

(Matt, 19:22) – We have seen in the first words of this young man his total ignorance and misunderstanding of the law and how salvation is not by the works of man but by the grace of God in the glorious Person and effectual work of Christ as the believer’s only righteousness before God. The young man boldly claimed to have kept the law and asked, *“what lack I yet” (19:20)*. Christ told him, *“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me” (19:21)*. The young man lacked a perfect righteousness that can only be found in Christ, and at this point, he also lacked faith in Christ which is the evidence of having been made righteous by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to His people. By this one, pointed command, our Lord stripped away the fig leaves of this man’s self-righteousness, exposed the foolishness of his pride, and showed him his need of the grace of God and his need of a Substitute. The Lord dealt with this young man so as to expose the reality of his depraved, unregenerate heart, and the young man **“WENT AWAY SORROWFUL: FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS.”**

Sadly, this rich young ruler would not forsake all and follow Christ – **“FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS.”** He loved the world and the things of the world more than the things of God. We all know the false gospel of “health and wealth” where false preachers tell people that God desires all of us to have lots of money and physical health if we would obey Him. This is a lie. They will misuse Scriptures such as, *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich,” (2 Cor. 8:9)*, claiming this is physical wealth and not spiritual. We who are saved by God’s grace are truly spiritually and eternally rich in His blessings. If we are rich in material things, it too is a gift from God, but this is not a gift given to everyone.

(Matt. 19:23) – **“VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT A RICH MAN SHALL HARDLY ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”** The Lord is not saying here that if a person is rich in money and material goods, he/she cannot be saved. We know of many true children of God who were blessed with material wealth and possessions – Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, Philemon, etc. We know of true children of God who were poor. Though rich in Himself, our Lord Himself was poor in material things. What the Lord is pointing out here is that the pursuit of and love for riches that keeps a person from seeking, worshipping, serving, and trusting the Lord and loving His people is idolatry and keeps that person from entering the kingdom of heaven. This is “covetousness, which is idolatry” that keeps a person from faith in Christ (Col. 3:5). It is not money but the love of money that is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:9-10). The Lord warned of the danger of those who leave Him and His Gospel for “the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches.” Such are spiritually dead and unfruitful (Matt. 13:22).

The deceitfulness of riches is when people assume that because of riches, it means they are blessed by God and not cursed (Luke 12:13-21; 16:19-31). Also, as a believer, having been blessed with material riches does not mean that you have a higher status with God. It means that you have more responsibility towards the Kingdom. The Bible tells us that those who are blessed with salvation by God's grace and also blessed with material riches in this life are to live for the glory of God in Christ, the good of others in need, and not for their own selfish gain (Matt. 6:33; James 1:27).

(Matt. 19:24) – This was a proverbial saying among the Jews expressing that which is impossible. As preposterous as it is to think that a camel could go through the eye of a needle, it is even more absurd to think a rich man can enter into the kingdom of God while loving his wealth to the point of rejecting or neglecting Christ. This is said in light of our fallen, sinful natures that cause us to love self rather than Christ. Those who enter the kingdom of heaven do so by the grace of God in Christ. They are those who have been convinced by the Spirit that, even though they may be rich in the world's goods, they are spiritually poor and in need of the riches of God's grace in Christ (Rom. 8:32). They realize that ALL blessings, material and spiritual, are gifts from God freely given to them and not earned or deserved (Eph. 1:3). Jesus's message is clear—it is impossible for anyone to be saved on his own merits. Since wealth was seen as proof of God's approval, it was commonly taught by the rabbis that rich people were blessed by God and were, therefore, the most likely candidates for heaven. Jesus destroyed that notion, and along with it, the idea that anyone can earn eternal life.

(Matt. 19:25-26) – If this man who, in the eyes of men, was a moral, upright, intelligent, law-abiding man, and blessed with material riches could not be saved, *“WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?”* The Lord's response says it all – *“WITH MEN THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE; BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.”* The salvation of sinners, the justification of the ungodly, the regeneration and conversion of the spiritually dead, and the preservation of sinners saved by grace, are all things that only the Lord God by His power and grace can and does accomplish. If salvation, or any part of it, is something to be attained by man's efforts to make himself righteous by his works, then there will be no salvation. Salvation is of the Lord in its purpose, origin, workings, and culmination. Salvation is of the Lord, from election in the beginning to glorification in the end (Psalm 37:39; Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8-10; Php. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:30-31). The way to eternal life is Christ and His righteousness imputed alone which God brings His people to submit and receive by faith (Rom. 10:4).