

Mark 10:17-23

Walking Away From Christ.

The story of the Rich Young Ruler is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and Mark. The fullest version of the story is found in Mark. In order to understand the real meaning and message of Christ to the rich young ruler we must understand what Christ had just taught his disciples in the previous verses.

We read in verse 13 (read to 16), “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

We read in MATTHEW 19:14 “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Why does Christ liken entering into the kingdom of God to a little child?

Because a child is powerless, helpless, and with nothing to bring, completely dependent.

It is from this backdrop that Christ talks to the rich young ruler about how one inherits eternal life.

Note that this young man was a Ruler. He came possibly from the aristocracy, a wealthy family.

He came running and kneeling, approached Christ. Undoubtedly, the young man had heard of X and now he has the opportunity to meet Christ for himself. He expresses both enthusiasm and concern when he talks to Christ.

He asks the right question, the most important question a man could ever ask: “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

The same kind of question is asked in Acts 2:37
“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30 “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Have you ever ask that question?

Although the rich young ruler begins by showing real initiative and promise, we soon discover where his heart really is. We read in verse 22, “And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.” I would like to preach on the theme, *Walking Away From Christ*. What did it mean for this young man to walk away from Jesus Christ.

1. He walked away from God.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Christ was not denying his deity but asserting it. To be good is to possess the positive and holy character of God.

Examine the life of Christ, and you will see perfect goodness and obedience pervades his life. He was a preacher of righteousness. He was a healer of the sick. He raised people from the dead. What more did you need to see to be convinced that Jesus Christ was eternal God.

Christ was more than a good teacher. He is the God-Man. The Second person of the mystic triune God. He is the answer the Young Man was searching for. But the young man did not see Christ any more than a good teacher. He could not see his need for a Savior from sin. He lacked conviction over his sin. He lacked the truth about his condition before God.

He couldn't see what Paul writes about in Romans 7:24 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Maybe you are here today and you are walking away from Christ. That means you are walking away from God.

1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Not only was this young man walking away from God, he was walking away from righteousness. A righteousness that he did not possess in himself. A righteousness which he needed to enter into heaven. A righteousness that is found only in Jesus Christ.

2. He walked away from righteousness.

We learn here the purpose of the Law: to show that all men are sinners. Therefore, Christ takes the young man to God's Law. We read in verse 19, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother."

The Law points to God's beauty, holiness, goodness, and justice.

But for sinners, the law condemns.

Romans 5:18 "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation..."

The Young Man thought he had kept the law good enough to inherit eternal life. "He answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth."

How many people do we know that believe they will be accepted before God because they lived good enough.

God's law was the standard by which this young man was using to gain acceptance before God. He had no idea that he had broken God's Law before he was even born in Adam. And after birth he himself was guilty of breaking the law. He was using the Law as a ladder to heaven but it was his ticket to hell.

We read about the woman caught in adultery John 8:9 "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning *at the eldest, even unto the last:* and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. The young men were the last to be convinced.

Walking away from Christ meant walking away from righteousness.

3. He walked away from spiritual riches.

Fine clothes, doing alright, respectable in society equals acceptance with God in the eyes of the young man. He was full of hypocrisy and lies. Self-deceived and ignorant. Lost.

We read in Revelation 3:17-18 how Christ condemns the church in Laodicea, “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

4. He walked away from the love of Christ.

Profound/The text says that, “Christ loved him.”

We read how Paul tries to describe the love of Christ in Ephesians 3:17-19, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what

is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

A man gave testimony of how God saved him in the icy water when the Titanic sunk and then was rescued. “Hundreds were jumping off the doomed ocean liner, only minutes to live, there was an evangelist among them. He was preaching Christ in the frigid water. He later succumbed and drowned but this man heard the loving words of the preacher and cried out to the Lord.”

We read in Matthew 16:26 “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Think what following Christ might have cost the young man. It might have cost him his inheritance. His family. His status. His life. Now think what not following Christ cost the young man. Eternal life. Where is he now?

5. The young man went away grieved. He walked away from eternal life

If Christ would have just said to the young man, ‘Believe on me,’ then he would have went away thinking all was well with his soul. Today in the church just make a profession, just say a prayer, just go forward in a church service, and you are saved but sin is not dealt with. There is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun my friend. The young man revealed what really was in his heart. He shunned heaven by walking away from Christ.

John 6:67-69, “Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

In closing, we must be willing to sell all and follow Christ. We must be humble and trusting like little children. We must take up our cross daily and follow after the Lord. Such people make up the kingdom of heaven. Have you walked away from the Lord? The Lord says, “Repent of your sins and return to me.” Will you walk away from Christ like the rich young ruler? Are you on your way to heaven? Let us pray!