

Matthew 19:16-26, Mark 10:17-27, Luke 18:18-27

The Rich Young Ruler

Introduction:

1. What does it mean to be good? How do you evaluate goodness vs. evil?
2. Without God you cannot say what is lawful, lovely, right, beautiful, and virtuous, for it is the Lord who defines reality and what is good
3. God is the source of all that is good, He is the very definition of good, He created what is good, He classifies and categorizes goodness

Main Idea: God is good. Christ is God, therefore the epitome of what is good, but not in the way many people think. Sinful man is not good, not even one. Our sincerity, our goodness, and our perceived blessings will not save us. Our salvation is by God's sovereign grace conquering our idolatrous and covetous hearts.

Sincerity Does Not Save (Matthew 19:16, Mark 10:17, 21, Luke 18:18)

1. The Rich Young Ruler (RZR) is genuine in his candid display of honor towards Jesus, falling at His feet and calling Him Good Teacher
2. Jesus loved Him; He did not see the RZR as hypocritical
3. The RZR sought Christ for eternal life, characterized by moral virtue, and a real desire for spiritual truth
4. The RZR though, is shallow in his self-reflection and self-introspection
5. The RZR was sincerely wrong

Moral Goodness Does Not Save (Mt 19:17-21, Mk 10:18-21, Lk 18:19-22)

1. Jesus asks the RZR, "Why do you call me good? Why ask about good?"
 - a. Jesus corrects the RZR on who He is as Lord and God and who the RZR is as a sinful man
 - b. Jesus is not making a comparison between Himself and God the Father; Jesus is not denying His Deity
 - c. Jesus is not merely a good teacher, or good example, the Lord Jesus is God in the flesh, one with the Father (**John 10:30, Matt 11:27**)
 - d. No other being can claim what Jesus claims
 - e. Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy
 - f. Jesus claimed absolute authority over all human beings, be their judge when they sin, and grant forgiveness to the contrite
 - g. Jesus is God, the Absolute Good
2. The RZR was wrong on Christ's identity, bringing Him low, but also is wrong about himself and his state of sinfulness, lifting himself high
 - a. Jesus rattles off the second table of the law, which deals with one's love for neighbor
 - b. The RZR boasts that he has kept all of the commandments, showing how unreflective he is on these commandments
 - c. Jesus taught the righteousness one must have must be greater than the Pharisees, a deeper righteousness from a transformed heart
 - d. Trying hard to be good is the religion of Man
3. The idea of human goodness to receive eternal life is a flawed idea

- a. How good do you have to be? How good is good enough? When am I good enough? How bad do you need to be to be disqualified?
 - b. What about your personality and temperament, or the kind of family you are born into? Supportive? Abusive?
 - c. There is no one who does good (**Romans 3:12**)
4. God and His Law are the standard for goodness; the Law is a reflection of God's character
 5. What the RZR lacked: A transformed heart – His heart was idolatrous (first commandment) and covetous (tenth commandment)
 6. Jesus loved him enough to challenge him

Perceived Blessings Do Not Save (Matt 19:22-24, Mk 10:23-25, Lk 18:24-25)

1. God is not in competition for your affections for the world; He will not compete for your love (**1 John 2:15, James 4:4, Luke 16:13**)
2. The RZR rejects the Good, the source of joy and happiness for wealth
3. Jesus asks the RZR to give it all to the poor; this is not a paradigm for every Christian, for this is the only person Jesus asks this of
 - i. This is NOT proto-Marxism
4. The Gospels are critical of the Rich
 - a. Mary's Magnificat (**Luke 1:52-53**)
 - b. Jesus' first sermon (**Luke 4:18**)
 - c. The Sermon on the Mount (**Luke 6:20-24**)
 - d. The Parable of the Rich Fool (**Luke 12**)
 - e. The RZR choosing his wealth over Christ
5. Wealth can be mistaken for the Lord's blessing and providence: Abraham and Lot, Job, David, Solomon, etc
6. Wealth is seductive; it produces idolatry and covetousness
7. Jesus is the treasure: He can give mercy, grace, forgiveness of sins; only Jesus can provide a treasure that will last forever (eternal life)

Salvation Is By God's Sovereign Grace (Matt 19:25-26, Mk 10:26-27, Lk 18:26-27)

1. The disciples thought the wealthy were saved, and the evidence was a perceived blessing and favor upon them
2. We are saved by God's grace, whether rich or poor
 - a. God the Spirit acts to convict the heart and conscience of sin
 - b. The Spirit opens the heart to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - c. God gives you faith to exercise belief in Jesus, Risen from the dead
 - d. God grants you repentance from sin
 - e. Sinful man cannot convert themselves
 - f. God's overpowering and conquering grace is the decisive act to turn the idolatrous, covetous heart toward Jesus
3. Jesus came to this earth to die for sinners, the wealthy miser and scrooge can be saved; it is only possible to God
4. The Spirit operates on the heart to see Christ as the treasure of heaven
5. Once we see Christ as our treasure, we realize God's grace made us His treasure
6. Jesus gave up the wealth of heaven to die for His sheep (**Phil 2:5-11**)
7. God gave it all to make us His treasure, we can give it all to make Him our treasure