

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Possessed by Possessions!

Youth, wealth, and power – these three are highly valued in our nation. Today, we'll meet a man who had all three, yet he knew something was missing in his life. His encounter with Jesus is recorded in Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, and Luke 18:18-23. Follow along in your Bible, as we examine these accounts and find the lessons for us that God placed therein.

First, this rich, young ruler was reverent. He kneeled before Jesus, and used a title of respect; he addressed Jesus as "Good Master." (Considering the man's address of Jesus as "Good Master," and Jesus' admonition that only God is good, read Jesus' teaching on elevating religious persons by titles – Matthew 23:1-12.)

Look at this young man's question: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Many of today's religions scoff at "doing" anything to receive eternal life, but Jesus is not among that group. He reminded the man of the commandments that he must keep, or do. This young, rich, and powerful man replied that he had been obedient to God's commands all his life. Yet, he knew he lacked something (Matthew 19:20).

Jesus loved this rich young man (Mark 10:21). In fact, He loved him enough to tell him what he yet lacked. Question: when one loves me enough to attempt to correct me, what is my attitude? What is your attitude? Read Galatians 4:16. As always, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter. His instruction to this rich, powerful, young man? "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." (For further discussion of treasure in heaven, read Luke 12:15-34; especially verses 15, 21, 33, and 34.)

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." The fact is made clear to us that his possessions possessed him. He was unwilling to make the sacrifice which would have erased the emptiness within. Are not multiplied millions today also unwilling to completely follow Jesus? They want eternal life, but they want it on their terms, not on Jesus' commands. Readers, may each of us look within to learn what it is that may be possessing us, and separating us from obeying God.

Final point: Although Jesus loved the man, He did not go after him and He did not soften His instruction. Jesus knew what it would take for this rich young ruler to successfully follow Him. Today, He knows what is essential for each of us to be followers. And He has not left us in the dark as to what that is! The demands of Jesus for us are written down. The only remaining question is: will I obey them? Many religious groups attempt to soften Jesus' requirements. They discard those they believe will exclude some; they add man-made laws to make their group more popular with the people. Their stated motives are "love" and "inclusion." But, following Jesus' example, it is love indeed when a person, or a group, points others to obedience to God's commands. Let's consider these questions: Do I love

Jesus enough to obey Him? Does the religious group with which I am associated love Jesus enough to preach boldly and clearly God's commands, not changing, eliminating or softening them? Do I love others enough to attempt to point them to obedience to God? Readers, may we take to heart the example of this unfortunate young, rich, and powerful man! May we determine to follow Jesus, whatever the cost!