

**To Seek And To Save
What Lack I Yet?
The Rich Young Ruler**
Luke 18.18-30;
cf. Matt 19.16-26; Mark 10.17-31

What Lack I Yet - Matt 19.20 - This Ruler knew he was still lacking something.

This Rich Young Ruler Struggled With:

A. His Religion (vs 18) - This man was a devout moral man, but he knew deep inside that he lacked something. He was clearly a religious man, but man made religion will always leave one empty, hollow and lacking. Hence, he asked, "What lack I yet?"

1. **The Man**

a. [**His Position** – He was a ruler. Possibly a member of the Sanhedrin. The same word for ruler is used to refer to Nicodemus in John 3.1, but the words “Of the Jews” are added in the text denoting the religious nature of Nicodemus’ position.]

1) [**Spiros Zodhiates** suggests that this ruler was probably about the same age as Jesus, in his thirties.]

b. [**His Possessions** – Luke notes that this man was “*very rich*” (Luke 18.23), while Matthew and Mark record that “*He had great possessions*” (Matt 19.22; Mark 10.22).]

2. **His Manner (Mark 10.17)**

*[Mark 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, **there came one running, and kneeled to him,** and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?]*

a. [**The Haste in his coming** – He came running. It appears outwardly that this man had a zeal for Christ. He appears to desire to be near Christ and receive counsel from him. However, moments later we learn that his haste was merely a religious appearance; his emotionalism was not a reflection of his heart. There are many in our day who give the appearance of sincerity, but reveal their spiritual aptitude when endurance, persistence, and sacrifice are required.]

b. [**The Humility in his coming** – This man kneeled before Christ. He outwardly and publicly kneeled before Christ. But latter we find that his heart was not in his humility, for when he was called upon to obey the Word of God he revealed that he would honor God with his words and gestures, but not with his heart and actions.]

c. [**The Hunger in his coming (vs 18)** – He asks, “. . . *Good Master, what shall I do to*

inherit eternal life? . . .” This rich ruler knows that in all that he has he still lacks something. **He has prosperity, possessions, and position, but he does not have providential protection.** He possesses mortal life but he lacks everlasting life.]

- 1) [There are multitudes in our world that have all that life can offer, yet they know, as King Solomon knew, that it was all vanity (worthless) in the eternal scheme of things. They sense something that though this world were to give them all that it has, all possessions, all prosperity, all power, it still would leave them in some unseen peril. The peril of everlasting doom.]
 - 2) [This ruler, as many in our world, wanted what nothing in mortal life can give them. Everlasting life. The problem is they seek to secure it as they have secured everything else in life, **with a purchase agreement.** But it will never be given that way.]
3. **His Morality (vs 19-21; Matt 19.20)** [– ¹⁹ *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.* ²⁰ *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.* ²¹ *And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*”]
- a. **[The Obedience Commanded (vs 20)** – Jesus tells this young man that if he will have eternal life, then he must keep the commandments of God. This young man responds as multitudes have responded since time began, **WHICH?**
 - 1) [Jesus responds by listing **five of the Ten Commandments**, these six are those that refer to how we deal with our fellow man. The six moral commands regarding civil conduct.]
 - 2) [It is important to notice that Jesus has not listed any of the first four commands in the list he offers to this ruler. Some have contended that this young ruler was struggling with covetousness. That greed was his mortal downfall. I suggest that this was not his downfall at all. The fact that he would not steal, or commit adultery exonerated him from this charge.]
 - 3) [Jesus lists the moral law and indicates that this man must obey all of these commands.]
 - b. **[The Observance Commended (vs 21)** – *“And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.”*
 - 1) [The young ruler says, I have done all of this. What a wonderful child he must have been for his parents. He was faithful to keep all of these moral requirements. Not just in his adulthood, but also through his youth.]
 - 2) [Jesus does not contend with the man on this point. Indeed, our Lord seems to indicate that the man has spoken truthfully. This is a good, upstanding member of

the community. This was a man of honor, faithfulness, and integrity. This was the type of man that everyone in the community looked up to and assumed would be in heaven one day.]

3) [Yet, this young man knows that something is missing!]

c. **[The Obsession Conferred (Matt 19.20) - Matthew 19:20** ²⁰ *The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?]*

1) [One can almost imagine those standing around listening to this young man, hearing him ask, “What lack I?” And wondering. If this young man is lacking eternal security, then where must I be? This young man demonstrates an honest that few will allow themselves to express. He reveals **the reality of integrity**. This man knew that something was lacking in his soul, and he was willing to express that truth to Jesus Christ.]

a) [How about you? Where does your integrity stand right now? God already knows who and what you are. But will you allow yourself to admit, what God already knows, to yourself and others?]

2) [This was a clearly religious young man, but he knew that his religion was not enough. His religion had failed to give him peace with God, and he need to know what was required.]

B. His Riches (vs 22) [– *“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”*]

1. **The Deficiency of the man (Mark 10.21)** [– “. . . One thing thou lackest: . . .” – Jesus confirmed the thing that the man feared, he still lacked something.]

a. [He did not feel eternally secure because he was not eternally secure.]

b. [When you are Born-Again, when you have secured your salvation, you will know that you are saved. You will not doubt whether or not you are going to heaven.]

1) [You may have times when you wonder if God is near you.]

2) [You may have times when you will wonder if you are right with God.]

3) [But you will never doubt your salvation in and through Jesus Christ.]

2. **The Dependency of the man (Mark 10.21; cf. vs 22)** [– “. . . go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: . . .”]

- a. [Jesus now confronts the real issue that man is dealing with. The man is not struggling with the moral law as it refers to his fellowman, he is a good man. When Jesus list the commands this man must obey he only list the manward commands, but none of the godward commands He is struggling with the moral law in respect to his God. This man’s God is his prosperity.]
 - b. [Jesus directly challenges that basis for this man’s security in life. Jesus is revealing who and what this man’s god really is. Your God is not revealed so much by what you say, but by what you trust, and you reveal what you trust by what you do.]
 - c. [This rich man’s possessions had become his God. His riches were his idol, because his riches dictated his direction in life.]
3. **The Destiny of the man (Mark 10.21; cf. vs 22)** [- “. . . *and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*”]
- a. [God had a plan for this man. It was that he would use his riches to glorify and magnify God. Christ is not telling this man that his riches were a sin. Instead, Jesus was letting him know that his loyalty was misplaced. God, in Christ, need to be his Lord, whereas, right now his prosperity was his Lord.]
 - b. [God’s plan for this man was that he should walk with God, as Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden of Eden. Jesus said, “come, and follow me.” But the man couldn’t because **his riches were keeping him from his God.**]
 - 1) [Anything that keeps you from God, has become your god.]
 - c. **[For some people:]**
 - 1) [Their **Prosperity** is their god, they would do anything for their money.]
 - 2) [Their **Posterity** is their god, they would do anything for their family.]
 - 3) [Their **Poverty** is their god, they would do anything for the sympathy associated with their poverty.]
 - 4) [Their **Pride** is their god, they would do anything for their own exaltation, they are god’s unto themselves.]
 - 5) [Their **Piety** is their god. J. Vernon Magee notes that church is keeping many from God, because Church makes them feel right with God.]

Note: [There is nothing wrong with Prosperity, Posterity, Poverty, and Pride as a result of the course of life. But, when anything becomes more important than God himself, then it has become the God of your life.]

- d. [God’s desire for this man was that he might be saved through Jesus Christ and that he might receive an eternal inheritance in heaven.]
- e. [It is not surprising that this lost, moral, rich, young man had exalted his riches to a position of lordship over his life. He had never been Born-Again. He did not have the Holy Spirit of God in him, teaching him, comforting him, guiding him, and building him. **What is sad, is that this rich young ruler would walk away from Jesus, because he just could not give what Jesus required.**]

C. His Renewal (vs 21-26)

1. The Offer (vs 22; Rom 6.23; 10.9-10) [– “. . . and come, follow me.”]

- a. [Salvation is a gift. It is God’s response to our dreadful need. Sin demands our judgment, God offers His love.]

*[Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but **the gift of God** is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.]*

- b. [As a gift salvation can never be earned or purchased. This rich young ruler wanted to know what he could do to earn eternal life. Jesus said to him, nothing. It was all already done by Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross. It cannot be purchased or earned in this mortal life.]
- c. [The only way to receive eternal life is to receive the Lord, Jesus Christ.]

[Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.]

- d. [You must **surrender those things** that are the god’s in your life, whether those god’s are your stuff or your self, and you must accept Jesus as your personal Lord, and Savior.]
- e. [You must come and follow Him! Accept Jesus Christ, as your living Lord and Savior.]

2. The Offense (vs 23-25; Mark 8.36) [– “And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.”]

- a. [What a sad, sad day for this rich young ruler. He kept his stuff, but he lost all of eternity.]

[Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?]

- b. **[The struggle of our prosperity (vs 24-25).** Jesus revealed how hard it was for a rich man to come to the New-Birth. He said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But it is not impossible.]

Luke 18:24-25 ²⁴ And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

- c. [Without a doubt someone is here right now who is struggling with their eternal destiny. God wants to save you. God is offering you salvation through Jesus Christ. God is offering you eternal riches in heaven to come, will you forsake God's gift for these mere mortal moments.]
 - d. [Perhaps you are struggling, wrestling with how to respond at this moment. Notice Jesus answer for you today.]
3. **The Offering (vs 26-27)** [– “*And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?*”
²⁷ *And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*”]
- a. [Tell God your struggle. Come up into this altar and meet God here. Tell Him how you are struggling.]
 - b. [Turn your life over to Christ, He and He along can meet this struggle within you and bring you to the New-Birth.]

CrossRoads Baptist Church, August 26, 2007