

is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

When the rich young man came and asked Jesus what he could do to have eternal life, Jesus knew what his problem was. The young man's problem was that he was breaking the first of the ten commandments, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). This man was trusting in his good works to save him.

When Jesus told him to sell what he had and give the money to the poor, He showed to the man what his problem was. Jesus did not tell him to just give his things to the poor, but to sell what he had and give the money to the poor. The only way for the rich man to know the value of his possessions was for him to sell them on the market. In giving the money to the poor, he would be showing them that he loved them as much as he loved himself. In doing this, he would be building up his treasure in heaven. Also, by selling what he had, he would be free to follow Jesus as He had asked Him to.

The young man had realized that he was missing something and came to Jesus in a sincere way to be told what it was. He was not expecting to hear what Jesus told him. He did not want to give up what he had. Without arguing, he walked away from Jesus and His disciples.

Jesus told His disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (be a Christian). He said this to show that it is impossible for a man who values earthly wealth more than heavenly wealth to be saved.

When the disciples heard Jesus say this, they were surprised and said, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus told them it is impossible for a rich man to humble *himself* enough to put all of his trust in God. But if a man truly wants to be saved, with God's help he can be. Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

The Bible often refers to wealth as a hindrance in doing God's will. Too many people are too concerned for their own welfare. Jesus said, “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the

kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:32, 33).

In the Old Testament, material prosperity was a sign of God's blessing. We have as examples Abraham, Job, Solomon, and others. The Bible says in Genesis 13:2 that Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. But we know that he did not trust in his wealth. “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). But even then there were warnings against trusting in riches. King David wrote, “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked” (Psalm 37:6). “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them” (Psalm 63:10b). “Be not afraid (excited) when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him” (Psalm 49:16, 17). Job said he was naked when he came into the world, and he would go out the same way (Job 1:21). In I Timothy 6:7 we read, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

In the New Testament we are encouraged not to store up wealth but to look to God for what we need. In I Timothy 6:17-19 we read, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

We can see from this that riches are uncertain and are not to be trusted. Proverbs 23:5 talks about riches as taking wings and flying away. We are to trust in God and be ready and willing to share what we have.

God made mankind as beings with the ability to choose to do right or wrong. There are many things that we decide on our own to do or not to do. The reason that God made man was to bring honor and glory to Him. He receives that when

we decide to follow Him and His will for us. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, all mankind inherited a sinful nature. They were selfish and wanted things done their way and not as God wanted.

Today mankind is selfishly inclined and wants to do things his own way. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

God sent Jesus to be an offering for man's sin and to help bring him back into right standing with God. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Jesus' death on the cross makes possible that which was impossible for even a rich man.

As individuals, we can choose if we want to serve God or our own selfish desires. But Jesus said that we cannot serve God and money (Matthew 6:24).

There are many pressures around us to have more and more of the things we do not need. Advertising, all about us, tells us that we should get this or more of that. But we must get our directions from God concerning the things we need. Our whole economy is geared for men to increase their material wealth. But Jesus' words come to us from His sermon on the mountain. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where your treasure is there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). It takes the power of God in the heart of a man to make him see what true wealth is.

Sorrowfully, the young man walked away from Jesus and His disciples because he had great possessions. He was unhappy not just because he was rich but because he trusted in his wealth. Poor people can be guilty of trusting in riches. A poor man may want to be rich for the same reason the rich man does. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men