



Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Matthew 19:16-22 NIV

Dear Friends,

This story, found in Matthew, Mark and Luke has some different details, but always the same conclusion. The young man for all his desire for what we might call today, a rich spiritual life became shocked and dumbfounded at what Jesus required him to do to make that happen. First of all, the spiritual life he so desperately wanted came on Jesus' terms and not his own. Secondly, he would have to give up his "comfort" zone as a "well-off man" who appreciated the "finer things" in life. For this man, he had to make a real change in his lifestyle to get what he most deeply wanted.

While indeed the stumbling block for the man is his great wealth, the truth of this story extends far greater than just issues of money and wealth. It is in these two propositions underlying the problem of the rich man's wealth:

1. willingness to grow in our relationship to God according to God's terms rather than our own. 2. To get us to a place of spiritual growth or personal fulfillment, God might happen to take us out of our comfort zone, and more than likely we probably won't like it.

Now I am not saying that God works that way all the time, but we really need to understand that God could put us in the rich young ruler's shoes when we ask God for "growth in our faith", "to deepen our spiritual life", or "give me something that gives me deep personal fulfillment in my life".

Let me give you an example from my life. Some years ago, when I was a conference dean in another synod, I felt there needed to be a minister's lectionary group both for fellowship, and to exchange ideas and information to help us prepare for the scripture texts for the coming Sunday in worship. The best day for most of those interested was Tuesday. It wasn't my best day, I just started the week after taking Monday off, and right after the lectionary group I would be meeting with an adult bible study for my parishioners. It also gave me very little time to touch base with the church office person. It wasn't easy. I am a bit of a schedule freak, so I didn't like to be frazzled by changing it. I was out of my comfort zone. But I persevered realizing that this was something that God wanted for us who could gather and benefit us from our different insights into the scripture. The group turned out to be a real gift from God. If I had not been willing to let God do it God's way, and give up control of my schedule, I really would have missed out on a real place of blessing and growth in my life.

Believe me, I am just citing one time when God worked this way in my life, I can assure you there are others.

Sunday Worship Services

9:00am - Heritage (Traditional)

11:00am - Celebration 2 (Contemporary)

Sunday School 10:00am

God loves you and will never stop loving you, and through the riches of God's mercy and grace God wants to bless us, not curse us. But if we want spiritual growth in our walk with God or looking to God for a fulfilling purpose in our lives, we'd better be prepared that to fulfill those worthwhile goals, God may be requiring something of us that will really, as the saying goes "rock our world".



Your brother in Christ,
John