



On the road to Emmaus.

THE STORY: PSA 49

There is a tendency to envy those with wealth and power, and to be dissatisfied with the condition or status that God has assigned to us in this world. In this psalm we clearly see a distinction between our earthly life, and our heavenly life. Even more clearly, we see how our expectation of the life to come affects the way we live our present life, and where to place our trust. “Truly, no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit.” We’ll all see the grave, rich and poor, powerful and weak. To trust in wealth, power, good deeds, or anything else in this world as a way to escape death is “foolish.” “*But God* will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol...” Our confidence must be placed in God alone, who sent His son Jesus to be our ransom (1Tim 2.5-6).

TALK ABOUT IT:

How can you tell what you’ve placed your confidence in? (*Heb 13.5-6 content vs. discontent; 1Joh 5.14, prayerful vs. prayerless; Prov 3.25-26; fearful vs. fearless.*)

What renews your confidence in the Lord? (*Psa 42.6; Isa 44.21; Jer 17.7-8; Ezek 16.62-63; Joh 10.11 – remembering who you are to him, and who he is to you.*)

PRAY:

Thank God for all He has done for you; recount some of those things to Him.

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*To bring glory to God
Through the transforming of lives
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*building children into their parents...
... and families into the gospel.*

GET INTO The STORY

LIFE OF CHRIST • LESSON 18

JESUS CONFRONTS THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Only by God’s grace may we enter the Kingdom.



Jesus talks with a rich young ruler

THE STORY: MAT 19:16-22

Jesus has been warn the Pharisees of their hard hearts. He just called the little children to himself and blessed them, for their hearts were not hard (Mt 19.13-15). Then as Jesus turned onto the road leading to Jerusalem and death (Mk 10.17, 32), a rich young ruler (Lk 18.18) approached and asked, “What *good deed* must I do to have eternal life?” as if his *own* good deed could cleanse his sin, or cause God to save him. Jesus said, “Only One is good” (only God is perfect; and only Jesus’ death on the cross will save him); yet he said, “keep the commandments.” The ruler still hoped to *earn* his eternal reward. And so he asked, “Which ones?” Jesus listed commandments 5-10 (the “second tablet” dealing with our neighbor). The ruler said he kept all of those since his youth. Jesus loved him for his zealotness (Mk 10.20-21). “What do I still lack?” Jesus tested his heart (Mat 6.21), to see if he loved God more than the world (1Joh 2.15). To be perfect, the young ruler must give up everything he has on earth to follow Jesus. The young ruler left, sorrowful. The cost of following Jesus was too steep for him, for he had great wealth.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Jesus was willing to die to redeem his people from death. Name something costly (difficult) that you’re willing to do or let go of, to obey him, and to thank him for the life he freely gave you. (*e.g. Act 4.18-20; Eph 4.21-31; Col 2.6-7.*)

The cost of following Jesus isn’t about earning eternal life or paying Jesus back. It’s choosing God’s kingdom over the world. How have you done that recently? How can you even recognize there’s a choice to be made? (*Hos 14.9; Php 1.9-11*)

PRAY:

Ask God to give you discernment, to know when you’re being tempted by the world, and the conviction to choose kingdom living over worldly living.



TUESDAY

Jesus talks with his disciples about salvation

THE STORY: MAT 19:23-26

The rich young ruler was an admirable man, obedient to the Law, a “good man” by earthly standards. But that wasn’t enough to enter the kingdom of heaven. Indeed, his great wealth and power – even his goodness – were obstacles to salvation. It was easy to place his confidence in these things, in himself, and not in God. To let go of them, and trust in God’s grace instead, becomes more difficult the more we have. The treasure and pleasure we touch here on earth compete with the treasure that awaits us in heaven by faith. This great truth dismays Jesus’ disciples. If this young ruler who had so much going for him, could not get into heaven on his own merits, then who can be saved? Jesus is clear that no one can enter the kingdom on his own merits; that’s impossible. God makes salvation possible by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works we have done (Eph 2.8-9; Tit 3.4-7).

TALK ABOUT IT:

How can you enjoy what God has given you, without letting what you have “own” you, or letting what you don’t have “rule” you? (Luk 4.5-8; Jas 1.12-17)

Knowing Jesus did everything necessary to save you, and you cannot contribute to your salvation, why should you be obedient? (Joh 15.10-14; 1Joh 5.3; for love.)

PRAY:

Thank God for what you have, and what you don’t have. Praise Him that He loved you enough to save you at the cost of His only son, Jesus.



WEDNESDAY

Where is the Gospel?

THE STORY: Luk 14.26-33; Mat 13.45-46

Counting the cost of choices that we make isn’t always easy. We must be realistic about the consequences and possibilities. Following Jesus has costs involved, and they can be painful costs. We can lose friendships, family ties, jobs, freedom, and even our life. We can expend a lot of time, effort, and money in pursuit of God’s kingdom, fulfilling our duties as servants of Jesus Christ. Letting go of what we have, to live the life God has for us, takes discipline, resolve, and understanding. We need to lay hold of what Christ gave his life for, to willingly sacrifice in order to build his kingdom, by God’s hand (Psa 127.1), and to His glory. Why would we

choose to do that? Because we know the value of “the pearl” purchased for us by Christ’s blood. The hymn *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* ends with, “Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.” Will you give them?

TALK ABOUT IT:

Building a tower requires a blueprint, materials, digging down to bedrock, laying a foundation, and then building on it. How does that relate to your Christian walk? (1Cor 3.10-15) What do you need to be built up in Christ? (Eph 4.11-16, church)

Make a list of what God has given you through Jesus that reveals the value of “the pearl of great price.” Meditate on it. (e.g. Act 5.32, 17.28; Eph 1.7-11; 1Joh 4.16.)

PRAY:

Ask God to teach you and remind you of all that you have because of Christ.



THURSDAY

What is our reward for giving up everything?

THE STORY: MAT 19:27-30

If earthly goods, position, and works don’t merit salvation, and if we must let go of our attachment to everything on earth to follow Jesus, then what reward awaits us in heaven that make following Jesus worth the cost? Peter asks, “What then will we have?” What is worth living and dying for? Jesus’ answer is unusually specific: there will be a *regeneration* (a new world), ruled by Jesus; and we will rule men by his side. Whatever we left behind will be replaced a hundredfold, and we will inherit eternal life. Whoever was first beforehand, like the rich young ruler, will be last in this new kingdom; and whoever was last before the regeneration, like the disciples who gave up everything, will be first in the kingdom. Jesus will reveal more about his kingdom in the parable he is about to tell in chapter 20. This is not describing the afterlife, but the life of Christians *in this world*, under King Jesus.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is what God has already done for you more important than what you can do for God, or what you can hope to receive from God later? (Rom 8.35-37; Eph 6.10-13; we live on earth for a purpose – what has already been done enables us to conquer in Christ’s name and stand by his power, to his glory, here and now.)

What makes laying down your life for Christ the same as or different than laying down your life for family, friends, or country? (Mat 10.18; Rom 5.5-8).

PRAY:

Tell God why you love Him. Tell Him why you’re willing to sacrifice even your life to testify of what He has done for you through Jesus Christ.