

# The Rich Young Ruler

Luke 18:18-27

## **MEMORY VERSE**

LUKE 18:27

But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

As many pre-cut "gingerbread man" shaped pieces of paper as the number of children in your class, construction paper, crayons or markers, scissors, and glue.

Magazines, scissors, glue, construction paper and a large basket.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **People Puzzles**

Pre-cut several "gingerbread man" shaped pieces of white paper. Have your children write their names as large as possible and decorate them with crayons or markers.

When your students are finished coloring their men, collect them to be used for a later illustration.

## **LESSON TIME!**

Have you ever had a cut or bruise and had someone accidentally touch or bump that place and make it hurt all over again? You might have forgotten about your injury, but when that person touched it, the pain came back in a hurry.

If you went to the doctor to have the cut looked at, the doctor had to touch it in order to examine and fix it. Did it feel good when he touched it? No! But in order to fix it and make it better, the doctor had to touch that sensitive area. We did not like it, but we had to let him. We had to do what he said if we wanted to get better.

Today our scripture shows how Jesus touched the sensitive place in someone's life. They did not like how it felt, but instead of letting Jesus, the best doctor, make that sensitive place better, they left. They did not want to endure the pain of being "fixed" by Jesus. Let's meet this person. **God wants first place in our lives.**

### **LUKE 18:18-21**

**Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"**

**So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.**

**"You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"**

**And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."**

What was this young man like? Well, he seemed a fine young man. He had been listening to Jesus. He even recognized Jesus as being a good teacher. He told Jesus that he had kept the five commandments that Jesus mentioned since he was a child. That meant he must have been kind and thoughtful towards his fellow man. But just because he was a nice guy did not make him perfect. James 2:10 says if we sin in one commandment we are guilty of all. No one can be perfect without Jesus. The commandments Jesus listed are five of the six that have to do with how a person relates to other people; the other four have to do with how a person relates to God.

Verse 23 also tells us that this young man was very rich. Notice the word "very." He was not just rich; he was very rich. He also was a leader of people, a ruler. That means he had power and influence. He was a young man that had everything the world desires; he was young, powerful, rich, and a nice guy. It must have looked like he had everything, but look at what Jesus said to him in the next verse.

### **LUKE 18:22**

**So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."**

Jesus told this man who seemed to have everything that he still lacked one thing. Jesus always sees what we lack, even when we do not. What was it he lacked? Jesus did not just tell him, He showed him. By asking the rich young man to sell all he had, Jesus was revealing the young man's heart. Would the young man do what Jesus asked in an honest attempt to give himself completely to the Lord?

### **LUKE 18:23**

**But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.**

The answer to the rich young ruler's question in verse 18, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" was not the answer he wanted to hear. You see, he had done a lot of things right, but his response to Jesus' request that he sell all and follow Jesus revealed that he had another god before the one true God. The young man became sorrowful at giving up his riches because his riches, all of his stuff, were his god.

He may have felt pretty good about the commandments that asked about how he dealt with other people, but the commands that have to do with how he dealt with God were a problem in his life. And remember, if we sin in one commandment, we are guilty of them all. No one can be good enough without Jesus. Jesus put His finger on the young man's problem, and it did not feel good to have Jesus touching his sensitive area of sin. The commandments "Thou shalt have no other God's before Me," and "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," were the ones this man had failed in. This was his area of sin, and Jesus had put His finger right on it.

## **Give It All to Jesus**

Take several magazines and instruct your students to cut out pictures of the things that they really like. Have them paste these pictures to a piece of construction paper.

When they are all done, pass a basket around the room and have your students deposit their collages in the basket as an act of surrender, giving the things we really love to the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Explain that the rich young ruler struggled with giving up wealth, but our individual struggles could be over many different things. God wants us to surrender all to Him.

Jesus points out our sin only because He desires to cleanse us. Through Him things can be made right with God. This man may have appeared pretty good on the outside, but his heart was not right with God. **God wants first place in our lives!** His riches had taken God's spot on the throne of his heart. His riches had become king of his heart. He was not willing to give up his sin and make things right with God.

It may hurt to have Jesus put His finger right on our sin, but it is His love for us that causes Him to do so. He does not want us to become comfortable in sin but wants us to confess it and turn to Him for forgiveness. The rich young ruler was sorrowful because he had refused Jesus, choosing instead the small god of self and money. We may not have the same sin as this young man, but whatever keeps us from putting God first and loving Him above all is the very thing Jesus points out and desires to cleanse out of us. **God wants first place in our lives!**

## **People Puzzles**

Take the "gingerbread man" pictures done earlier by your students and cut them into puzzle like shapes. Have your students reassemble them on a piece of construction paper.

Illustrate for your class with your own puzzle that if one piece is missing from the puzzle, we are not a whole person. When the missing piece is in place, we are whole. Explain that God wants every piece of our lives; and then He makes us whole.

## LUKE 18:24-27

And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!

"For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"

But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Jesus watched sadly as the young man rejected Him and walked away, choosing his earthly riches over Jesus' heavenly riches. Because of our selfish hearts, making Jesus number one in our lives can be as hard as trying to thread a camel through the eye of a needle! Jesus was not saying that every sinner has to sell everything, but He was saying that people who want a heaven without a change in lifestyle do not honestly want God. They want religion, a set of rules, not a relationship with the Creator of the universe.

We may not have a problem with riches, but Jesus loves us enough to put His finger of conviction on any area of our lives that keeps us from putting God first. **God wants first place in our lives!**

Verse 27 is a wonderful verse of hope. Even though it seems impossible to do anything with man's selfish, greedy heart, Jesus reminds us that a heart brought to Him in its worse condition will be miraculously changed and saved through His power.

People cannot fix their own hearts. People cannot cleanse their own ways and make themselves right with God; it is impossible. But, what is impossible with man is possible with God. God can do it! God can save us from ourselves and our sin; all we have to do is come to Him honestly desiring His touch, honestly wanting to surrender to Him what dominates our lives and takes His rightful place. **God wants first place in our lives!**

The big question will always be, "How can I inherit eternal life?" The answer will always be the same; surrender to Jesus. Following Jesus will give us more treasures in heaven than this earth could ever dream of!

Whatever it is in your life that is your first love, whatever has taken God's rightful place, hold it up to Jesus and ask Him to forgive you and put things in the right order. We can stay in Jesus presence in joy rather than leaving Him in sorrow. Let Him touch the sin area of your life and cleanse it away. Remember, **God wants first place in our lives!**

## **The Hokey Pokey**

Have your class assemble in a circle around the room. Lead them in the "Hokey Pokey" song. Begin with "put your right hand in" and add individual limbs with each verse. Finish the song with "put your whole self in."

Explain to your class that this is what we must do for God; give Him our whole selves.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of confession and commitment to make Jesus first priority. If any children have not responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.

