

Matthew 19:16-30
Sell Off Your gods

One man's story ...

I. The Ultimate Question

- A. A Great Guy
- B. Anxious Soul
- C. Desperate for An Answer

II. The Ultimate Good

- A. Our Great God
- B. Demands Perfection
- C. And No Competition

III. The Ultimate Jealousy

- A. Allows No Others
- B. Bestows Grace

C. Provides the Impossible

... left unresolved.

Children, Listen ...

1. What does the young man want to know?
2. What hard thing does Jesus tell the him to do?
3. Why does the man go away sad?
4. If salvation is impossible with man, is it possible at all? How?

What Happened Next?

Not to diminish the weight of the rich young ruler's critical question about salvation and Jesus' profound answer, but there is something that always intrigues me about the way this encounter ends. We are told that the man went away sad because Jesus had told him to sell everything and give it to the poor. While there is an element of mercy toward the poor touched on here, I contend that the critical matter Jesus addresses is young man's god of worldly possessions that is keeping him back from worshipping the true God. The man is saddened by the prospect of giving up everything for the kingdom. But I ask, who wouldn't be? I know I would be. Besides, since when does gaining the Kingdom of Heaven – something that requires “taking up our cross and following Jesus” – come easy? So, we can speculate, but we don't know what happens to the man. But I wonder if we are left hanging so that we ask ourselves questions critical questions of faith and devotion. “Is there anything keeping me back from following Jesus wholeheartedly?” “Do I have other gods?” “How much is the gain or loss of eternal life worth to me?”

Who knows what happened to him? After all, we learn from Mark that “Jesus loved” him. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that he actually did just what Jesus called him to do painful as it would have been. Whatever the case is, we do know this: he couldn't save himself and neither can we, it is impossible. But with God all things are possible, and because of His amazing grace even sinners like us can have eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. What became of that conflicted man remains a mystery, but it is no mystery that our God is a Jealous God worthy of our full allegiance and that His love for us demands “our souls, our lives, our all.”