

# Harmony of the Gospels

# Lessons from an encounter with a wealthy ruler

## **Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30**

- A composite look at this man from the three accounts is that he was very wealthy, he was young and he was a ruler. His specific position as ruler is not specified.
- His question to Jesus focuses on who and what is good and how he may have eternal life.
  - Jesus quickly and firmly sets God as the standard of righteousness
  - This rich young ruler reveals an emptiness that all of his achievements has failed to fill
- Jesus used the Word of God to diagnose the man's spiritual condition.
- The man's self diagnosis was that he has known and practiced the requirements of Scripture stated by Jesus from the time he was able to know and understand them.

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## **Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30**

- Jesus poses a scenario to test his self-assessment.
  - Jesus ended the commands taken from the Ten Commands with the summary requirement to “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
  - The man was convinced that he had satisfied the requirement completely.
  - Jesus challenge to go and sell all he had, give it to the poor and come follow Jesus was designed to reveal to the man that he did not love his neighbor as himself.

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## **Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30**

- Jesus poses a scenario to test his self-assessment.
  - Jesus was not putting some kind of works condition on the man's salvation. He was revealing the true nature of his heart. i.e. If he truly loved his neighbor as himself it would not matter if he owned what he owned or his neighbor owned what he owned.
  - Jesus wanted him to see that his righteousness failed miserably and only God's righteousness offered to those who accept Jesus is sufficient.

# Lessons from an encounter with a wealthy ruler

## **Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30**

- Jesus takes this occasion to challenge the popular belief that wealth and earthly success were evidence that a person was in right relationship with God.
- The rich young ruler's response to the challenge of Jesus revealed how material possessions can become our master.
- The main point here is that no person can be saved without God's intervention.

# Lessons from an encounter with a wealthy ruler

## **Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30**

- Jesus' reply to Peter's statement puts works into perspective. There are rewards for obedient service to God but works do not establish our relationship with Him. Works are a result of that relationship.
- Jesus ends with the emphasis that the ranking of people in the Kingdom of God is remarkably different than the appearance in this world.

# Parable of the gracious landowner

## Matthew 20:1-16

- This parable is given in the context of the encounter with the rich young ruler in which the idea of earthly success and blessings are equated with a privileged place in the kingdom of God.
- Note also it is bookended with a variation of the phrase: “The first will be last and the last first.”

# Parable of the gracious landowner

## Matthew 20:1-16

- The teaching here is on the grace sovereignly exercised by the landowner. God, just as the landowner in the parable, tirelessly reaches out to the people of the world to bring them into His kingdom.
- Some applications are that the Jews had a longstanding relationship as the chosen people of God but the doors were about to be thrown wide open to the Gentiles.
- This parable should also give pause to anyone who would begrudge the salvation of one who comes to God later in life after years of living far from God.

# Third prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection

Matthew 20:17-19; **Mark 10:32-34**; **Luke 18:31-34**

- Mark tells us that as Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem the disciples were “amazed” and the people who followed were “afraid”. John 11:57 tells us that after the High Priest and Council had decided to put Jesus to death they had given orders that Jesus was to be turned in by anyone who knew of His whereabouts so they could arrest Him.
- This obviously led to the amazement that He would openly return to Jerusalem and the people would be afraid of what may happen to Him there.

## Third prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection Matthew 20:17-19; **Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34**

- Jesus now relates in striking detail what awaits Him in Jerusalem. In Luke's account He reveals that this has been predicted in the writing of the prophets. (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53)
- Luke also relates that the disciples could not get their minds around what Jesus was saying. Jesus was crystal clear in His statement. They simply did not want to receive it.

# Warning against ambitious pride

Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45

- James and John come up with a scheme to secure privileged positions in the kingdom they believed Jesus came to establish.
- Their very request reveals their woefully inadequate understanding of the Kingdom of God.
- God is absolutely sovereign over His kingdom and no position is achieved by merit.
- Jesus' "cup" would involve suffering and death. James is the first disciple to be put to death. (Acts 12:1-2) John was exiled to the prison island of Patmos. ( Revelation 1:9)

# Warning against ambitious pride

## Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45

- This incident should act as a warning of how blinded we can become by preconceived notions and our own self-centeredness.
- Observe how this attitude leads to serious disunity among the followers of Jesus.
- Jesus uses this teaching to tell of the nature of leadership in His kingdom. He sets the example Himself through serving even to the point of laying down His life.
- Jesus' last statement is a not so subtle rebuke of how out of place and insensitive their request is in the light of His revelation about His suffering and death.