



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

JUNE 5, 2021

When the Rich Young Ruler refused to put God First

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from the rich young ruler, who refused to put God first?

When Jesus met the rich young ruler, the disciples might have been excited to have someone with financial wealth join the group. That didn't last long as Jesus asked the man to sell everything he had and give to the poor. Here is the story of what happened:

"Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, 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.'

When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'" (Matthew 19:21–26).

What the rich young ruler did not realise was sim-

ple: the experience of salvation and full connection with God and humanity required the giving away of his possessions. The Bible would refer to this experience as Shalom, a total harmony and peace with God, humankind, oneself and nature.

To those of us who have accumulated wealth, regardless of how small that wealth might be, we are also tempted to keep it safe. Wealth can give us a feeling of security and power. In itself, wealth is a blessing from the Lord. As soon as we begin to believe it is the result of our work and should not be shared with anyone, it can turn into a curse.

The rich young ruler put his wealth first. Jesus wept when that happened because it was a tragedy for the sincere and greedy young rich ruler to miss out on salvation because of his wealth. Putting God first means putting our wealth in second place. Generosity is a non-negotiable characteristic of the Kingdom of God.

The young rich ruler refused to put God first. The consequences were terrible for him and the people around him. God's love compels us to put His Kingdom first, while the young rich ruler's example is a warning for us today. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.