



GROW AT HOME

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 10

READ

MATTHEW | CHAPTERS 19 + 20

FOCUS

¹⁶ AND BEHOLD, A MAN CAME UP TO HIM, SAYING, "TEACHER, WHAT GOOD DEED MUST I DO TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?" ¹⁷ AND HE SAID TO HIM, "WHY DO YOU ASK ME ABOUT WHAT IS GOOD? THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO IS GOOD. IF YOU WOULD ENTER LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS." ¹⁸ HE SAID TO HIM, "WHICH ONES?" AND JESUS SAID, "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, ¹⁹ HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER, AND, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." ²⁰ THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO HIM, "ALL THESE I HAVE KEPT. WHAT DO I STILL LACK?" ²¹ JESUS SAID TO HIM, "IF YOU WOULD BE PERFECT, GO, SELL WHAT YOU POSSESS AND GIVE TO THE POOR, AND YOU WILL HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN; AND COME, FOLLOW ME." ²² WHEN THE YOUNG MAN HEARD THIS HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL, FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS.

REFLECTION from PASTOR CONNIE SURRATT

The story of the rich young ruler is one that many of us have probably read through many times. Honestly though, this is the first time I've really dug a little deeper to see what Jesus is showing us. Here we have the Rich. Young. Ruler. He was rich—Matthew tells us that he had "great wealth" (which will be very significant later). He was young—it was very unusual in the culture of his time that a young man would be elevated to such a position of authority. And he was a ruler—he addressed Jesus as "teacher" or "master", so we assume he was a Jewish ruler in the local synagogue. This young man had spent his whole life studying and keeping the commandments. He really was so confident that he was doing everything "right," that he considered himself "top of the class." So, like every teacher's pet, he decided to go one step further and ask the question, "What do I lack?" This was where things get tricky for him because Jesus' answer is to "sell your possessions and give the money to the poor."

I can so relate to the rich young ruler's adherence to rules—I am one of those people too. I have found as I've walked this spiritual journey that I'm always trying to take the easy route, which is: just give me the list and I'll do it! But, in this passage, Christ is looking deeper into the heart. The young ruler was willing to follow the rules, but his heart exposed something more precious to him than God's commandments: his wealth. He wasn't willing to trust God with that. He needed to keep control of that part of his life—which is why he ended up walking away.

You may think, "Well, that doesn't apply to me!" But is that true? Your issue may not be money, but I think, if you look deep enough, you'll find there may be a hidden part of your heart that you're not willing to surrender. It really boils down to the fact that you know better than God. Every time in my life that I try to tell God how things should go, He does a heart check. Many of you have heard the story of how Doyle and I felt God call us to California to start a ministry in a little white church in Seal Beach (which would become SeaCoast). The interesting part is, my whole life I told God I would do anything He asked me to do. When I was young, I was sure that would mean I would have to go to some remote part of a third-world country. What a noble and brave calling! But then time went by and we settled into ministry in a thriving suburb of Chicago. I got comfortable. So when God asked me to leave all I had planned out and move my family to California, my immediate answer wasn't yes. I was no longer sure I could surrender that part of my life. Surely God just understand my plan! Like the rich young ruler, God had to expose my heart so I could see the empty words that I had spoken all those years. Sure, I was willing to speak them, but I wasn't willing to follow through with action. Needless to say, God and I had to have lots of conversation for me to see how God's plan was the best. I couldn't hold anything back.



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REFLECTION from PASTOR CONNIE SURRETT (CONT'D)

I can say this journey has been better than I ever could have dreamed. By not withholding anything from God, I gained everything.

QUESTIONS

- ARE YOU A RULE FOLLOWER? DOES THAT SOMETIMES LULL YOU INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY?
- WHAT ARE YOU WITHHOLDING FROM GOD?
- AS OUR WORLD HAS BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN, WHAT DOES GOD WANT TO BE YOUR PRIORITY?