

# The Reward of Grace

*Lesson # 28:* (Mt. 19:16-30; Mk. 10:17-31; Lk. 18:18-30; Mt. 20:1-16; COL 390-404)

Today we will study the parable of the laborers who went to work in the vineyard at different hours of the day. However, before we can fully comprehend the meaning of this story, we must take a look at an event which took place immediately before—the encounter of Jesus with the rich young ruler.

## Historical Occasion

1. What event took place just before Jesus spoke this parable? “Just before He gave the parable of the laborers, an event occurred that \_\_\_\_\_ the way for Him to present the right \_\_\_\_\_. As he was walking by the way, a \_\_\_\_\_ ruler came running to him, and \_\_\_\_\_, reverently saluted him.” (COL 390)
2. What act of Jesus attracted the rich young ruler to Him? “Then little \_\_\_\_\_ were brought to Him that he might put His \_\_\_\_\_ on them and pray.” (Mt. 19:13)

**Note:** Ellen White explains: “As he saw Jesus blessing the little children, he was convinced that this must be a good man.” (Review and Herald, September 11, 1900)

## The Rich Young Ruler

1. What was the rabbinical view of salvation and the final reward? “The rabbis taught that God’s favor must be \_\_\_\_\_. The reward of the righteous they hoped to \_\_\_\_\_ by their own works. Thus their \_\_\_\_\_ was prompted by a grasping, \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.” (COL 390)
2. What vital question did the rich young ruler ask Jesus? “Good Master, what \_\_\_\_\_ thing shall I do, that I may have \_\_\_\_\_ life?” (Mt. 19:16)
3. How did Jesus respond to the rich young ruler’s question? “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the \_\_\_\_\_.” (Mt. 19:17)

**Note:** Verses 18-19 clearly indicate that Jesus was referring to the ten commandments. At first sight, Jesus’ answer is perplexing. Are we not saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9)? Why, then, does Jesus make commandment keeping the litmus test for eternal life? As we proceed we shall understand the reason.

4. Does God expect less of us today than He expected of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? “The Lord expects no \_\_\_\_\_ of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise; \_\_\_\_\_ obedience; unblemished \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 391)

5. **Thought Question:** In His answer to the rich young ruler, Jesus referred to the second table of the law. Which commandment did Jesus exclude? Which commandment did He include in its place? Why?

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6. What type of obedience did the rich young ruler render the law? “His conception of the law was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Judged by human standards, he had preserved an \_\_\_\_\_ character. To a great degree his \_\_\_\_\_ life had been free of guilt; he verily thought that his obedience had been without \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 391)

**Note:** “Many see much to admire in the life of Christ. But true love for him can never dwell in the heart of the self-righteous. Not to see our own deformity is not to see the beauty of Christ's character. When we are fully awake to our own sinfulness, we shall appreciate Christ. The more humble are our views of ourselves, the more clearly we shall see the spotless character of Jesus.” (Ellen White, Review and Herald, September 25, 1900)

7. What was the canker sore of the rich young ruler’s soul? “He [Jesus] showed him the plague spot of his \_\_\_\_\_. The young man desired no further enlightenment. He had cherished an \_\_\_\_\_ in the soul; the \_\_\_\_\_ was his \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 392)
8. What was wrong with the rich young ruler’s law obedience? “He professed to have kept the commandments, but he was \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ which is the very spirit and life of them all. He did not possess true \_\_\_\_\_ for God or man.” (COL 392)

**Note:** The rich young ruler’s obedience had the wrong motivating principle. Self, not love, was the driving force. Notice the following remarkable statement from the pen of Ellen White: “If the rich young ruler had seen by the light of the commandment that he was sinful, if, like Paul, he had honored God by obeying the commandments in **spirit** and in **truth**, his sinful nature would have been slain by the law, and he would have laid hold of eternal life.” (Review and Herald, September 11, 1900)

9. What did the rich young ruler need to accept before he could serve Jesus as a preacher of righteousness? “But first he must accept the \_\_\_\_\_ of discipleship. He must give himself \_\_\_\_\_ to God.” (COL 393)
10. How did Levi Matthew respond to the call of Jesus? “And he left \_\_\_\_\_, rose up, and \_\_\_\_\_ him.” (Lk. 5:28)
11. What did the rich young ruler choose instead of Jesus? “The young man looked upon Jesus with \_\_\_\_\_. His heart was drawn toward the Savior. But he was not ready to

accept the Savior's principle of \_\_\_\_\_. He chose \_\_\_\_\_ before Jesus." (COL 393)

**Note:** The rich young ruler wanted to have his cake and eat it too. He hoarded his riches in this world and yet hoped for eternal riches in the world to come. Jesus made it crystal clear that no one can serve two masters: "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt. 6:24)

12. How did Judas Iscariot feel about Jesus' demands upon the rich young ruler? "Judas was \_\_\_\_\_. He thought that a mistake had been made. If such men as this ruler could be connected with the believers, they would help \_\_\_\_\_ Christ's cause. If Judas were only received as a counselor, he thought, he could suggest many \_\_\_\_\_ for the advantage of the little church. His principles and methods would \_\_\_\_\_ somewhat from Christ's, but in these things he thought himself \_\_\_\_\_ than Christ." (DA 719)

### The Disciples and Riches

1. How difficult did Jesus say it is for a rich man to be saved? "And again I say unto you, it is easier for a \_\_\_\_\_ to go through the eye of a \_\_\_\_\_ than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Mt. 19:24)

**Note:** Ancient cities frequently had smaller gates beside the large city gates. In fact, Damascus actually has a gate called 'Needle's Eye.' G. Christian Weiss explains: "Camels loaded with sacks of grain, wood, charcoal, or other commodities entered the city daily. If a merchant should happen to arrive in the evening after the main gates of the city were closed, the only way he and his beast could possibly enter would be for the camel to be unloaded of all of its baggage and made to kneel and literally crawl through the 'needle's eye' on his knees. Stripped bare and down to his knees! The clear implication is that a wealthy man, in order to become a Christian, must be ready to let go of his material wealth and humble himself to the level of a poverty-stricken sinner at the feet of Jesus." (Insights Into Bible Themes and Customs, p. 25)

2. What did the apostle Paul say about the danger of riches? "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a \_\_\_\_\_, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in \_\_\_\_\_ and perdition. For the love of money is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have \_\_\_\_\_ from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Tim. 6:9-10)
3. How did the disciples react when Jesus said it was hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? Why were they so alarmed? "When His disciples heard it, they were greatly \_\_\_\_\_, saying, 'Who then can be \_\_\_\_\_?'" "They [the disciples] had been taught to look upon the rich as the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven. . . . if the rich were to fail of entering the kingdom, what \_\_\_\_\_ could there be for the rest of men?" (Mt. 19:25; COL 394)

4. What will happen when we believe the and practice the words of I Corinthians 6:19-20? “When men believe this, their \_\_\_\_\_ will be held as a \_\_\_\_\_, to be used as God shall direct, for the saving of the \_\_\_\_\_, and the comfort of the suffering and the poor.” (COL 394)
5. What did Jesus mean when He said: “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible?” (Mt. 19:26) “With man this [practicing the words of I Corinthians 6:19-20] is impossible, for the \_\_\_\_\_ clings to its \_\_\_\_\_ treasure. . . . But with God all things are possible. By beholding the \_\_\_\_\_ love of Christ, the selfish heart will be \_\_\_\_\_ and subdued.” (COL 394)
6. What spirit did Peter and the disciples reveal when he said to Jesus: “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” “But Peter’s question. . . had revealed a spirit that uncorrected would \_\_\_\_\_ the disciples to be messengers for Christ; for it was the spirit of a \_\_\_\_\_. While they had been attracted by the love of Jesus, the disciples were not wholly free from \_\_\_\_\_. They still worked with the thought of meriting a reward in proportion to their \_\_\_\_\_” (COL 396)
7. What will be the reward of those who apply the principles Jesus taught? “And everyone who has \_\_\_\_\_ houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or \_\_\_\_\_, for My name’s \_\_\_\_\_, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.” (Mt. 19:29)

**Note:** Jesus was not telling us to become hermits or to take vows of poverty in order to enter eternal life. Neither is he telling us to forsake our families. Jesus is teaching us a lesson about priorities. That is to say, nothing can be allowed to stand in the way of our relationship with Jesus. He must occupy first place, our fellow-men second place and ourselves last place.

### **Motives for Service**

1. What central truths did Jesus teach in the parable of the vineyard laborers? “It is only through the \_\_\_\_\_ grace of Christ that any man can find \_\_\_\_\_ into the city of God. . . . [The parable illustrates] the \_\_\_\_\_ in which God deals with His servants, and the \_\_\_\_\_ in which He desires them to labor for Him.” (COL 394, 396)
2. What is represented by the landowner and the hired laborers? “The householder’s dealing with the workers in his vineyard represents \_\_\_\_\_ dealing with the \_\_\_\_\_ family.” (COL 396-397)
3. In what sense does God’s method of compensation differ from that used by men? “In worldly business, compensation is given according to the \_\_\_\_\_ accomplished. The laborer expects to be paid only that which he \_\_\_\_\_. But in the parable, Christ was illustrating the

principles of His kingdom—a kingdom not of this world. . . . They [the laborers of the vineyard] were \_\_\_\_\_, not according to the amount of their labor, but according to the \_\_\_\_\_ of his purpose.” (COL 397)

4. What is the basis for our final reward? “His reward is given not according to our \_\_\_\_\_ but according to his own purpose. . . . ‘Not by works of righteousness which \_\_\_\_\_ have done, but according to His \_\_\_\_\_ He saved us.’” (COL 397)

5. **Thought Question:** How can we reconcile Paul’s statement in Titus 3:5 with other texts which clearly teach that we shall be rewarded according to our works? (Mt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; II Cor. 5:10; Mt. 25:34-40)\_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is more important than the amount of labor we do for Christ? “Not the amount of labor performed or its visible \_\_\_\_\_ but the \_\_\_\_\_ in which the work is done makes it of value with God.” (COL 397)

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