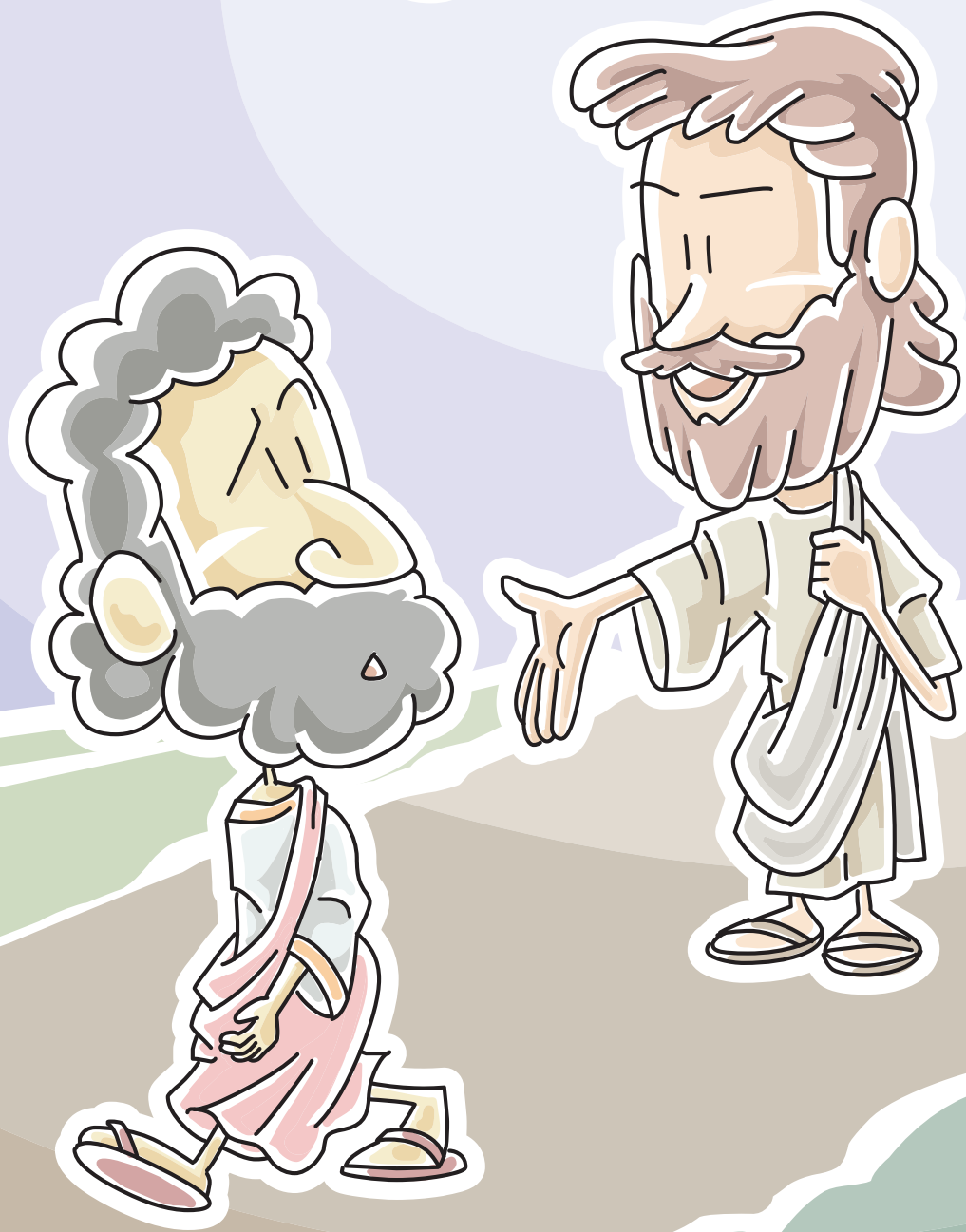


# A rich young man



## Colour me!



### Matthew 19:16-30

A man came to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? Only God is good. If you want to have eternal life, you must obey his commandments." "Which ones?" the man asked.

Jesus answered, "Do not murder. Be faithful in marriage. Do not steal. Do not tell lies about others. Respect your father and mother. And love others as much as you love yourself." The young man said, "I have obeyed all these. What else must I do?" Jesus replied, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell everything you own! Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and be my follower." When the young man heard this, he was sad, because he was very rich.

Jesus said to his disciples, "It's terribly hard for rich people to get into the kingdom of heaven! In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly surprised and asked, "How can anyone ever be saved?" Jesus looked straight at them and said, "There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything." Peter replied, "Remember, we have left everything to be your followers! What will we get?"

Jesus answered: "Yes, all of you have become my followers. And so in the future world, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, I promise that you will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. All who have given up home or brothers and sisters or father and mother or children or land for me will be given a hundred times as much. They will also have eternal life. But many who are now first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

## Commentary

Jesus' teaching and miracles attracted many who wanted to become his disciples. Sometimes they were just people going with the crowd, but there were also those who longed to live God's way and be part of God's kingdom. The young man in this story certainly seemed to be trying to do the right thing. He knew the ten commandments and tried to keep them, although Jesus' first words to him are a reminder that only God is truly good.

The young man is rich, and Jesus sees that this is where the real stumbling block may lie for him. Money can gain a hold on people's hearts and minds in a way that distracts them from putting God first. This rich young man, as far as we know, walked away, unwilling to let go of his love of money. This surprised the disciples, who had assumed that having money was a sign of God's blessing. On the contrary, Jesus says it can be a huge problem and that it can be much harder for these people to get into God's kingdom—but not impossible!

Peter and the others have already given up a lot to follow Jesus, and he reassures them that they will one day be richly rewarded. Things are very different in God's kingdom, where the last end up coming first, and the first, last.

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## Questions

- ▶ Why do you think the young man wanted eternal life?
- ▶ What is behind the young man's question about which of the commandments he should obey?
- ▶ Do you think Jesus wants everyone to sell everything they have, or was this just a command for the rich man in the story?
- ▶ Why were the disciples surprised by what Jesus said about rich people?
- ▶ What else, other than money, can be considered 'riches'?



## Visual aid

Fill up a piggy bank with lots of money so that it rattles noisily and temptingly. Use this as a focus for all the riches that belonged to the young man. He was being asked to part with quite a lot.



## Activity idea

Imagine your family has won \$10,000 in a competition. Work out together how you can give it all away to good causes. Talk about how you would share it out, but also reflect on how it feels not to keep any back for yourselves.



## Prayer idea

Remind yourself of the ten commandments and, in particular, the tenth: “Do not want what belongs to someone else”. Hand out a small amount of money to everyone in the family and pray together that God will help you have a right attitude towards it, to spend it or save it wisely. It may help if you imagine what this money could buy for yourself and then for someone else you might give it to.

## Key verse

There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything (Matthew 19:26).

## Old Testament story link

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20: Here are some wise words from King Solomon about money and wealth.



Colour me!

