

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14). I praise you today as the God who welcomes little children into your kingdom. You love how they receive your grace with simple faith and trust, and you call me to imitate their complete dependence on you. I serve a God who loves to take children in his arms and bless them. Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me about the rich young ruler. He ran up to Jesus, knelt before him and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” His question revealed that he believed eternal life could be obtained by what he did, and he was especially interested in some good deed that would guarantee his entrance into the Kingdom. Jesus, picking up on the word “good,” asked him a question in return: “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.” Jesus was trying to help him see that goodness is not something that can be achieved by an effort of the will. It comes only by being united with the source of goodness—God. If the man truly believed the implication of his words, if he really thought that Jesus was God, *then he would want to be Jesus’ disciple*. But the young man didn’t see Jesus’ point, and so Jesus continued by talking in terms of what the man was focused on: “what must I do.” Jesus told him to “keep the commandments” and listed those which dealt with relationships with others. He concluded with a summary statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18). Jesus deliberately used the law to remind the young man of the importance of love, but he was too focused on himself to notice. He brushed aside Jesus’ words: “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” Jesus, looking at him in love, told the young man to give his wealth to the poor and “come, follow me.” This final command struck at the heart of the issue, for the rich young ruler loved his possessions more than he loved you. He went away sorrowful, unwilling to give up his riches and follow you with the simple faith and love of a child. The disciples were stunned, for they thought the rich young ruler was the *ideal* candidate for the Kingdom, certainly better than the children Jesus had been so eager to bless. They needed to learn, as I do, that it is not what we have but what we give that really matters. For “many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10:31).

Reflection

I confess that I find myself sympathizing with the workers who had “borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat”—it *doesn’t* seem fair. Yet this parable serves to remind me that I enter the Kingdom through your mercy and grace, not by the merit of my labors in your service.

Request

Father, give me a love for you that exceeds all other loves. Guard my heart from anything that would take your rightful place of supremacy in my life. May I always put you and your Kingdom first!

Thanksgiving

Thank you for loving the rich young ruler enough to confront him for his lack of love for you. I know that you love me just as much, and I welcome your searching gaze in my own heart. Keep me on the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life and peace!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[What the Savior Hath Said](#)” – Barney E. Warren.

Meditation Verse: Matthew 20:15.