



Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

The Rich Young Ruler

—by Nick Bertin

One hundred years ago, on January 5, 1920, the single worst trade in sports history occurred. Herman “Babe” Ruth was traded from the Boston Red Sox to the New York Yankees for \$100,000 and a loan for a Broadway play. Babe Ruth would set numerous home run records, set the Yankees on a course to become one of the most recognizable teams in all of sport, and set the Red Sox on a tailspin into mediocrity under the “Curse of the Bambino.”

We have seen bad trades in the Bible as well. Look at the story of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25. Esau, a skilled hunter, comes home after a day of hunting. He is very hungry (maybe even hangry!) upon returning—so hungry he says he will die if he does not eat. Jacob offers him the stew he is cooking in exchange for Esau’s birthright. Esau agrees and receives his bread and beans. Beans and bread for his birthright.

We see the rich young ruler presented with a similar circumstance in Mark 10. He thinks he has done everything to inherit eternal life, but Jesus knows the heart of men and cuts directly to the one thing that represents safety, security, and identity in the rich young ruler. In Mark 10:21, Jesus says, “You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

The rich young ruler is presented with a choice. Sell his possessions and follow Jesus. Give it all to the poor and inherit eternal life. Exchange the identity he finds in his possessions for a new identity as a follower of Jesus. What does he do? He trades being a follower of Jesus to retain his great wealth.

All too often, we make this trade as well. We trade following Jesus for a career we want to pursue. We trade becoming fully devoted to continue living in sin and temptation. We refuse to give control to the God who knows everything about us and leads into the way everlasting.

So what is one area in your life that is lacking? What is the one thing that God, in His love and compassion, would say that you are clenching too tightly? What is one place you find your identity in rather than in Christ? Nothing can compare to the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus. Who knows what the rich young ruler gave up by choosing possessions over Jesus? My prayer is that we would not make this mistake, but rather choose Christ over all.

Question Is there one thing that is standing in the way of you truly following Jesus? Will you be known as one who follows Jesus wholeheartedly, or will you risk becoming unknown because you couldn't let go?

Family Chat Do you care more about what others think of you or what Jesus thinks of you? As a family, find out together what the Bible has to say about you!

Take Action Let go of that one thing—whatever it takes to follow Jesus wholeheartedly!