

What About the Idols in Your Life?

Matthew 19:16-22

Intro:

1. An idol is what takes the place of the living true God. Rather than worship God, some would worship an idol.
2. In our society, it's whatever you have in your life that takes the place of God.
3. It isn't what you possess, but what possesses you that affects your spiritual relationships.
4. It is also a question of attitude, not quantity. Greed affects poor people as well as the rich!
5. This young man's idols are something we can relate to much more than carved images.
6. So - what kind of person was he? Was he like you?

I. Who was He?

- A. **v16b** - He was very religious.
1. He had the right purpose.
 2. He wanted the right thing - eternal life.
- B. **v20** - He was moral.
1. He wanted to do the right thing!
 2. He prided himself in obeying at least the legal demands of the laws the Lord quoted.
 3. Jesus never denied that this young man spoke the truth.
- C. **v20** - He was young.
1. He was filled with the enthusiasm of youth. **Mk 10:17** has him running & kneeling.
 2. **v18-20** - He failed to think things through. He had trouble with the implications of some of these commands.
- D. **v20** - He was sincere.
1. He knew he had a spiritual need.
 2. He wasn't happy or complacent with his spiritual life. He wanted to be more spiritual!
- E. **v22** - He was rich.
1. To so many people this is the most desirable thing in life.
 2. But also like so many, money & possessions just don't seem to satisfy life.
- F. **Lk 18:18** - He was a ruler.
1. He knew & practiced the Law enough to be recognized as a leader in the synagogue.
 2. He had popularity & prestige.
- G. **Mk 10:21** - The Lord loved him.
1. At this point the Lord was impressed with this bright, sincere, humble young man.
 2. The Lord wanted him as a disciple & told him what he needed to do to become one!

II. What Did He Want?

- A. He wanted to do something to receive eternal life.
1. He wanted the right thing - but in the wrong way!
 2. He wanted eternal life based on the Merit System. **ILL: The Merit System.**
 3. God's way is for us to receive eternal life as a free gift!
 - a. **Rom 6:23** - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - b. **Eph 2:8-9** - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.
 4. It's the cross that provides you eternal life, not your good behavior. **"Just As I Am, Without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."**
 5. Your desire to obey the Lord & live a righteous life comes as an expression of your gratitude for the cross!
 6. Your good life is a by product of heaven's promise, not an attempt to get there! **Eph 2:10** - For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

B. He was making a selfish request.

1. Notice during the whole conversation he was seeking something for himself!
2. The Lord's answers were intended to steer his mind towards other people & away from himself.
 - a. **v18-19** - The Lord quoted the last 6 of the 10 Commandments - the ones dealing with relationships with other people.
 - b. The Lord's command was to give to the poor - to share your abundance with other people!
 - c. God's way is always others oriented.
3. If you think of others more than yourself, the blessing of God will start flowing forth!

III. What Did He Lack?

A. v21 - The **desire** to respond to the Lord's answer. What was the Lord's Answer?

1. **Go** (ὑπάγω) = depart slowly, slink away (unnoticed).
 - a. He was supposed to do this good thing without drawing attention to himself.
 - b. The Lord was against giving to the poor for show (**Matt 6:1**).
 - c. The requirement for being a disciple was to deny yourself. **Matt 16:24** - **If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**
 - d. You are a hypocrite if you do good things in the Lord's name to draw attention for yourself!
2. **Sell your possessions.**
 - a. The thing that stands in the way of being complete in the sight of God is whatever you put in front of your loyalty to Him!
 - b. The Lord is saying here, "Get rid of your idol!" - whatever it is you're worshipping!
 - c. Is it: money, friends, family, car, boat, time (on Sundays), TV, computer?
 - d. Discipleship means to **take up your cross** - **Matt 16:24**.
 - e. The Lord said, **No one can serve two masters** - **Matt 6:24**.
 - f. **ILL: Abraham willing to offer up Isaac.** (**Gen 22:1-13**).
3. **Then, come follow Me.**
 - a. The idea here is "be on the same road with".
 - b. The implication here is "go where I go" & "imitate what I do".
 - c. The Lord wants His disciples to follow His example & trust Him!

B. v22 - The **faith** to respond to the Lord's answer.

1. Having money represents security to most people - like **ILL: The Rich Farmer** (**Lk 12:13-21**).
2. **ILL: "You and Your Possessions"**.

So - what are the idols in your life?
What's more important to you than the Lord's will?
Don't be like this young man and walk away!

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