

# Matthew 19:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

## Analysis

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**He went away sorrowful** (ἀπῆλθεν λυπούμενος, apēlthen lupoumenos)—The young man's grief reveals spiritual authenticity yet fatal unwillingness. His sorrow (λυπέω, lupeō) shows he understood Jesus's demand and felt its weight, unlike those who dismiss Christ's claims lightly. Yet **for he had great possessions** (ἡν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά, ēn gar echōn ktēmata polla) explains his choice: present wealth outweighed eternal life.

This narrative demonstrates that intellectual assent, moral respectability, and even spiritual hunger prove insufficient for salvation. The man had possessions, but more accurately, possessions had him. Jesus exposed the First Commandment violation: the young ruler's functional god was wealth, not Yahweh. His refusal to sell and follow illustrates how mammon becomes an enslaving master (Matt. 6:24), preventing Kingdom entrance (v. 24).

## Historical Context

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In Jewish thought, wealth was often viewed as a sign of God's blessing and covenant faithfulness (Deut. 28:1-14). The notion that a wealthy, Torah-observant young man could be far from the Kingdom was shocking to Jesus's audience. This encounter challenged the prosperity theology of Second Temple Judaism and exposed how material blessing can become a spiritual snare.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. What possessions, relationships, or ambitions might Jesus be calling you to surrender as idols that compete with whole-hearted discipleship?
2. How does the rich young ruler's sorrowful departure warn against mere emotional response to the gospel without repentant obedience?
3. In what ways do contemporary Christians rationalize partial obedience, keeping what Jesus demands we release?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος τὸν λόγον ἀπῆλθεν  
heard But G3588 when the young man G3495 G3588 that saying G3056 he went away G565  
G191 G1161 G3495 G3056 G565

λυπούμενος· ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά  
sorrowful G2258 for he had possessions great G4183  
G3076 G1063 G2192 G2933 G4183

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 6:24** (Parallel theme): No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

**Ezekiel 33:31** (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

**Matthew 13:22** (Parallel theme): He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

**Colossians 3:5** (Parallel theme): Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

**Ephesians 5:5** (Parallel theme): For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

**Mark 10:22** (Parallel theme): And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

**Matthew 16:26** (Parallel theme): For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?