

As we know, there are three stages in human life: Childhood, Youth, and Old Age. The stage at which a person is most likely to make the pivotal decisions about the future of their life is Youth. The Bible says in Jeremiah 21:8b: "...Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death." These two paths are placed before a person when they reach the stage of youth. This is when wisdom and God's guidance are absolutely necessary to choose the right path.

In Scripture, we can observe two distinct examples of young men who made key decisions that shaped their future. By reflecting on their stories, we can gain insights into how the choices made in youth can impact not just the present, but eternity.

THE FIRST YOUTH: THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Matthew 19:16-22 (NKJV)

"16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?'

17 So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is

good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.'

18 He said to Him, 'Which ones?' Jesus said, 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness,

19 Honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

20 The young man said to Him, 'All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?'

21 Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'

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

This young man, often referred to as the "Rich Young Ruler," came to Jesus seeking the key to eternal life. He was sincere in his question and genuinely believed that keeping the

commandments was not enough. Yet, when asked to forsake his wealth to follow Jesus, he was unable to do so. The Bible tells us he went away sorrowful because he had great possessions.

Theologically, this passage highlights the tension between earthly wealth and spiritual treasure. Jesus didn't condemn wealth, but He pointed out that wealth can easily become an idol, a barrier between us and God. Matthew 6:24 says, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other." The young man loved his wealth more than he loved the eternal treasures Christ offered, revealing that his heart was not truly set on eternal life.

Theologically, this passage calls us to examine our hearts: What do we love most? 1 Timothy 6:9-10 warns, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil..."

Had the young man made the right choice, he would have received eternal life and far greater riches than anything this world could offer. Jesus promised that anyone who forsakes all for His sake will receive a hundredfold in this life and inherit eternal

life (Matthew 19:29). But the young man failed to grasp that Mark 8:36 reminds us, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

THE SECOND YOUTH: MOSES

Now let's consider Moses, a young man who made the opposite choice. He grew up in Pharaoh's palace, enjoying the privileges of royalty. However, when he came of age, he chose to identify with the enslaved people of Israel rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of Egypt.

Hebrews 11:24-27 (NKJV)

"24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Moses had the wealth and status of Egypt at his fingertips, but he chose to endure suffering with God's people. He regarded the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. This highlights the principle that true wealth is found in Christ alone, and not in earthly treasures or positions of power.

Hebrews 11:26 is theologically significant because it connects Moses' choice to "the reproach of Christ." This is a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice that Christ would make on the cross. Moses, in his time, saw the eternal reward of being associated with God's people and identified with Christ's suffering, despite not knowing the full scope of Christ's work.

Moses' story is a powerful reminder that the kingdom of God offers an eternal reward that far outweighs the transient pleasures and wealth of this world. Moses is counted among the heroes of faith because he endured hardships for a future promise, just as we are called to do. The Bible reminds us in Romans 8:18: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

THE LESSON: WORLDLY WEALTH VS. SPIRITUAL TREASURE

The contrast between these two young men—one who chose earthly wealth and one who chose spiritual wealth—teaches us profound theological truths about what it means to follow Christ. The call of Jesus to "follow Me" is a call to forsake all else, not because God wants to take away our joy, but because He knows that true joy is found in His presence, not in the fleeting pleasures of this world.

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus teaches:

"19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This passage is theologically significant because it reveals the true nature of wealth: eternal treasures are imperishable, unlike material wealth that is temporary and can be lost. The riches of the kingdom of God are far greater than anything this world can offer. Matthew 13:44 says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

Theologically, this calls us to reorient our priorities. What do we value most in life? Is it wealth, status, pleasure, or the Kingdom of God? If we are to be disciples of Christ, we must be willing to follow Him, just as Moses and the apostles did, counting everything else as loss for the surpassing value of knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8).

CONCLUSION: THE DECISION YOU MUST MAKE

Just like the young man in Matthew 19 and Moses, we too are faced with decisions that will determine the trajectory of our lives. The choice to follow Christ is not always easy, and it may require

us to give up things we hold dear, but the rewards are far greater than anything this world can offer.

As young people, this is the time to make the right choice. In Ecclesiastes 12:1, the Bible says:

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'

And in Lamentations 3:26, we are encouraged:

It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.

Making the right decision now will set the course for your future, both in this life and in the life to come. My prayer is that you will choose wisely, just as Moses did, and store up treasures in

heaven.

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