

SESSION #2: The Rich Man

Main Idea

God has put many things in the world for us to enjoy, but the pursuit of this world's goods as a means of finding meaning in life is futile.

Scripture Connection

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.'" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Matthew 19:21–22.

Background

The Rich Man in this drama quotes Aristippus of Cyrene (Libya, c. 435 – c. 356 BCE). He taught that the goal of life was to seek pleasure by adapting circumstances to oneself and by maintaining proper control over both adversity and prosperity.

Discussion

- Popular theology at the time of Jesus held that if people kept the commandments God would bless them with material wealth. Poverty, illness, and problems in life indicate that a person has incurred the displeasure of God. To what degree is this philosophy still around? (Luke 12:15).
- King Solomon, identified as 'the preacher,' in Ecclesiastes, wrote that he found no meaning in pursuit of wisdom, wealth, women, wine, and work. (Ecclesiastes 1:17, 2:1-8, 17-23). What was Jesus' perspective on all this? (Matthew 6:25-34, esp. verse 33).
- The Bible gives clear instructions to those who have this world's goods (Acts 20:35; 1 Timothy 6:17–21; James 2:1–5; 1 John 3:16–18). How might these apply to us today?
- How does the filmmaker illustrate the fleeting nature of wealth and pleasure?

Reflection

"Alone. Alone. To be alone is the only sure way to self-fulfillment..."

Closing

May we not cling to the things this world affords, but rather use them to advance the reign of God.