



Christ and the Rich Young Ruler



Happiness, – what is it, and how to reach it? Happiness is in justification of life. Happiness isn't momentary pleasure, isn't temporary transient satisfaction. Happiness is permanent joyful state of spirit which a person takes with him crossing the border of a new life.

A young man asked Christ about happiness. “What must I do to possess eternal life”? “Keep the commandments”, Christ said to him. What does it mean, “keep commandments”? The commandments show us the way of our ascension to God, the way leading to spiritual maturity, getting the power of the Holy Spirit by means of free, voluntary merging of a person's heart and will with God's will. And this way ends by confirmation of a person in love: “Love you neighbour as yourself”. This is the way to happiness.

“If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (Mt. 19, 21). “But when the young man heard these words, he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth” (Mt.19,22). Would he had gone away sad if, having got an answer to his question, he had kept hope to inherit eternal life? No, this young man refused not only his perfection, but the eternal life itself because he wasn't able to sell his possessions and didn't show proper resolution. Of course, the Saviour knew how the young man would act, and so He showed what prevented him from inheriting the eternal life – his attachment to possessions. He exposed not possession itself, but the attachment to it.

Possession is great temptation, but it can't be means to Christian deed, perhaps one of the most difficult one. A rich man who was able with God's help to kill in himself the attachment to temporary wealth for the sake of brotherly love and love of God, becomes as if the Lord's steward converting possessions given to him by God for the good of people.

Jesus said to his disciples, “In truth I tell you, it is hard for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven” (Mt. 19,23). This means that a person having attachment to something earthly one, practically can't enter the eternal life. Perfection is when you, having some earthly possessions, don't have any attachment to them – To get rid of attachment to all earthly things, maybe even to something beautiful and kind, but less than love to God, is possible only with God's help.

Who can be saved then? The one who is conscious of his weakness, his incapability to anything kind and



sacred; the one who feels that he himself can't be saved, and being conscious of it, asks for God's help, prays to God for having mercy upon him. Consciousness of our weakness and impossibility to be saved mustn't lead us to idleness but to harder resort to the help of God and hope of His boundless mercy. Amen.

Source: [Patriarchal Parishes of Russian Orthodox Church in Canada](#)