

## TOO GOOD FOR HIS OWN GOOD LUKE 18:18-27

*"A man's body is remarkably sensitive.  
Pat him on the back and his head swells."*

### INSTRUCTION CONCERNING

#### ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM 18:15-30

Who gets into God's kingdom?

Two incidents provide two answers:

When the disciples rebuke those bringing children and interrupting Jesus' important activities, He uses the occasion to teach them: **18:15-17** *People were bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*

**Those who have a childlike dependence on the Father enter the kingdom**

Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler teaches us:

**Those who recognize its value enter the kingdom 18:18-30**

We call him "the rich young ruler"

because of the composite Gospel picture:

Matt. says he is young;

Luke says he's a ruler;

all 3 observe that he's *very* rich!

### TWO MAIN LESSONS:

#### A LESSON FOR THE RICH YOUNG RULER:

**18:18-23**

*A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" 21 "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth.*

He comes with a question:

*[lit.] "What thing having done, shall I inherit eternal life?"*

"What do I have to DO to obtain eternal life?"

He's struggling with a question that plagues *all* who try to come to God by religious efforts:

"How can I know I have done enough?"

=> "*How Good Is Good Enough?*"

If our system's based on doing good, we can never be sure we've done enough.

Thus the eternal insecurity of those whose salvation depends on turning from sin and living a righteous life:

We can never be sure we've done enough.

Troubled by insecurity, the ruler asks, "WHAT WILL IT TAKE?"

"Will I make it?"

**Rich ruler's question concerning what he must DO to inherit eternal life is used to teach Him His own efforts are not enough.**

### THREE ATTEMPTS TO SHOW HIM HIS SIN: 3 questions raised

1. **18:19** *"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone.*

### **Why do you call me good?**

**NO ONE IS GOOD**, except God!

If I am good, then I must be God.

And if you think you are good, . . . ?!!

You aren't good. If I am, it's because I'm God!

Does He mean, "You shouldn't call me good for only God is good and I'm not God?"

Jesus tries to help young ruler see implications of his words.

Thoughtless use of good betrays cheap view of goodness.

He thinks the teacher is good,

because he thinks *He* is good.

Far from *denying* His deity, our Lord is in fact *affirming* it!

Until ruler realizes his own failure to obey God's law,

he'll *never* receive the gift of life the Savior came to give.

[2nd attempt to show young ruler his sin:

Draws attention to the standard]

2. **18:20-21** *You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'* 21 *"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.*

### **Do you keep the whole law?**

You know what the law says: No adultery      No murder

No stealing      No lying

Honor father and mother

Just do all those things and you'll obtain eternal life!

Jesus takes commands which deal with other people.

He never addresses those related to love and loyalty to God

—with the fact that God comes first in our lives.

Then the young man reveals his naivete!

"I've been doing that for years—from my youth!"

NO PROBLEM!!!

He never realizes God's more concerned about the *spirit* of the law than the *letter*.

The Lord moves away from peripheral issues

and goes to the heart of the matter:

**What's the essence of the law?**

**What's the greatest commandment?**

**Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart**

**and all your soul, and all your might!**

**Love your neighbor as yourself!**

\* Love God more than anything else!

\* Love those around you as much as you love yourself!

How do you do on that score?

Do you *really* do what the law requires?

Do you love the Lord your God above all else?

3. **18:22-23** *When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."* 23 *When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth.*

### **Do you love your neighbor as yourself?**

Sell all you have and give it to the poor.

Sell everything, distribute to homeless and needy,  
 and accumulate heavenly treasure.  
 Let go of everything you're clinging to--  
 –give it to the poor  
 –store your treasure in eternal investments  
 –And then, *come follow me!*  
 That will satisfy the essence of the law  
 and *you can be sure you'll make it!*  
 The young man knows he's done for!  
 He becomes deeply grieved  
 –there's no way he could make it.  
*But neither did he ask for help!*  
 Now we see what his real God is:  
 His God is comfort;  
 what he worships are his possessions and wealth.  
 He's living for himself and for pleasure,  
 rather than for God and others.  
 He doesn't love God more than anything.  
 He doesn't love his neighbor more than he loves himself.

**NO ONE DOES!!!**

**NO ONE CAN DO ENOUGH!**

**OUR EFFORTS ARE NEVER ENOUGH!**

The ruler comes assuming he has it made.

He doesn't realize the dangerous position he's in.

He thinks he can buy his way into God's kingdom.

He's like: Stuntman named Bobby Leach. In 1911, he went over Niagara Falls in a steel drum. Although he suffered minor injuries, he survived because he recognized the tremendous dangers; he did everything he could to protect himself from harm.

Years later, walking down a street in New Zealand, Bobby Leach slipped on an orange peeling, fell, and fractured his leg. He was taken to a hospital where he died of complications from the fall. He received a greater injury walking down the street than he in going over Niagara. He wasn't prepared for danger because he assumed he was safe.

A few years ago, 18 percent of Americans said they had a fear of flying. Only 9 percent said that driving or riding in a car was their greatest fear. But research shows traveling in an airliner is safer than going with all wheels on the ground.

A study at the U. of Michigan calculated that if a person were traveling from Detroit to Chicago, flying would be seven times safer than driving. While more of us feel safer on the ground than in the air, *our feelings are misleading. We can be misled by other feelings. Money makes the rich feel secure, powerful, immortal. But we're misled, by a false feeling!*

[Second lesson in this incident:]

**LESSON FOR JESUS' DISCIPLES: 18:24-27** Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" 27 Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

**Access to the kingdom is for those God has caused to recognize its real value and who are willing to surrender all they have to obtain it.**

How much is it worth to you, to be part of God's kingdom?

Only those who recognize the value will pay the price! **18:24-25**  
 Some insist this is a small gate in a city gate, or a narrow passage into a walled city in rocks.  
 That idea persists because the literal idea is impossible.

*That's the point!*

Our Lord uses an exaggerated, somewhat humorous illustration, to demonstrate the absolute impossibility of the rich ever making it into the kingdom of God.

Picture a camel trying to force it's way through the eye of a needle.

*Can you imagine a more pathetic sight?*

That's us when we think that on our own, using our resources we can somehow buy our way into the kingdom of God!

*It isn't going to happen. It's impossible!*

This isn't something that's hard to do—it's impossible!

The disciples get the message.

Wealth is a relative term.

You will always find someone richer and someone poorer!

"The rich" are *those who live for and depend on their riches*.

It isn't possessing riches that keeps people out of heaven.

If that were true then Job and Abraham,

David and Solomon, would all be locked out.

It's being *possessed by riches and trusting them*

that makes salvation difficult.

Wealth gives people a false sense of success and security.

When people are satisfied with themselves,

they don't think they need God.

### **TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING, YOU MUST RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF THE KINGDOM!**

His startling remark has the desired effect. **18:26**

*Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"*

**The disciples come to the right conclusion:**

***If the rich can't make it, no one can.***

Jewish concept: wealthy are rich because of God's blessing.

Like John D. Rockefeller: riches are "a gift from heaven signifying,

*'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'*

That's concept of some preachers—but not of God's Word.

God does prosper the righteous.

But God's prosperity is *not* like the world's standard!

It's not to get rich!

Logical conclusion from that perspective:

if the rich can't make it, NO ONE can! *Who will ever make it?!!!*

**Jesus offers a solution to the dilemma: 18:27** "Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

They're right about the impossibility of earning our salvation.

We can't even contribute to it!

**But what man can't do, GOD CAN!**

The key: **the things which are IMPOSSIBLE for people- are POSSIBLE for God!**

At every point, beginning to end,

we're dependent on God for salvation.

We can never make it!

It *all* depends on the grace of the sovereign God who reaches us and gives us life through His Son.

The sin problem is impossible.

No one can solve it.

No one can save himself.

But what's impossible for people, is possible for God!

He can handle it! **Trust Him!**

*"Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?*

*Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?*

*God specializes in things thought impossible.*

*He'll do for you what no other power can do!"*

For starters, how about the sin problem.

That may be impossible for us to deal with.

But it isn't with God. He can handle it!

We just need to trust Him with it.

**For those trying to get into the kingdom**

Will we come to God with childlike dependence on Him,

Or try to do it ourselves?

Will we try to be good enough, and walk away sad because we can't pay the price?

Or will we turn back to Him and cry out: "HELP! I can't make it!"

**For those who are in, but who need to recognize its value**

What are we living for?

Something of eternal value?

Heavenly treasure?

Or, things centered on earth, of temporary benefit?