**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 16** Luke 18:18-43 The Rich Ruler/Jesus Predicts His Death/The Blind Beggar!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture, and how does it apply to your life?
2. Read Wiersbe pages 78-82.

Why were the disciples shocked when Jesus announced that it was difficult for rich people to be saved? Why does wealth often prevent someone from recognizing their need for God?

1. Read Luke 18:1-30 along with the article below entitled, “Why did Jesus tell the rich young ruler he could be saved by obeying the commandments?”

To understand Jesus’ response to the rich young ruler’s question—“What must I do to be saved?”—we must consider three things: the background of the rich young ruler, the purpose of his question, and the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The young man had asked Jesus, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16). Jesus responded, “If you want to enter life, keep the commandments” (verse 17). At first glance,   
it appears that Jesus is saying that the young man and, by extension, all people must obey   
the commandments in order to be saved. But is that really what He was saying? Since the essence of the salvation message is that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), why would Jesus offer the rich young ruler an “alternative plan”?

The story of the rich young ruler is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew 19:16-23, Mark 10:17-22, and Luke 18:18-23. The man is described as a “ruler,” which means he was a prince or magistrate of some sort. Since no Roman ruler would address   
Jesus as “teacher” or “master,” it is assumed that this man was a Jewish ruler in the local synagogue. This man also had “great wealth” (Matthew 19:22), and Jesus later used His conversation with this man to teach the detrimental effect money can have on one’s desire for eternal life (verses 23-24). The lesson Jesus draws from this incident concerns money, not salvation by works.

The first thing Jesus says to the man’s greeting, “Good teacher,” is to remind him that no one is good except God (Matthew 19:17). Jesus was not denying His own divinity. Rather, Jesus was immediately getting the man to think about what “good” really means-since only God is good, then what we normally call human goodness might be something else entirely. This truth comes into play later in the conversation. When the man asked Jesus to specify which commandments he should keep, Jesus recited six of the commandments, including “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 19:19). The man replies, “All these I have kept… What do I still lack?” (verse 20), and that is a key statement. The young man was obviously religious and sincere in his pursuit of righteousness. His problem was that he considered himself to be faultless concerning the Law. And this is the point that Jesus challenges.

Jesus tells the man, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21). The young man decided that Jesus was asking too much. “He went away sad, because he had great wealth” (verse 22). Rather than obey Jesus’ instructions, he turned his back on the Lord and walked away. The man’s choice undoubtedly saddened Jesus as well, because Jesus loved him (Mark 10:21).

In telling the young man to keep the commandments, Jesus was not saying that he could be saved by obeying the commandments; rather, Jesus was emphasizing the Law as God’s perfect standard. If you can keep the Law perfectly, then you can escape sin’s penalty-but that’s a big if. When the man responded that he met the Law’s standard, Jesus simply touched on one issue that proved the man did not measure up to God’s holiness. The man was not willing to follow the Lord, if that meant he must give up his wealth. Thus, the man was breaking the two greatest commands; he did not love the Lord with all his heart, and he did not love his neighbor as himself. He loved himself (and his money) more. Far from keeping “all” the commandments, as he had claimed, the man was a sinner like everyone else. The Law proved it.

If the man had loved God and other people more than he did his property, he would have been willing to give up his wealth to the service of God and man. But that was not the case. He had made an idol of his wealth, and he loved it more than God. With surgical precision, Jesus exposes the greed in the man’s heart-greed the man did not even suspect he had. Jesus’ statement that only God is good (Matthew 19:18) is proved in the young man’s response to Jesus’ command.

In His conversation with the rich young ruler, Christ did not teach that we are saved by the works of the Law. The Bible’s message is that salvation is by grace through faith (Romans 3:20, 28; 4:6; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:9). Rather, Jesus used the man’s love of money to show how the man fell short of God’s holy standard-as do we all. The rich young ruler needed the Savior, and so do we.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. In verse 18, the rich young ruler asks Jesus, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
2. According to Scripture (see article above), what is the essence of salvation?
3. Who does Jesus say is the only One who is good?
4. Read Romans 3:10-12, 23. What is Scripture’s indictment against all of mankind?
5. Religion says, “Do!” Jesus says, “Done!” Explain.
6. In verse 21, the rich young ruler says (after Jesus told him he must keep the commandments), “All these I have kept since I was a boy.”
7. What was the chief sin of this young ruler and the religious leaders of Jesus’ day (Proverbs 21:4; Galatians 6:3)?
8. Is pride (spiritual blindness) still a problem for many religious people today?
9. How did Jesus reveal to this man that he lacked complete obedience to the Law of God (Ten Commandments)?
10. Is it possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? Explain your answer.
11. What do you learn from the following regarding the way of salvation?

* Romans 3:20, 28; 4:6
* Galatians 2:16
* Ephesians 2:9
* 2 Timothy 1:9

**Personal reflection:** Do you see yourself as basically good or a sinner in need   
of a Savior? Are you guilty of having been trying to earn your way into God’s   
favor through personal ‘good’ works, or have you surrendered to Jesus Christ by faith alone?

1. Read Luke 18:31-34 along with Mark 10:32-34.
2. Once again, Jesus is pointing his disciples to the cross, and Jesus is attempting to teach them that salvation for mankind can only be made possible by His sacrifice on the cross. Thus, he points them back to the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. What do you learn about this Messiah from the following?

* Genesis 3:15
* Psalm 2:2-9
* Psalm 22:12-16
* Isaiah 53 (the Suffering Servant)
* Jeremiah 23:5-6
* Micah 5:2
* Zechariah 9:9
* Luke 24:27

1. Why do you think the disciples failed to see and understand Jesus’ prediction about his impending death on the cross?
2. How does examining and seeing the fulfillment of so many Old Testament prophecies   
   in Jesus Christ (life, death, resurrection) affect your faith and confidence in the Bible (Word of God)?
3. Read Luke 18:35-43 along with Mark 10:46-52 and the article below entitled, “What is the story of blind Bartimaeus?”

The story of Blind Bartimaeus occurs in the Gospel of Mark and concerns the healing of a blind beggar called Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. A parallel account mentions two blind men (Matthew 20:30), but Mark focuses on the one who was no doubt familiar to his readers. On his way out of Jericho, Jesus was surrounded by a huge crowd, when, from the roadside, Bartimaeus called out to Him to be healed. The events that follow tell us something profound about God’s nature and shed light on the type of faith and prayer that are pleasing to God.

As Jesus was walking by him, Bartimaeus heard who it was that was passing and called out to Him: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mark 10:47). By calling Jesus the “Son of David,” the blind man was affirming his belief that Jesus was the Messiah (see 2 Samuel 7:12-16). The people told Bartimaeus to be quiet, but he kept calling out, even more loudly and persistently than before. This is further proof of his faith. In addition to his proclamation of Jesus’ identity as the Messiah, the blind man showed that he believed in Jesus’ goodness and deference to the poor and needy. Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was not like the   
other religious leaders, who believed that an individual’s poverty or blindness or bad circumstances were a result of God’s judgment. Bartimaeus appealed to Jesus according   
to the revelation of God’s character in the Psalms-a God who cares for the poor and the brokenhearted (e.g., Psalm 34:6, 18).

Jesus responded to Bartimaeus’s cries by telling His disciples to call the blind man over. Blind Bartimaeus jumped up and went to Jesus, and Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mark 10:51). The beggar could have asked for money or for food, but his faith was bigger than that. Bartimaeus said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” There is no pretention or religious pride in this interchange between God and man. The blind man had a desire, and he ran to Jesus with that desire. He did not preface his petition with a list of good works he had done or with any false humility; he simply expressed to Jesus his desire, trusting that Jesus was both willing and able to fulfill it. Jesus said to him, “Go . . . your faith has healed you,” and Blind Bartimaeus instantly recovered his sight and followed Jesus (verse 52).

By saying, “Your faith has made you well,” Jesus emphasizes the necessity of faith. Blind Bartimaeus had the kind of faith that pleases God-a wholehearted trust in the Healer. Jesus showed once again that God “rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Blind Bartimaeus understood this truth. He earnestly sought the Lord, and his actions reflected the kind of faith that is pleasing to God.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. What was the critical difference between the blind man and the rich young ruler?
2. What is significant about addressing Jesus as the ‘Son of David’ (2 Samuel 7:12-14; Isaiah 11:1-2 [Jesse was the father of David])? How did this show genuine faith in who   
   Jesus claimed to be?
3. List at least three steps in the blind man’s healing that show the steps of authentic   
   saving faith.

**Personal reflection:** Have you taken these same steps? Have you transitioned from spiritual blindness to saving sight (faith)? How would you describe your transition from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light?

1. “Why did Jesus tell the rich young ruler he could be saved by obeying the commandments?” Got Questions Ministries, accessed July 21, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/rich-young-ruler.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “What is the story of blind Bartimaeus?” Got Questions Ministries, accessed July 21, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/blind-Bartimaeus.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)