

## ***A Radical Challenge***

February 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013

### ***Luke 18:18-30***

This passage deals with the reality of every human that has ever existed, the impossibility to obtain eternal life by our own means. Everyone who is sound in their mind, is looking for eternal life. Despite the secularization of America, 89% of Americans believe that heaven is real and 75% of Americans believe they will go there when they die. Most people are trying to go to heaven when they die, yet most of them are trying to get there by their own means. With the same idea, this young rich ruler asks the question, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Little did he know that his desire to find the answer was going to be crushed by Jesus’ response.

#### **Reform Your View!**

- ❖ Jesus’ answer to the rich ruler, not only modifies his ideas, but completely overhauls the rich ruler’s view of eternal salvation.
- ❖ The rich ruler was humble and amazingly open to the direction of Jesus, yet there was something fundamentally wrong in his view as how to attain eternal life.
- ❖ The rich ruler thought he was “almost there” in regard to salvation, but the first response of Jesus exposes two major problems in his ideas:
  - ♦ There is no one intrinsically good except God.
  - ♦ He did not know who Jesus truly was when he called Him “good teacher.”
- ❖ Jesus’ second response is impossible to attain:
  - “...*If you would enter life, keep the commandments.*” *Matthew 19:17*
  - ⇒ Many times we realize that there is something wrong in us, and we think that by adjusting something inside of us, then everything will be alright.
  - ♦ The ruler considered that he had the ability to obtain eternal life by works. From the beginning, you see a man that has a self-righteousness view of himself.
  - ⇒ In the same way, we constantly think that by doing good deeds we are able to secure eternal life.
  - ♦ God was not even in the picture as the ruler approached Jesus. In fact, every time this passage is mentioned in the gospels the ruler says, “*what must I do*”.
  - ⇒ We cannot earn salvation by our own means. We will not deserve salvation no matter what we do.
- ❖ God, in His immense wisdom and power, is always transforming our understanding of Him and His ways, many times by crushing us, and often through His word, because we don’t quite see the true picture of salvation.
- ❖ The ruler did not desire God in his life. He was not interested in growing with Jesus. To live on and continue in his business was his goal in life.
  - ⇒ Human flesh seeks its own preservation. Most people will look for eternal security, in one way or another. God has placed eternity in our lives, yet our personal reaction to the true gospel is to resist God and avoid surrendering.

#### **Surrender All!**

- ❖ Up to this point in the ruler’s mind he thinks he is doing well. How arrogant that he thought that he had always kept every commandment from God.
- ❖ When he replied to Jesus that all those commandments he had kept from his youth, Jesus said to him: “*One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.*”
  - ♦ Even though it is one thing, Jesus is exposing the very idol in the rich ruler’s life: wealth.

- ♦ The ruler had an idol in his life that was a hindrance to knowing that he was far from obeying God's commandments. He thought that he had keep the law but he had disobeyed the main commandment, to love God with everything.
- ♦ Money was for this man a huge problem in his life, and this a big problem for many people today.  
*"When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."* Matthew 19:22
- ❖ After this Jesus made an astounding declaration: *"How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"*
  - ⇒ For many people, possessions in their lives are a barrier that holds them back from surrendering their life to Christ.
- ❖ We need to have the correct view of money.
  - ♦ God gave us the ability to produce wealth.  
*"You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth,..."*  
*Deuteronomy 8:18*
  - ♦ Jesus said to Peter: *"Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."*
- ❖ There was a worldview in Jesus time, and it still exists today, in which people thought that financial prosperity indicated God's blessing. People often think that if you are a follower of Christ you are entitled to wealth, and if you are poor, it is because you are not a good Christian.
  - ♦ Jesus' response to the ruler shows that God and possessions do not go according to this simplistic view.
  - ♦ Money can be a snare in our lives. *1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17*
  - ⇒ A good question: Do we own riches or do riches own us?
  - ⇒ Very often we are trying to find out how much we have to give, when we should be trying to find out how much we can give.
- ❖ With wealth, there is access to many things, which gives us power and makes us self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is an idol that we must deal with in our lives.
  - ⇒ Would you be sad about losing something that God asks you to give up? When something outside yourself gives you identity and is not God, it is idolatry.

### **Follow Me!**

- ❖ It is impossible for people to surrender everything to God in their own strength. Everything in this passage points to the power of God and the hopelessness of man apart from God.
  - ⇒ It does not matter how much you have: personal achievements, finances, degrees, relationships; nothing will fill the emptiness that is meant to be filled by God.
- ❖ Those who heard what Jesus said, asked "Then who can be saved?"
  - ⇒ The only way to find eternal salvation is through Jesus Christ.

*"What is impossible with man is possible with God."*

### Endnote

- ♦ Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

