

**Intro:** The Gospel of Luke . . . The word salvation is so multifaceted. There are so many words and metaphors and concepts that the Bible uses to describe salvation: We move from being an orphan to being adopted. We were once condemned as guilty but now we have been justified and counted righteous in God's sight. Though we once had an incalculable debt, God has forgiven us of that debt and wiped our slate clean. We are transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness to Kingdom of Light. We who were estranged and alienated from God have been reconciled to God. We who once experienced spiritual brokenness find healing through the sacrifice of Christ. We were enslaved to our rebellious ways, but now God has given us freedom through the gospel. We were blind but he gave us sight. We were once dead but now we are alive.

**"How Can Someone Be Saved?"  
Luke 18:18-43**

**The Point: Salvation comes to those who see the worth of Christ, receive his mercy and follow him.**

Salvation is essentially, following Jesus. So I want to give you two encouragements on what it looks to follow Christ. #1...

**I. Follow Christ with absolute commitment and experience his rich rewards (18:18-30).**

*Read 18-19.*

- There is a very wealthy ruler who comes and asks Jesus life's most important question: "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" This is the same question the lawyer asked of Jesus in Luke 10, which provoked the story of the Merciful Samaritan. [This question addresses the essence of salvation.]
- We ask a lot of important questions in life...None are more important than this.
- Jesus begins to answer his question in verse 19. In his dialogue with the rich ruler, Jesus lays out two all-important truths.

***Eternal life in Christ will cost you everything!***

- Jesus teaches the ruler this by first exposing his shallow understanding of goodness. First he says, "If you really understood goodness, you would know that no one is good except God alone." Perhaps Jesus said this with a twinkle in his eye, because he was God himself, incarnate goodness, standing before him this man.
- "No one is good except God alone." & Jesus is God. Let those words sink into your hearts: "No one is good." "Oh, he or she is such a good person." Jesus makes clear that only God is unique in his perfect holiness and righteousness. It is only against the backdrop of the moral purity and perfection of God that we see how lacking our goodness really is.
- And when we see our goodness really isn't that good, then we will be in a position to see how deeply we need God's goodness and mercy to grant us eternal life.
- Secondly, Jesus exposes his superficial view of goodness by testing him in light of the Ten Commandments.
- *Verse 20.* Jesus lists, though not in precise order, the fifth through ninth of the 10 Commandments. These all relate to our relationships with other people.
- The ruler responds in *verse 21*. "Hey, I'm a moral guy. Based on the commandments you just listed, I'm confident I'm in good shape!" This is probably a sincere, albeit presumptuous, response.
- Rather than interrogating and exposing his lack of keeping these commandments perfectly, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter in v. 22.
- These next five words are heavy words: "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."
- And with these words Jesus exposes his idolatrous heart before God. "One thing you lack..."
- The rich ruler is having that big gulp, that oh, no he didn't just say that to me moment. "Does he know what I have? I roll with Caesar's crew."
- Jesus shows the ruler how he broke the last commandment (covetousness) and how he broke the first and greatest commandment, the commandment upon which all other commandments are built. "You shall have no other gods before me." An idol is anything that becomes ultimate in our life other than God. We take the good things God gives (work, sex, family, marriage, money, recreation, reputation, intellect) and we turn them into godlike things.

***Idol of Riches***

- And Jesus will always ask for our idols. Hand them over (hand outstretched). Surrender is a key part of faith...
- Money, whether we realize or not, can become a functional savior in our life. So with Money, it becomes our creator. It makes us who we are and defines us. Money can become our lord. We make all of our decisions based on the bottom line. We will or will not take this job solely because of the money. Money can provide our sense of *security* and comfort, our significance and purpose.
- And we can find our sense of peace and satisfaction in a number of different pursuits under the sun. Just go read Ecclesiastes.
- The call of Christ to sell everything was a mechanism to rip idolatry out of the life of this rich man, so that he would be free to worship God. Jesus may tell you to give up something else completely. That is why this is not a command for every disciple to sell everything they own and live on nothing. Jesus requires whatever would stand in our way of him. Now, Christians should certainly.

Trans: So how does the rich ruler respond to this call to sell it all? *Verse 23*

- He was faced w a dilemma and this dilemma made him very sad. It could be translated, "very grieved." Why? Because he was loaded, and because he loved his riches more than he loved God.
- Don't forget, we're talking about eternal life here!
- Here's the deal: many people today would gladly follow Christ, if there was not that one great barrier in their way.

- **What is the one thing holding you back from a complete commitment to Jesus?** Is there anything you unwilling to give up? Anything you treasure more than Jesus? The ruler counted the cost and said by his actions: "Jesus you are not worth it."

Verse 24-25

- Jesus looked at him and said: "How difficult for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" Jesus did not hate the rich. He loved all people. This is a simple statement of fact.
- Then he goes on to say: A classic case of hyperbole: "For it is easier for a camel to go thru the eye of a needle..." Jesus takes the largest animal in Palestine, a camel, and one of the smallest items people would deal with on a daily basis, thus creating a known impossibility. This explains the shock of the disciples.
- Neither our righteousness nor our apparent material blessings in life can merit us eternal life. We have to place our commitment to Christ above everything.
- The problem for the ruler was that his riches were more valuable to him than Jesus.

*Trans:* The call to follow Christ is to allow nothing to stand in our way of our commitment to him. Following Christ will cost everything, but it will provide an even greater reward.

***Eternal life in Christ gives us everything!*** Read 26-27

- "Who then can be saved???" To ask this question is to ask the very same question the ruler asked in v. 18! Notice "inheriting eternal life," "entering the kingdom," and "finding salvation" are all synonymous for Jesus.
- As we have discussed before in Luke, people thought riches were a sign of God's blessing. So the disciples were shocked. If this rich, moral guy could not enter the kingdom, who could? There seems to be a feeling of desperation amongst the crowd
- But Jesus steps in with words of hope: "What is impossible with men is possible with God."
- God does the impossible. Salvation is a miraculous work of God. Blind eyes see. Deaf ears hear. Dead hearts beat!
- Every conversion is a miracle, so let's pray for miracles! This is true of your salvation, just as it is true of mine.
- While this whole conversation is going on Peter is processing what is being said, and he's looking back on his life and says, "What about us??? We left everything to follow."
- *Read 28-30.* They had truly answered the costly call to follow Jesus. We have pursued true riches in you!
- The rewards described by Jesus are staggering. . . . God is to have first place. I don't know how else to say it. Well, of course I do, but is that straight enough... Treasured above all else. "for the sake of the kingdom of God..." Promise of Reward... Every sacrifice is worth it! We give what we cannot keep to gain what we cannot lose.

What would happen if our church would collectively answer this serious call to follow Christ like Jesus is calling us to in Luke?

## **II. Follow Christ with spiritual sight and lead others to glorify God (18:31-43).**

Read 31-34

- Hinge verses.. Going up to Jerusalem... He just spoke of their sacrifice for the kingdom, and now he warns them of the ultimate sacrifice he will make. "Everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished..."
- Prophets... (Gen 3; Ps 22; Is 53)
- ***"I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. (Isaiah 50:6-8a)***
- Surprisingly, Luke helps us understand how drastically the disciples failed to understand. "But they understood none of these things." They didn't get it. "This saying was hidden from them," They didn't get it! "And they did not grasp what was said." They did not get it!
- A suffering Messiah was still a foreign notion to even Jesus' closest followers. They thought of the coming redeemer in triumphant terms, but Jesus tells his disciples the plan so that when it happens, they will remember and understand that the cross is the fulfillment of God's plan from the very beginning not some kind of tragic accident.
- Have you ever had a great plan and then discovered you needed to improvise... (Daryl & Emily's wedding...)
- Eternal covenant of redemption... Plan A... No need to improvise The shadow of the cross is growing larger and larger. In a few short days, Jesus will step into the Passion Week.

*Trans:* Verse 34 teaches us that the disciples did not have the spiritual sight to see what Christ was saying. Verses 35-43 tell us of a man who also could not see, but his involved not his spiritual sight, but his physical sight.

Read 35-43

- In these verses we come to the last miracle proper in the Gospel of Luke. In Mark's gospel we discover the blind man's name was Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46). Like any other day, this blind finds himself begging by the roadside in hopes that people would extend mercy to him sparing some small change or sliding him a piece of bread. But there was something different about this particular day. He heard the raucous of a crowd, and on this ordinary day, he is given the most extraordinary opportunity.
- He asks what is going on, and the crowd told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.
- When he hears this, he wasted no time... He cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." He must have heard of Jesus and his miraculous work. Those who were in front of him told him to be silent. No simple be quiet, don't say anything else. & they rebuked him. The marginalized are often treated with this kind of disrespect & contempt.
- But I love Bartimaeus. He does not allow anything to stand in his way! Peer pressure is totally disregarded. He refused to be silent. These are the cries of a desperate man. The blind man addresses Jesus with a messianic title,

- 2 Samuel 7:12-16. The Messiah would be the one to defeat all of Israel's enemies and reign forever on the throne of David with justice and righteousness. He is the one who gives sight to the blind (Luke 4 & 11)
- 40: Jesus stops. As death is staring in his face, he stops. The others-centeredness of Jesus is astounding...

Spiritual Blindness and Spiritual Sight (Jesus called the religious leaders, Pharisees, Blind guides... Blind leading the blind)

- Until we see our need, we will never seek God's mercy. You say, that's obvious for the blind guy, of course he knows he has a need. Yep! But if we had eyes to see like he could see on this day, we too what see our deep need before God.
- Faith is spiritual sight. Faith sees what others can't see. The great irony here is that the blind man is the one who sees
- He heard faith in his cries. Faith cries out! Simple prayers of need... Lord, let me see. God be merciful to me.
- And we all need God to open our eyes that we might see our need and see his sufficiency. Salvation comes no other way.
- Listen to Paul's words in 2 Cor. 4:1-6: **"Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:1-6 ESV)**
- *App:* This is a way to pray. God, "open blind eyes. Do the impossible. Do something. Wake them up. Shock them into seeing their vanity and emptiness of their current life and the satisfaction that is found in you.

What is the result and response of this faith? *Read 42-43*

- "Your faith has made you well." The phrase "made you well" is from the same word we saw in verse 26 for "salvation." Salvation/Healing/Made Well...
- Bartimaeus experienced both physical and spiritual healing. This is evidenced in how he responds.
- He follows Christ. The rich man would not follow. This once blind man could not help but follow. He experiences the kingdom, which continues Luke's theme, especially throughout the Travelogue (chapters 10-19), that humble outcasts are those who receive God's mercy and salvation. (Strauss)

Mission!

- You go glorify God with your life. There is no doubt this included words, by the way. "Yeah, that was me!" You go do that, and others will follow suit.
- "And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." Praise elicits praise!!!
- It is always a great time to share your faith, but let me say that the summer time (people are out... loving life, doing their thing, at the parks, bustling about the city... Let's be ready to initiate our witness among blind people who need to hear.
- Now, I wouldn't suggest going up and starting a conversation by saying, "Yeah, my pastor says you're blind, and I want to help you see.
- Let me tell you, there is nothing better than possessing salvation in Christ and telling others about him.
- What must we do to inherit eternal life? Believe on Christ and Receive his mercy.

### Conclusion:

We are about to commission 12 people going on summer missions. We all have a mission here.... Today I want to invite you to see the impossible. Who in your life is impossible?" Is it people in India? Is it your neighbor across the street? For some, you may be saying it's me! You would say, "Before today, I did not realize that I could have a real, vibrant relationship with God through placing my faith in Jesus and what he did for me in his life, death, and resurrection."

We're going to sing "REIGN IN US." "So reign, please reign in us. Come purify our hearts, we need your touch. Come cleanse like a flood and send us out, so the world may know you reign, you reign in us."