

Sunday, July 21, 2024 | The Road to Redemption

Week 33 | Luke 18:18-30 | "The God of the Impossible"

Last week, we talked about "Sola Fide," or faith alone. And this subject was explored using three individuals: a Pharisee, a tax collector, and a child. We saw his self-esteem was great when the Pharisee prayed; his self-abasement was great when the tax collector prayed. Of the two, the tax collector went down to his house justified, while the Pharisee left unjustified. Why? Unlike the Pharisee, the tax collector based his salvation on faith and not good deeds. **He came to God like an infant—i.e., helpless, defenseless, useless.** And we would do well to follow in his footsteps. Only those who come by faith alone will be saved. Good works can do nothing to save us.

It is commonly known that there were *twelve* apostles: Peter, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and, of course, Judas Iscariot. But did you know there could've been one more? There were almost *thirteen* apostles!

In today's passage, we'll meet a man who came as close as possible to becoming a disciple. He was already a ruler of the people, well-read in the Scriptures, and above all, he was wealthy. By all *outward* appearances, few would've appeared more qualified than him. However, as we'll see, though he might've seemed like a shoo-in for the job, he'll turn his back on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Why? He had a fatal flaw: *he loved his riches more than anything else*. He realized that following Jesus would harm his lifestyle, particularly his *pocketbook*.

We already know that one *cannot* love money and God (cf. Lu. 16:13). And now we'll see this principle played out in a sorrowful scene where, rather than renounce everything and follow Jesus, this so-called "rich young ruler" will choose *temporal* treasures over *eternal* life. As such, rather than being the thirteenth disciple, he is just another cautionary tale.

There are three takeaways:

- i. Those who **delight** in riches will be **saddened** by the gospel.

READ: Luke 18:18-23 (ESV)

¹⁸ And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I **do** to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? **No one** is good except God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: '**Do not** commit adultery, **Do not** murder, **Do not** steal, **Do**

not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.”²¹ And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.”²² When Jesus heard this, he 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.”²³ But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.

ii. Though no one can save themselves, God can save anyone, even the wealthy ones.

READ: Luke 18:24-27 (ESV)

²⁴ Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

“Wealth can shrink the door of the kingdom down to an impassable peephole.”¹ The impossibility of man is nothing more than an opportunity for God.

Joseph of Arimathea was both wealthy in this life and the next. Joanna was a wealthy merchant and a follower of Jesus.

iii. The immediate and imminent rewards of God’s kingdom outweigh every sacrifice made for its sake.

READ: Luke 18:28-30 (ESV)

²⁸ And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” ²⁹ And he said to them, “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, ³⁰ who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

¹ Bock, p. 1486

Video Description:

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SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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Season 38 | 33