

Luke
See Jesus
“Right But Still Wrong”
Luke 18:18-30

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / April 30, 2023

Notice that the passage begins and ends with a reference to eternal life because that’s what this conversation between Jesus and the rich, young ruler is all about.

I. You Could Get Some Things Right But Still End Up Wrong

A. He Knew that He Was Missing Something

When you don’t have Jesus, you know you’re missing something. This guy was moral, religious, devout, a respected leader, rich, and influential, but he knew there was something missing.

John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

This man knew all about God, but still didn’t know God. You can’t know God personally until you know His Son, Jesus Christ.

B. He Searched for It Passionately

Mark 10:17 “...came running and knelt before Him and asked Him...‘What must I do to inherit eternal life?’”

He is desperate for an answer and has no shame in putting it on display publicly.

C. He Even Goes to the Right Source

Many people who know they’re missing something search in all the wrong places for the answers, but this man goes to Jesus Himself!

D. But He Was Still Asking the Wrong Question

Luke 18:18 “...what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

He was part of an “I do” system that is still ingrained in each one of us today: “Tell me what to do and I’ll work hard trying to do it!” He was trying to achieve eternal life and achieve a relationship with God.

He has no category for grace or unmerited favor, so he’s still focused on his own ability. He’s still seeking God on his own terms. He’s asking Jesus to step into his existing paradigm and just let him know what is missing.

II. You Could Give Him Your Praise But Still Hold onto Your Heart

Luke 18:22 “...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.”

Saving faith will include repentance and submission to His rule and reign in your life that’s connected to a new heart attitude that says, “Yes, Lord, Jesus. I give You my life.”

Jesus saw this young man's heart and knew that, for him, it was far more than just money. Money was his identity scorecard, his security, his sense of worth, and what he looked to most for his significance and purpose. He lived for money.

Whatever that thing is for you, God sees it. If you're trying to come to Him while holding onto this other thing as first place in your life, He'll put His finger on it and say, "But you've got to give that up." He won't share the throne with someone or something else in your life.

When He puts His finger on what you've built your life around, you become distressed and disoriented because this is what you've known and clung to for how you lived. The Greek word means "deeply grieved" and is the same word used to describe Jesus on the night of His crucifixion, sweating drops of blood, as He prayed in agony of what was coming.

Luke 18:23 "But when he heard these things, he became very sad..."

Matthew 26:38 "...My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death..."

Often, that thing He puts His finger on is simply the right to rule our own lives. We don't like letting go of control of our lives.

"...what mattered most of all was my deep-seated hatred of authority, my monstrous individualism, my lawlessness. No word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word 'interference.' But Christianity placed at the center what then seemed to me a transcendental Interferer...There was no region even in the innermost depth of one's soul (nay, there least of all) which one could surround with a barbed wire fence and guard with a notice, 'No Admittance.' And that was what I wanted; some area, however small, of which I could say to all other beings, 'This is my business and mine only.'"

~ C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*

III. You Could Be Offended or Thrilled But You'll Never Be Indifferent to a Real Encounter with Jesus

Jesus sent shockwaves through crowds of listeners. When people truly heard the real message of Jesus for the first time, they were either disturbed or delighted, but nobody walked away indifferent.

His message was shocking to them and it's still shocking to us today because it demands more than you ever thought you needed to give – your whole life! But it also offers more than you could have ever hoped for – unconditional, unending love, acceptance, forgiveness, and adoption into God's family as a son or daughter, with unlimited access to His throne of grace now.

IV. God Makes Possible What Would Be Impossible Without Jesus

Luke 18:24-27 "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 men is possible with God.'"

He's not teaching that rich people can't go to heaven. What He's saying is that money is just one of the things we're guilty of building our lives around, fixing our identity on, and placing our security in that will keep you out of the kingdom because you won't see your need for a Savior and won't let go of what you're already trusting in.

See Ephesians 2:1-9