

Luke 18:18-30

Introduction: This is also found in Matt. 19:16-22 and Mark 10:17-22. Here we find an example of someone who fails to demonstrate dependent faith.

- 1) A superficial man tries to earn salvation—18:18-23
 - a) He attempts to flatter Jesus—18:18 ¹⁸ *Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*
 - i) This man seems to be highly respected in the community, but not a religious leader like a Pharisee.
 - ii) Luke seems to include this example of those who didn’t grasp what Jesus has just said. “You can’t earn God’s favor.”
 - iii) Jesus has already answered that question back in chapter 10:25-37 several months earlier.
 - b) Jesus teaches the ruler—18:19-20 ¹⁹ *So Jesus said to him,*
 - i) Regarding God’s goodness—“*Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*”
 - (1) Jesus tries to get the man to admit who Jesus really is.
 - (2) Only God is good in the absolute sense, and Jesus is good in this same sense. If Jesus is not God, he is not good.
 - ii) Regarding God’s standard of righteousness—²⁰ *You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.’”*
 - (1) Jesus refers to Exod. 20:12-16, including those commandments that relate to how others are to be treated.
 - (2) One demonstrates his love for God by loving others.
 - iii) If the ruler truly wants to follow the good God, then submit to His Teacher.
 - c) His self-confident response—18:21 ²¹ *And he said, “All these things I have observed from my youth.”*
 - i) Starting at his bar mitzvah when he became liable to obey the Law.
 - ii) This is mere external obedience at best. It is obvious from his next response to Jesus that he loved money. (cf. Luke 16:13-14)
 - d) Jesus makes a practical application of the Law—18:22 ²² *So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “One thing you still lack.*
 - i) A command—*Sell all that you have and give to the destitute,*
 - ii) A promise—*and you will have treasure in heaven;*
 - iii) Additional commands—*and come, follow Me.”*
 - iv) To care for the needy is evidence of reflecting God’s image in caring for others. Selling all would make this man dependent on God alone, not his own resources.
 - e) His deliberate, yet emotional response—18:23 ²³ *But when he heard these things, he became extremely sad because he was extremely wealthy.*

- i) It is only as we experience God's love and grace that we can genuinely love and serve other image bearers.
 - ii) He has wrongly placed his confidence and security in his wealth.
 - iii) Notice that he doesn't ask Jesus to explain the commands or demands. Jesus's demands are too much for his unregenerate heart.
 - iv) As someone has said, he had functioning ears but a deaf heart.
 - v) Obedience to Christ would demonstrate genuine repentance and faith in Christ. He demonstrates his lack of faith in Christ by not obeying Christ.
- 2) The impossibility of salvation—18:24-30
- a) Jesus teaches with hyperbole—18:24-25 ²⁴ *Now when Jesus saw that he had become extremely sad, He said,*
 - i) *“How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.*
 - ii) ²⁵ *For it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy man to enter the kingdom of God.”*
 - iii) *“The self-focused security of the wealthy is a padlock against kingdom entry.”* (Bock)
 - b) The shocking dilemma—18:26 ²⁶ *And those who heard it said, “Then who is able to be saved/rescued?”*
 - i) It was assumed by many that the rich were guaranteed God's favor. If they are left out, what about the rest of us?
 - ii) Note how they rightly equated “inheriting eternal life,” “entering the kingdom of God,” and “being saved.”
 - c) Salvation is God's omnipotent work—18:27 ²⁷ *And He said, “The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.”*
 - d) Peter and other disciples have been genuinely saved—18:28 ²⁸ *Then Peter said, “Look, we (emphatic) have left everything and followed You.”*
 - i) Indicating he was listening earlier (cf. 18:22)
 - ii) Peter had already done this as recorded in 5:11.
 - e) Jesus graciously promises them rewards—18:29-30 ²⁹ *And Jesus said to them,*
 - i) A conditional promise for all—*“Truly I say to you^{pl}, there is no one ... ³⁰ who will not receive ...* (i.e. everyone will certainly receive ...)
 - (1) The condition is what? *who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,*
 - (a) You become part of a larger family, the family of God, when you pursue God's kingdom before anything else in life.
 - ii) Promise for this lifetime—*many times as much in this time,*
 - iii) Promise for eternity—*and in the age to come, eternal life.”*
 - (1) The genuine disciple is accepted forever into God's presence.
 - f) By refusing to trust Jesus, the extremely rich ruler forfeits everything of true value.

Putting God first is what brings God's blessing. This involves childlike dependence upon God. Eternal life is the result of such faith.