

Lukes Gospel : Chapter 18:18-34 **The Rich Young Ruler & Predictions**

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
[King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.](#)]*

In The Gospel of Luke, events are given in their moral order, rather than necessarily their chronological, historical order. The moral sequence helps us to develop an understanding of what is right in the sight of God. There are lessons to be learnt which are most clearly seen if messages are grouped together to emphasize what we are to learn clearly before we move on. Chapter 18 is a case in point.

Our portion today is clearly in two parts of Luke chapter 18:

First, verses 18 – 30 are about a rich, young ruler.

Then, verses 31 – 34 are together a distinct portion devoted to the revelation by the Lord Jesus about His personal death and resurrection.

In the previous talk, considering the first 17 verses of the chapter, the climax, in verse 17, was

“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.”

That is, as a little child receives statements in all simplicity, without trying to complicate things unnecessarily, so we, whatever our age and stage of natural development, are to receive and accept what the scriptures say about the kingdom of God, in all simplicity, as the word of God, without looking for excuses to hide behind ideas of our own. This opens the door for the record given in verses 18 to 30 about a man described as:

A certain ruler:

Verse 18 says:

“And a certain ruler asked him, saying, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?””

We know from this verse that he was “a ruler”, and from verse 23 that “he was very rich.” In addition, we learn in Matthew 19 that he was a “young man.” These so-called qualities would tempt him to assume that he could regard himself as having experience and judgment well above average. He evidently thought that these qualities would give him a head start towards inheriting eternal life, like all the other benefits he had acquired or qualified for up to that moment.

He had to learn that, on the contrary, the natural achievements he had already made would, if anything, militate against his acquisition and enjoyment of eternal life. The text shows us how the

Lord Jesus gently led him on in the way that was right, probing him as to the sincerity of the way he spoke to the Lord. Verse 19 tells us:

“And Jesus said unto him, “Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.””

The Lord was clearly taking the place of a Jewish man speaking to another Jewish man, and therefore subject to the ten commandments laid down by the God of Israel in the days of Moses. Verse 20 says:

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.”

The ruler’s answer, given in verse 21, was quite unabashed:

“And he said, “All these have I kept from my youth up.””

He evidently judged himself as fulfilling all the requirements of the law of Moses. The Lord kindly did not take him up on his claim to behavioural perfection but probed him sufficiently to disturb his conscience. Of course, Jesus knew full well how to strike a response from the young man. Verse 22 says:

“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, “Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute (that is, from his acquired wealth!) unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.””

This was a test beyond what the rich, young ruler wanted to fulfil.

Verse 23 records:

“And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.”

Verses 24 and 25 tell us:

“And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.””

Those looking on could see the challenge that had searched the young man’s conscience. Verses 26 and 27 record:

“And they that heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” And (Jesus) said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.””

Then Peter, ever the spokesman on behalf of the Lord’s disciples, is recorded in verses 28 – 30 as saying;

““Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.” And (Jesus) said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.””

First of all, and taking up Peter on the strength of what he seemed to be claiming, the Lord Jesus began by stressing that those who made sacrifices, acting in line with the declared kingdom of God, would not necessarily have to sacrifice what material assets they already had, for the

kingdom of God's sake. The emphasis is that, rather than suffering for it, they would instead be richly rewarded spiritually by the God to whom they dedicated themselves.

Now for our second portion, verses 31 – 34, which is:

The coming climax: The Lord Predicts His Death and Resurrection

To acclimatize our minds, let us read the verses:

“Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.” And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

The twelve disciples were representative, among other things, of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. To go up to Jerusalem was to them to go to the centre of God's work on earth. “All things that are written” refers to the revelation of the mind of God, as given in the Holy Scriptures as they were increasingly built up by the revelation of God by the Holy Spirit. “The prophets” were those raised up and equipped to make known the will of God as it was revealed by and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

“The Son of man” is a significant title. It indicates the humility of the Lord Jesus as the One through Whom the full revelation of God would eventually be made known. To that end, the word “accomplished” is a most significant word, used eight times in the Gospel of Luke. It confirms that the work and words of the Lord Jesus in Person on earth, and the answers of men to them, would bring to full achievement both the blessing of God and the judgment of God. They would be brought to climax and fulfilment in Him and by Him, The Son of Man.

In verse 32, we learn that the will of God and the sinfulness of man will be seen in both Jews and Gentiles. The Christ of God shall be delivered by the Jews unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, spitefully entreated, spitted on, even scourged. Terrible, total lack of respect! That would be bad enough. But not only that!

They would go as far as putting Him to death, and that the death of the cross. That was the worst that man could do to man, reserved normally for the most evil and despicable of the lowest order of men. It would be a mark of their assessment of how much, or really how little, they respected the Lord of Glory, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe. The affirmation that He would be raised from among the dead on the third day, as verse 33 emphasises, was, among other things, confirmation that He had indeed died, and it had not been merely a swoon or a faint. Sadly, verse 34 confirms what we know from many scriptures:

“They (that is, the twelve disciples) understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

There are two major questions about the Lord Jesus Christ that must be answered.

First of all, Question number one! Is Jesus Christ really God?

In Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 His position after His birth into the world was declared in advance:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God”

That's it! He is the mighty God! Isaiah chapter 7 verse 14 also gives the plain prophetic answer:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (meaning God with us).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul says in First Timothy chapter 2 verse 5:

“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Question number 2! Is Jesus Christ fully man?

Let us think now about the great mystery of incarnation. This was the vehicle for The Son of God to become also The Son of Man. Listen to what the scriptures say:

The query is raised in Psalm 8 verse 4:

“[Lord], what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest Him?”

As we have already read, Isaiah chapter 7 verse 14 gives the plain prophetic answer:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (that is, God with us).

The virgin birth is clearly stated, and the union of Godhead and humanity in one Person is plainly declared. Indeed, the predictions of scripture got clearer and clearer as the time of fulfilment drew near. After the event, we get the clarification given in First Corinthians chapter 15 verse 47:

“The first man is of the earth, earthy. The second man is the Lord from heaven.”

Then again, Hebrews chapter 2 verse 9 tells us:

“[He] was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.”

We read in Luke chapter 2 that Jesus was born a baby in Bethlehem. The chapter goes on to tell us about when “he was 12 years old”. Then, chapter 3 verse 23 says that leading up to His sacrifice upon the cross He “began to be about thirty years”. There can be no doubt that He was indeed a real man.

Now, what do we mean by the terms ‘fully’ and ‘real’ man?

As finite creatures, we may never fully understand the manner in which God and Man can be united in one Person, having the nature and attributes of God and yet be a true and complete man, sin apart. We gladly acknowledge the inscrutability of the Person of the Son of God Who became Son of Man. We also realise that in that mystery lies all our blessing in time and eternity. I have already quoted the apostle Paul in First Timothy chapter 2 verse 5:

“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Here we get the assertion of the manhood of The Lord in a very emphatic way, showing that He must become man in order to be the mediator between God and sinful mankind. This is supported by Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.”

Real, full manhood involves spirit and soul and body. First Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 23 shows plainly the tri-partite character of man:

“I pray God your whole – (W-H-O-L-E that is complete) – your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This makes it very plain indeed that man is composed of spirit and soul and body. Take one of these parts away from a so-called man and he would cease to be a real man. In taking manhood, the Lord Jesus took all that was necessary, indeed essential, for manhood; spirit and soul and body; the spirit of a man; the soul of a man, and the body of a man; full, complete manhood; together with His personal deity. He is both Very God and Very Man. Amen to that! Now let us consider what we have said about Jesus being a real man.

First, Jesus had, and still has, the spirit of a man.

The spirit is the highest part of man. If there is no spirit there can be no real man. James chapter 2 verse 26 says:

“The body without the spirit is dead”.

The beasts of the earth have souls and bodies, and even then not an immortal soul as man has. Man has spirit and soul (an **immortal** soul) and body. Without one of these constituent elements Christ could not have been a real, living man on earth. Scripture records personal feelings of the Lord Jesus, appropriate to His having the spirit of a man. The four Gospels plainly declare moments when “He perceived in His spirit, sighed deeply in His spirit, waxed strong in spirit, rejoiced in spirit, groaned in spirit, was troubled in spirit.” Finally, when His work on earth was completed, He commended His spirit into His Father’s safe keeping.

Secondly, Jesus had, and still has, the soul of a man.

In John’s Gospel chapter 12 verse 27 we read:

“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Save me from this hour.”

Matthew chapter 26 verse 38, and Mark chapter 14 verse 34 both tell us:

“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me.”

Acts chapter 2 verse 27, quoting Psalm 16 verse 10, says:

“Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

Thirdly, Jesus had, and still has, the body of a man.

The Lord Jesus was born a babe. He grew through childhood and became a full-grown man. Luke chapter 2 verse 40 says:

“The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”

Verse 52 tells us:

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

The true manhood of the Lord Jesus is connected closely with the atoning work He came to do. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 5, quoting Psalm 40 verse 6, reads:

“When he cometh into the world, he saith, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.””

It was necessary for Him to become man in order to die for our sins and be raised again for our justification. Praise His Holy Name!

Finale

Now, as we draw to a close, I would remind you of what I said at the beginning. In The Gospel of Luke, events are given in their moral order, rather than necessarily their chronological, historical order. The moral sequence helps us to develop an understanding of what is right in the sight of God. There are lessons to be learnt which are most clearly seen in messages grouped together to emphasize what we need to learn before we move on. From about chapter 14 onwards, there is a succession of examples of those who are declared to be far from God, but are aware of their spiritual need. They are brought near to God and into relationship with Him by the grace and mercy of God. In principle, they are seen to be repentant towards God and trusting in the Saviour Who will die for their sins and make them right with God. They are contrasted in each case with those who set themselves on a pedestal, consider themselves worthy of the highest honours and favours, and see no need of repentance and salvation on their part. They need to be brought to a realization of their distance from God. Our portion today is a particularly good example of this total contrast. On the one hand, the rich young ruler thought himself worthy of the highest honours, and capable of achieving it by himself. This leads on to the revelation by Jesus Himself as the only One Who by His work is capable of bringing lost sinners back to God. The outline that the Lord Jesus gave of His future course, onwards, ever onward, to the cross, is both touching and moving, implicit in its outline of the work to be done by Him and the blessing available to those who believe that Jesus died for their sins, and rose again for their spiritual justification.

It has been our privilege to be reminded that the way to be free, completely clear of the judgment of God, and avail ourselves of the blessings available to those who are right with God, not because of any works of righteousness that we have done, but because of the work of Christ Who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. It is our privilege today to be reminded that the only way to salvation is to believe in the value to God of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Himself, Who loved us even unto death, and that the death of the cross.

Now, let me say, “Thank you very much for your patience in listening to this Truth for Today talk number T1167, entitled ‘The rich, young ruler, and the Lord’s predictions of His death and resurrection’, from our series named ‘Luke’s Gospel.’”

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