

Slide 1

In Pursuit of Eternal Life

LUKE 18:18-30

Introduction

1. Have you ever given serious thought to the concept of “eternal life”?
 - a. Life in a realm whose beauties defy description.
 - b. A life in which Satan and his angels no longer tempt and torment us day and night.
 - c. A life in which sorrow, pain, suffering and death no longer exist.
 - d. A life in which old, tired, worn out bodies have been replaced with new, energetic, immortal bodies.
2. Think about it all you want. Dream about it every night, but the truth is that neither you nor I can begin to conceive of all that God has prepared for His faithful in that eternal home.
3. Our text, this morning, introduces us to a young man who came to Jesus in search of this life.
4. He was a man, who, from the world’s perspective already had everything a man could want, everything that the world considers important.
5. However, he knew there was something else, something even more important, that he wanted.
6. As we look at this exchange between Jesus and this man and the conversation which follows between Jesus and His disciples, I would like to encourage you to think about what Jesus has already told us through . . .
 - a. His parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector.
 - b. His comment concerning the infants being brought to Him for His blessing.
7. If you long for eternal life, the things which Jesus says here are very important.

Slide 2

I. Meet The Man Who Came To Jesus

A. HE WAS YOUNG

1. Twice, in Matthew's account of Jesus' encounter with this man, we are told that he is "young" (Matthew 19:20, 22).
2. The word used by Matthew — *neaniskos* — is generally used to describe a young man in the prime of manhood.
3. We typically think of young men as being strong, agile and energetic.
 - It was such a man who came to see Jesus that day.

2a

B. HE WAS RICH

1. Both Matthew and Mark tells us that "he was one who owned much property" (Matthew 19:22; Mark 10:22).
2. Luke tells us plainly, "he was extremely rich" (Luke 18:23).
3. Generally, we think of those who are "extremely rich" as being able to buy for themselves whatever they want — money is no object.

2b

C. HE WAS A RULER

1. Luke is the only one who tells us that this young man was "a ruler" (Luke 18:18).
2. We aren't told what he ruled — simply that he was a man of authority.
4. Many in the world today would look at this man and say that he had it all — he was young, he was rich and he had authority.
5. What more could a man want?
6. However, there was something in his life which left him unsatisfied and it was for this reason that he came to Jesus.

Slide 3

II. The Question of Eternal Life

A. THE YOUNG RULER'S QUESTION

“Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18b, NASB95)

1. I don't think that any of our students who started back to school this past week addressed one of their teachers as “Good teacher.”
2. In Jesus' day, it was also something which was not done. No one called one of the Rabbis, “Good teacher.”
3. Did the rich young ruler address Jesus this way . . .
 - a. to flatter Him?
 - b. without realizing what constitutes goodness?
 - c. out of genuine appreciation for Jesus?
4. He asked Jesus “what shall (must) I do to inherit eternal life?”
5. He wanted to know what “behavior” or “conduct” was necessary on his part to “inherit eternal life?”
6. Earlier a Pharisee had asked this same question (Luke 10:25; Matthew 22:34-35), but he was did so to test Jesus.
7. This young ruler was not testing Jesus, he genuinely wanted to know what to do in order to inherit eternal life.

Slide 4

B. JESUS' REPLY

“Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’ ” (Luke 18:19–20, NASB95)

1. Jesus responded to this young man by asking him, “Why do you call me good?”
2. He told him, “No one is good except God alone.”

3. This fact is repeated a number of times in the Old Testament:

“O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good” (1 Chronicles 16:34, cf. Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1,29; 136:1)

“O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” (Psalm 34:8, NASB95)

“The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him.” (Nahum 1:7, NASB95)

4. It is God alone who can claim to be completely good.

5. Jesus did not confirm his own goodness but He did imply that His goodness was the goodness of God who was working in Him.

6. Earlier, in Jerusalem, He had said “the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing” (John 5:19; NIV84).

7. In response to the young ruler’s question, Jesus directed him to the moral requirements of the second half of the Ten Commandments:

“Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.” (Luke 18:19–20, NASB95)

Slide 5

C. THE YOUNG RULER’S CONFIDENT RESPONSE

“All these things I have kept from my youth.” (Luke 18:21, NASB95)

1. I’ve been doing this since I was a boy!

2. The apostle Paul had himself said that he was blameless when it came to the righteousness which is in the Law (Philippians 3:6).

3. However, as he pointed out in his letter to the Christians in Rome, when he seriously considered the Tenth Commandment — “You shall not covet . . .” (Exodus 20:17) — he realized he hadn’t been as good as he thought:

“I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not

have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind . . .” (Romans 7:7b–8a, NASB95)

Slide 6

D. THE ONE THING THAT WAS LACKING

“When Jesus heard this, He said to him, “One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”” (Luke 18:22, NASB95)

1. It is at this point that Mark inserts a comment not included in either Matthew or Luke — “Jesus felt a love for him” (Mark 10:21a).
2. Jesus deeply cared for this young man. He wanted him to have eternal life, but He knew there was one thing that was holding him back.

“One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”” (Luke 18:22, NASB95)

3. Neither Peter and Andrew, nor James and John were commanded to sell their possessions in order to follow Jesus (Luke 5:1-11).
4. The fact that Jesus commanded the rich young ruler to do so is a clue that this man’s “great wealth” (v. 23) held greater power over him than did the boats and nets belonging to the four disciples.
5. The children, who, as we noticed last week, were being brought to Jesus possessed nothing, but the kingdom of God is theirs.
6. The ruler possessed everything — youth, wealth and power — but he lacked something.
7. Only when he became like a child and sold all he had would he then possess everything.

Slide 7

E. THE YOUNG MAN'S SORROW

“But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.” (Luke 18:23, NASB95)

1. Matthew and Mark both include another aspect of his response:

“But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.” (Matthew 19:22, NASB95)

2. This young man, who had everything that money and power and youth could possibly give him had a desire for something far more important.

3. He saw it, caught a glimpse of it, wanted it — eternal life — not just living forever, but a quality of life he knew he lacked, an emptiness within his spirit he could not fill.

4. But he knew that if he could take hold of eternal life his spirit would be at peace.

5. But he was saddened, because he also knew, at the words of Jesus, that he had to give up the other in order to have this — he could not have both.

6. This is why he went away “grieving” — because he had great possessions.

Slide 8

III. What Is The Problem With Wealth

A. IT CREATES DIFFICULTY FOR THOSE SEEKING TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“And Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! “For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”” (Luke 18:24–25, NASB95)

Slide 9

1. Wealth has a tendency to create an absorbing desire for more.

a. We think that having more wealth will bring us the satisfaction we seek.

b. However, it was Solomon himself, the richest king to ever sit upon the

throne in Jerusalem, who said, “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

9a

2. There is a certain deceitfulness to wealth.
 - a. In his parable of the sower, Jesus said “the deceitfulness of riches choke the word” so that “it becomes unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22).
 - b. Wealth has the ability to deceive us into thinking we don’t need anything else (i.e. the rich fool, Luke 12:16-21)

“Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry” (Luke 12:19).

9b

3. Wealth can harden our hearts and make us selfish.
 - a. While God may have blessed us financially and put us in a position to help others, if we are not careful, we may close our hearts toward those in need.
 - b. This was God’s complaint against Israel during the days of the prophet Amos: “Hear this, you who trample the needy, to do away with the humble of the land, saying, “When will the new moon be over, So that we may sell grain, And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat market, To make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, And to cheat with dishonest scales, So as to buy the helpless for money And the needy for a pair of sandals, And that we may sell the refuse of the wheat?”” (Amos 8:4–6, NASB95)

Slide 10**B. THE ONE QUESTION WE SHOULD ALL ASK**

“Then who can be saved?” (Luke 18:26).

1. This was the question asked by those in the crowd that day when they heard what Jesus said about the difficulty of the wealthy to enter the kingdom of

God.

2. It is the question that each of us should ask ourselves today.
3. Even as we ask it, we must hear what Jesus says in response: “The things that are impossible with people are possible with God” (Luke 12:27).
4. You and I cannot acquire eternal life on our own nor can we enter the kingdom of God through our own abilities — it is humanly impossible.
5. Only when we realize this, only when we become like a child — helpless and dependent — do we open the door to divine possibility.
6. When Jesus promised His disciples in the upper room that He was going to prepare a place for them and that He would come back and receive them to Himself, so that where He is, there they might be also, He added, “you know the way where I am going” (John 14:3,4).
7. Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” (John 14:5).
8. Jesus said to him, “ I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).

Conclusion

1. It is impossible for us to inherit eternal life on our own.
2. We cannot and will not enter the gates of Heaven through our own effort or merit.
3. Only through Jesus Christ do we have any hope of entering that home of the redeemed.
4. Will you come to Jesus today?