

Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler

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[0:00] In there, we'll be spending most of our time in Luke 18 and the passages before that. At this time in the book of Luke, Jesus is coming to the end of his ministry.

He is definitely faced towards Jerusalem. Him and the disciples are headed that way. And he has some urgent things still that he wants the disciples to know, particularly concerning salvation and how men are to be saved.

And so today in our passage in Luke 18, starting in verse 18, we have a narrative account.

Something that actually happened. This is not a parable, but something that happened.

And Jesus uses this again to teach his disciples about salvation. Starting in verse 18, it says, A certain ruler asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Why do you call me good? Jesus answered. No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony.

[1:10] Honor your father and mother. All these I have kept since I was a boy, he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

Then come follow me. When he heard this, he became very sad because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

Indeed, 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. Those who heard him asked, Who then can be saved?

Jesus replied, What is impossible with men is possible with God. Peter said to him, We have left all we had to follow you. I tell you the truth, Jesus said to them.

No one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and in the age to come eternal life.

[2:08] So this is a pretty intriguing passage, and it's one that's found in all three of what we call the synoptic gospels. It's found in Matthew 19 and also in Mark 10.

And this guy comes, he has a good question. It's one that's, you know, if we had one question to ask Jesus and knew that we would get the truth, this is probably as good a question as you could ask of Jesus.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? It's not the first time we've heard this question. You guys remember a few months back, Samir preached out of Luke chapter 10 when a lawyer came up trying to trap Jesus, and he asked the same question, What must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus asked him, and he gave the commandments, and then Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. This young man seems to be coming with a different agenda on his mind.

By looking at all three passages, we've learned a little bit about who this young man is. First, in Matthew, we learn that he's young. It doesn't mention that in Luke here, but in Matthew, it talks about a young man coming to Jesus.

[3:17] Here in Luke, we see that he's a ruler, and therefore, we get that part from the Gospel of Luke. And then all three of them talk about the man's wealth. In the interchange there, it says that he went away sad because he was very wealthy.

So we take all that together and we put it together, and we have the rich young ruler. Even though he's not called that in any of the passages, he's known as that because of the three passages put together. We also know a few other things about this young man.

He comes in Mark. It talks about him running up to Jesus and kneeling before him. So we know that he has this question. He's very eager to know the answer. He has a question that has to be answered.

Again, Jesus has been ministering in this area for a few years, and perhaps this man has heard Jesus' teaching, and he's finally come to the conclusion that if anybody knows the answer to this question, it's got to be Jesus.

And so I have to have this question answered. And so we would say he's an eager young man. We also would say that he's reverent. In Mark, it also talks about him running up to Jesus and kneeling before him to ask this question.

[4:21] And so he's acknowledging that Jesus has some authority and he has some weight to him. I mean, even in his address to Jesus, he calls him good teacher.

That's not something that was normally called of the teachers at that time. The rabbis certainly were people that were asked questions, but they generally wouldn't call them good teacher. It would be like teacher or rabbi or something like that.

And like I said, he seems to have a very different agenda. When some of these rulers and people from the area, like the Pharisees and the scribes who come to question Jesus, they came trying to trap him.

This man has a different purpose. He needs to know the answer to this question. And so we see him coming up and asking Jesus this question, and we immediately think to ourselves, if any of us have done any evangelism, this looks like a pretty good prospect.

He's a hot lead. He wants to know right away. And so we have to ask ourselves then why he asked this question. Out of all the questions, again, that he could ask Jesus, he chose this one.

[5:28] And like I said, I think it's a good question and an important question. But apparently there was something in him that was needing an answer to this question. I mean, apparently he was looking for some type of peace or joy or just assurance, assured hope in something.

But definitely something was missing in him. You know, he had the wealth. He was a man of position. We don't know exactly what it means to be a ruler, that Luke calls him, but very possibly he was a ruler in the local synagogue or possibly part of the Sanhedrin or something like that. We tend to think he was part of the Jewish community there, probably not a Roman. Just in his familiarity with Jesus and in the way he asks his questions, he seems to be familiar with the commandments.

So he's probably a local Jewish ruler, and that would kind of limit things in that time since they were under the rule of Rome. So he's looking for something.

And like I said, he seems to be familiar with Jesus and also with the Old Testament. It kind of brings to mind, perhaps you've heard some quotes.

[6:35] St. Augustine, he talked about men being restless until they find their rest in God. And Blaise Pascal, he talked about men having a God-shaped hole in their heart and that only God could fill that.

And so this man seemed to have that sense about him. He had all these things. There was money in the position. He even seemed to have an upright moral character about him. And yet all this did not satisfy him.

There was still something missing. And so he asked this question about inheriting eternal life. And so what is he asking for there? What is this eternal life? To understand that, we really need to, again, Jesus talks much about eternal life, and he talks about the kingdom of God.

And these two terms are used interchangeably, even in these passages that we're looking at. And so it's talking about something that is more of a quality than a quantity of life.

Often times we think of eternal life, and we think of that time after we die that we are going to live forever. And it's either going to be eternal life, or it's going to be eternal death. And that's what this young man seems to understand, that difference.

[7:45] He understands that there's something missing, and he wants that eternal life. But again, it's more of a quality thing. Before the fall of Adam, when Adam and Eve sinned and were banished from the Garden of Eden, men had perfect fellowship with God.

They were able to commune with him and enjoy his presence, have joy in his presence, just to talk to him and walk with him, and just fellowship and commune with God.

After the fall, we are no longer able to do that. The Bible says that we are spiritually dead, so we don't have this ability to commune and fellowship with God and to seek after him.

And so the Jews, they understood this, and they believed that God was eventually going to restore all things, as he promised. And they begin to think of that as the age to come.

They were looking back to that age before the fall, and now they're in this period where because of our sin and our deadness, we are no longer able to fellowship and commune with God.

[8:46] And so they're looking for the time when God would restore things and bring about that age to come when we would have, again, that fellowship and communion with God. And so they even talked about it as being that divine life, that they could participate in God's life, that life free from sin.

It's free from just the bindings of sin and free from the bindings of time even. And it's an eternal life that God possesses, and yet he's going to impart that with us as well.

And this is what the Jews became to think of. Jesus even tells us it's something more than just living forever. He talked in John 3, Nicodemus came and Jesus began to talk to him about the kingdom of God and how one had to be born again to be a part of this kingdom of God.

So he's talking about a different life than we currently are living. And so he's showing that, and this is what they believed, it's much more than living for a long time. And it's about living in a world like God dwells in and being able to communicate and commune and fellowship with him and just experience life the way God intended us to.

So that is behind what his question is. When he says, you know, how do I inherit this eternal life? He's asking for more than something, just life after death. He's looking for something much greater than that.

[10:12] And so then Jesus begins to answer him in kind of a strange way. He asks the man a question right off the bat. Why do you call me good?

Jesus answers. He doesn't give him a chance to respond to this, but Jesus is doing something here. Again, he's not just answering the man's question directly, but he's trying to show him something.

And I also would encourage you to remember that the disciples are watching this very closely. And so Jesus is showing them something as well, as the way he goes about dialoguing with this young man and answering his questions.

And so Jesus is, first off, he's saying, why do you call me good? Only, no one is good except God alone. And he's trying to show him that this young man, that he has a, in a sense, a wrong perception of what good is.

He, like most of us, tend to think of good as a relative term. You know, we keep most of the commandments. We only break a few. We tend to think of that as good.

[11:13] Or, you know, we're better than that person who, you know, has murdered five people or five million people or whatever. We're better than them. Therefore, we can call ourselves good.

But Jesus is saying that this is not how God views good. When we talk about God being good, it's something totally different than that. Only God is good. All the rest of us, because we have sinned, because we have fallen short of God's standard, have fallen short of giving him glory, we are not good.

We are evil in all that we do. And that's what Jesus is trying to, first and foremost, get to, because he knows where this is going. And he knows that this man is not seeing this rightly.

And probably thinks of himself as good. And he wants, right off the bat, to communicate to this young man that you're not good. And he's beginning to systematically kind of take apart this man's foundation for why he perhaps believes that he's very close to eternal life.

So he begins by talking about that. Why do you call me good? And like I say, he doesn't give him a chance to respond, because he's just trying to make a point there. But then he goes right into, in a sense, answering this man's question.

[12:27] And again, he does it in a way that perhaps we would not think to do. Again, if you've done any evangelism, somebody comes up and asks you this question, you're going to have, you know, you've got a ready answer.

You know, oh man, he's wanting eternal life, he's wanting salvation. He just needs to believe in Jesus and be saved. And we tend to oversimplify it. But again, Jesus knows this man's heart, and he knows that this man is not actually seeking what he seems to be seeking.

He's seeking something different. And so Jesus doesn't say any of the things that we would say. He doesn't say, whosoever calls on the Lord shall be saved. He doesn't say what Paul said to the Philippian jailer, believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

Jesus could have quoted Isaiah 55, 6 through 7. It says, seek the Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. And let him return to the Lord, and he will have compassion on him. And to our Lord, to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. So we have all these things he could draw on. And we've seen Jesus already in the Gospels.

[13:34] He talks about if anyone thirsts, come to me, and I will satisfy. He says things like, I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And so when he comes to this answer and he tells the man, you know the commandments.

Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony. Honor your father and mother. That doesn't seem like Jesus is preaching a gospel. It sounds like he's preaching law here.

That somehow this man could be saved by keeping the commandments perfectly. Again, that's not something where we would go. We tend to emphasize, oh, no, salvation is a free gift.

You don't have to do anything to earn salvation. You have to just believe. And, you know, we want to emphasize that free gift so often because, you know, that'll hook them. That'll draw them in.

Everybody wants something free. And eternal life, that sounds like something really good. So we offer them that and think that, wow, you know, they want that. Surprise, surprise. Who doesn't want something free?

[14:35] And then so we just kind of lead them through a prayer and, well, you know, kind of pronounce them as saved. But Jesus is saying that it's not always as it appears. He's going to dig a little deeper into this man's heart and show these things, show us some things about so-called seekers.

And we say, you know, Jesus believes all those things that I just said. You know, those are all perfectly true. And like I said, Jesus pronounced some of these things himself in that it's just believe and you will be saved.

But, and he's believing those things. And at the same time, we can say that just because he tells this man, you know, do these commandments, keep these and you'll be saved. He's not distorting the gospel.

Again, he's using the law in a different way. He's not using the law to show this man how to be saved. But in a sense, he's using the law as the way Paul describes it in Galatians 3.24 as a tutor to teach us that we need to be saved.

He's using the law for that purpose. Romans 7 through 13 says, The law is good. It is holy. And the law helps us to know what sin is.

[15:43] So, again, he's telling these to this man so that he can see the incredibly high standard that is required by God and also see the impossibility for any man to keep that standard.

Jesus wants this man to see that he had broken God's laws and was a sinner. This man was not coming with that posture to Jesus. He's coming with, see what I have, see all the good things that I have done.

What else do I need to do to have eternal life? And Jesus is saying this is not the right posture to come to God in. And we'll look at that a little bit more. But Jesus knows that this is not going to save this man.

But what he wants to do, again, is to show this man that he has broken God's law and is a sinner. Paul says the same thing in Galatians 3.10 through 14. He says, In fact, anyone who does try to keep the law actually is under a curse.

And only Jesus can redeem us from that curse. And it's by faith that we gain that eternal life. So Jesus shares God's law with this ruler. And the young ruler says, at first, he says, he has kept the law.

[17:00] So in his mind, again, he's not thinking that he's guilty. And I'm probably looking at these externals of the five that Jesus mentioned in this passage. He probably thinks, I have been faithful to my wife if he's married.

I haven't committed adultery. I haven't murdered anybody. I've never stolen. He's a very rich man. Why would he need to steal? Perhaps he has honored his father and mother. Perhaps he hasn't given false testimony. And externally, all these things he probably has kept. If he had been at the Sermon on the Mount, he might have heard Jesus talk more about how these things come from the heart.

And begin to have a take place in the heart that we break these commandments. When Jesus says, you have heard it said, thou shalt not murder. But I tell you, if you hate your brother, you have murdered him already.

And he would say things like, if you lust after a woman, you have already committed adultery. And so Jesus gets much more internal. And we might expect him to do that here.

[17:59] To kind of like, okay, we've got to bring this down so that we can see that this is at a heart level. But he lets the man just give his response. I've kept all these commandments since I was a boy.

In verse 21 it says that. All these I have kept since I was a boy. But I suspect that if he knows about Jesus' teachings, he probably knows there's something more there.

And he still is waiting for the answer from Jesus. Because this hasn't satisfied him. He hasn't received this assurance that, oh, I've kept all these, therefore I must be inheriting eternal life. There's still something missing in his heart. So he needs more. And then Jesus kind of goes right for the kill on this one. And he says to the man, you still lack one thing.

Sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me. So Jesus doesn't deal with whether he had actually faithfully kept those five commandments or not.

[19:04] He now goes for the most foundational commandment that there is in the first commandment in the Ten Commandments. He knew that this man was not convinced that he was a sinner here.

And he knew the heart of this young man. And so instead of going over these, he goes right to it and basically is showing this man that his possessions are a god to him. We see his response says, when he heard this, he became very sad because he was a man of great wealth.

And it talks about in the other passages about him walking away with sadness. So Jesus says, in a sense, successfully demonstrated to him that he had a different god.

He was not ready to serve God the way the first commandment said to have no other gods before the one true god. He had this god of possessions. And so Jesus, by giving him this requirement, knowing that he will not do it, he shows that he has this one basic commandment that he has broken.

Essentially the first commandment, as the lawyer had talked about in Luke chapter 10, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. This man was not doing that.

[20:22] And I think it's interesting that he went away sad. There was a sense in that he knew Jesus had the authority to command that and to say, to follow me.

And he went away sad. You've got to think that if he just disagreed with Jesus that this wasn't the right thing to do, he would get mad and just kind of dismiss Jesus. But the fact that he went away sad gives us a sense that he knows that that's true, and yet he can't do it.

He's not going to be able to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. And that's what Jesus begins to tell to the disciples. First of all, we see this command of Jesus telling this man, you need to sell all you have and give to the poor and then follow me.

And we see from Scripture that that's not a requirement to be saved. I mean, there's plenty of other people, accounts in the Scriptures where Jesus pronounced people saved on the basis of their faith.

If you look just over in Luke 19, we're not going to read through that passage, or perhaps you're familiar with the passage where Zacchaeus, the tax collector, he has Jesus over to his house.

[21:34] And Jesus just coming to his house causes this man to have such joy that he wants to, in a sense, make up for the sins that he committed. He's going to repay all the money that he had stolen.

He's going to begin to do things to help the poor. It says that he sold half his possessions. And Jesus declares that salvation has come to this house.

He didn't sell all his possessions. He hasn't sold anything yet. He's just saying, I'm going to sell half my possessions. I'm going to repay what I've taken. But Jesus says salvation has come to this house today based on the change that he saw in this man's life.

He was turning from what he had formerly done as a wicked tax collector and defrauding people and lying to people and stealing from people. And now he's turned into a person that wants to do what Jesus wants him to do in repaying that and following after him.

And so it's not a requirement that he do all this, but it's definitely a demonstration that there has been repentance in the heart of Zacchaeus. And Jesus is able to say salvation has come to this house.

[22:38] And there's other people that come to Jesus and demonstrate faith in various ways, like the centurion who demonstrates a knowledge of authority. And Jesus says, this is such great faith I haven't seen in the whole country of Israel.

And we get a sense that this man is saved and others are saved on the basis of their faith. They didn't have to sell all their possessions. But at the same time, there are times where Jesus requires some people.

You need to, he'll say things, you need to deny yourself. You have to take up your cross and follow me. You know, he gives an example of where some people come up with excuses as to why they can't follow Jesus.

And he basically says, you know, depart from me. You're not ready to follow me if you're not ready to give up your family and your possessions and all these things. And he's not saying that those things are requirements, but those would definitely be demonstrations of repentance.

And that's what he's asking from this rich young ruler. So I just want to make sure that you understand that this is not what was required. What's required is that we worship God first and put him first, that all these other things become secondary, lesser priorities.

[23:47] None of us, to my knowledge here, have been asked to give up our family in order to be saved. But there are countries in this world where that's, in a sense, what these people are being asked to do.

For Muslims to become Christians in some nations, they're going to have to give up their families. Some of them are going to have to give up their jobs. It's going to cost them a lot to become Christians.

It might cost them everything. It might cost them their lives. But that is certainly not the requirement in order to be saved. It might be something that will happen to these people.

And that will be an opportunity for them to demonstrate repentance and that they're willing to pay this cost. And so we see that though this is not a requirement, it's certainly within Jesus' right to demand everything that we have.

If we are going to follow him and confess him as Lord and King, everything we have is his. Our lives, our possessions, our reputations, everything belongs to him.

[24:47] And so this is part of what this man understands, is that Jesus has this right to demand this, and he leaves with sadness. Again, showing two things. I think showing that he understands what Jesus is saying, but also showing that he has an idol in his heart.

There's something that he is worshiping before the true and living God. They're, like I said, violating the first commandment, to have no other gods before God.

And so he leaves in sadness and walks away. And Jesus can see the sadness on him. Oop, I'm going to turn the page and lost my spot.

Okay. So Jesus, in verse 24 now, this is where Jesus really is turning his attention to the disciples and teaching them and trying to explain to them what has just happened and what they should be taking away from this.

And Jesus looked at him and said, How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

[25:53] So he has this great illustration just showing how hard it is. And in fact, it's impossible for men to be saved, for these rich men to be saved.

And it's actually impossible for men to be saved. And so he's trying to teach this to the disciples. And he has this illustration of trying to get a camel through the eye of a needle. It's impossible. It's just not going to happen.

And the same way, a rich man in and of himself is not going to enter the kingdom of God. And you'll see that. That's kind of where he uses that interchangeably. The young man asked, How do I inherit eternal life?

And Jesus now is talking about entering the kingdom of God, just showing that those two things are the same. When Jesus is talking about these, he's meeting the same things. And so this prompts a question to be asked.

Who then can be saved? And Jesus hears this question. These people hear this, and they ask perhaps amongst themselves, perhaps to Jesus directly, Who can be saved?

[26:52] You know, they looked at this young man. He's rich, wealthy. He's got the position. He's a ruler, you know, perhaps in the local synagogue. He has everything going for him.

You know, they just heard, in a sense, how he testified to being morally upright, that he's kept all the commandments. And again, they're looking at this young man and just thinking, if he can't be saved, who can be saved?

You know, in that culture, wealth especially, was viewed as a blessing from God. If you were wealthy, you were blessed by God. And so they're looking at someone, and they're thinking, man, he's got extreme blessing from God, and yet he's not going to enter the kingdom of God.

Who can be saved if he can't? And so Jesus takes this opportunity again to teach, and he just makes this statement. Verse 27, Jesus replied, What is impossible with men is possible with God. And so we've got to understand, why is this so hard? Why is it impossible for men to enter the kingdom of God? And we have to understand, again, what Jesus was showing, is that there is a heart there that has a defect.

[28:08] It's dead. It cannot worship the one true God. And Jesus, in his teachings throughout the Gospels, he talks about men needing new hearts. He's saying out of the heart is where the sin comes from.

So that's where it comes out, and that's what causes us to be dead and are unable to come to God. That's why he talked about, again, to Nicodemus in John 3, you have to be born again. You have to have this new life, this new heart that can follow after God, that can worship God as he ought.

And so we see over and over again in Scripture, way back in the Old Testament, it was prophesied even in Ezekiel that God is going to come, and he's going to sprinkle with water and cleanse people's lives and give them new hearts, hearts that can serve God and follow after him.

And so Jesus is building on this and just showing them that, again, the disciples is like, salvation is all of God. This is not anything that man can accomplish on his own. He needs a new heart.

[29:11] He needs something done in his life so that he can come to God and repent of these things and follow after Jesus. And so we see this and then Peter says to him, kind of a strange statement.

He says, we have left all we had to follow you. I'm not really sure what Peter's getting at. He's saying, well, are you sure about that, Jesus? Because we came to you and, you know, I'm not sure if he's just trying to get some pat on the head, like, yeah, you did a good thing, Peter.

But Jesus just keeps going and showing him that, again, salvation is all of God. He says, I tell you the truth, Jesus said to them, no one who has left home, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and in the age to come, eternal life.

So in a sense, he's saying to Peter, you know, God has given you all these things. You've brought, yeah, you've brought what you have and you've given it to God, but it's like, you know, complaining about spending a dollar and hitting 500 million on the lottery.

Look what I had to spend in order to win this 500 million dollars. It's nothing in comparison to what God has done and what God is doing in this life and in the life to come.

[30:32] Again, that eternal life encompasses all of that from that moment that we come to Jesus and in faith. He gives us that new heart and at the same time, a new life that is able to fellowship with God and commune with him and follow after Jesus in that.

And so we see that he's just, all through this passage, just trying to show these disciples and the people who are listening that salvation is a work of God. You have to come to him knowing that we are unable to follow him apart from the work of God and all the blessings that follow are God just pouring out goodness and multitudes of things into our life.

Again, not in response, not because of anything we have done, but because of what God has done in our lives. So how do we respond in this if we're unable?

Jesus gives us some teaching. Again, this is right in the middle of a section, right before Jesus is going to Jerusalem to be crucified. And so he's got some intense teaching going on here that he's doing with these disciples.

And right before this in Luke chapter 18, we have a couple of passages that help to demonstrate a little more of the proper response to God.

[31:49] Right after this, we see, I talked about the passage with Zacchaeus where, again, Jesus is showing this is the way people are to respond to God. There's going to be a change. There's going to be repentance.

But here, and before this in Luke 18, he has a couple little parables and another little narrative passage that kind of show of what coming to God is going to look like.

So if you want to just back up a little bit there in Luke 18 to verse 9, it says, Jesus is directing this parable to some who are confident in their own righteousness.

It says, to some who are confident in their own righteousness and look down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable. Two men went up to the temple to pray. One a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself. God, I thank you that I am not like other men, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and I give a tenth of all I get.

[32:49] Then we also have this tax collector who's there. He's in the distance and he says, the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven but beat his breast and said, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

I tell you that this man rather than the other went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

And so we're seeing kind of a contrast here already. We saw the passage where that rich young ruler came and we can see that he came more like the Pharisees. He came talking about himself of what he had done.

or at least we sense that he's thinking I have done these things. I have great wealth. I have this position. I think I'm pretty close to eternal life. I just need one more thing.

What good thing do I need to do to get eternal life? And then we have this tax collector and he's more of a demonstration of how this man should have come.

[33:49] He should have come just knowing I'm an idolater. I love my possessions. I love my position. I love the power I have, the prestige. And I know this is an offense to God.

These are keeping me from him. I need God's mercy. And so this tax collector these were the these were kind of considered the lowest in society.

These were men who were considered traitors to the Jews in that they served the Roman occupying government there. They would collect the taxes and the Romans really didn't care how they went about it and so they would they could do it in the most wicked ways possible of collecting way more taxes than they needed to of defrauding the people in any way they could but basically they were considered the worst sinners of the people at that time.

So when Jesus talked about a tax collector that's what the people would think oh he's a bad guy. He's just full of sin and wickedness. There's no hope for him but the way he came to God the posture that he had of beating his breast and just saying God have mercy on me a sinner I'm a wicked sinner and I am totally in need of God's mercy.

Jesus is in that Richard Young Ruler passage showing this is the posture that that man should have come to. He's just basically again telling me he told this parable to people who were trusting in their righteousness and he's just showing them that being righteous and their righteousness was according to their own standards not to God's standards.

[35:24] He's not talking about people who are righteous according to God's standards but their own righteousness. They thought themselves righteous because of the way they conducted their lives.

Perhaps they thought well we go to the temple every week we pay our tithe you know like they said I fast twice a week I give a tenth of all I get. There's so many religious things that we do these days. We give our offerings who come to the worship service there's many that believe that's enough that's the good works that they are doing and they believe themselves to be righteous. Some people just because they're not involved in certain types of sins you know I don't do drugs I don't get drunk I'm not immoral I'm not cheating on my taxes so therefore I'm righteous I'm doing things the right way.

Also maybe some just because of the type of church they go to you know I go to a Lutheran church or a Baptist church or you know a Buddhist church whatever just belong to a Bible believing church whatever it is they equate that with righteousness and think I do these things therefore I'm righteous but understand these are all man's standards this is their own righteousness they've declared themselves righteous God has not declared them righteous according to their standards his standards none of them are righteous.

we do these good deeds to make ourselves look righteous but they come from a sinful heart and they're offensive to God they have selfish motives involved in trying to make ourselves righteous and that is just compounding the wickedness that we have.

[36:59] If we get into this conundrum of trying to do enough good works to please God you never know when you have enough there is nowhere in scripture that says this is how many good works you must do to enter the kingdom of heaven.

I mean Jesus set that standard pretty high you have to keep all the commandments perfectly. A few years ago I had some Jehovah's Witnesses come to the door and the first I didn't want to talk to them Jasmine had been they had been coming during the week and having talks with Jasmine and so this was like I think it was a holiday like Labor Day and of course they don't like celebrating holidays so they go out and do some door to door and you know they came to our door and I was like I don't want to deal with them I was busy doing something but Jasmine invited them and she had been regularly talking to them and somehow they drew me into the story into the conversation and they told me I needed to do good works to be saved and I asked the lady I said well how many because I don't want to do more than I have to and she's just kind of like what I'm like I understand I've got to do some good works to be saved but how many do I have to do you know can you show me in scripture you know just where the line is

I just want to kind of ease over the line and you know be saved that way and she just didn't know what to do with me really but she took me to another passage in Matthew where Jesus talks about good trees producing good fruit and bad trees producing bad fruit and she said here don't you see you need to produce good fruit and I said okay so you're saying I'm a bad tree and she's like yeah I said so how do I produce good fruit and she's just like I'm like how do I become a good tree and she goes well you do good you produce good fruit I said but I'm a bad tree I produce bad fruit how can I produce good fruit and when you get into that works righteousness there's no assurance you don't know where the line is you don't know have I done enough good works have I done too many bad works and you realize there's nothing in scripture that will show you where that line is because the line is way high only Jesus has kept it and everybody else falls short whether you've done one sin or a billion sins you still fall short you're a sinner condemned by God and that's his standard and so we are all in need of mercy just like that tax collector he's no more wicked than we are apart from God we are all fall way short of God's standard then Jesus has another story there right after that in Luke starting in verse 18 verse 15 it says people were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him

touch them when the disciples saw this they rebuked them but Jesus called the children to him and said let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these

I tell you the truth anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it and so we hear again we're seeing an aspect of how do we come to Jesus and this one's kind of troublesome because we don't really know exactly what Jesus is saying and he's come as a little child you know some people have suggested well maybe you know children are pretty humble maybe we gotta go in humility and I'm like I don't know I have a two year old and there's nothing humble about him as you know at times if he doesn't get what he wants he would kill you if he could he gets that angry he wants his way so bad so I'm not sure that there's a humility there that we want to emulate in children and same thing you know people will say like well children have such pure faith and the reality is children will believe anything they are very gullible it's not a faith based on knowledge it's just you know it's one of the conundrums of doing

Sunday school and evangelism with children is that it's very easy to get them to pray a prayer if that's what you're aiming for if you can you know there's so many vacation bible schools and things like that where their whole goal is to get that child to pray a prayer and then kind of like pat them on the head and oh good you've inherited eternal life and these kids can grow up thinking that and they're believing a lie because they haven't repented of their sin and followed after Jesus so but one thing that we do see in here is that people were bringing the babies to Jesus there was a common Jewish practice for the parents to bring their one year olds usually to the local rabbis or to a local official to receive blessings and these parents were bringing these helpless children to Jesus and wanting blessings from him and I think that's more the aspect of what Jesus is going after here that these are helpless children they're coming to God helplessly they're actually being brought to God they're being brought to Jesus in much the same way we have to be brought to Jesus we are helpless to go there we won't seek after him apart from a work being done and so we see these two aspects of how these people came the tax collector he comes just in search of mercy and coming like a baby is just coming with helplessness

[42:19] God I cannot change myself only you can do that and we come to him looking for that eternal life and so as we close today I just want to pray that some of you are feeling restless perhaps maybe you know that you don't yet have eternal life and like this rich young ruler you need to have that question answered what do I have to do to have it I just want to say I know you're in need of God's mercy all of us are in need of God's mercy and all of us are helpless to do anything about it but I believe that today like those helpless infants that the parents were bringing to Jesus God has brought you here today he has brought you here to hear from his son and I'm just telling you that Jesus today he's asking the same thing he's asking to repent and believe and I'm telling you too he's asking you to do something that's impossible for you to do but with God all things are possible and so even as Jesus would tell there's a passage in Mark where Jesus tells a paralytic this man's never walked before his friends had to come and lower him down through a hole in the roof and Jesus tells the man rise up take your pad and leave he asked the man to do the impossible but the man immediately rose up rolled up his pad and left the same time that Jesus asks you to do the impossible he gives you the ability to do the impossible he will give you a heart that can repent of your sins and follow after him he will help you to turn from those false gods of possessions and power and pleasure and to follow him and so he's asking you to do the impossible but let me tell you it's possible with him perhaps there's also some here today that think they believe but are really trusting in themselves they're like the Pharisees they have this pile of good works that that's what they're trusting in and I just ask you today to ask these questions where is your hope when you ask why do I have eternal life do you immediately start listing off a list of things that you have done or do you think immediately of what God has done for you in your life do you know

God's peace and rest are you looking for that one more thing to help me have assurance that I have eternal life I know that God will not let you have that rest if you are not fully trusting in him so if you're having that lack of peace and lack of rest about that please ask God to what is it that is keeping me from Christ and come to him again helpless to change but knowing that we are in need of change we are great sinners in need of salvation I know there's some of you that are already following Jesus and we just give praise to God and rejoice that he did the impossible for us that he has made us a disciple and yet at the same time he calls us to make more disciples so we need to spend a lot of time like those disciples just meditating on those passages of how a person is saved and what a right way to come to God is we need to be finding those lost and bringing to Jesus just the way that the parents brought their helpless children to Jesus and then we just kind of like Jesus to try to help them understand their need for a savior and point them to Jesus who is the way the truth and the life so let me pray for us now dear heavenly father again I just do give you thanks that you do save sinners father that as we follow after Jesus and see the way he lived his life father and as we follow him all the way to the cross and we see that place where where Jesus was crucified and died for our sins father and then we continue to follow and we see him raised from the dead with victory over sin and death father and we see that he is who he says he is the lord Jesus Christ and the one whom we should follow and worship father we just thank you for making that known to us father I also just pray for those this morning who who you have caused to hear the gospel preached father as they you cause them to see your son as the one who calls people to repentance and belief father I pray that you help them now help give them hearts that they might come and repent of their sins and turn to Jesus father again we just thank you for this time pray to you continue as we sing in worship to help just empower our worship to you as it is due father I thank you that just pray that you would again by your spirit cause your words that they're here in the scriptures to have power in people's lives to change them power to just cause your disciples to do the work that you have called us to in making disciples father but in all these things we rejoice that you are great that you love us and that you are full of mercy towards sinners let's pray these things in Jesus name amen