

## Luke 18C

- As we go back into Chapter 18 today, we will rejoin a conversation that Jesus is having with the disciples concerning the nature of saving faith
  - The last piece of this conversation concerned a rich young ruler who walked away sad because he couldn't bring himself to meet the test for eternal life that Jesus presented to him
    - This man presumed he could be worthy of eternal life because of his righteous living
    - But Jesus pointedly illustrates that his life wasn't nearly as perfect as the man assumed it was
      - Jesus says if your heart's desire is truly to seek after the kingdom, then sell all that you have and follow me
      - Obviously, Jesus wasn't giving a recipe for earning our salvation (e.g., those who sell everything get automatic entrance into heaven)
      - Rather, it was a matter of repentance
  - Before we can receive the Messiah as our salvation, we must first reject all other forms
    - Our belief in the Messiah must be an exclusive allegiance
    - We cannot hold Jesus to be important and necessary while still holding to other things, including material wealth, as essential
    - Christ and His call on our life must reign supreme, above all else, or we are merely playing religion
    - This man was playing religion, as we studied last week
    - He was hoping to gain assurance from Jesus that he had discovered the magic formula and was going to receive his reward
    - But Jesus threw him a curveball
      - Jesus said if you honestly desire the kingdom, then do away with the one thing that stands in your way in your heart

- But the man couldn't do it
  - Because the unregenerated man can't change his own heart, and his heart will betray him
  - SO the man walked away sad
- Then the disciples exclaimed, "Who can be saved?"
  - Because if this upstanding member of society couldn't meet the test, who could?
  - Jesus answers that for a man to find salvation on his own is impossible, but by God a man might be saved
  - Which leads us to tonight's starting point

[Luke 18:28](#) ¶ Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own *homes* and followed You."  
[Luke 18:29](#) And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,  
[Luke 18:30](#) who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

- As usual good ole Peter speaks up to defend himself and the group
  - He says we've left our homes and followed you, Jesus
    - That opening word, behold, is such a Biblical term,
    - In fact the NIV just ignores it
    - but it's really exactly the same as a word that many of you would use to begin your own sentences
    - Especially when you're trying to make a point emphatically, as Peter is doing here
      - The word in Greek is *idou*, but it can also be translated look
      - So you could translate, "Look, we've left our homes..."

- It should be pretty easy for all of us to see why prompted Peter to make this exclamation here
  - In listening to Jesus teaching, Peter may not have understood all that Jesus was teaching but he made one connection
    - He heard Jesus say that his rich man who couldn't bear to part with all that he owned was not going to inherit eternal life
    - And you can almost see the wheels turning in Peter's mind
      - If being unwilling to part with your possessions leaves a person in jeopardy, then I better clarify something with Jesus
  - So Peter says we've given everything up...
    - To which he hopes Jesus will respond that's he's safe
- Can you imagine a smile on Jesus' face as he hears Peter's words?
  - I think Jesus was understanding of Peter's concerns and wanted to allay them
  - But perhaps Jesus was also a bit amused at Peter's rush to exonerate himself
    - Jesus responds with an answer that both satisfies Peter's concerns and gives him something new to think about
- Once again, the topic here revolves around the nature of saving faith
  - In this case, the sacrifices and rewards that come with true faith
- Jesus says that those who make sacrifices in this age for the sake of the kingdom will be vindicated
  - Look at the list
    - House
      - Give up the security and comfort of a home, a permanent place to live
    - Wife
      - This doesn't mean leaving a wife as in divorce

- It either means leaving the opportunity of marriage or the separation that might be required to perform ministry
- Brothers, parents, children
  - While this may also refer to separations due to ministry work
  - I believe its greater meaning is to be found in the separations that occur over the gospel itself
    - Our belief in the gospel and our desire to obey Christ results in division within the family, just as Jesus promised it would
    - This is often the kind of sacrifice we must be willing to make if necessary to follow Christ
- Consider all that Jesus is suggesting here
  - To the rich man, Jesus had demanded that the man's wealth could not stand in the way of his obedience
  - And not because Jesus hates rich men
    - But because for that ruler, his riches took precedence in his heart over the call of the Gospel
    - The gospel is an all or nothing proposition
      - If we are truly believers in the Gospel and have our hope for eternal life in Christ, then we would never trade it away for anything found in this world
      - Hebrews puts it this way

[Heb. 3:14](#) For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

- Hebrews says that the definition of one who is a partaker of Christ (a believer in the Gospel) is one who holds fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end
- Those who show an initial interest in the Gospel some way and even make a confession of faith

- but later find reason to move on to some new hope are giving proof that their initial confession was false
- Jesus tells the man that he must demonstrate his true reliance and trust in Jesus to inherit eternal life by dispossessing himself of all he owned
  - For that man, this was the test necessary to prove his heart true
  - And as Jesus knew would happen, the test merely proved the man's interest in Jesus to be insincere
- But to those who are truly in the faith, then we should expect that at times we may be called to dispossess ourselves of something that stands in the way of our complete trust in and obedience to Christ
  - Things like our possessions and security
  - Like our opportunities for a spouse
  - Or our opportunities for close family relationships, if necessary
    - Remember Paul teaching to the church in Corinth

[1Cor. 7:29](#) But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;

[1Cor. 7:30](#) and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess;

[1Cor. 7:31](#) and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

- Paul describes our time on this earth as a time that has been shortened
  - He's speaking about urgency in our lives
    - The New Testament is abundantly clear that we should look for Christ's return on any day
    - Or at the very least we should consider that everyday is our last day of life
    - And that urgency should compel us to stop living a normal life

- We should live a radically different life
- Though we may be married, we should live as though we are not married
  - In the context of chapter 7 of 1Cor it becomes clear that Paul is talking about the demands and distractions that come with marriage
  - Though we have commands to love our spouse and perform our duties in marriage
    - We cannot use those obligations as excuse for not obeying Christ's call to be a disciple
- Similarly, look at Paul's other examples
  - Those who weep must live as those who do not weep
    - Which means we cannot use our sorrows in life as an excuse or a barrier to discipleship and obedience
  - Even when we have reason to rejoice, we should live as one without rejoicing
    - We can't let our triumphs in life distract us away from our calling in response to the Gospel
  - Nor can we let our possessions become our distraction
  - And Paul sums it up this way
    - Even though we must live in and use this world to accomplish the mission God has given us
    - We cannot live as though it is this world that matters to us
      - It must not matter to us except as we can use it to accomplish God's desires through us
      - For as Paul reminds us, this current form of the world is passing away
      - It is not meant nor can it last
- So Jesus confirms for Peter the fact that they (and we) are going to be called upon to make sacrifices like that rich man for our faith

- When we make necessary sacrifices, the reward will be great
- And it will come in two forms
  - Jesus ends with the comment that these sacrifices are ultimately rewarded with eternal life
  - Remember, this was the implied concern that Peter had
    - So Jesus makes sure to provide Peter with the reassurance he sought
    - When you makes these kind of sacrifices, you are demonstrated a heart that is true to the Lord
      - You are not earning salvation
      - But you are giving evidence of it
- But interesting, Jesus also mentions that these sacrifices will result in compensation even now in this age
  - What would such compensation look like?
    - How are we supplied with a house or a wife or family?
- Well I believe there are distinct parallels in the life of a believer to the list Jesus offers
  - Consider that our fellowship with other believers will bring us into the family of God
  - And in this family, we will have the deep abiding love that the world longs for and seeks through marriage and normal family experiences
    - The love of other believers
    - The emotional and even material support of each other within the family of God
    - The instruction of old women with young women
    - The iron sharpening iron of elders and younger men
    - And most importantly, the spiritual support or prayer and encouragement of one believer for another

- And each case, the depth and meaning of these relationships will far exceed what is possible among unbelievers, even within natural families and marriages
  - But of course, these kind of compensating benefits are only fully realized for those who would give priority to gathering together in fellowship
    - It's like the phrase we get out what we put in
    - If we treat our church relationships as merely a social club with people we visit once or twice a week, then we should expect to miss out on much of what Jesus is promising here
- But having reassured Peter, Jesus then turns to his third warning about his coming death

[Luke 18:31](#) ¶ Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.

[Luke 18:32](#) “For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon,

[Luke 18:33](#) and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.”

[Luke 18:34](#) But the disciples understood none of these things, and *the meaning of* this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

- As I mentioned earlier, this is not the first time Jesus has spoken of his coming death
  - In fact, in all three of the synoptic gospels, Jesus predicts his death three separate times
    - In Luke, we see Jesus mention the necessity of his death first in chapter 9, when he departs for Jerusalem
    - Later in Chapter 9 Jesus warns the disciples again
    - And then here in 18 we see the most detailed prediction of the event



- What's so interesting in all three cases, and particularly here, is that the disciples can't understand the reference
  - What makes this fact so interesting here is that the prediction is so specific and plain spoken
  - How can these guys not follow what Jesus is saying?
    - Well, the text tells us
    - It says that it was hidden from them
    - In fact, in the second warning we also saw Luke comment that the meaning of the warning was concealed
- So what's going on here? Why give warnings but then conceal their meaning?
- Well, we covered this in detail when it first came up Chapter 9, so I won't repeat it all now, but I will remind you of the basic issue
  - The point in giving the disciples this information is not so that they may understand the future
    - Self-evidently, if the information was given but the meaning was hidden, then the reason it was given cannot be so that they might understand the future
    - So what other reason would God give men information like this without the understanding?
      - The same reason God gave men his word in the scriptures yet did not give men the ability to understand all of it immediately
  - Many places in scripture were only to be understood many generations after they were given to men
    - Many of the prophecies of Jesus weren't understandable until after His crucifixion
    - Many of the prophecies of Israel could only be understood after Jesus was rejected and the temple was destroyed

- Many of the prophecies of the end times could only be understood completely once Israel was made a nation again in 1948
- In other words, God will often give men His word without immediate understanding because He desires to reveal it in a future day
  - And then when it is revealed, it's truth is made even more powerful when we recognize that it was given beforehand
  - God's ability to reveal the future and yet do so in such a way that we don't understand it until he's ready to reveal it to us magnifies his sovereignty and trustworthiness
  - Consider what Jesus does at the very end of Luke's gospel

[Luke 24:44](#) ¶ Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

[Luke 24:45](#) Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

[Luke 24:46](#) and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

[Luke 24:47](#) and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

[Luke 24:48](#) "You are witnesses of these things.

- In other words, when the time was right, Jesus was able to refer back to the things He had spoken earlier to these men and demonstrate to them that all is going according to plan
  - And what's more, the fact that God could predict it in advance only served to reinforce the trustworthiness of Jesus' words to them

- Finally, Luke ends this chapter on faith with a story of a blind man

[Luke 18:35](#) ¶ As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging.

[Luke 18:36](#) Now hearing a crowd going by, he *began* to inquire what this was.

[Luke 18:37](#) They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

[Luke 18:38](#) And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[Luke 18:39](#) Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[Luke 18:40](#) And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him; and when he came near, He questioned him,

[Luke 18:41](#) “What do you want Me to do for you?” And he said, “Lord, *I want* to regain my sight!”

[Luke 18:42](#) And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.”

[Luke 18:43](#) Immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.

- Luke records this incident to provide a capstone to this chapter on faith
  - The story itself is very simple and straightforward though there are couple of issues to mention
    - Luke tells of a blind man met on the way into Jericho
    - But in Mark’s and Matt’s accounts, the blind man is met on the way out of Jericho
    - And in Matt’s account there are two men
  - Well the issue of one man verse two is not unusual
    - It’s not uncommon for one gospel writer to focus on one character in a situation while ignoring others that were included by a different gospel writer
      - Matt choose to record both men while Mark and Luke chose to focus on only one
      - With Mark even going so far as to name one of the men as Bartimaeus
  - The second issue of arriving or leaving Jericho is answered more than likely by the fact that in Jesus’ day there were actually two Jerechos
    - There was the old city, the original ruins of Jericho mentioned in Joshua
    - Then there was the modern town of Jericho where the population actually lives
    - They were very near one another and the road to Jerusalem connected the two
      - So you walked out of one to enter another

- So if the blind men were sitting on the road between the cities, then one writer could say enter Jericho while the other said leaving Jericho and both would be correct
- But to the content of the account itself, as I said, it's very straightforward
  - As Luke tells it, a man is blind and sitting on the road
    - He hears the crowd passing by and hears that the crowd is following Jesus
    - Having heard that Jesus is nearby, the man cries out for Jesus to notice him and have mercy
    - For some reason the crowd tries to silence him, especially those who are leading the crowd
      - It's likely that the leaders in this case were the Pharisees who were always trailing Jesus anywhere he went
      - And they would have been in the place of honor within the crowd, at the front
      - And they didn't appreciate it anytime someone called out to Jesus as the Messiah
      - In fact, their objection to his calls is probably our best proof that the blind man's calls were a proclamation that Jesus was the Messiah
    - Despite the leader's objections – or may be because of them- Jesus takes note of the man, calls him to himself, and asks him to state his desire
    - The man says I want my sight
    - And Jesus heals him physically and spiritually, saying your faith has made you well
    - Finally, the man immediately follows Jesus, giving God glory and causing the people to give praise to God
- A simple story,
  - So simple, in fact, we are tempted to skip over it perhaps
    - Or see it as just another example of Jesus healing the needy

- But consider the story a little more closely
  - Place it in the context of a chapter organized around the nature and manner of saving faith
  - And then consider the story as a perfect picture of how God does the impossible – saves men
- First, consider we have a blind man – a man who cannot see
  - This man represents every sinner, a man who is spiritually blind to the truth and without hope
  - And then his attention is drawn to something new, and hears of Jesus, the Christ
    - And as Paul teaches us in his letter to the Romans, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ

[John 5:25](#) “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will **live**.”

- And hearing that Jesus is near, the sinner cries out for mercy
  - But even as he does, the unbelieving world will work to thwart the sinners response to the Gospel
- Then Jesus takes note of the sinner and calls him to Himself
  - For ultimately, every saved sinner is called into a relationship with God by God Himself through the Holy Spirit
- Then Jesus poses the question that every sinner must answer – what do you expect of Jesus
  - Rom 10:9 - if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved
- The sinner asks to be healed, have his sight, to see with spiritual eyes
  - To which Jesus responds positively, for whoever asks shall receive
- Then having his request answered, the sinner immediate becomes a follower of Jesus

- As all believers are called and expected to do
  - And then the eternal purpose of the sinner's salvation is made clear
    - The sinner gives glory to God for his salvation
    - And his renewed life and testimony to the world results in the crowds giving glory to God
- This is the gospel played out in a simple vignette to end Luke's 18<sup>th</sup> chapter
  - How fitting that Luke would place this event at the end of chapter that illuminates the nature and manner of salvation
  - Does this pattern sound familiar to you? As a believer, you should see yourself in this story and chapter
  - And if you don't?