

To Whom Does the Kingdom of God Belong (Part 2)

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[0:00] Take your Bibles then this morning, would you?

! And open them to Luke chapter 18. We're making our way through this chapter. Luke chapter 18 in our text, the larger text, we started to look at this last Sunday, going to finish it up today, is verses 15 through 30.

So Luke 18, verses 15 through 30, so follow along in your Bibles as I read it. They also brought infants to him that he might touch them, that means to bless them.

But when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him and said, Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God.

Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. Now a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

[1:23] And so Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. You know the commandments. Do not commit adultery.

Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother. And he said, All these things I have kept from my youth. So when Jesus heard these things, he said to him, You still lack one thing.

Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

And when Jesus said, or when Jesus saw that he became, saw that, he became very sorrowful, he said, How hard it is for those who have riches 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. And those who heard it said, Who then can be saved?

[2:24] But he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. And Peter said, See, we have left all and followed you. And so he said to them, Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who shall not receive many times more in this present time and in the age to come eternal life.

All right. Now, if you were here last week, you know that this is the kind of the second installment in a two-part series out of this particular passage.

And I've entitled it, To Whom Does the Kingdom of God Belong? Or as I said last week, the alternate title, it might be, Of Babies and Billionaires. I think that's probably a pretty good title.

Now, last week, we looked at the babies, the babies that were brought to Jesus for a blessing. And this morning, we're going to look at the billionaire, the rich man.

And his story begins with verse 18. And his introduction to Jesus comes in the form of a query. He asks, Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

[3:44] So he begins with a question. We can just kind of imagine the setting. He just kind of walks up to Jesus. Maybe he's been in the crowd all along. Really, by the way, a crowd that started way back there, first part of chapter 17, maybe even beyond that.

And he walks up to Jesus and asks a question. Now, in case you're thinking or you have the impression that all these stories are just kind of disconnected, you know, here in Luke 18.

They don't really have anything to do with one another. The Pharisee and the publican, which we looked at, I think, three weeks ago. Last week, the baby's being brought to Jesus for a blessing.

And now this morning, the rich ruler that has come to Jesus to ask a question. Now, they may seem unconnected. It may seem like they don't have anything to do with one another.

And I talked a little bit about this last week. In case you're thinking that Luke has kind of just pieced together, you know, a bunch of unrelated narratives.

[4:49] And that this, you know, the appearance of this rich ruler is kind of, and with his question, kind of out of the clear blue or something like that. In case you're thinking that. Let me, again, just fill you in on how all this fits together.

It's important to see that. I mean, when you're studying the Bible, you, especially the Gospels, you want to take note how everything fits together, that there is a stream of thought, even though it is a narrative and not like a letter that, like Paul would have written.

You would expect there to be a theme or a kind of flow of thought in a letter, but there's also a flow of thought and everything fits together here in the Gospels. So let me just share with you once again about how all of this fits together.

See, the parable of the Pharisee and the publican is the beginning of, really the beginning of a thread that ties all three stories together.

It identifies for us what is the core issue. Now, even before I tell you what that is, the larger subject, really that starts way before the story of the publican, Pharisee and the publican.

[6:05] The larger kind of theme is the kingdom of God. Remember, we've been talking about that. But these three stories are tied together with a core issue and that issue is justification.

Justification. That theological word justification. Now, we're not reading something into that. This is what Jesus says at the very beginning with that very first story. The issue is justification or to put it in the form of a question, how can one be declared just with God?

Or, we could say it this way, right with God. How can one be declared right? Right with a holy God. That is the question.

And so, you see, the parable of the Pharisee and the publican begs for an answer to that question. How can one be declared just before God? How can one be right, eternally right, with God?

And Jesus said in the parable, and we studied again, studied this several weeks ago, the publican, he said the publican, that tax collector, went down to his house, what?

[7:22] Justified. justified rather than the other. And the other being, of course, the Pharisee. And the question is how? How can one be declared justified before God?

That's what gets this whole thing started, and all of these three stories are tied in with that. Even though the questions become a little bit different with each of the three stories, it's still the same question.

How can one be right with God? And so it all comes down to that. It comes down to one standing with God or before God.

How do you stand with Him? You ought to ask yourself that question. Hopefully you can answer it. How do you stand with God? Do you stand before Him justified?

Not perfect, not sinless, it's not that at all. It is what God has declared you to be. How do you stand before God? You see, justification speaks of one's standing with God.

[8:27] It's not something that you gradually become, it's not some work that is ongoing process, it's not like sanctification where we participate with God in our maturing in the faith, becoming more like Christ.

It is an act of God to justify you, to put you in a place before Him where you're right with Him. justification says that as you stand before God, you, or rather He sees you as though you had never, ever sinned.

That's pretty, pretty incredible. I'm not talking about who you are and the reality of your life. You and I continue to be sinners, but we're talking about a standing before God that God places you in, declares you to be just.

He sees you as though you had never, ever sinned. Not just sinned and repented, but as though you had never sinned. And really, we're going to add to that, He sees you, God chooses by His grace to see you as though you had always perfectly obeyed every word of this book.

Now, that's pretty incredible. Now, the question is, how can I have that kind of standing before God? And this is what Jesus is teaching. Way back there with the Pharisee and the publican, the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.

[9:57] How can one stand right with God? Well, the answer right off the bat is only by the grace and mercy of God. Only by the grace of God that extends mercy to the sinner.

That's what the parable of the Pharisee and the publican teaches us. The publican, remember, what did he pray? He prayed, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

The Pharisee's bringing to God all of his good things. I do this and I don't do that and I'm not like that guy. But the publican says, have mercy upon me.

That's all he's got. That's all he can bring is a plea for the mercy of God. And what did Jesus say about the publican? He said, that man went home justified.

Justified. All right, then, who will receive that mercy of God? As we kind of go along in the stories, who is it that receives that kind of mercy?

[10:57] Well, only those who receive the kingdom as a little child. That's what the second story reveals to us. It's still the same issue. Those who receive the kingdom as a little child.

That's the story of the babies being brought to Jesus for blessing. That's what that story teaches us. Jesus said, let the little children come to me.

He said, don't hinder them. For of such is the kingdom of God. Of such. Not for these as the kingdom, but of such is the kingdom of God.

He said, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.

That's what Jesus said. And so the idea, of course, the truth is that all little children possess a certain quality that Jesus says is essential for anyone to be justified before him.

For anyone to be saved, to enter into the kingdom of God. And what is that certain quality that all children share?

[12:03] We talked about this last week. It is helplessness. It is utter helplessness. And this is the way we must acknowledge that like little children, just like little children, we have no status of our own, no standing before God on our own, no standing with which to deserve entrance into his kingdom, and no standing whatsoever.

And like little children, in the analogy that Jesus uses, we have no strength. We're helpless in our strength. We have no strength, you know, with which to lay hold of, to secure for ourselves eternal life or the kingdom of God, entrance into the kingdom of God.

And then, like children, we have no service to offer. We have no good works, no good works with which to earn, to earn entrance into the kingdom of God.

We studied all that last week, and I'm kind of reviewing, so I can not only tie all three stories together, but also see how all of this leads us to this third story.

Because we have essentially the same issue in the third story in this series, the story of the rich ruler. It's really the same thing that Jesus is teaching. And the issue there is, what must one do to inherit eternal life?

[13:22] That's the issue, and we're going to consider that question here this morning, but essentially, it's the same, same issue. How a person stands right with God.

How a person stands just, justified before God, to be declared justified, to receive the kingdom of God, to inherit eternal life, all talking about the same thing, same thing.

All right, so let's consider the rich ruler. Last week, we looked at the story of the babies being brought to Jesus for a blessing, and in that story, Jesus revealed those received into the kingdom. Those received into the kingdom. That was our subject last week. And now this morning, as we look at the rich ruler, Jesus reveals those rejected from the kingdom.

those rejected from the king. So now we go from the babies to the billionaire. The rich man and the babies, of course, were representative of those who are received into the kingdom and the billionaire is representative of those who are rejected from the kingdom.

[14:44] See how it ties together. All right, so let's begin with just who this man is or was. I'm not alive today. Who was he, this man, in the story?

Well, number one, notice his first-rate identity. I mean, this guy had a really first-rate identity, and we need to see that because this is important to the story, important to what Jesus is ultimately going to teach us in this story.

His first-rate identity. Now think about it. What do we know about him according to what Luke has recorded here and also bring into play the parallel accounts of this same story in Matthew and Mark, and I'll mention those as we go along.

But what does the Bible teach us about this man? Well, first of all, he was a ruler. That's the first thing that we see in the story here as recorded by Luke. He was a ruler.

A ruler. Now, not a monarch kind of ruler. He was not a king, and not really a kind of civil ruler. He was not a governor or something like that.

[15:56] But he was a religious ruler. And that was very important in the society, the culture of the Jews. He was a religious ruler or leader.

He was very likely the ruler of the local synagogue. And perhaps even a member of the Sanhedrin. We don't really know. Luke doesn't elaborate on that.

But he was a ruler. And this would be the kind of ruler that he was. And by virtue of that, he would be a very visible man in the community. Very visible, very respected, very revered within the society and the community of the day.

And that's important to note. And that's why Luke is giving us that little bit of information. This guy was up here in the eyes of the people. And so he was a ruler. Second, and you really have to look further down in the text to see this, but he was rich.

All right? He was a rich man. In verse 23, Luke reveals that this man was very rich. That's what Luke said, very rich.

[17:01] At least that's how it's translated in the New King James. And really, that's to put it a bit mildly because the word Luke used actually means exceedingly rich.

He was exceedingly rich. In fact, the New American Standard, if you have that particular version, ESV also, they kind of get it better, I think. He was extremely rich.

All right? So that's the idea. This guy was filthy rich. A ruler, a filthy rich man. I don't mean filthy in a bad sense.

It's all right to be rich. I've heard, I guess. But, you know, this guy was really, really rich. And, you know, it's interesting to note, rather, that according to Matthew's account, in Matthew chapter 19 verse 22, he was a young rich ruler, a young rich man.

All right? Now, I'm not giving you another quality. I'm just trying to emphasize the significance of the fact that he was rich or maybe give a little bit more explanation. He was a young rich man, young rich man, which means that he very likely was the heir of his wealth.

[18:14] probably the heir of a very wealthy estate, a wealthy family in the community, which I think means that all he has ever known in his life is wealth, affluence, you know, kind of raised with the silver spoon in his mouth.

This was, that's the kind of guy we have here. Now, what else do we know? Well, third, and this is getting us closer to the most significant point about him, and that is he was religious.

And when I say that, I mean seriously religious. He was serious about his religion. Now, just put aside the fact that religion usually has a negative connotation.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about his commitment to the faith, his faith. He's very religious. He was a dedicated worshiper of the one true God.

He was not an idolater in his religion. He was dedicated to Yahweh God, the one true God, and this man was a dedicated keeper of God's word, God's law, which would have included, of course, the Ten Commandments, the moral code, or the moral laws.

[19:33] It would have also included the civil laws, which are detailed in Scripture as well in the Old Testament. It would have also included the ceremonial laws, like the feasts and the food laws and the ritual cleansings and all of those kind of things.

This man was seriously dedicated to the law of God. Now, remember, he is a ruler. He's a ruler, probably of the local synagogue, again, as I said.

And as a spiritual leader in his community, he was a worship leader, a worship leader in his community.

We would call him a good man and mean it. We would call him a spiritual man. We would have a great deal of respect for this man if he were a member of our church.

I can't emphasize that enough. I talked about this way back several weeks ago when we were talking about the Pharisees and a particular Pharisee that had come to Jesus.

[20:40] Get the idea that this guy was some kind of overtly evil man or even covertly evil. He was very religious, a spiritual man, committed to the word of God.

He was committed to the faith. He was a man of honesty and integrity in his community. He was a man who stood far above almost everyone else in the community.

You might be thinking, well, pastor, aren't you kind of overstating this a little bit, maybe reading a little bit into this? I don't think so. And the reason I can say that is because of how the disciples responded to something Jesus said a little bit later in the passage.

In fact, look at verse 24. Jesus said how hard it is. This was right after his dialogue with the rich ruler and after the rich ruler left sad, you know, and he left unsaved.

And Jesus said in verse 24, how hard it is for those who have riches 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.

[21:50] And we're familiar with that passage. And we'll talk more about that a little bit later. But how did the disciples respond to that? Well, verse 25, and those who heard it, by the way, Mark and Matthew tell us it was the disciples who said this, those who heard, the disciples who heard what Jesus just said, they asked what?

who then can be saved? Who can be saved? Now, this is an important question. And it lets you know that the disciples are thinking, if it is that hard for this guy to be saved, then who in the world can be saved?

That's what they're saying. If this guy can't make it, this spiritual leader in Israel, this worship leader, this honest man, this exemplar ruler in the synagogue, if this guy can't make it, then who on God's green earth can make it?

That's the idea. Of course, you see, man's evaluation doesn't really count, does it? Not really. God is the one who knows the heart and Jesus knows the heart of this man.

So he's a ruler, he's rich, he's religious. We can know something else here, too. He was respectful. Respectful.

[23:25] I mean, genuinely respectful toward Jesus. He respected him. I believe he honored him. See, he's not coming to Jesus trying to trick him, trap him.

We have a similar story back in Luke 10 where a ruler comes and a lawyer comes and he asks an important question, a valid question, but he does so with the intent of tripping Jesus up.

But that's not the case here. He respected Jesus. He approached Jesus by saying, good teacher. And I don't believe he's paying some kind of lip service here.

I think he meant it. Good teacher. He was showing Jesus respect, he said, and honor here. He was saying, in effect, I know that you are someone I can trust with this question, the question I have.

And I'm coming to you because I value your answer. that's what we should understand here. He was not Jesus' enemy, as so many of the Jewish leaders were of that day.

[24:38] Let me tell you something else about him. He was resolute, resolute in his desire as he approached Jesus.

In what he desired from, he was very resolute, he was resolved to have an answer to this. It was the burning question of his life, and he really meant it, and he also was very resolute in that Jesus was the one who could answer this question for him.

We have to go to Mark's account, I think, of this same story in order to see this. In Mark chapter 10 verse 17, Mark tells us that he fell on his knees before Jesus.

That's pretty serious, isn't it? I mean, it tells us quite a bit about this man, doesn't it? Fell down to his knees before Jesus and asked this question.

And it makes you kind of want to ask, at least at this point, how could this guy not make it into heaven? His identity, and it's a first-class, first-rate identity, man's At least from man's perspective.

[26:00] Second, his forthright inquiry, his forthright inquiry, the rich young ruler asked a very forthright question.

He asked, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Now, before you start poking holes in that question, making some conclusions about what's behind that question and what it might reveal about this man's heart, you should know that this is a valid question.

On the face of it, it's not a terrible question. It's a good question. It's a valid question. By the way, it was the same question that the people asked Peter on the day of Pentecost. Remember, after Peter preached that mighty sermon in Acts chapter 2, and they came to him, they almost shouted in one accord, men and brethren, what shall we do?

It's the same question. What shall we do? And it was the same question, by the way, that the jailer asked Paul and Silas when God shook open the prison doors.

Remember, the jailer goes out looking for his prisoners thinking they had escaped. In fact, he's about to end his own life because his prisoners had escaped. But there, Paul and Silas are sitting in their cells, you know, even though the door is wide open.

[27:19] And the jailer asked the question, remember, sirs, what must I do to be saved? It's not a wrong question, it's a good question, really, it's a valid question.

And in each case where the question is asked, the answer addresses the one big flaw in the question. And there is a flaw in the question.

Because it is never about doing, doing something. It is always about believing in what has already been done by Jesus at the cross.

And so when the crowd asked the question, Peter answers how? He says, repent! Turn to Christ! And when the jailer asked the question of Paul, Paul said, believe!

Believe on Jesus. And so what was Jesus' answer to the ruler? Who asked the same question? What was his answer to him?

[28:22] Well, in this story, Jesus has to crush this man's self-evaluation first. And that's exactly what he does. But the point at this juncture is, this rich, young, ruler of the Jews, highly respected Jew, this guy was looking for really that one good work that would put him in solid with God.

That's what he was looking for. Right? Please, good teacher, tell me what it is. He had all kinds of good works and they were important to him, but maybe there's just one more.

What's that one thing I must do to have eternal life, to make sure of it, to be in with God? Tell me what I must do to inherit eternal life. So, it's a forthright question.

Third, notice his fatal inaccuracy. His fatal inaccuracy. And this is really amazing. You know, surely you've noticed as you've read through the Gospels and you have read the accounts of Jesus' interaction with people and dialogue with people and how Jesus kind of led the conversation and how Jesus is so masterful at exposing the true condition of the heart and Jesus could do that. You and I can't do that. Don't you wish sometimes you could just, you know, talk to sinners and answer their objections in the way that Jesus did? The problem is he knows their heart and you and I don't know the heart of any individual.

[30:02] We don't even know our own hearts. But Jesus was such a master of this. So pay attention very closely here. Verse 18. Look at it. You've got to look at this closely because it helps you understand why Jesus took the approach that he did with this man.

Because we have all kinds of questions about how Jesus approached the man's question. Because you and I can't approach the question this way. We'll be misunderstood. But Jesus is getting at something.

So he has a certain method here. A certain approach. And if we don't see this we'll misunderstand his approach. So look at verse 18 again. How did the man address Jesus?

How did he address him? Good teacher. That's what he said. And again he meant that. Alright so he said good teacher. And then he asked this question. And then verse 19 how did Jesus respond? Well he said why do you call me good? No one is good but one that is God. That's how he responded. Now I mean right off why would Jesus respond that way?

[31:13] I mean that seems a little bit harsh. A little bit hard on the guy. I mean he's sincere. This guy's coming. He's complimentary of Jesus. He's being very respectful of Jesus. And he addressed him as good teacher.

And it was respectful. I mean why would Jesus then respond by saying why do you call me good? No one's good but God.

Well you have to understand Jesus' approach here. Kind of his end game what he's trying to do here. And so after he says no one is good but God he then asked the man if he knows the commandments if he has kept all the commandments.

That's the next thing he says. And what does the man answer? He says all these things I have kept from my youth. Are you catching on yet?

Run through that again. The man says good teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus says no one is good except God.

[32:23] And by the way have you kept all the commandments? And then he names a bunch of them. And the man responds yes yes I have all of them all the time.

I am good. good. I am good. Gotcha. Gotcha.

Didn't you hear what Jesus said? No one is good but God. No one is good but God. Do you see what Jesus did to this man's evaluation of himself?

himself. He's getting down to the heart of the problem. He's drawn this man out. Unmasked his self-righteousness. Exposed his fatal inaccuracy about the true way to salvation.

That is he's a good person. He's a commandment keeper. He is a worshiper of Yahweh. He's the kind of person who deserves to inherit eternal life.

[33 : 27] That's what this man thinks. Right? Well, I think so. And so what does Jesus do about this man's fatal error in theology?

Well, he shows the rich young ruler that he is actually a lawbreaker. He's a lawbreaker, not a lawkeeper. He obliterates this man's self-righteousness and his faith in it.

He destroys the one thing this man is trusting. His works. And how he does that is really quite interesting.

So fourth, I want you to see his faithless idolatry. We're talking about this rich young ruler here. his faithless idolatry.

Verse 22, So when Jesus heard these things, he said to him, you still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me.

[34 : 41] All right? What? This is where we kind of have trouble here. we're trying to interpret what Jesus is saying to this man and apply what he said to this man to every other situation, every other person.

We can't do that. At least not take Jesus' approach and read something into that about salvation and the way of salvation and apply that to all cases, make it normative for all things.

You can't do that. You got to follow along with Jesus' approach and so discover what he's trying to do with this man and what he's identifying in this man and it is that that you can apply, of course, to every other situation.

Not the method, but the reality of the human heart. And so is Jesus saying, yes, you've kept all the commandments. Is that what he's saying? He didn't refute it?

Not openly. So is he saying, you know, you're right, you've kept all the commandments, but there's something more that you must do in order to have eternal life, to inherit eternal life.

[35 : 55] You must sell everything you have and give it to the poor and follow me. You say, well, that's exactly what it says. Is that what it says? Is Jesus saying the way to eternal life is keep all the commandments and give everything you have to the poor and become my disciple.

Is that what he's saying? That's the way to salvation? If so, there hasn't been a Christian on this planet since Jesus was here. Because no one can do this.

I can't, you can't, Billy Graham can't. We can go back to the Apostle Paul, you know, number one Christian in most people's minds.

He didn't do this. Because no one can. If that is what Jesus means, if that is what is required for eternal life, then we're all in big trouble.

Every one of us here need to be saved, if that's what Jesus meant. Good news, of course, is that that is not what Jesus means. So what does he mean? Well, it's really very simple, actually.

[37 : 15] He's revealing, this is what Jesus is doing, he's revealing this man's idolatry. His idolatry, which is something deep into the very core of his life, the man's heart.

He worships his money. He worships his money. And that is a violation of both the letter and the spirit of God's law, the Ten Commandments.

And so in effect, Jesus is saying, or asking, do you love God more than anything? Do you love God more than anything? That's what he's asking. Okay, I'll prove that you don't.

That's what he's doing. I'll prove that you don't. Sell everything you have and give it to the poor and follow me, worship me. And what happens next is the proof that Jesus hit the mark.

Verse 23, but when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. he proved that he was a law breaker, not a law keeper, and therefore he was lost, unjustified before God.

[38 : 36] He needed a Savior. Let me ask you something just for sake of argument. What if this rich ruler had done exactly what Jesus told him to do? You know, sell everything he had.

What if he did that? Became one of Jesus' disciples. Would he then be saved? Would he then inherit eternal life? Not necessarily so.

Not just on the basis of that. And to think that is to miss the point Jesus is making about how one enters into the kingdom of God. I was listening to a sermon on this particular passage and I love the

way this particular preacher put it.

How it would have changed everything. And let me just quote him. It's what he said. He said, you know how this conversation should have gone.

It should have gone this way. Good teacher, I have a very important question I want to ask you. It's a question I think about all the time.

[39 : 46] How may I inherit eternal life? What must I do to inherit eternal life? Why do you call me good? Only God is good.

You're right. You're right teacher. You're right. Only God is good. Well, have you kept the commandments? You know, don't murder, don't steal, don't commit adultery, don't bear false witness, honor your father and mother.

Oh teacher, no. I haven't. I haven't kept those commandments. I've tried. I've tried really hard.

There are those who say that I'm a very upstanding man and I've tried to be a godly man but I know that I have broken every single one of those commandments and if that's the way to eternal life, then I'm not saved.

I'm not saved. I'm lost. Help me. That's the way it should have gone.

[40 : 53] And that's the only right way it can go. Very much like the publican. Publican is the example, the tax collector who prayed, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

But it didn't go that way, did it? And just like the Pharisee in that story, in that parable back there, this rich ruler went home unjustified.

Lost. Verse 24 says, and when Jesus saw that, he became very sorrowful. In fact, Mark's account says that Jesus loved this man.

Mark's That's why some have supposed to conjecture that maybe this man was Mark. He wasn't saved this day, but saved at some other point.

I don't know about that. I do know that it says that Jesus loved him. He loved this man. And then he said, how hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God?

[42 : 12] For it is, and then this famous analogy, for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. By the way, I've done a little study on that, and you know, I've heard over the years that the eye of the needle was a kind of a gate for the city.

Have you ever heard that? Well, there's no evidence of that at all. No such gate called the eye of a needle. So I guess Jesus means a real needle. But the point of the analogy, that's the whole point. It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And the disciples said, who then can be saved?

Who can? He's the best man among us. He's the best a man can get. If he can't make it, who can? And Jesus is saying, exactly. No one can. It's impossible.

[43 : 27] That's what he means. It's impossible. For any man to be saved, rich or poor. It's impossible.

But he says in verse 27, the things which are impossible to men are possible with God. God has to do it.

God has to do it. That gets us right back to the sovereign grace and mercy of God. God has to do it. So we need to wrap this up this morning.

Those received into the kingdom. The story of the babies being brought to Jesus. Those rejected from the kingdom. The story of the rich ruler.

Went away sad because he was extremely rich. And then third, those rewarded with the kingdom. Those rewarded with the kingdom.

[44 : 26] Now, you know, leave it to Peter to say the right thing. But with the wrong spirit. Verse 28. You just got to love Peter, don't you?

He said, see? We have left all and followed you. And you know, Jesus is so gentle and gracious with Peter here, isn't he?

He could have really pounded him. But he didn't. In fact, he said in verse 29, assuredly, and actually starting that way, the implication is, yes, Peter, you have.

And Peter had. As did all the disciples. Left all. Follow Jesus. So in a sense, Jesus is affirming that. Yes, you have. But then he says, assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children for the sake of the kingdom of God.

[45 : 27] Who shall not receive many times more in this present time and in the age to come eternal life? And so just, you know, very quickly, what does Jesus say?

He's saying, Peter, yeah, you've left it all. Follow me. That's right. But Peter, what you have given up does not even come close to what you're going to get.

Not only now, but in eternity. Doesn't even compare. I put that in contrast with the rich ruler. He didn't want to give up anything.

He refused to give it up. Why? Because he loved it. And in a sense, to give it up would be like giving up his identity.

Giving up those things that he thought made him complete and fulfilled. And Jesus said, no one's ever given up anything.

[46 : 38] Even if they give up every single thing, it does not even compare to the reward of heaven.

So, you know, what you and I have here is worthless. I mean, it really is. Worthless compared to what God has in store for us there.

Vance Havner used to say, who wouldn't give up dirt for diamonds? for diamonds?