**WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH MAN IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD**

Luke 18:18-30

Key Verse 27

Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

**Introduction**



For a camel to pass through the eye of a needle is impossible. Likewise, it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom with a divided heart. With God, however, a rich man can still enter the kingdom. With man it will be impossible for anyone to enter the kingdom of God. But God makes it possible for any sinners to go to heaven through Jesus Christ. Nicodemus was one of those possible cases. A rich young ruler in this passage could have been a good candidate to fulfill another possible case, for Jesus has defeated all sins and death to give us this great hope and promise of eternal life. Jesus brings the focus back to God and his grace. What man cannot do God can do through Jesus Christ.

1, Read verses 18-21. What does the ruler’s question reveal about himself? (18) What did Jesus teach him about God? (19) What commandments did Jesus ask him about? (20) What does the ruler’s reply show about him? (21)

1-1, Read verses 18-21.

18 A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 19 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’” 21 “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.

1-2, What does the ruler’s question reveal about himself? (18)

***18 A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”***

* First of all, the certain ruler was like Nicodemus. He lived in a very hard world. But, he must have struggled hard to succeed in this world. Finally he came up to the position of being a ruler.
* His question revealed his problem, “What must I do?” Also his use of the term Good Teacher means that he sometimes thought himself good and on the same level as Jesus.
* This ruler came to Jesus to ask how to inherit eternal life. It shows that the ruler was not satisfied with fame and wealth due to his empty soul.
* Even though he was a ruler and had great wealth. He was empty inside & he did not have the assurance of his salvation.
* Though he had the whole world he had a longing for eternity. He had everything but was missing a genuine relationship with God.

Ecc 3:11 reads,

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

1-3, What did Jesus teach him about God? (19)

***19 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.***

* Here Jesus tested him whether he knew the concept of being good, and taught him about God.
* In past and present, people do not know what good is. Some people thought that some people are good.
* But when we study the Bible, we can find the fact that there is no one good except God. Only God is good.
* When Jesus asked, "Why do you call me good?" Jesus wanted to know if he really believed that only God is good.
* Psalm 135:3 says, "Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good" (135:3). Psalm 136:1 says, "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good".

1-4, What commandments did Jesus ask him about? (20)

***20 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”***

* Jesus did not ask him about the first 4 commandments concerning the love of God. But Jesus asked him about the last commandments concerning the love of his neighbors only.
* Since he did not know God well from his heart, he could not experience eternal life in his soul. Out of his desperation, he could not but come to Jesus to ask how to inherit eternal life.
* But Jesus did not condemn him, but gently taught him about God’s commandments and its meanings.
* This ruler was an educated Jew of his day, so of course he knew the commandments. Jesus could appeal to the man on this common knowledge.

1-5, What does the ruler’s reply show about him? (21)

***21 “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.***

* It is likely that he actually did keep them in a way that made him righteous in the eyes of men, in the similar sense that Paul did say in [Philippians 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/philippians/3/6/s_1106006).
* But he certainly did not keep them in the full and perfect sense in which Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount.

2. Read verses 22-25. What did Jesus ask the ruler to do? (22) How did he respond? (23) What did Jesus say based on the ruler’s response? (24) Why is it so hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? (25)

2-1, Read verses 22-25.

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.”

23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

2-2, What did Jesus ask the ruler to do? (22)

***22 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.”***

* In this verse, we learn that this ruler did everything to fulfill his selfish ambition. And superficially he obeyed the law of God, but his inner heart was selfish.
* He did not know about the love of his neighbor. So Jesus said, "You still lack one thing."
* When Jesus said, "Sell everything and give to the poor," it does not necessarily mean, in order to inherit eternal life he has to become a person as poor as a crow.
* It meant that he must have the law of God with which he can love his neighbor. John 15:13,14 says, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."
* This ruler studied the law of God. But he could not catch the spirit of the law of God. So he could not learn that he must love God, and next he must love his neighbor.
* As the ruler had tried hard to obtain his social position and money, he must have tried hard to pass the tests to become a ruler.
* But when the ruler studied the law of God, he did not master the spirit of the law of God.
* When he lived in the world as a selfish man, he did not have treasure in heaven. When Jesus commands us, "Love your neighbor," it means, by doing so, we may have treasure in heaven.
* Here, "treasure" refers to eternal life. Those who have the assurance of having eternal life are peaceful and joyful and generous and altruistic.
* Here we learn that we must have treasure in heaven. We must have eternal life. In the last part of verse 22, Jesus said, "Then come, follow me."
* Even if we have treasure in heaven, we must know why we must follow Jesus at the last part of the 20th century.
* In the course of doing the work of God, we become weary and burdened and feel no rest. But there is true rest and inner joy in Jesus.
* Matthew 11:29,30 says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
* Here, those who have treasure in heaven must take his yoke upon them and follow Jesus. Then they will find rest in their souls.
* There is true rest only in Jesus. Physical rest is not true rest. God gives us true rest in our souls.

2-3, How did he respond? (23)

***23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.***

* Truth is very costly. When Jesus uncovered this man's falsity, he had to be wise enough to make a decision of faith, being worthy to have eternal life. But he gave in to money and abandoned the truth.

2-4, What did Jesus say based on the ruler’s response? (24)

***24 Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!***

* Jesus didn’t change the demands of discipleship when the rich man walked away. He did use the man’s sorrow as an occasion to teach His disciples.
* How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! Riches are a problem because they tend to make us satisfied with this life, instead of seeking for the age to come. Also, riches are gained at the expense of seeking God.
* Clearly Jesus said that riches are an obstacle to the kingdom of God. We usually only think of poverty as a problem. Jesus told us that riches may present a much more serious problem.
* We often excuse ourselves from what Jesus says here because we don’t consider ourselves rich. Yet Americans would be considered richer than this rich young ruler was.
* This passage may remind us of Revelation 3:17-19, “ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”

2-5, Why is it so hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? (25)

***25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”***

* With this humorous image, Jesus illustrated the difficulty riches present to entering the kingdom of God. We immediately think of this as being impossible.
* We also find it hard to see how riches can hinder us from the kingdom of God. We think only of the blessing and good riches might bring.
* They had probably hoped that their following of Jesus would make them rich and influential, and prominent leaders in His Messianic government.
* In our culture, wealth was regarded as a sign of God’s blessing. Paul said to Timothy, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil... ([1 Timothy 6:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1timothy/6/9-10/s_1125009)).
* Jesus is not saying that all poor people and none of the wealthy enter the kingdom of heaven. That would exclude Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
* Jesus grieved over him. Fallen man's mentality is to grab something and try to live forever in this world. They know that they must have eternal life. But they are sad when they have to overcome their greediness and follow Jesus.
* In order to have eternal life, he must love Jesus more than the world. In order to follow Jesus, he must throw away common sense and keep even one word of God in his heart.

3. Read verses 26-30. What did people ask upon hearing Jesus’ words? (26) What was Jesus’ answer? (27) What did Peter say to Jesus? (28) What promise is given to Jesus’ true followers? (29-30)

3-1, Read verses 26-30.

26 Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

27 Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

28 Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”

29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”

3-2, What did people ask upon hearing Jesus’ words? (26)

***26 Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”***

* This verse implies that the disciples also had a strong attachment to this world like the rich ruler.

3-3, What was Jesus’ answer? (27)

***27 Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”***

* But Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." When we see the people of the world, we wonder, "Who can follow Jesus?"
* But there are many who love to follow Jesus at the cost of their lives. Also at the time of the Holy Spirit, people keep changing through the gospel message!
* When we were rejected by Bible students many times and our Bible students left without saying, “Goodbye,” we are frustrated.
* When our Bible students don’t change as much as we expected, we also despaired and we are tempted to throw in the towel.
* Even when we looked at our unchanged or unfruitfulness every year, we are discouraged. Our children who seem to spiritually blind may become our grief.
* But still salvation work in every person is possible with God. God did not change our task from college mission to different mission that seem to be easier.
* What is impossible with man is possible with God. Our college students are much like a rich young ruler. It is still possible for us to meet those who have desire to live for Jesus. Everything is possible with God! Peter like disciple candidates are waiting for us in the coming new year 2020! Thank God!

3-4, What did Peter say to Jesus? (28)

***28 Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”***

3-5, What promise is given to Jesus’ true followers? (29-30)

***29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”***

* But God has his purpose of world salvation throughout history and surely God wants to save all of them through his servants, missing no one.
* To God, salvation work is possible. Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" (28) We cannot deny that Peter lost a lot.
* But Jesus did not say, "You don't have to lose anymore." Instead, he said in verses 29-30, "'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 &, in the age to come, eternal life.'"

**Conclusion**

Today Jesus urges us to make a clear decision of faith. We must make the decision of faith and pile up treasure in heaven. Truly rich people are those who have eternal life. Truly rich people are those who have treasure in heaven. Truly joyful people are those who have eternal life. The rich ruler had fame and wealth. But he felt he was empty. He could not boldly decide to follow Jesus because of his selfishness. He was a rich man. But he was indeed a poor man and a fool. May God help us open our spiritual eyes and begin to have treasure in heaven. May God help us so that we have eternal life in Jesus Christ. May the Lord help us to increase our personal and absolute faith so that we may continue to serve God’s work in prayer and through relying on His truth in this new year.

**One word: Salvation work in 2020 is possible in our GOD!**