

## “Disillusioned about God”

### Luke 18:18-30

**Context:** The account of the rich young ruler flows from a previous parable correcting errant self-righteous attitudes of the Pharisees toward sinners like the publican. In conjunction with this correction is another which rights the disciples' faulty assumptions that demean the spiritual worth of children in God's Kingdom and God's work. Our teaching today is followed by an account of the disciples' blindness toward the price of redemption paid by Jesus and the ability of Jesus to heal such blindness, as He did on the Jericho road. These accounts fulfill Luke's purpose for this Gospel, to steady the God-lover's wobbly faith by revealing that the Kingdom of God is possible to see when God removes that which blinds us to its presence.

**Life Principle:** Disillusionment allows us to be true to one another as fact, not by our delusional ideas of one another (cf. Luke 18:19).

#### 1. Disillusioning the ruler - Luke 18:18-25

The rich ruler was under the illusion that, like Jesus, he had divine insight into the nature of good and the divine power to accomplish good and so earn his way into heaven. Jesus left the ruler disillusioned by questioning his divine moral knowledge and exposing his unyielding attachment to earthly treasure.

#### 2. Disillusioning the audience - Luke 18:26-27

The audience suffered the illusion that wealth intimated God's favor. Jesus dispelled association of the well-endowed with salvation and reveals that salvation is impossible except for the divine work of God Himself.

#### 3. Disillusioning Peter - Luke 18:28-30

Peter reacts to Jesus' declaration about the sacrifice of wealth, wondering whether what they left behind was sufficient and wondering also just what they would receive by traveling the same road of life as Jesus. Jesus' answer: “when for the purposes of God's Kingdom you let go of relationships built upon earthly illusions, you will receive God's gift of relationships in this season of salvation here and you will gain eternal life in the next.” Thus, Jesus completes His answers to the ruler's question of “what must I do.”

#### For Further Study:

- Look up the meaning of “good” in *Vine's NT Dictionary* and determine why Jesus challenged the ruler's attribution of the term to Him in Luke 18:19 (cf. <http://www2.mf.no/bibelprog/vines.pl?tofrom=g>). Why did the Rabbis of that time avoid being called “good?” What faulty ideas about personal moral knowledge and moral power did the ruler assume in his judgment of Christ's character?
- Jesus corrects the ruler's assumption of knowing “good” in Luke 18:19 because He knew that no human could ascertain the absolute “goodness” of God (cp. John 2:24). Our doctrinal statement attributes our inability to truly know good to all humanity's radically wounded sinful nature (see our **doctrinal statement 'On Mankind'** under **what we believe**, footnote 8 at <http://www.gracepointfellowship.org/files/DocStmnt.pdf> and also Romans 7:18; 3:10; Ephesians 2:3). In light of these passages, why would it be impossible for anyone to perform moral acts that assure eternal life (Luke 18:18, 27)? What is one of the actions that God takes to make salvation possible (cf. Luke 18:27; Titus 3:5)? What evidence exists that God has acted on you?
- In Luke 18:18, the ruler asks what work he could do to earn eternal life. Why did Jesus respond with the Law? Being rich is not against the Law, so why did Jesus lay that requirement at the ruler's feet (cf. Luke 18:22)? How do works relate to salvation and eternal life (cf. Luke 6:43-49; James 2:14-26; 2 Peter 1:4)? What is it that you must do to be saved (cf. Mark 9:23-24; Romans 10:9)?

#### Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Luke 18:29-30. Each morning, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that stands in the way of living a Christ-like life. Give thanks to God each evening for one Kingdom relationship you experienced that day due to God's faithfulness to His promise in Luke 18:30.