

“then who can be saved?”

Luke 18:18-34

context:

The hearers are surprised by Jesus's statement concerning the difficulty for rich people to enter the kingdom of God.

Because they had an idea about the kind of people God was saving, and if those kind of people couldn't be saved, then who?!

The rich ruler's story (Luke 18:18-34) follows two stories (Luke 18:9-17) that describe the path to salvation. Jesus' answer to who gets saved seemed easy and hopeful in those stories: it is someone who is repentant (like the tax collector crying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner") and someone who comes to Jesus dependent, like a child.

BUT WE'VE GOT TO THINK ABOUT ALL THIS A LITTLE MORE CAREFULLY BECAUSE THE REQUIREMENTS SEEM SO EASY AND WE KNOW GOD IS SO GENEROUS YET LOOKING AT THE RICH MAN REVEALS THERE IS SOMETHING THAT MAKES IT REALLY HARD FOR PEOPLE.

the question:

THE QUESTION, “THEN WHO CAN BE SAVED?”, IS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IN THE WORLD!

the answer:

“WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH MAN IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD.”

THE REQUIREMENTS:

Jesus argues that what makes salvation so hard is that it requires a **CHANGE THAT HAS TO TAKE PLACE IN YOUR HEART**, moving beyond mere external respectability to being repentant and coming to Jesus dependent, like a child. This requirement is difficult because it demands that a person submit to Jesus' instruction and become an "all in" follower, which involves banking everything on Him and accepting a complete reversal of status instead of relying on worldly prestige, power, and possessions.

THE PROBLEM:

The central problem with actually being the kind of person who is saved—repenting, humbling oneself, and depending on Jesus like a child—is that **THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH MAN**, as humans cannot accomplish the necessary change on their own. By nature, we are spiritually blind and unable to see the spiritual realities required for salvation! So, acknowledging neediness and depending on Jesus is the most difficult thing in the whole world for a person to do.

THE HOPE:

The hope for salvation, given that it is impossible for humans to achieve the necessary repentance and dependence on Jesus, **RESTS ENTIRELY ON THE FACT THAT JESUS DECLARES, "WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH MAN IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD"**. Since salvation demands a miraculous change in the heart that only God can perform, the hope lies in God's ability to make the impossible, possible, ensuring that the entire transformation is one hundred percent God.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?:

1. humility

WE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE CAN NOT APPROACH GOD WITH ACHIEVEMENTS OR WORTHINESS, BUT RATHER NEED TO COME CRYING OUT FOR HIS MERCY AND BE DEPENDENT ON JESUS LIKE A CHILD.

SALVATION REQUIRES A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN HEART—STOPPING THINKING OF OURSELVES AS A GOOD PERSON, SEEING SIN CLEARLY, RECOGNIZING JESUS AS FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN, AND VALUING HIS PROMISES ENOUGH TO ABANDON WORLDLY PURSUITS FOR HIM. THIS KIND OF CHANGE IS ONLY POSSIBLE IF GOD PERFORMS A MIRACLE!

2. gratitude

THIS NATURALLY FOLLOWS FROM THIS UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION AS A DIVINE ACT. SINCE SALVATION IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT GOD, WE OUGHT TO FEEL TRULY GRATEFUL FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE HAVING BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY GOD!

Questions for Reflection:

In what areas of my life am I still seeking to exalt myself or "go up," rather than following Jesus' direction of "going down"?

When faced with Jesus' teaching, do I approach Him as an "adult" trying to negotiate or as a "child" submitting to what He says?

What earthly possessions, honor, or comfort am I still banking on, instead of trusting in the treasures promised in heaven?

Do I truly believe that spiritual transformation (seeing Jesus and repentance) is impossible for man apart from a miracle from God?

How should the miraculous nature of my own salvation (if I am a Christian) influence my boldness and urgency in sharing the gospel with others?