

# **Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 28, The Question of Eternal Life, Luke 18:18-19:27**

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This is Dr. Daniel K. Darko in his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session number 28, The Question of Eternal Life. Luke 18:18-19:27.

Welcome back to the Biblical Element lecture series on the Gospel of Luke.

So far, we have covered a range of things, and we are continuing now from Luke chapter 18, verse 18. In the previous lecture, we saw how Jesus touched on prayer in particular and emphasized the place of the widow, the tax collector, and I ended the session talking about how infants were brought to Jesus and the disciples were trying to resist them from being able to read Jesus and Jesus used that as a lesson to show that children are supposed to be models for them to understand because theirs belongs the kingdom. Here, we look at the question of eternal life, beginning from Luke 18, verse 18, and I read the text.

And a ruler asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life and Jesus said to him why do you call me good no one is good except God alone. You know the commandments do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, and he said all these I have kept from my youth when Jesus had this, he said to him one thing you still lack sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven and come and follow me but when he had these things he became very sad for he was extremely rich Jesus seeing that he had become sad said how difficult it is for those who have wealth 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 person to enter the kingdom of God. Verse 26 those who had it said, then who can be saved? But he said what is impossible with a man is possible with God, and Peter said, see you have we have left our homes and followed you, 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 who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life. This particular account is very interesting in my view because of some parallels and some things that I will bring to your attention as we go on toward the end of this lecture.

In this lecture, we will see how Jesus deals with the wealthy and how he manages to show one who will not let some of his wealth go away and later on, in the case of Zacchaeus, how one will like to let his wealth go voluntarily. A few things to observe in this passage quickly as we move on. The first is to look at the ascription of this rich ruler to Jesus.

He calls him a good teacher. It is interesting to see that Jesus protested by saying why do you call me a good teacher? Now, to many, this will not make sense, but let me draw your attention to a few things in this passage. The guy who comes to Jesus and calls Jesus a good teacher will not ultimately listen to Jesus' instructions and will not follow them.

So, if you are Jesus and in look and plot knowing that the person is calling you a good teacher, a few things may come to mind. One may ask, is this a form of flattery? Is this guy so status-conscious that when he comes to Jesus, he thinks that he needs to put up a very big title for Jesus to make him feel good about himself, not necessarily being honest about who Jesus was? So, is it that? Is it that he's so status-conscious, or is it a form of flattery to Jesus? Is it a genuine observation that Jesus is a good teacher? The protest of Jesus does not make sense until you understand that those who recognize good teachers follow the instruction of good teachers, and this ruler will not.

So, that is one observation to be made here. The other thing to note is the position of the ruler. Olin Luke refers to this person here as rich ruler Arkon.

This same language will be used when we come to Zacchaeus later on in chapter 19 to realize that he was also a ruler of tax collectors and chief tax collector if you like. It is noteworthy because here, Jesus is trying to portray someone in a leadership role. It could be that this is a member of the Sanhedrin being referred to as a ruler in these terms.

If that is so, then he's a prominent figure. Another thing to look at is this guy's piety or religious condition. He was very devout.

Notice the things that he tells Jesus he's been doing from infancy. He has been very, very devout in his commitment to Jewish law and seems to have earned his money through good means. Nothing in this passage suggests to us that he was an excuse me, a corrupt figure, an unjust or dishonest person, but more so, the image we have is someone who is so devout to his faith conviction that he could confidently assert the things he's been following all his life.

Another thing to observe with this particular account is how Jesus challenges this young man, or this man, excuse me, because he's not referred to as young in Luke. He's referred to as young in other gospels but not in Luke. In Luke, he's simply a rich ruler.

Jesus challenges him to sell all his possessions. He demands all material possessions to be forfeited. Jesus also challenges him to give what he has to the poor, not to use it to make friends.

As we have seen in other discussions in previous lectures, we are told that this was really hard for this man because he was very rich. Jesus was trying to challenge him to give his money to the poor, and I seem to say that if he gave his possessions to the poor, he would insure himself with treasures in heaven and notice another thing that Jesus put forward here to him. He says do this when you have done that, when you have let go of your possessions with the specific and tangible audience to whom this possession should be given to the poor: come and follow me.

Discipleship then requires that he forfeits all this to come and follow him. Is Jesus asking this guy to say that perhaps if you are rich, you cannot be a disciple? No! It is very, very possible that the way he prioritizes possession in his life is what is going to get to the heart of the matter so that the one thing he requests will bring a real challenge to him. This was not an easy stuff.

You realize the reaction. The first reaction is the rich ruler himself. We are told he went away very, very sad, but it was a second reaction to the crowd of people around from whom someone said who then can be saved? This is too much! But more intriguing is Peter's third reaction. Peter said by the way, Lord, we have left this to come and follow you.

Do you understand that we have left a lot of things to come and follow you? What is it that you are demanding to be faithful disciples? You see, Jesus is asking this man to look at some serious issues in the context of Luke's gospel, where status and worth are supposed to be secondary in pursuit of the kingdom of God and where giving to the poor and needing is an integral part of how we use or we steward the resources God has given us. I must tell you that when you look at his account from the surface, you might be quick to judge this rich ruler, but may I suggest to you that you want to be very careful because there is nothing in the Jewish law that says in order to be a good follower of Yahweh, you have to sell all your possessions and give to the poor to become a faithful follower, a faithful covenant community member. No! What the man lists that he has been doing since his youth is highly commendable stuff.

He's a law-abiding pious man who has earned his worth for what it takes to do, but you see here Jesus is touching to one thing, and that one thing is perhaps it is one thing that takes priority or primacy over how he perceived life over his attitude towards life and his attitude relative to the poor and the marginalized around him. You do not want to see how much Luke wants to actually elevate the poor and the outcasts that are marginalized in society in the kingdom of God and in those who are participants and beneficiaries of the kingdom of God. The man went sad because he's been asked too much, and if he did this, he would be Jesus, and you knew that this was how the story was going to end.

I don't think it's a good way to protest the good teacher ascription. A good teacher is teaching, and he will not follow. A good teacher is calling, and he will not obey.

Instead of following note Lukan's expression, he went, and he went sad. He rather left Jesus sad because he had many possessions. That brings me to verse 31 of chapter 8. Jesus goes on to say, and taking the 12, he said to them let us go on.

Because now he has really challenged all these people. They all had questions to give him, and he answered them. He told them what is impossible is possible.

Still, you have to live a sacrificial life. In verse 31 he said and taking the 12, he said to them see we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophet will be accomplished for he will be delivered over to Gentiles and be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day, he will rise. But they understood none of this.

This saying was hidden from them, and they could not grasp what was said. Notice this passage carefully because Jesus was predicting what would happen to him in Jerusalem, and we are told they will not understand it was hidden from them, and they could not grasp it. Luke will show us an irony right after this.

First here, looking at this passage, is the son of man language. The son of man in the messianic framework is coming to Jerusalem, and as it is expected, the son of man will be delivered in Jerusalem, but more than they already know, the son of man will be mocked. The son of man will be put to shame, a language that means not much in America but means a lot in other countries.

The son of man will be put to public shame. The son of man will be humiliated to the point that people will spit on him publicly. The son of man will be reduced to nothing in the capital city.

He will be flogged. He will be who will suffer legal consequences even though he had done nothing wrong, and he will be killed, the good news is he will rise on the third day, but we are told they will not understand this. It was hidden from them.

They will not grasp or get to know it, and then Luke tells us that what the disciples will miss, someone will catch. Let's read from verse 36. And as he drew near Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging, and hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant.

They told him Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, and he cried out Jesus, son of David have mercy on me and those who were in front rebuked him telling him to be silent, but he cried out all the more son of David have mercy on me and Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him and when he came near he asked what do you want me to do for you? He said Lord, let me recover my sight and Jesus said to him recover your sight. Your faith has made you well. immediately, he recovered his sight

and followed him, glorifying him and all the people. When they saw it, they gave praise to God. Notice what is happening. Jesus spoke to the disciples.

Jesus predicted his suffering and humiliation, and the disciples could not get it. But in Lukan's irony, as he entered Jericho, a blind man who had not traveled with Jesus. A blind man who had not heard Jesus speak directly. If a blind man heard about Jesus, he would believe he would cry out for mercy, and he would understand and follow. This is fantastic stuff. When you understand what Luke is doing, you begin to understand Luke is a literal genius in the way he shows the faith of a blind man when the disciples themselves have failed to capture what Jesus is conveying. |

Luke locates this incident at the entrance of the city of Jericho. In Mark chapter 10, Mark puts it more in the city of Jericho. Luke seemed to have set this up this way so that he could tell us that the account of Zacchaeus would be taking place as Jesus left Jericho.

Notice the son of man, the son of David language. In other words, Luke is telling us that when the disciples could not grasp what was going on, the blind man, who is unnamed in this story, in Mark it is referred to as Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. This unnamed blind man identified Jesus just on his way to Jerusalem, very close by, just about 17, 14 to 17 miles away.

This man recognized him as the son of David. He cried out for mercy, and in crying out for mercy, we see his persistence will pay off. The persistence that Jesus taught in prayer, as with the widow, he will cry out for mercy and Jesus will reach out to the disciples and ask them to bring the blind man to him, and when they brought him, he would ask him, what do you want me to do for you? Think for a moment; the blind man, just before he enters Jericho, will normally be in his position to beg for some arms, to beg for some money.

What a great opportunity that you have. The Messiah is passing, and a large crowd is following him. He has just motioned and he has given you his full attention and now he asks what do you want him to do for you. If this man will say I want some money and he does put a coin in his bowl, how many people will continue to give the coin just with crowd effect? Think about that.

Think about something else. Think about the fact that this is the last time in both Luke and Mark that Jesus is going to pass through Jericho before he will be arrested and crucified. What if this man was not persistent in his cry and what if this man did not get the attention of Jesus? We are told that when he cried for mercy, Jesus will hear his cry for mercy as he employed the people to bring him people who had rebuked him to be silent.

Now, they became the messengers Jesus would use to bring him to him so that he might heal him. The result is that the blind will receive his sight. Incredible stuff! He will receive his sight, and he will glorify God, and many around him will also start glorifying God for what is happening.

Look at what Luke is doing again. The outcast, that poor beggar on the road, becomes a model of faith, a model of one who cries out for mercy, and he becomes that disciple who gets more people to now begin to glorify God for the ministry of Jesus. Well, Luke is telling you that you know what the son of David language.

We haven't seen much of it in Luke so far. Do you do you remember that? But you see, the blind beggar recognizes the son of David when the disciples cannot comprehend the predictions he forwarded or put forward to them. Luke is lifting up these socially marginalized and bringing them to the fore.

A note of the Lucan irony. One observes that the socially outcast hears and identifies the Messiah and cry out for mercy. We see the efficacy of a blind man's faith is validated as Jesus says today your faith has healed you.

We also see something here where we have a struggle of a rich ruler to follow Jesus, and disciples were even unable to understand, but a blind beggar will recognize him, believe, and follow. In Luke chapter 19, verse 1, Luke brings out another scene, a very, very important one. Another socially marginalized group, a key member in the camp of tax collectors, will be someone who will be pursuing Jesus and see results.

And I read from verse 1 that He entered Jericho and was passing through, and behold there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich, and he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd, he could not because he was small in stature. So, he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way, and when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down for I must stay at your house today.

So, he hurried and came down and received him joyfully, and when they saw it, they all grumbled he had gone to be the guest of a man who was a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, behold Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him today, salvation has come to this house since he is also a son of Abraham, for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost.

Wow! You see here Zacchaeus is a tax collector a group that is not respected among society. As I have on the screen to show you about the social status of tax collectors tax collectors no matter how rich you were you will have low social status due to the

profession one has chosen. Jews saw tax collectors as traitors because they collected taxes for the Romans.

In other words, they were agents of the Romans collecting taxes to benefit these Romans as they were at the expense of Jews. But you should not forget that Jesus will call a tax collector to join his team, Levi, in chapter 5. Jesus was criticized in chapter 15 and chapter 5 for dining with tax collectors. Even in the parable that I mentioned earlier on in a previous lecture in chapter 18 Jesus shows a contrast between a Pharisee and a tax collector to be an undeserved person.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Zacchaeus, as a tax collector, should be seen here in a very, very interesting contest. The same location where another outcast, a blind beggar, will recognize the son of David and see miracles wrought is in that same city where a tax collector will find Jesus and follow him.

Zacchaeus is mentioned with specific attributes to him in this text. He was a chief or ruler of tax collectors. A title of which we are uncertain as that specifically means.

We are told he was rich like the rich young ruler. I'm going to put on a slide, though small, that when the text says that he was small in stature, I need to clarify some of that. The word in Greek could mean that Zacchaeus was short in stature or he was young in age.

So, think about this. If you see the language of Zacchaeus to be small in stature short, then you say oh yeah, he's a short man, but if you understand that he's little in terms of his age, then Luke must be very deliberate, not calling the rich man young but characterizing the rich man in chapter 18 to be someone who may be old who could say I have done all these things since my youth and then you may find Zacchaeus rather being the rich young tax collector. But it is important to note that expression could mean that he was small in height or stature or he was young.

He was a seeker of Jesus who will later discover that he was being sought by Jesus. He would be a host of Jesus as Jesus recognizes him or finds him in a search for him and said I must be in your house today. Notice the reservation of the crowd.

They grumbled. That is the attitude of the Pharisees in chapter 15 when they saw Jesus eating with tax collectors. They did not want to see a pious rabbi engage tax collectors.

But you should know this: Zacchaeus will walk in obedience. Jesus calls him he comes. Jesus invites himself to be his guest he accepts.

While he was with Zacchaeus and his family he Zacchaeus would offer to give half of his possession and four times restitution according to some of the laws. Notice that

Zacchaeus was not prepared to give everything he had, but his heart was in the right place, and that would not be an issue. Yet again, we see Zacchaeus will have this pronouncement of salvation coming to his house.

It was immediate. Jesus said today, today salvation has come to this house. The seeker who was sought has now be found.

And so Jesus said the son of man came to seek and to save that who was lost. Whoa! Remember a sharp contrast between Zacchaeus and the rich ruler. I thought it would help you if I created a chart.

Occasionally, I try to do that. I wasn't so good in math, but I noticed that when I do chart things, it works. So, let's do one of those for these two.

I put up a chart trying to compare and contrast Zacchaeus and the rich ruler in chapter 18, verses 18 to 30. In terms of leadership roles both are mentioned in the text as rulers. The rich ruler was a ruler.

Zacchaeus was a ruler. In terms of wealth, they were rich. Both were rich.

The only difference is that the rich ruler seemed to have earned his riches by honorable means. Zacchaeus seemed to have earned his riches in a dishonorable way or despised way because he was a tax collector. In terms of piety we see that the rich ruler was Torah abiding.

He has been following all these laws since he was young. Zacchaeus was a social sinner. As a tax collector, he was considered to be a sinner.

But notice something else that Luke does in this way of portrait portraying the two. In terms of identity, the ruler is the rich ruler is unnamed in chapter 18, but Zacchaeus is named three times. The posture of the ruler is not worthy as he tries to justify himself with all the laws that he has observed, and the response of Zacchaeus where he shows this voluntary readiness to give all he has to do all it takes sorry for the typo there to be able to recompensate or recompense from whatever he has extracted from others.

Notice the obstacle. The obstacle of the rich ruler is he had free assets but his wealth stood in the way. He could not bear the cost.

Zacchaeus was hindered by the crowd, perhaps due to his low status or being a young person. Now, I should clarify that being a short person is not a reason society will not give you access to someone you want to reach out to. So that is why more and more scholars are leaning towards the idea that perhaps Zacchaeus was rather a young man taking the expression in that light.



Now we find in the kingdom of God another social outcast, a tax collector, has just come to be a follower of Jesus. He and his household have been found by Jesus. Let me end this session before we get into the entry of Jesus in the subsequent lectures into Jerusalem to see the passion narratives later.

Here, still, Jesus is a short way away near Jerusalem. As they heard these things we are told verse 11 of chapter 19. He proceeded to tell a parable because he was near to Jerusalem because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

He said, therefore, a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling 10 of his servants, he gave them 10 minas and told them to engage in business until I came. But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying we do not want this man to reign over us.

When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered his servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him so that he might know what they had gained by doing business. The first came before him saying, Lord, your mina has made 10 minas more. And he said to him, well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over 10.

And the second one, the second came saying, Lord, your mina has made five minas. And he said to him, And you are to be over five cities. Then another came saying, Lord, here is your mina, which I kept.

I kept it laid away in a handkerchief, for I was afraid of you because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.

And he said to him, I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant. You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why, then, did you not put my money in the bank? And at my coming, I may have collected it with interest.

He told those who stood by to take the mina from him and give it to the one who had the 10 minas. And they said to him, Lord, he has 10 minas. I tell you that everyone who has more will be given. More will be given.

But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me. Jesus here entering Jerusalem is highlighting the coming of the Son of Man and judgment that will be ensued.

What God has entrusted to the care of his people, the accountability that is required, and the consequences of bad attitude for those who have bad perceptions of God, who has given them this wealth to be stewards of. In closing these lectures, I highlight six things from this particular parable. And I'll end this one here.

First, in the parable of the 10 Minas, one is brought to look at the anticipation of Jesus coming to Jerusalem. The Kingdom of God is coming. Jerusalem is a defining place for things to happen.

God has entrusted more to the care of people, and God will require accountability from them. You see, Jesus tries to establish that a noble man will seem to accept the negative portrait of the slave. But while we find that to be true, there will be citizens who would hate who the master has left and would devise their own means to respond.

Jesus, in telling this parable, is talking about the judgment that will come. Things are wrapping up quickly. Central issues about the Kingdom of God's message should be known.

Because Jesus teaches this way, Jesus may not give the long level of teaching after the arrest and crucifixion. Jesus is synthesizing in effect teaching that should be embedded in the memory of the disciples to be carried out for a long time. The time of reckoning would come as we see with the two.

The two who came to account for the five and the ten were heavily rewarded for their faithfulness in discharging their duty, and so would faithfulness be rewarded for those who took the kingdom message seriously. But we see another time of reckoning for the one who says who was unproductive because of fear of the master. To that what he had was taken and given.

The point of Jesus is this. Salvation is here, and the son of man will come to judge in the future. Those who are faithful will be rewarded, and those who are unfaithful will be punished.

If the son of man would come today, would he find you to be a faithful steward? Think about this. Think about a rich ruler who could not accept to let go of his wealth to follow Jesus. And think about Zacchaeus, who would be ready to give what it takes to be a follower of Jesus.

Luke reminds us all are welcome and will be participants in the kingdom of God. The rich will find their place that which seemed impossible would be possible. As we saw the reaction to the chief ruler's story, even Peter was concerned, but Jesus said people who have lost family, house, and all that to follow him will be rewarded many folds.

Faithfulness in the kingdom of God attracts reward. My prayer and my hope is that as we seek to pursue this walk with Jesus, as if we are literally walking with him to Jerusalem, we may capture his heart. We may capture the centrality of the kingdom of God.

The ordinaries find their place. The extraordinary of society, with the right attitude, becomes a follower of Jesus. Jesus will be entering Jerusalem in subsequent lectures.

People's expectations about who the messiah would be would drive them to receive him a certain way. They will be disappointed, but little will they know that what he said to the disciples could not be grasped or made true. He will be humiliated.

He will suffer injustice. Yet he will take victory or claim victory over death and rise and become that victorious king. He will become that savior who has conquered all the enemies conceivable.

Death, sin, and Satan have concrete evidence to show that he triumphs over them all. He comes to seek and to save those who are lost. You can find salvation today in him if you are not already a follower of Christ.

If you are a follower of Christ, you may join me in that journey to search our hearts and minds and ask what is getting in the way of perceiving Jesus. Is it wealth? Is it status? Is it pride? Luke reminds us of all these obstacles. As we work through them, God will bless us. And bring us to where he alone has destined for us.

Knowing that he has our highest interest at heart, he will reward us bountifully in his own special way as He, God alone knows how. May God bless you and keep you, and I urge you to continue this learning experience with us in the subsequent lectures. God bless you.

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