

# Who Can Be Saved?

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[ 0 : 00 ] And next chapter, chapter 19, he arrives in Jerusalem.! So we are getting close.! There's a P.

All right, all right. Luke 18. We want to read the text, then we'll ask the Lord to really open our eyes to do, as Gabriel said to Daniel, that we might consider and then understand.

And then we'll dig into the text. Luke 18. So if you're able, please stand as I read from the Scripture, Gospel of Luke, chapter 18, beginning at verse 15, reading from 15 through verse 30.

Now they were bringing even infants to him, that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

But Jesus called them to him, saying, Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

[ 1 : 36 ] Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. 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 your mother. And he said, All these I have kept from my youth. When Jesus heard this, he said, One thing you still lack.

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 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.

[ 2 : 51 ] 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. Those who heard it said, Then who can be saved?

But he said, What is impossible with man is possible with God. And Peter said, Behold, 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 of God, who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life.

So it reads, let us pray. Father, grant to us to consider and understand. Help us to understand what Jesus says about children.

Help us to understand what Jesus says to this rich man about entering the kingdom of God. Lord, this we pray in Christ's name.

[ 4 : 04 ] Amen. Please be seated. Quick drink of a beverage. This would be a good time for you to take a drink of a beverage again.

Who can be saved? The disciples ask. How do we inherit eternal life?

So, this is the ultimate question. Over the centuries, there have been many different answers.

Different religions answer it different ways. Different religions understand salvation in different ways. Saved from what? Delivered from what? Right?

So, in Islam, salvation or eternal life or their aspect of salvation requires one to adhere to the five pillars.

[ 5 : 10 ] Requires them to do good deeds, ultimately. Hinduism. This is very generalized because there are different ideas.

But in general, Hinduism, it takes devotion, knowledge, and selfless acts to be liberated from the cycle of rebirth.

Ultimate salvation. Again, good works. Judaism. What is salvation in Judaism? Well, Moses makes it clear.

Or God made it clear to Moses. A holy, righteous life obeying God's commandments. And you will be blessed beyond measure. Buddhism. This might be the hardest to understand.

Buddhism. Buddhism. Buddhism. Buddhism. It basically calls one to follow the eightfold path in order to cease from suffering and the cycle of rebirth.

[ 6 : 11 ] So, there are many other religions and views of what it means to be ultimately saved. A lot of people don't even want to think about anything like that. But what's common to all of them is good works.

You must work. You must achieve. You must earn your way. You must live in a certain manner. Jesus comes and proposes a wholly different way.

He says it's impossible for man to be saved. No one can be good but God himself. The standard is so high.

God has made clear. And as Jesus makes clear, that was the purpose of the Old Testament. To show a holy and righteous and true standard that no one was able to obtain.

Which the Old Testament proves. As Zach read Daniel, Daniel is suffering from Israel's disobedience as his prayer shows. God has made clear. God has made clear and we have not done it.

[ 7 : 20 ] We have not done it. And even as they're in Babylon suffering, Daniel says we're still not trying to get it right. But that's human nature, isn't it?

So, who can be saved? So, what Jesus presents to us here, he replies to the question of the rich ruler. How do I inherit eternal life?

Who can be saved? Different questions. And also by talking about the children as entering the kingdom of heaven, one must be like a child. So, I want you to note that in these two things, even though there's two different episodes.

The bringing of the children and then the dialogue with the rich man. What's in common is the discussion about entering the kingdom of God. And inheriting eternal life.

And I want you to kind of just realize that the big picture, as we trace those terms, there's an overlap. To enter the kingdom of God and to inherit eternal life are basically the same thing as salvation.

[ 8 : 26 ] Just notice in verse 17, Jesus describes entering the kingdom of heaven or receiving the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. Verse 18, he's asked about inheriting eternal life.

Verse 24, he talks about how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. So, he talks about entering the kingdom of God.

The question was, inheriting eternal life, right? So, eternal life and entering the kingdom are the same thing, in other words. That's what's understood there. And then, as well, verse 26, they ask who can be saved?

Another different term. So, you have entering the kingdom, you have inheriting eternal life, and you have saved. All concepts referring to the same thing. Okay?

I just want you to realize that as we kind of go through these things. So, two incidents here I want to look at about entering the kingdom of God.

[ 9 : 31 ] So, we have the children receiving the kingdom of God like children, and then we have how do we enter the kingdom? So, what do we need to enter the kingdom of God and inherit eternal life?

That's the ultimate question. What do we need? What does it take? What do I need to do? As the rich man said, what must I do? What do I do to get there?

Right? So, I think what we uncover is two aspects or two scenes here, two essentials. One in reference to the children, verses 15 to 17, talking in reference to being like children.

Right? What does that mean? And then the direct answer, verse 18, to the rich ruler. Right? So, they're really answering the same thing, but from a little different perspective, a little different.

So, first essential, in verses 15 to 17, in dealing with the children, I would put it this way. I think what Jesus is saying is what we need is to have confident trust in God as helpless and dependent children.

[ 10 : 45 ] What does it mean to receive the kingdom like a child? It is to be helpless and dependent. So, trust.

So, here's the scene. Verse 15, the scene is these children are being brought. Literally, the word is infants. Little, little ones. Little, little ones. Okay? The word is infant here.

They're bringing infants that He might touch them. Now, we don't know what that means, that He might touch them. Do they just want Him to lay hands on the children and pray for them and bless them? Are they talking about touch?

Remember, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' touch is a powerful thing. Remember, He touched the leper and He's cleansed. Remember the woman who snuck up in the crowd.

Remember, just a touch, right? And Jesus felt power go out, right? Luke refers to incidents where He had power to touch and heal.

[ 11 : 43 ] Okay? So, is that what they're looking for? Are these parents who have heard about Jesus? Listen, because remember, in the first century, children didn't survive like they do now.

Right? So, the mortality rate was fairly high. And so, they could have just been, you know, touch my child so they may live. Right? We don't know what their motive was.

They just wanted Him to touch them. And then we have the disciples rebuking these parents. Don't do that. Now, we're not told why they did that. What's going through their mind?

What are the disciples thinking? Are they thinking Jesus is too busy for children? Or children are, you know, not significant enough? I don't know what they're thinking. We're not told.

All we can do is conjecture. Okay. I'm trying out words that I don't know. Okay. Somehow, they think it's wrong.

[ 12 : 44 ] We don't know. Are they dismissing the children as too young? Are they overlooking children? Do they want to keep children separate from the adults?

Which has implications for the church today. Do we want to keep children separate from the adults? Is our thinking in our culture today unbiblical?

Is what I would ask. It's understandable, but is it unbiblical? So, I don't know. Well, I'm just conjecturing.

I don't know what the disciples' motive was, but they thought it was wrong. So, Jesus immediately rebukes them back. Verse 16, Jesus called them to him saying, let the children come to me and do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

So, Jesus emphasizes the character of the children. Let them come. Don't hinder them. Do not keep them away. Do not keep them away. Do not send them away.

[ 13 : 53 ] For to such is the kingdom. In other words, children in some way model what the kingdom of God is. In some way they exemplify the character of the kingdom.

For to such is the kingdom. In other words, the kingdom is what the children are like.

Some way. The character of the kingdom is like the character of little children. Not how children act.

But who they are. Okay. When we think of children now, we're thinking of what children, who children are. What's their character.

Not necessarily how they act. And then he adds to that. Verse 17. Then he says, truly I say to you, on top of that, not only do they characterize the kingdom, but they exemplify the condition of getting into the kingdom.

[ 14 : 57 ] I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter. What does that mean? How would a child receive?

How are children receiving from their own parents? Dependence, trust. Dependence, trust. Dependence, trust. Yeah, dependence, trust.

See, we have to think of it in terms of just a general picture like that. Not, oh, be innocent like a child. Well, you know, a two-year-old.

I understand innocent compared to adults. Yeah, children are innocent in that sense. But in terms of who's truly innocent, no, of course not.

You don't have to teach a child how to disobey. It's ingrained. It's our nature to wander, to stray, to rebel, to try our own thing, to test the limits, et cetera, et cetera.

[ 16 : 10 ] Huh? Adam and Eve. I know, I know. All things fair. Oh, Adam takes the responsibility, okay? He's the one that let the serpent in.

That's, you know, it's his. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Not a good gardener. All right. I'll pick on Adam and Eve, okay? Right. Because as if we weren't there doing something better.

Right. So as a child, receive as a child. Yeah, so when we think about a child, we think not what they do, but who they are.

And they are absolutely dependent on the parent. They are absolutely helpful. Now, they learn to do things. They learn, we teach them, we train them, right, to be more self-sufficient.

Hopefully, you know, get on their own kind of thing. But as children, they're absolutely dependent. That's how we receive the kingdom, as absolutely helpless and dependent children.

[ 17 : 16 ] That's how we enter the kingdom. So let me think about an aspect of this that is very relevant to the church today.

Widespread in the church today and just assumed to be the right thing to do. Today, it is typical to remove children from adults during the worship service.

Many churches have children in until the sermon time, and then we need them to be dismissed. Why? Why?

Well, I was told. I was told. Now, I did not have this philosophy when I first became a pastor. We were a little church, and we had young families joining us, and a lot of them were homeschooling families, and they wanted their children with them.

That was a new concept to me. I was, you know, I grew up in a big church. We had big programs. Everybody had their own church. Literally. Totally. And so, well, you're the parents.

[ 18 : 29 ] You can do whatever you want. Of course, you can have your children, and, you know. And then we did that. Our children were very little at that point, and we found incredible benefits to that. We found that our children learned things that they could never have learned in children's church.

Now, were there things over their head? Absolutely. Of course there are. But there's things over all of our heads sometimes. We don't absorb everything that comes from the Word, but God gives us pieces.

And it's incalculable how much children learn after a week, after a week, after a week, after a week, after season, after season, that begins to unfold upon them.

That they could never get in a little children's lesson in Sunday school. Now, I'm not talking about Sunday school. Sunday school, I think there's times for children to learn on different levels, of course.

But never in Scripture are we told to separate children from adults. Not in gathering. We're told to teach, you know. Women teach women. You know, but when the church gathers.

[ 19 : 36 ] In fact, the letters to the churches are written with the understanding that children are present. Because when Paul writes, children, in his letter, this is what I want you to do.

He expects the children to be there. And of course they were until about the 1950s. So, here's the way Paul wrote to Timothy.

He said to Timothy, 2 Timothy 3, 14. As for you continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood.

Now, excuse me, Paul actually uses the word infancy there. Same word we have in Luke 18. How from infancy, not just from childhood, but from infancy, you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. That the man of God, the person of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

[ 20 : 50 ] In other words, scripture is not reserved for adults. It's meant to profit all ages in the same setting. In fact, in the Old Testament, you'll find in Deuteronomy 31, 2 Chronicles 20, you will find Moses referencing that when all Israel gathered together to hear the word of God, the little ones were with them.

In fact, he says the little ones along with the adults and the children. So, he meant the little, little ones. Okay, they're not separated. Now, understand Jewish synagogue, they separated men and women, right?

You had women's side, men's side. But you didn't have children's section. Okay? Now, I understand. We're in a day and age where we think, well, children won't sit still.

Well, they learn to sit still by training. That's why we have a training chapel downstairs. That's why in the nursery, we have ability for parents to view.

Now, we haven't got as many parents at this point in our time. But we have had those aspects there. Poor people. All I want to make, I don't want to harp on this.

[ 22 : 05 ] I just want you to think about that. That was a huge turning point in my pastoral ministry to kind of recognize that. I remember I was told when we decided to do that, I had one lady coming to me who was crying, just saying, well, how will the children ever find Jesus?

I'm like, are you kidding me? I said, how do you think they found him for 2,000 years? Anyway. I understand that.

I understand that. Our culture thinks we need children. Well, and of course, children learn the different things. So, the scriptures tell the parents to do what? Train your children. That's your job.

And we have adapted as a church. Right now, God hasn't brought us children of late. We've had children move on. But we've had times where we've adapted.

As we've had unchurched people come in with kids, we've adapted to that. We've kind of come alongside here to go in our training chapel. We'll work with you. That's been fine.

[ 23 : 25 ] So. Anyway, just to kind of know where our thoughts are. In all things, we seek to be biblical.

Because God's ways are not our ways. Okay? And sometimes we walk by faith when it seems hard.

But the church down the road is full. And they got a bouncy house in front of the church and lots of kids there. We had one of our unchurched families who were here for a long time and they visited one of those churches.

And they were going, oh my God, I can see why that's not a good idea. I mean, they were appalled. You have to have a bouncy house at the church?

Get the children to come? Who's parenting? Well, that's been abdicated, hasn't it? We trust the schools. We want the church to do that.

[ 24 : 30 ] All Paul says about Scripture applies to children. It is that which can make them wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Why is it important for children to be present?

It's not only important for children to be present because they learn through God's word with their parents. But because the parents learn and we adults learn from the children.

Because as we look at them and see them, they exemplify for us. They remind us of that dependency. As we see the child turn to mom or turn to dad and, you know, we see that dependence.

We see that helplessness. We're reminded what the kingdom is like. So, first thing. What do we need to enter the kingdom of God?

We need to have confident trust in God as just like helpless and dependent children. So, second story, verse 18. The rich ruler who comes to Jesus with an honest question.

[ 25 : 35 ] I don't think this is somebody coming to Jesus trying to test Jesus because he goes away sad. Okay? He's really affected by this. I think he genuinely wants to know.

And in the parallel gospels that tell this story a little bit different, they talk about how Jesus was sad. This guy walked away. Right?

So, it wasn't one of these test things. It was a genuine seeker who really saw Jesus as a real rabbi. In fact, a unique rabbi that he trusted to learn from.

Okay? So, we see in 18, this ruler suddenly approaches him and apparently maybe heard what Jesus said about children. And he says to Jesus, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And so, we have this dialogue then that happens where Jesus kind of unpacks for him, walks through for him. What does he do? What can he do even to inherit eternal life?

[ 26 : 41 ] And what we find by the end in Jesus' answer is the second essential. That what we need is a secure trust in God and forsaking all and following Jesus.

That's what he calls this man to do. Sell all that you have, distribute to the poor, come and follow me. In other words, forsake everything. Trust me. Forsake everything.

Forsake, get rid of all your earthly securities and trust me. Jesus did not ask this of everybody. He asked it of this man because this man, that's where his treasure was.

This was the test for him. Okay? So, we walk through this. We have the rich ruler come, ask the question, what shall I do?

Well, there's a clue in the question. What can I do? He's a doer. He's kept all the commandments. I do, do, do. I do it. I'm an achiever.

[ 27 : 45 ] I'm a performer. Tell me what to do. I just want to know what to do. And again, I really believe he's honest. But that's his training. He grew up in Judaism. He grew up in following the commands.

This is what you must do. You must do this and not do that. And to do this well, you do this, this, this, and this. He's learned from the Pharisees the added rules in order to fulfill the commandment.

Right? So, he's a doer like every other good Jewish man. So, but Jesus surprises him. Verse 19. Instead of answering right away, Jesus turns with, you know, Jesus answers a question with what?

A question. You know, Jesus wants people to think. And so, he says, why do you call me good? Now, Jesus is not making a statement about his own deity here. Okay? He's asking the man, he's questioning the man's concept of goodness.

This man doesn't know Jesus as the eternal son of God. He just knows him as Jesus of Nazareth, the possible Messiah. He does not know him as the eternal son of God.

[ 28 : 51 ] Okay? So, Jesus is not making a statement about his own divinity. He's just saying, why do you call me good? He's not saying he's not good. He's just saying, why do you call me good? And then he says, what is goodness?

Well, only God is good. So, he's pointing out to the man, your scale is on a sliding scale. What's goodness? Well, I'm good compared to that guy.

I'm good compared to that guy. Right? Yeah, but are you good compared to perfect goodness? No. Right? So, he's just kind of working with them here. And then Jesus says, you know, the commandments.

And he names off five of them. It's just interesting why only those five. Not the first part of the law, the second part of the law.

And he leaves off one really important one. Do you know what it is? So, he mentions, right? Don't commit adultery. Don't murder. Don't steal. Don't bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.

[ 29 : 54 ] Now, those are all out of order. But there's five of them. What's missing? Besides the first ones. Do not covet. Do not covet. Ah.

See, I would have nailed him. And the earlier ones. Yes, I heard it. The first one is? No, the very first commandment.

No other gods. No other gods. What's this man got? Well, we find out he does. Yeah. We don't know that until Jesus tests him.

Interesting. That's kind of a clue, I think. Right? Oh, I've kept all those. Well, yeah. I'm safe with murder. I haven't killed anybody. Right? I haven't stolen. I haven't committed adultery.

Right? I've honored my mother and father. Right? I haven't lied. Okay. Probably most good Jews could say, yeah, I've kept those. They keep the don't take God's name in vain because they don't even say God's name.

[ 30 : 58 ] To make sure that they don't say it in vain. It's the, you know, you can't say Yahweh if you're a Jew. No, that's God.

Because you might say it in vain. You might just say it, you know, kind of too casually, not reverently. Understand, what's vain? Say it in vain. To take it for granted.

So, to guard themselves from doing that, they don't say it. They don't say the sacred name. How dare we say it, huh?

Well, we say it because Jesus said it. Moses said it. So, okay. So, then his answer, verse 22.

Okay. Look at verse 22. When Jesus heard this, the guy said, I've kept all these. Wow. Okay. Jesus heard this. He said to him, okay. So, in other words, Jesus understood.

[ 31 : 59 ] Okay. You say you check all those off. All right. Here's the thing you lack. Here's what I see. Go sell all that you have and distribute to the poor.

And you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. Be my disciple. See, Jesus sees this guy as a genuine guy. Come, follow me.

Let go of it. Like Peter has. Peter's left everything. John and James have left everything. All these guys have left everything. These guys follow me. How do you think they're following me full time?

Because they've left everything. You mean they left their wife? Well, the wives are probably with them. Okay. And the children. When we get to the upper room, there's 120, right?

There's some kids up there. So. So he goes away sad, right?

[ 32 : 56 ] Exposes him. Give it away. Sell all. Give it away. Remove your earthly security. Give up that other God you have. Give up the coveting. So he walks away sad, right?

Oh, we don't know if he walked away or not. It's just that he became very sad for he was extremely rich. Jesus. Then Jesus' remark, right? Verse 24. Seeing that he'd become sad, said how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of heaven.

In fact, it's so difficult that it's easier for a camel. And he means a real camel, not a camel cigarette. He means a real camel, which was the largest animal in Palestine at the time.

Right? So he picks the largest animal that most people that are listening to him have ever seen. A camel. Through the eye of a needle. He doesn't mean a gate in Jerusalem that the camel has to kneel down and go through.

No. There's no proof that that gate ever existed. He means literally eye of a sewing needle. So he means it's impossible. Narrow is the path.

[ 34 : 07 ] Right? Right? We were just talking about going under the house. Right? What do we call that? The crawl space. That's the narrow gate. It's the one that makes you groan and gets you real humble and dirty.

That's what it does. I mean, are you willing to take the breadcrumbs? You know, the person who wants to be saved wants, breadcrumbs are fine. I'm okay with that. I don't have to sit at the, let me sit under Jesus' table and just take whatever falls off.

That's the attitude God loves. So who is able? The disciples ask, verse 26, who can be saved if a rich person can't be saved?

See, remember the mindset of the first century. A rich person equals blessed by God. Because the Old Testament commandments say, if you keep the word, if you keep my commandments, what?



I will bless you. And what will you have? You will have wealth. Health, wealth, and prosperity. Everything that the church of today wants. But can never have.

[ 35 : 20 ] Because it's not for today. It's for later. You'll have it all later. Well, Jesus said, we'll get to that. Okay. So who is able to be saved?

Nobody. It's only possible with God. Right? Which means I must be absolutely dependent. I must put all my security in him. It's only possible with God.

I must know God to be saved. God must act for me to be saved. So then Peter needs some affirmation, beloved Peter. Peter's thinking about all this.

He's going, okay. Okay. I've learned a lot from Jesus. And Peter's, and this was a new one for him. Okay. The wealthy probably don't get in.

Okay. Well, Peter's not wealthy. But he has given up everything. Peter did have something. He had a business. He had a fishing business.

[ 36 : 23 ] Right? He and his brother, and they were in business with James and John. And their last fishing expedition. Remember, they had two boatloads full of fish. Right? Probably financed them for a while.

And remember, later in the gospel, Peter still has the boat. So when he says, I've left all, doesn't mean he sold the business. And it just means conceptually that he's put that on the back burner.

And Jesus is all. That's what he means. Okay. Doesn't mean I get rid of everything. And because later I still, I have, wait a minute. I got to take care of my parents.

I got to take care of my family. You know, it does not mean, you know, put your whole family in bankruptcy. Okay. It means mentally, have I left it?

Am I willing to lay it all down? And maybe for some it does mean, yeah, empty it at some point. So Peter says, what about us?

[ 37 : 30 ] He's thinking about all this. Okay. What about us? We've left all of our stuff. The term here we have, verse 28, Peter says, see, we have left our homes.

Well, it's not really the word for home. It just means for all my own stuff. I've left my stuff. I left my possessions. I left everything. He has not left his wife and children.

Peter, we know Peter was married. Because Paul later talks about, gee, does Peter get to be married? No, I don't. You know, Peter gets to be supported. So we know Peter hasn't left his family.

But in concept, okay. That his own stuff is no longer the priority. So he's thinking about this.

He said, are we okay? Jesus, are we okay? We've left all. Are we okay? What's going to happen for us? You know, am I that rich?

[ 38 : 30 ] You know, did I do what was right? So what does Jesus say? Verse 20, he affirms him. He says to Peter and the rest, you know, truly I say to you, there's no one, not one of you, who has left home and wife and brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life.

He affirms that those who forsake all other loyalties for the kingdom of God will be many times repaid in this life.

Now, a prosperity preacher would look at that verse and say, see? See, if you give all your money to me, the pastor, then God will bless you with many times.

See? See, I mean, you could twist that verse. What does he mean? What does he mean many times more? How do we receive many more times in this life?

Obviously, it's not wealth, not earthly wealth. You know, we're storing up treasure in heaven, yes. But he says in this life, we will experience many more times blessing.

[ 39 : 43 ] Where do we get it? If we, in one sense, we've not made my, I still love my wife, but she's not the first. I still love my children, but they're not first.

Jesus is first, right? That's what he means. I still have a home. Peter still has a home. But that's not first. It's not primary in his life.

You understand where he's going? Okay. Okay. So what does he mean that they receive many more times in this life? How? Blessings where?

Where? There you go. Fellowship, the church. He means the church. We're going to find out in Acts, the church is going to explode. Why? Because the blessings are in the church.

Because there's people in the church that will go sell a field so that, okay, and I'm going to lay that at the elders' feet and they'll distribute it to whoever needs it in the congregation. That's what it's, it's not socialism.

[ 40 : 50 ] Right? It's not communism. But it is Christian charity. It is Christian fellowship. It's not, they don't put all the pool in the middle and then everybody gets the same.

No. Those who have give so others can have who need it. That's what happens. As needed. We do that.

We have needs. We let people know. People give. We've had, that's been, that's been amazing to watch. Ever since we changed our, our, our bylaw about benevolence, things change.

We used to have benevolence where, you know, we had a, we had a budget and we gave it out and, you know, it was kind of impersonal. Now it's, we have a meeting and say somebody has a need and somebody else says I can do that.

That makes it personal. It makes it, you know. It's kind of like, really? We've had that. Remember? Y'all been here. You, you know, those kind of things that happen.

[ 41 : 56 ] So, many more times here in terms of church family and church, church blessings, in terms of, of spiritual blessings that happen among us. We had a time of worship this morning.

That's a spiritual blessing. Because we have chosen to forsake all and follow Jesus. To trust him. So, how does God make this possible?

Right? It's, it's not possible with man. I can't save myself. I can't keep the commandments. Right? I can't do enough good deeds. If I'm a, if I'm a Buddhist or I'm a Hindu or if I'm, if I'm a Muslim.

I mean, there's not enough I can do. Not if my God is a holy God. Not if my God is the ancient of days. Not if my God is the ruler of this world.

Not if my God is. So, how does he make it possible? So, Paul explains this.

[ 43 : 00 ] Paul's always a great explanation giver, isn't he? Romans 8. We can go to almost anywhere in Romans, but Romans 8. Says, there is now no condemnation. Now, there's no more condemnation, no more shame, no more guilt.

There's no more condemnation. For who? For those who are in Christ Jesus. In Christ alone. Right?

For, why? For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. What's the law of sin and death?

That's the Old Testament. The law of sin and death. It's the law of sin and death because it's the perfect, it's a holy and righteous law that nobody can keep. That's so it makes me a sinner.

Right? So, the law of the spirit has set me free from the law of the sin and death. Why? For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh. Talking about our flesh. The law's not weak in itself.

[ 44 : 00 ] The law's weakened because we can't keep it. What God has done with the law weakened by us in the flesh could not do. How did he do it? By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

And for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. Who, not because we fulfilled it, because Jesus did.

Who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. See, those who no longer have condemnation, those who are set free from the law, are those who, not to earn salvation, but because of their salvation, walk by the spirit and not by the flesh.

I don't walk by the spirit to earn it. I walk by the spirit because I have it. Because I am new. Because God has changed my heart.

I don't do it to earn it. I don't do it. I do it to please him. I do it because of his grace. I do it because I love him. But I don't walk by the spirit, right, to be an earner.

[ 45 : 06 ] I do it because I'm grateful. And I want to. So what happens? So in other words, I'm forsaking all to follow him. I walk by the spirit, not by the flesh.

I forsake the flesh. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, like money and, you know, earthly securities.

But those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. What are the things of the spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness. Right? For to set the mind on the flesh is death.

But to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. Boy, that's against how we naturally think. I think if I go get that earthly thing, that'll give me life and peace.

You get a new car. Well, for me, a new car is, you know, an old car, but new to me. And that's fun for a while. When I got my truck years ago, it's like, oh, cool, cool.

[ 46 : 14 ] That wears off after the first chip on the door and the, you know. Those don't, that's not life and peace. Life and peace is what only God can give.

It's peace that passes understanding. It's peace when I shouldn't feel peaceful. It's security when I shouldn't feel secure. It's hope when life seems hopeless.

And I only have that because I walk by the spirit. I set my mind on the things of the spirit. See, there's the key. I set my mind. For the mind that's set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law.

Indeed, it can't. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So here's the gospel. God is just and he must condemn sin.

There must be condemnation. Man is weak and can't keep the law, so he is under condemnation. So how does God fix it? God has to fix it, not us. God sends his own son.

[ 47 : 21 ] God loves sinners, right? For God so loved the world, and he gave his only begotten son, which means his only one and only unique, unique son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, not be condemned, but shall receive eternal life, right?

Who believe upon him, who trust upon what he has done, who trust upon what he has said, who bank everything on him, right?

They are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. And we know that because it's according to the scripture alone.

So how do we apply all of this? Well, let me just ask you a simple question. How are you doing? We ask our, you know, that's one of our first questions, right?

When we greet each other, we say, how you doing? How you doing? You know, and Ed and I always kind of jockey back and forth on that. Sometimes we say, well, you know, better than I deserve, or, you know, fair play to Midland, right?

[ 48 : 36 ] You know, I love how Dan says it, you know, blessed beyond measure. It's like, okay, there's a faith. There's a faith statement. I'm a feeler. So I'm more like, okay, kind of fair to Midland, or better than I deserve.

Always better than I deserve. All right? But blessed beyond measure, that's Paul in Ephesians. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heaven. I love that.

That reminds me every week. So you need a little starter. Go to Dan and ask how he's doing.

So what do you lack? Here's an application. What do you lack? Is there something you lack? Say, oh, I'm keeping, I'm walking okay, and I'm keeping, you know, I'm being on the narrow road, you know.

But is there something you lack? Are you holding on to something? That's your earthly security. Is there something you're unwilling to let go to really trust him?

[ 49 : 46 ] You know, is there some earthly dream and some earthly hope, right, that's motivating you, that's competing with treasure in heaven? I can't tell you what that is.

Only you can know that before God. You know, you go to the Lord and say, search me and try me. Show me, Lord. He's always, for me anyway, he's always been faithful to go, oh, here's one.

He's good about answering that one. So is there something that stands in your way? And then secondly, the most important question is has God saved you? Has he liberated you?

I don't mean like this generation today means liberated. I mean, has he liberated you from sin, from condemnation, from slavery to sin?

Has he liberated you? Doesn't mean that you don't sin anymore, but he's removed that slavery to it. He's taken the chain. My chains fell.

[ 50 : 53 ] I remember that song, Wesley song. My chains fell off. The dungeon filled with light. My chains fell off. Suddenly I'm free to follow him.

Not treachery. Not a hardship. Right? Have you experienced that? Do you recognize your own?

I mean, read Daniel 9 if you haven't. Read Daniel 9. Look at the way he talks about sin. Oh my, there's an honest man. To you belongs righteousness. To us, open shame.

You've been merciful and righteous and good. You've kept all your promises. We have not. I mean, that's just, that's confession. And Daniel was a good man.

And yet he's saying he's part of that. Right? Okay. Let's, let's pray. Father, thank you for these words, Lord, that you challenge us by.

[ 51 : 55 ] You challenge us about our view of children. You challenge us, not just about our view of children, but how we, you want us to be as children.

To you. And then thank you, Lord, that you talk to this rich ruler and you're just so honest with him. You're challenging him.

He's a real seeker and you're challenging. You're honest with him what he needs to do. So be honest with us. As we come to you, show us, Lord, if there's anything we need to sell, we need to get rid of, we need to remove from our lives, from our hearts, that we might walk by the Spirit and have life and peace.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.