

Sacrifice
Luke 18:18-30

ETS: The rich young ruler wanted to inherit eternal life without sacrifice

ESS: You must sacrifice your pride and follow Jesus to inherit eternal life

OSS: I want people to sacrifice whatever is holding them back from Jesus

PQ: Will You Sacrifice for Christ?

UW: Sacrifice

ME

I live modern conveniences

- Microwaves = quickly heated meals
- Electric blanket = no more cold sheets
- Computers = video calls, emails = no more waiting to hear from someone

Natural Human Tendency: To make our lives as easy as possible.

Natural Human Tendency: To avoid making a sacrifice.

- If we can find a simpler way to do something w/o the hard work, we will try to do it.

WE

Unfortunately, it seems we are living in a world that increasingly **devalues sacrifice**.

- Saw a video from a company named **ETOLIFE** about Artificial Womb technology

Claim: The world's first artificial womb facility, EctoLife, will be able to **grow** 30,000 babies a year. It's based on over 50 years of groundbreaking scientific research conducted by researchers worldwide.

- “Ectolife offers you a **safe, pain-free alternative.**”
- And if you want your baby to stand out and have a brighter future, our Elite Package offers you the opportunity to genetically engineer the embryo before implanting it into the artificial womb.
- Thanks to CRISPR-Cas 9 gene editing tool, you can edit any trait of your baby through a wide range of over 300 genes.
- By genetically engineering a set of genes, the Elite Package allows you to customize your baby's eye color, hair color, skin tone, physical strength, height, and level of intelligence.
- It also allows you to fix any inherited genetic diseases that are part of your family history so that

your baby and their offspring will live a healthy, comfortable life, free of genetic diseases.

- And for those who want a more **convenient solution**, EctoLife is made accessible so your life can be easier. Thanks to our **miniaturized bioreactors** and long-lasting batteries, you can use **EctoLife growth pods** at the comfort of your home, allowing you to incubate your baby in your building without the need to visit our factory.”
- By owning your special growth pod, you will have the ability to build a happy family, one baby at a time away from any birth complications.

According to a report by the Economist, we are a decade away from this being a reality, but scientists are hard at work to create artificial wombs.

Sacrifice is NOT something we WANT to do, but an **UNWILLINGNESS** to **sacrifice** can cost you **everything!**

What would you be willing to sacrifice for God?

- Would you be willing to sacrifice your health?
- Would you be willing to sacrifice your finances?
- Would you be willing to sacrifice your relationships?
- Would you be willing to sacrifice your life?

What would you be willing to sacrifice for God?

GOD

Turn to **Luke 18**

We've been in a series called "KINGDOM ATTITUDES"

- The "KINGDOM" is the Kingdom of God
 - Who is the Kingdom of God?
 - All who profess Christ as Savior
 - All who have asked God to rule in their heart

What should the ATTITUDE be of those in God's Kingdom?

- **Luke 18:1-8:** Attitude of Persistence in Prayer
 - Pray and NOT give up!
- **Luke 18:9-17:** Attitude of HUMILITY
 - Humility is ROOTED in God, NOT self
 - God RESPONDS to HUMILITY, NOT pride!

Let me give you another Kingdom attitude. **SACRIFICE**

Luke 18:18 "And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus is walking on his way to **Jerusalem** and as He is walking this man comes up to him.

- **Luke** states that this man is a “**ruler.**” Ruler of what, we don’t know.
- **Matthew** calls him a “**young**” man
- **In Matthew, Mark and Luke** all note that this man was “**rich**”

So, he is a **rich, young ruler** approaching Jesus. Think about it: this young man has **attained a lot** in a **short** time.

- He is **young**
- He is **rich**
- He is a **ruler**

From **our perspective**, this man would have it made in the eyes of the world!

This ruler comes up to Jesus and says “**Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?**”

- That sounds like a nice way to address Jesus, doesn’t it?

Wouldn’t you say that Jesus is a **teacher**? YES!

Wouldn’t you say Jesus is “**good**”? YES!

Luke 18:19 “And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

- Jesus' reaction then seems **strange!** “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”
 - That sounds a little **snippy!** That sounds a little **harsh!**
 - That is no way to “win friends and influence people”!

Jesus doesn't even acknowledge that this man is a ruler!

- You would think Jesus would have responded by saying “Most high and exalted sir” but instead Jesus **skips any formalities** and throws a question back at the young man!
 - Jesus asks him why he called Jesus a “good” teacher in the first place!

Why would Jesus respond to this “ruler” in such a way?

- To answer that question, we must ask ourselves a question: Why would this “ruler” call Jesus good?

Jesus was often called a **Rabbi**. Rabbis were often called “master”; thus, Jesus was often called “teacher, Rabbi, or master” by the people.

- However, it would be **unusual** for a Rabbi to be addressed as “Good teacher”!
 - Why? Because the Jews considered only God as being “good.”

This explains why Jesus asked the young man what he meant, because **IF** this “**ruler**” believed that Jesus was “**good**,” *then he had to confess that Jesus was God.*¹

- By asking this question, Jesus was **not denying** His deity but **affirming it.**²
 - Jesus was **testing** the **young man** to see if he **really understood** what he had just said.

Without giving the young ruler a chance to respond, Jesus simply states: **Luke 18:20** **You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’”**

- I am sure that the young ruler was beginning to feel **really good** about himself!
- I am sure that he **thought** he was about to get the **validation** that he was expecting to receive from Jesus.

I want you to look at the commandments Jesus listed you will notice a couple of things:

- Jesus **quotes** from the **10 Commandments**

¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Lk 18:18). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

²Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Lk 18:18). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

If you look at the **10 commandments**, you'll notice that the first five deal with our relationship to God

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol
3. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy

The last group deals with our relationship with **each other**:

5. Honor your father and mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Jesus quotes from the **last group**

Luke 18:21 "And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth."

Do you remember the parable about the **Pharisee** and the **Tax Collector** right **before** this story?

- Do you remember the **Pharisee's attitude** towards **HIMSELF**?
 - I am not “**greed, unrighteous, an adulterer, or like this tax collector**”

Doesn't the young, rich ruler's response **ECHO** that same sentiment? **YES!**

He is saying: “**I am not a murderer, adulterer, thief, and I honor my parents**” (most Jews would accuse the **tax collectors** of **NOT honoring their parents** since they were working for the Romans!)

- You could argue that this **rich, young ruler** sees himself on the **same level**, at least **morally**, as the **Pharisee** in the parable Jesus told.

I don't think Jesus' answer is what he *expected* to hear!

- Like the **Pharisee**, I think this rich, young ruler **felt** he was **right with God**; *the only reason he came to Jesus was for **self-validation**.*
 - He “**battered up**” Jesus by calling Him “**good**” thinking it would “**stroke**” **Jesus' ego**, but it didn't work!

Luke 18:22 When Jesus heard 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, follow me.”

- There is no expression of “Way to Go” from Jesus concerning this man’s keeping of these commandments. Jesus simply states “One thing you still lack.”

WHY did the Holy Spirit lead Luke to include this story at this point?

- Jesus has been talking about the Problem with **PRIDE!**
 - The **Pharisee** in Jesus’ parable in **vss. 9-14** was **full of pride**
- In **vss. 15-17**, Jesus said that to come to Him, we must “**be like a little child**” meaning: we have to let go of our **PRIDE**.

DO you think this **rich, young ruler** had a problem with **PRIDE**? Yes!

- He is **rich**
- He is **young**
- He is a **ruler**
- He is **moral**

Do you think the rich, young ruler **expected Jesus** to give him a **command** of what he needed to do to “**inherit eternal life**”? NO!

- I don't think so.
 - I think he expected Jesus to say “**Way to Go. You've got eternal life!**”

Just like the Pharisee, there is a **fatal flaw**: *He is in **love** with his **wealth and position** more than with God!*

- Jesus presents the man with the solution “**Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.**”

Is Jesus teaching that to go to heaven, WE need to “**sell everything and distribute it to the poor**”? NO.

- Jesus consistent message was “**Repent**” and “**follow me**”
 - The **apostles** did not teach that **salvation is earned** by selling everything and giving it away to the poor.

This is a **SPECIFIC COMMAND** to a **SPECIFIC MAN** who was **in love** with his **money**!

Luke 18:23 But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.”

What did Jesus' command require?

- It required the **ONE THING** that is NECESSARY for HUMILITY: **SACRIFICE**

Humility Requires the Sacrifice of Pride

This man's **PRIDE** was in his **POSSESSIONS**

This man's **PRIDE** was in his **POSITION**

To sell his possessions would mean he would have **to let go** of his **PRIDE!**

- Without his possessions, *he would be like **everyone else!***

The **second part** of the command "**Distribute it to the poor**" meant he would have to be **with poor people!**

- "**Selling his possessions**" to his rich friends would have been difficult, but then to go to the **poor sections** of town and "**distribute it to the poor**" would be even a MORE HUMBLING experience, at least as far as he was concerned!

Notice that Jesus **invites** this man: "**Come, follow me.**"

- The SAME INVITATION Jesus gave to His **Apostles!**

- His **Apostles** had to leave their businesses and families behind to “**follow**” Jesus and **they did**.
 - This man has the **same opportunity** and **invitation** from Jesus to “**follow**” Him!

Of course, this would REQUIRE SACRIFICING his **Pride!**

- Instead of being recognized as a “**RULER**,” he would be seen as a “**follower**”
 - A “**follower**” of an **itinerate Rabbi!**
 - What would his **family** think?
 - What would his **friends** think?

Luke 18:23 But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.”

Why was this rich, young ruler “**sad**?”

- Because he wanted to “**inherit eternal life**” on **HIS terms!**
 - He didn’t want to SACRIFICE his **pride!**

Look at the **pain** in his **soul!** He is **sad** and **left grieving!**

- The **Greek word** translated “**sad**” gives the picture of **storm clouds** gathering. **The man walked out of the sunshine and into a storm!**³

³Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

- He felt that Jesus had **asked too much** of him.⁴ How could Jesus expect him to sell all he had, give to the poor, and follow Jesus?

What kind of **relationship** did this man have with Jesus?

None! He walked away. *He did not follow Jesus.* He was not a disciple of Jesus.

- For this man to be a disciple of Jesus meant he would have to sell all he had. It meant sacrifice.
- Because he **prized his wealth** more than his relationship with God, he left **spiritually empty**.
 - He left **with earthly treasures**, but **NO heavenly treasures!**

Doesn't that sound familiar?

- PROBLEM: We want to “**inherit eternal life**” on OUR TERMS

Here are some phrases that WE use when we want to “**inherit eternal life**” on our Terms:

- I think God will let me into heaven
- I've been a **good person**
- I grew up in the church
- My daddy was a **preacher**

⁴Robertson, A. 1997. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Logos Research Systems: Oak Harbor

- I believe in God

When you hear those words, the UNDERLYING SENTIMENT is...

- God will let me into His heaven on **MY TERMS!**
 - I don't want to **SACRIFICE** my **LIFESTYLE**
 - I don't want to **SACRIFICE** my favorite **SIN**

Bottom LINE:

- "I don't want to **sacrifice** for God"
- "I love what I love more than God"

To sacrifice something means to give up **something precious** to you.

- To **sacrifice to God** means you must give up something precious to you for GOD!
 - That you want God more than the thing you love most.

The bottom line is that the **rich, young ruler** loved something more than God! In his case, it was his **money and position**.

- **In love**, Jesus was telling this man that **he had to give up** that which he loved more than God and give God the first place.

Was Jesus' demand unreasonable? From a **materialistic perspective**, it is! But notice the **end result** that Jesus promises:

Luke 18:22 When Jesus heard 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, follow me.*"

- Jesus is asking this man to **exchange** the **temporary** for the **eternal**.
- Jesus is asking this man to let **go of earthly wealth**, which he will ultimately lose anyway, and **gain eternal wealth** which **will last forever**.

This incident is **not an illustration** that we all need to sell everything and join a monastery, but we **MUST sacrifice our PRIDE** if we want to "inherit eternal life."

PQ: Will You Sacrifice for Christ?

- Would you give up a PET SIN for Christ?
- Would you give up a SINFUL RELATIONSHIP for Christ?
- Would you give up a CAREER for Christ?
- Would you be willing to lose your family for Christ?

I'm not saying **you have to quit your job** or **stop talking to your family** to be a Christian, but what if becoming a Christian meant your family would no longer talk to you, would you “Follow Jesus”?

- When a Muslim becomes a Christian, they are often cut off from their family!
 - Would you be willing for that to happen? They are!

Is there something that is holding you back from following Jesus?

We live in an **affluent culture**. We have far more than most people will ever have. However, **the reality is that while people in our culture have plenty to live on, most have little to live for!**

- This man, like people today, was **seeking a deeper answer** than what money or morality could provide.
 - He was seeking **eternity**.
 - He wanted to know that he was going to **last** beyond the grave.
 - That there was more to life than this.

He was confronted with the reality that the “sacrifice” of that which he prized most was what was needed!

Earlier, Jesus said in **Luke 9:23** ... “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Oswald Chambers wrote: “The meaning of sacrifice is the deliberate giving of the best I have to God that He may make it His and mine forever: if I cling to it, I lose it, and so does God.

REALITY: The **Majority of people** will **not enjoy eternity** with God because they love **TEMPORARY PLEASURES** more than God!

Luke 18:24-25 Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 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.”

There is nothing wrong with having WEALTH, but it is more **difficult for wealthy people** to trust Christ!

- WHY? They think they **have all they need!**
- WHY? They **don't know desperation.**
- WHY? They are **comfortable.**

ON this **THANKSGIVING WEEK**, I'm **THANKFUL** that we live in America, but the wealth of our country (and others) has produced a **generation** that does not know **true desperation!**

- Even the **poorest in America**, are in the **top 1%** when compared to the Global population!

Clearly, Jesus' response to this rich, young ruler **SHOCKED** the disciples! **Luke 18:26-27** "Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

Why were they shocked at Jesus' response?

- In the **Jewish mindset** of that day and even for *many Christians today*, **wealth** is seen as an indication of the **blessing of God**.
 - Yes! God can and does bless people with wealth, *but the possession of wealth is not necessarily due to the blessing of God!*
- From all **OUTWARD appearances** this man was "**blessed**" by God because he was wealthy, but when it came right down to it, *his earthly wealth robbed him of the greatest wealth: eternal life.*

In our affluent culture, it is easy to think that we don't need God. It is easy to think that we can make it on our own.

- The words “**commitment**” and “**sacrifice**” are words we shun.

George Barna conducts polls of Christians. Barna noted:

"The Christian faith commends sacrifice, servanthood and sharing as the means to significance." How is it possible to have more than **120 million adults** attending Christian churches on a regular basis, but only **15 million** who grasp the message that success is not about personal accomplishment or material possessions?"

We have forgotten about the “**commitment**” Christ calls for and the “**sacrifice**” of following Him. The words “**commitment**” and “**sacrifice**” are words we shun.

- However, “**commitment**” and “**sacrifice**” are basic to salvation and your growth as a Christian.
 - Without Christ's sacrifice there would be no salvation and without your commitment of your life to Christ's control there is no salvation for you!

When Jesus said: “**What is impossible with man is possible with God**” He is letting His disciples know that **God saves wealthy people**, but they **have to overcome** their **love of money** to come to Christ—which is almost impossible for many to do.

Sacrificing Pride is Worth it

Luke 18:28-30 “And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” 29 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, 30 who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

There is a PRESENT and FUTURE benefit to following Christ!

There is a TEMPORARY and PERMANENT benefit to following Christ.

PRESENT benefit:

- You gain ‘**Fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers**’ in this life when you SACRIFICE your PRIDE and “**Follow Jesus**”
 - HOW? You become part of the **Body of Christ!**
 - You gain a **FAMILY!**

- You gain a **HEAVENLY FATHER** who will “**supply your needs**” in this life!

HOWEVER, **unless** we live to see the **return of Christ**, death comes for all of us

ETERNAL LIFE is the PERMANENT benefit for those who “**follow Christ**”

YOU

As far as we know, the rich, young ruler NEVER “**Followed Christ**”

- Now, he is **dead** and his **wealth** is long gone
 - Now, he is in **eternity**
 - But where? Unless he was later willing to let go of his pride and “**follow Christ,**” he is living apart from Christ, apart from fellowship with other people, and apart from his possessions.
 - Jesus told him what to do, but he wouldn’t let go of his PRIDE!

Would you say it was worth it? NO!

- Rejecting Christ because you want to hold onto your **pride** is not worth spending *eternity apart for the love, joy, peace, and presence of God!*

PQ: Will You Sacrifice for Christ?

What is holding you back?

- Maybe it is **NOT money** or a **sin**
 - Maybe it IS **money or sin!**
- Maybe it is a **hurt past** and you **don't want to SACRIFICE** your **ANGER**
- Maybe it is **fear**, and you don't want to **SACRIFICE** your **COMFORT**

What is holding you back?

- The rich, younger ruler had a personal encounter with Christ and **“went away sad.”**
 - If the Holy Spirit is pulling at your heart and you say **“later”** or **“No”** you will **not** leave here **happy**