

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 18: 18-27**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Luke Chapter 18 and today we will read verses 18 to 27. Yesterday, we concluded at verse 17, where Jesus told us that in order to inherit the kingdom of God, we must turn back and become like little children.

**Verse 18: "Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'"**

The account in verses 18–27 is also recorded in Matthew 19:16–22 and Mark 10:17–27. From these three passages, we can conclude that this ruler was a young man—as Matthew specifically states. From the following description, we also know that he was very wealthy, a rich man. So he was a young man who had already become a ruler and was also extremely rich.

Such a person came before Jesus. In Mark's account, it specifically mentions that he knelt before Him. This young ruler, who from a human perspective seemed excellent in every way, was nevertheless humble enough to come to Jesus and kneel before Him. Even today, when we see such a young person, we would naturally feel great admiration. In Mark's Gospel, it is also especially noted that Jesus loved him.

This young ruler, who seemed to have everything, came before Jesus and said, "Good Teacher." He called Jesus "Teacher" and recognized Him as good. Then he asked Him a question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Although outwardly this young ruler appeared to have everything, deep within he knew that he did not have eternal life. Moreover, he longed to obtain or inherit it. Therefore, he wanted to know what he needed to do in order to inherit eternal life.

His attitude was sincere, and what he sought—eternal life—was indeed something good. Unfortunately, the question itself was not entirely accurate.

First, he did not recognize that Jesus is God; he regarded Him merely as a good teacher. Second, he assumed that eternal life was something that could be obtained by doing something to earn it. Therefore, he asked Jesus to tell him what deed he must perform in order to receive eternal life.

**Verse 19: “So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.’”**

It may seem as though Jesus was asking him a question, but in fact, Jesus was giving him a hint. What was the hint? Since you call Me “good,” you must understand that no one is good except God. If, by observing what I do and what I say, you conclude that I am good, then you should realize that only God is truly good. In other words, Jesus was pointing him to this truth: *I am God*. I am not merely a teacher instructing people—God is the Creator of all things, the source of life itself. Where God is, there is eternal life.

After giving him this hint, Jesus continued and said that he already knew the commandments. This young man was a ruler, so he would have been well-versed in the Law. Since he asked, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus responded according to his question—by referring him to the commandments, the Ten Commandments.

**Verse 20: “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.’”**

The five commandments that Jesus mentioned correspond to the fifth through the ninth of the Ten Commandments, though the order is slightly rearranged. The fifth

is to honor one's parents, followed by: do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, and do not bear false witness.

A key point is that these five all relate to outward actions—what one *does*. Since he asked Jesus what he must *do* to inherit eternal life, Jesus answered him on that level, presenting the commandments that govern human conduct: honor your father and mother; do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; and do not bear false witness.

**Verse 21: “And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth.’”**

This young ruler was not only wealthy and accomplished—able to attain a position of authority at a young age—but he also had strong moral character. With regard to the fifth through the ninth commandments in the Ten Commandments, which deal with what one should or should not do, he had kept them from his youth.

When Jesus heard this, Mark adds a significant detail: “Jesus, looking at him, loved him.” I believe that if such a young man came among us today, we would all find him admirable. And it was precisely because Jesus loved him that He continued to speak to him.

**Verse 22: “So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, ‘You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’”**

When Jesus says, “you still lack one thing,” that one thing is usually the most crucial. What is that one thing? “Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Even for us today, these words are very difficult to hear—and for that young ruler, they were truly hard as well. Jesus said he lacked one thing. Yet when we listen carefully, Jesus actually gave two requirements. First, “sell all that you have and give

to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.” This corresponds to the tenth commandment—do not covet. The ultimate expression of not coveting is that a person is no longer bound by possessions. And one of the clearest ways to be free from being bound by wealth is to share what one has with others—to give, as Jesus said, and thus store up treasure in heaven. But then Jesus adds a second requirement: “and come, follow Me.” So why does Jesus say “one thing” when there seem to be two?

We know that in the Ten Commandments, the first four concern our relationship with God—loving Him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. The last six concern our relationship with others—loving our neighbor as ourselves. Among these, the fifth through ninth commandments deal with outward actions, while the tenth commandment—“you shall not covet”—deals with the heart. From this perspective, what the young ruler lacked in relation to others was precisely the tenth commandment—the issue of his heart, his attachment to possessions.

Yet if we understand the Ten Commandments more deeply, the latter six are built upon the first four. When a person truly loves God with all their being, loving others naturally follows. Therefore, we could also say that what Jesus ultimately required of him was this: to come and follow Him. But sadly, the young ruler did not fully understand what Jesus meant. Why was he unable to fully grasp it?

**Verse 23: “But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.”**

A wealthy person easily comes to rely on his riches and depend on his money. Over time, this can reach a point where he feels he cannot let go, and therefore is unable to follow the Lord. Although Jesus loved him and gave him further guidance, because he was rich, his heart was occupied by his possessions. As a result, he could not truly understand the word of God.

**Verse 24: “And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!’”**

Although this young ruler was admirable in many ways—knowledgeable, educated, humble, morally upright, and sincerely seeking to inherit eternal life—the condition Jesus gave him was extremely demanding. As a result, he felt he could not meet it, and therefore was unable to continue following Jesus. This is why Jesus then drew this conclusion: “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”.

**Verse 25: “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.”**

A camel, such a massive creature, carrying many burdens and loads of goods, of course would not easily pass through the eye of a needle. The “eye of a needle” here is not referring to the needle used for sewing clothes, which would make it absolutely impossible; rather, it is referring to a small gate beside the main gate in Jerusalem. After sunset, the main gate would be closed, and only that small gate would remain open. That gate was called the “needle-eye gate.” During the daytime, when the main gate was open, camels carrying various goods could pass through the city gate quite smoothly. But after dusk, when the main gate was closed, that needle-eye gate was very small. The camel would have to unload all its cargo, then kneel down, and squeeze through that narrow gate; afterward, the goods would be carried through one item at a time.

Actually, it is not that it is impossible; rather, it shows that a person must first lay down all the possessions in their hands. When a person becomes free, then it becomes possible to truly follow Jesus. Therefore, Jesus used the image of a camel passing through the eye of a needle to describe how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

**Verse 26: “And those who heard it said, ‘Who then can be saved?’”**

Those who heard this actually did not understand the word of God. Jesus was saying that entering the kingdom of God is not easy, but those who heard it turned it into the question, “Who then can be saved?” A person who is saved can inherit eternal life; and after inheriting eternal life, he is able to be freed from the entanglement of wealth, and then he can enter the kingdom of God.

When Jesus said that it is not easy for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God, it was because many possessions create bondage that makes it difficult for him to let go. Jesus was not speaking directly about inheriting eternal life, but those who heard Him did not understand clearly, and they equated the two matters. Therefore they said, “Who then can be saved?”

**Verse 27: “But He said, ‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.’”**

Jesus’ view is much more positive and full of hope than ours. Many things that seem difficult to people are, in God, things for which all things are possible. Is it difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God? In God, it is not difficult at all; in God, all things are possible. In fact, this word of Jesus shows us a way forward.

Many things appear impossible to us, but we truly do not need to worry. We only need to firmly resolve to follow the Lord, and bring everything we cannot do and everything we cannot let go of before God. Once we receive eternal life, and allow this eternal life to reign and rule within us, we will naturally begin to live in such a way that our lives become worthy of entering the kingdom of God.

Following the Lord truly requires revelation from God. And anyone who receives revelation from God must be a humble person. He has no fixed preconceived ideas; he comes before God empty, allowing God Himself to speak to him. As long as we have a willing heart—to be willing to follow—then in God, nothing is impossible.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank You for placing this account of the rich young ruler before us, and also help us not to look at the great and difficult things before us that seem overwhelming, but instead to simply follow You. Many things that we feel we cannot do, we now bring before You in prayer with a humble heart. May Your life continually increase within us so that we may grow, and eventually become those who store up treasures in heaven. As we follow You, may You turn what is impossible into what is possible. Bless my life today that I may experience Your true guidance. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen!