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The Gospel of Luke / Luke 18:18–30; Luke 19:1–10

Introduction

- <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/arizona-grandmother-stranger-mistakenly-texted-2016-celebrate-8th-thanksgiving-together>
- That's the kind of story we like during the holidays! We like to hear about good people doing good things.
- It's the time of year where we see the good of people. People are more generous during Christmas time. People are looking for ways to help others during this time of year.
- During this time of the year, a little bit of hope in humanity. Mankind isn't that bad, right?
- BUT... don't be fooled... Yes, it is the time of year when we see people do good things, but the good things we do don't mean that we're good.
- Apart from the saving work of Jesus, we're all bad. We have a sinful nature ([Romans 3:10-12](#), [Romans 3:23](#)).
- [Luke 18:18-30](#) - a reminder that there is ONE who is ultimately good. God is good, and everything He does is good.
- For you this morning: the ONE who is good has saved us so that He might extend His goodness through us. God has called you to be good in a not so good world. He has called you to be good to your family and friends. He has called you to be good. Do you exhibit the goodness of God in the way you live? I'm not talking about random acts of kindness

or Christmas generosity, but do you exhibit the goodness of God? And, how can you exhibit the goodness of God?

- Two familiar stories that teach two truths that are going to help us to extend the goodness of God to other people.

Your goodness is never good enough.

- Such a sad story... A young ruler. Some type of official? Member of Sanhedrin? RYR had everything going for him. Wealth, youthfulness, influence... Other young men looked at him with envy. He had accomplished so much. He was the guy that everyone wanted to be.
- BUT... one question that kept him up at night. Did he have eternal life? Perhaps he had asked other rabbis this question, but he couldn't find an answer to satisfy him. So, he asked the most famous rabbi of the day: Jesus.
- “**Good teacher**, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus, “Why do you call me good? Only God is good!”
- We know that Jesus is God, but the RYR didn't know this. He was trying to flatter Jesus, and he didn't even know what he was saying. Only God is ultimately good. Every thought He has is good. Every act He does is good. Every intention of His will is good. That's not true of you. Apart from Christ, your heart is deceitfully wicked ([Jeremiah 17:9-10](#)).
- Jesus answers the question: “You know the commandments...” In other words, if you want to gain eternal life, be good!
- RYR felt pretty good about himself. He was religious. He was a good person. “I have kept all these from my youth” (vs. 21).
- Then, what Jesus said absolutely shocking: “Go sell everything, and then you will have treasure in heaven. The come, follow me.” An invitation to follow the King of kings and Lord of lords... An invitation you

can't refuse, but the RYR refused the invitation. He went away sad because he rich.

- In a moment, his heart was exposed. The RYR was not as good as he thought. He was an idolater. He loved his money far more than he loved God. He thought he had kept the commands, but he was guilty of breaking the first command.
- Watching the RYR walk away Jesus said easier for a camel to go through eye of needle than for a rich person to enter Kingdom. Famous statement... BUT Jesus could have said... "Hard for the person obsessed with his job." Hard for anyone to enter the Kingdom of God who grasps at anything in this life with two hands and unwilling to let go.
- Disciples flabbergasted: "Who can be saved?" Jesus: "What is impossible with man is possible with God" (vs. 27). HUGE - It is IMPOSSIBLE to gain eternal life - it is IMPOSSIBLE to be good without the goodness of God in Christ at work in you saving you through His death and resurrection.
- **You don't impress God.** ([Isaiah 64:6](#)) God loves you, but He is not impressed with you. You're impressed with you. When you write a big check for charity, you pat yourself on the back. You impress others. Others see your acts of kindness and say, "Wow, what a great guy!" But... God knows you. God knows what really controls your heart.
- Fill in the blank: I can't live without _____. How you fill in the blank shows what really controls your heart. Whatever you put in the blank is your greatest love. What does your heart reveal is your greatest love? ***If you're greatest love is anything other than God you'll settle for a checklist faith.*** What the young ruler wanted - give me a list of things to do so I can be in good standing with God. Problem: you'll always be like the rich young ruler. "What do I lack? Have I done enough?" A checklist faith is not impressive to God.

- **God doesn't expect you to impress Him.** He knows your heart. He knows you prone to idolatry. He knows you will never be good enough to gain eternal life. And... God is not looking down from heaven: Maybe he will finally get it right. Simply put, your goodness is never good enough.

God's goodness is always good enough.

- A second story about a rich man - following a story about spiritual sight. (Deal with that text next Sunday.) Zaccheus is rich, but very different than RYR. His eyes are open to the truth about him and the truth about Jesus.
- Jesus made His way through Jericho - a major trade route close to Jerusalem. One of three major centers for collecting taxes for the Roman government. Tax collectors hated because they were Jewish traitors that worked for Rome.
- Zaccheus very good at his job - a chief tax collector, but his business was not as lucrative as he thought. His pursuit of wealth cost him more than it gave him. Materially, he had everything he could ever want. Relationally, he had nothing. His own momma didn't want him home for Thanksgiving.
- Zaccheus very different than RYR - he wasn't admired. He was hated. He was relationally bankrupt. He didn't look at himself and see his own goodness. He looked at himself and saw his own filth. He was disgusted with himself.
- BUT... Zaccheus knew about Jesus. When Zaccheus caught word that Jesus was in Jericho. He saw the crowds, but he couldn't see Jesus. (Zaccheus was a wee little man... Such a degrading song...)

- Zaccheus willing to humiliate himself to see Jesus. What did he have to lose? He was already hated. Didn't care what others thought of him. The richest, shortest man in the city climbed a tree.
- Don't know what Zaccheus expected to happen, but he likely didn't expect Jesus to call out his name. "Zaccheus..." Jesus knew his name. Everyone tried to forget Zaccheus' name. That name had caused so much damage to so many people...
- Jesus didn't want to forget Zaccheus' name. Jesus wanted to write Zaccheus' name in the Lamb's Book of Life. "Come out of the tree. I'm going to your house today." The scandal! Out of all the people in the crowd, this was who Jesus was going to dine with?
- BUT... in that moment, Zaccheus experienced the goodness of Jesus.
- This is the goodness of God on display:
- **Jesus looks past what everyone else looks at.** Perhaps people look at you in judgment. You're labeled. Stereotyped, etc. People point out your shortcomings, failures, etc. Jesus looks past all of that and sees you with love.
- **Jesus willingly takes our scorn.** The scorn that Zaccheus had experienced over the years now directed at Jesus. "How could He?" All of a sudden, the focus and scorn was taken off of Zaccheus and put on Jesus. In that moment, people weren't complaining about Zaccheus, they were complaining about Jesus. Jesus gladly took the scorn for Zaccheus. He would take Zach's scorn upon Himself again some time later when He went to the cross.
- vs. 8 - Zaccheus does what RYR unwilling to do. He's willing to let go of his wealth. Why? He experienced the goodness of Jesus. [Luke 18:27](#) - Jesus had done the seemingly impossible in Zaccheus life.

- Difference between RYR and Zaccheus - RYR refused the invitation. Zaccheus embraced the invitation. Zaccheus knew he wasn't good but was overwhelmed by the goodness of Jesus.
- Zaccheus immediately began to live out the goodness of God - in response to grace - Zaccheus became very generous. He sought to make things right because God had made things right with him.
- That's what happens. When you see yourself for who you really are, and you see God as the only source of goodness, it changes you. You want HIS goodness because you know you can never be good without Him. In HIS goodness, He saves you. In HIS goodness He places His Spirit within you. In HIS goodness, He makes you good.
- Goodness = fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#)). God desires His goodness to extend through you to other people. How? How can you extend the goodness of God, not your goodness, to other people?
 - **Look past what others look at.** Remember, you were a mess too, and Jesus saved you. Instead of seeing people through the eyes of judgmentalism, see others through the eyes of Jesus.
 - **Be willing to be interrupted.** Jesus often welcomed interruptions because He was more focused on people than tasks. You know the goodness of God is being extended through you when you simply want the best for others even if someone else's best comes at an inconvenience to you.
 - God never views your messiness and neediness as an interruption. Your messiness and neediness is His opportunity to graciously work in your life.
 - Needs have a way of surfacing at the most inopportune times but needs always present strategic opportunities.
 - Need comes at 10:00 at night when that husband walks out on his wife and that wife just needs a friend to console her.

- Need comes during the week when you're trying to get homework done, dinner on the table, etc. and your neighbor's car won't start.
- Those interruptions may be divine opportunities - an opportunity God is putting in your lap to demonstrate the goodness of God to someone else.
- We HATE interruptions because we prioritize tasks over people. Or, we prioritize our needs over the needs of others.
- **Get extremely practical.** To extend the goodness of God, you need to be a student of people. You're probably an expert in all things you, but are you an expert in knowing others?
- Think about your relationships. What's the best way to you can show the goodness of God to someone this week? A conversation? A financial gift in the name of Jesus? A consistent encourager and friend to someone who is hard to love?
- **Keep the goal in mind. We want people to see God's goodness, not our goodness.** Your random acts of kindness don't save anyone, but the Good News of Jesus does. The Gospel is the essence of God's goodness.
- Real goodness is Jesus. He's the ultimate Rich Young Ruler - Jesus of incomprehensible wealth and glory, but for our sake, He became poor ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)) Jesus didn't call the rich young ruler in this story to do something that Jesus Himself was not willing to do. **He gave it all way - His life - so that we could have life. If Jesus would give His all away for us, how can we not give our all away for Him?** Believe that Jesus died for you and rose again. Repent and turn to Him in faith.