# Gospel of Luke Weekly Talk Ideas | Sean McGever

## Luke Chapter 18

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| Scripture suggestion, basic overview, and background:Luke 18 has several stories which could work really well in a club talk. First, the contrast between the Pharisee and the Tax collector (18:9-14) shows that God doesn’t look at outward appearances, but at our response (e.g. “God be merciful to me, a sinner… this man went down to his house justified” 18:13-14). Second, is the Rich Ruler (see below). Third, is the “Blind Man” (18:35-43)… [shoutout to the old YL song “Blind Man!”] which, again, shows a person who desires mercy (18:38 and 18:39), this man was made “well”, the word for “well” could also mean “saved” [Gk:sozo]. In my club semester we are at the “sin” talk and the Rich Ruler story is one of my favorite to discuss this topic, so that will be my focus here (though, when I speak at camp I like to use the account of the same story as found in Mark 10:17-27, it includes a few more details. 1. Question (Rich Ruler): What must I DO for eternal life? (18:18)
	1. Answer (Jesus)
		1. Part 1: Only God is good (18:19)
		2. Part2: Keep the [ten] commandments (18:20)
	2. Response (Rich Ruler): I’ve DONE those! (18:21) [Mark 10:21 adds “Jesus looked at him and loved him”]
	3. Answer (Jesus): Sell all that you have, then follow me (18:22)
	4. Response (Rich Ruler): [No response, just sadness as if you were dying] (18:23) [Mark 10:22, he leaves]
	5. Answer (Jesus):
		1. Difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven [which included eternal life] (18:24)
			1. Illustration: Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (18:25)
	6. Question from the crowd: Then who can be saved? (18:26)
2. Conclusion: What is impossible with man is possible with God (18:27)

*Epilogue*: The next chapter contains the story of Zacchaeus who was also rich. Jesus asked the rich man in ch. 18 to give to the poor (18:22) and he did not (18:23). Jesus didn’t even ask the next rich man he met (Zacchaeus) to give anything away (19:2), but he *did* respond by giving to the poor (19:8), and was saved (19:9). The *rich* can be saved. Anyone can be saved. |
| Possible main point(s):* No one can ever be obedient enough, good enough, or perfect enough all the time to deserve eternal life. This is called sin. Fortunately, what is impossible for us is always possible for God. Eternal life is possible because of the miracle of Jesus’ death for our sins.
* Many dream of being rich, young, and powerful. It still leaves you wanting more.
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| What this shows us about Jesus:* Only God/Jesus is truly good (18:18).
* Only God/Jesus can do the impossible (18:27).
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| What this has to do with our life:* It is natural to want to know how to get eternal life (even for a man who was rich, young, and powerful… money, time, and power can get almost everything… except eternal life).
* No matter how hard we try (and the rich ruler certainly did), humans cannot be perfect (truly good).
* Whether we worship money or something else, we simply can’t let go of everything we love. We cannot be perfect.
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| Relevant technical details:* “Ruler” (v.18) = A general term for a powerful person. [We also know this man was *young*, see Mt. 19:20, 22]
* “eternal life” (v.18 and v.30) = Not just ongoing/eternal life but vibrant/renewed/delightful eternal life.
* “commandments” (v.20) = Jesus lists a few of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20, Deut. 5).
* “treasure in heaven” (v.22) = Essentially synonymous with the eternal life (which is what he asked about).
* “very sad” (v.23) = This word is used only 3 other place in the NT, with 2 of those being Jesus’ cry in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:38, Mk. 14:34). The man was not just sad, but sad to the point of death (like Jesus in the garden).
* “camel through the eye of a needle” (v.25) = A hyperbole/exaggeration of something impossible.
* “kingdom of God” (v.24/25) = Human participation recognizing God as king of this world and the world to come.
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| Possible illustrations:* *A needle (and a piece of cardboard)*: We all have things that we don’t want to let go of (for the rich ruler it was wealth). These things make it humanly impossible to deserve eternal life. Show a needle and ask if you could “fit” through the eye of the needle. No, that would take a miracle. Part 2 = Take a piece of cardboard and poke a hole in it, ask if you could “fit” through that. No, that would take a miracle. The cardboard is sin. Our sin keeps us from entering into a right relationship with Jesus Christ with also includes eternal life. Then tear the cardboard in half and say “what is impossible with man is possible with God” (18:26). Invite them to a relationship with Jesus and tell them to come back to hear more about how Jesus accomplished this miracle (the cross talk next week).
* *Dollar bill*: Ask them what you can get with the dollar. Ask them how much eternal life costs. Show that our ways of obtaining things simply don’t work with God. We can’t buy the most important things in life, esp. eternal life.
* *Tom Brady video*: He is rich, powerful, (and used to be young), yet he never has enough. See my video [HERE](http://ylhelp.com/2008/04/07/the-best-talk-talk-illustrations-2-of-5/).
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*For more details, see ylhelp.com*

Luke 18 (ESV)

**The Parable of the Persistent Widow**

**18**And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. **2**He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. **3**And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ **4**For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, **5**yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ ” **6**And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. **7**And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? **8**I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

**The Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

**9**He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: **10**“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12**I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ **13**But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ **14**I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Let the Children Come to Me**

**15**Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. **16**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. **17**Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

**The Rich Ruler**

**18**And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” **19**And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. **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.’ ” **21**And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” **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.” **23**But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. **24**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.” **26**Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” **27**But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” **28**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.”

**Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time**

**31**And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. **32**For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. **33**And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” **34**But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

**Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar**

**35**As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. **36**And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. **37**They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” **38**And he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” **39**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!” **40**And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, **41**“What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” **42**And Jesus said to him, “Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.” **43**And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.