

A Priest and a Rabbi Walk into a Classroom

March 5, 2023



Riches

Luke 18:15-30

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.'

A certain ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother."' He replied, 'I have kept all these since my youth.' When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

Those who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' He replied, 'What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.'

Then Peter said, 'Look, we have left our homes and followed you.' And he said to them, 'Truly I tell 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 get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.'

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Luke 12:13-21

Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?' And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God. in prayer with faith, you will receive.'

Please tell me about the Parable in Luke 18:18-30

The parable in Luke 18:18-30 is commonly referred to as the story of the "Rich Young Ruler." It goes as follows:

A certain ruler asked Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responded by asking him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." Jesus then proceeded to list several of the Ten Commandments, and the young ruler responded that he had kept all of these since he was a youth.

Jesus then said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young ruler heard this, he became very sad because he was very wealthy.

Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

The parable teaches several important lessons.

First, it emphasizes the importance of obeying the commandments of God. The young ruler had kept the commandments, but he was not willing to give up his wealth to follow Jesus.

Second, it warns against the danger of wealth and material possessions. The young ruler was so attached to his possessions that he was unwilling to give them up, even for the sake of eternal life. Jesus points out that 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.

Finally, the parable reminds us that our salvation ultimately depends on God's grace. While it may seem impossible for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus reminds us that with God, all things are possible.

Why is this parable titled as it is? What are other possible titles?

The parable is titled "The Rich Young Ruler" because it describes a wealthy young man who approached Jesus and asked him what he must do to inherit eternal life. The young man was committed to following the commandments, but he was not yet ready to give up his wealth to follow Jesus. The story highlights the tension between material possessions and spiritual devotion, and the importance of surrendering oneself to God's will.

While "The Rich Young Ruler" is a common title for this parable, there are other possible titles that could capture some of its key themes and messages. Here are a few examples:

1. "The Challenge of Wealth" - This title would focus on the parable's emphasis on the difficulty of letting go of material possessions and the spiritual dangers of wealth.
2. "The Importance of Surrender" - This title would highlight the idea that following Jesus requires a willingness to surrender one's own desires and priorities in order to align with God's will.
3. "The Limits of Human Achievement" - This title would emphasize the idea that no amount of human achievement or success can guarantee eternal life, and that true fulfillment can only be found in God.
4. "The Promise of Grace" - This title would highlight the parable's underlying message of hope and assurance that salvation is possible through God's grace, regardless of one's past mistakes or failures.

Ultimately, the title of the parable is not as important as its central message, which challenges us to examine our own priorities and commit ourselves fully to following Jesus.

I disagree. I believe that the title of a parable can adversely affect the reader's understanding of the parable.

You are correct that the title of a parable can influence a reader's understanding of the story. The title sets the tone for the reader's expectations and can shape their interpretation of the message. However, it's worth noting that the title is only one aspect of the parable's presentation, and readers can still engage with the story itself to form their own conclusions.

For example, if a reader approaches the parable titled "The Rich Young Ruler" with preconceived notions about wealth and status, they may be more likely to focus on the young man's wealth and miss the broader themes of the story.

However, if they approach the parable with an open mind and allow themselves to be immersed in the story, they may gain a deeper appreciation for the parable's messages about spiritual devotion, surrender, and grace.

By reading the parable with an open mind and heart, readers can gain deeper insights into the message and allow it to impact their lives in meaningful ways.

Consider the significance of naming the parable ... "The One Thing You Lack"

The title "The One Thing You Lack" is significant because it highlights the main point of the parable, which is the idea that following Jesus requires a complete and total commitment to Him. The young ruler in the parable was doing many good things and following the commandments, but Jesus told him that he still lacked one thing - selling all his possessions and giving to the poor.

This title emphasizes the fact that, despite all of our good deeds and efforts, there may be one thing holding us back from experiencing the fullness of a relationship with God. It challenges us to examine our own lives and priorities, and to ask ourselves what we may need to surrender in order to follow Jesus more fully.

Furthermore, the title "The One Thing You Lack" suggests that this is a universal challenge that all people face, regardless of their background or circumstances. We all have areas in our lives where we may be holding back, or where we need to let go of our own desires and trust in God's provision.

Overall, the title "The One Thing You Lack" emphasizes the importance of wholeheartedly committing ourselves to following Jesus, and challenges us to examine our lives and make any necessary changes in order to draw closer to God.

Yes! Exactly! Please emphasize the fact that for the man described as rich, surrendering possessions may be indicative of what he lacks. For each person, there is a different "thing" they must strive to move beyond or to be rid of. This is a universal challenge that we each experience in our own particular way.

Absolutely, you make a great point. For the rich young ruler in the parable, his wealth was the one thing holding him back from following Jesus fully. However, as you said, for each person, there may be a different "thing" that they need to surrender in order to experience the fullness of a relationship with God.

The parable highlights the fact that this is a universal challenge that we all face, and that each person's journey towards spiritual growth and maturity may look different. For some, it may be the need to surrender material possessions, for others, it may be a struggle with pride, or a lack of trust in God's provision. Whatever it may be, the parable challenges us to examine our own lives and to be honest about the areas where we may be holding back from fully following Jesus.

The title "The One Thing You Lack" emphasizes the idea that this challenge is universal, and that each person's journey towards spiritual growth will be unique. It reminds us that surrendering our own desires and priorities is a necessary part of the journey, and that true fulfillment can only be found in God.