

Good News, Great Joy, All People

“How to Live Forever”

Luke 18:18-30

Growth Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- ❖ In your current season of life, how do you feel about the idea of getting older? (For example, do you see yourself aging, and resent it? Welcome it? Fear it? Does it seem way off in the distance, rather than real?)
 - Is the desire for eternal life something that you think of often? Why or why not?
 - Josh mentioned on Sunday that in biblical terms—while “eternal life” invokes the concept of being “eternal” in duration—it also involves being eternal in its quality. What do you think of when you think of life that is eternal in its quality?
- ❖ Begin your time together with a moment of silence, then pray and ask for God’s Spirit to shape us through his word.

1. The preceding verses provide important context for this week’s focal passage.

Read Luke 18:15-17, and discuss the following.

- In v. 17, when Jesus talks about receiving the kingdom of God “like a little child,” what aspect of childlikeness do you think he has in mind?
- This comparison should become clearer as we read on.

2. Read Luke 18:18-19, and discuss the following.

- Recall what Jesus said at the outset of his ministry, that he came to “proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18). To what degree does that aspect of his ministry shed light on the current interchange?
- Why do you think that Jesus takes issue with the ruler calling him, “Good teacher?”
- Pastor Josh pointed out that this ruler is operating in the paradigm that says, “Good people earn God’s favor,” resulting in eternal life.
 - How do you feel about this paradigm? Do you ever catch yourself thinking that if you can reach a certain behavioral or moral standard, you will earn approval and blessings from God?
 - Jesus points out one problem with this paradigm: “No one is good—except God alone.” If Jesus were in the room tonight, would you debate him on this point? Why or why not?
 - What other problems do you see with this “good people earn God’s favor” paradigm?
- Josh suggested that Jesus is telling the man, and us, “Stop trying to earn your way into eternal life.”
 - Do you feel that this instruction is one that you need to hear again today? Why or why not?

3. Read Luke 18:20-30, and discuss the following.

- In v. 22, Jesus tells the man, “You still lack one thing.” What do you think is the “one thing” he lacks?
- Pastor Josh interpreted the instruction as follows: “the one thing the man lacks is ‘treasure in heaven.’ And that heavenly treasure is only found in following Jesus.”
 - What do you think of this interpretation? Does it make sense of Jesus’ words? Why or why not?
 - Why does Jesus command the man to sell everything he has and give to the poor?
 - Josh also said, “As long as something else is standing in the way, it isn’t possible to have God’s kingdom be your heart’s treasure.” How can good gifts, from God, be something that one must give up to follow Jesus?
 - Sensitive question alert! Do you think that there is anything you love so much that it stands in the way of treasuring God’s kingdom, in Christ? Or has there been any such thing in the past, which you have addressed?
- What’s the difference between treasuring Jesus just for who he is, as opposed to treasuring him for what he can do for you? What does it look like, in your life, when you go to him for what he can get for you? What does it look like when you simply treasure him for him?
- How do Jesus’ words in vv. 24-27 strike you? What do you think he is trying to communicate?
- How does the true “rich young ruler” enable you to loosen your grip on the things you treasure more than him?
- Linguistically, there are multiple reasons to see this interchange as a picture of the principle Jesus stated in Luke 18:17. At this point in the discussion, how would you interpret Jesus’ statement about receiving God’s kingdom like a child? How is that statement related to the rich ruler?
- In vv. 29-30, Jesus makes a claim about what you will receive *in this life*. Have you experienced this as a reality yet? How? In what way does this help you to follow Jesus?

Prayer:

- Pray about the things that have already been shared.
- Take a moment to share, and pray for any other needs that exist among your group members.