

God's goodness is not measured by the comfort or ease of our lives, but by His faithfulness to shepherd us through every season—both the valleys and the mountaintops. Even when life is hard and we face trials, God's desire is to meet us right where we are, to comfort us, and to lead us into His peace. King David's declaration in Psalm 23 that "the Lord is my shepherd" was not written from a place of comfort, but from the wilderness, reminding us that God's goodness and mercy pursue us in every circumstance.

We often find ourselves carrying the burdens and treasures of this world, gripping tightly to things that ultimately cannot satisfy the deep longing in our hearts. Like the rich young ruler in Luke 18, we may have achieved worldly success, influence, or comfort, yet still sense that something is missing. Jesus' invitation is clear: to receive the eternal life and purpose He offers, we must be willing to let go of whatever we treasure more than Him. The things we withhold from God—whether possessions, status, comfort, or even our fears—can become the very things that pull us away from the life He has for us.

Jesus is not looking for crowds of interested people, but for fully surrendered disciples. He calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him—not just in word or religious activity, but in wholehearted devotion. This means evaluating what truly sits on the throne of our hearts. Are we building our own kingdoms, or are we seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness? The call is not just to avoid obvious sins, but to surrender even good things that have become ultimate things in our lives.

God's purpose for us is not just about a future in heaven, but about living an eternal kind of life right now—a life marked by surrender, purpose, and impact for His kingdom. Each of us is called to be a light in our community, to serve, to love, and to point others to Jesus. The invitation is to lay down whatever competes for our devotion, to pick up the life God has for us, and to trust that what He offers is far greater than anything we could ever gain from the world.

Key Takeaways

- God's Goodness Is Present in Every Season

God's goodness is not dependent on our circumstances. Even in the midst of hardship, loss, or confusion, He is the Good Shepherd who desires to meet us, comfort us, and lead us through the valley. Our greatest experiences of His peace and joy often come not on the mountaintops, but in the valleys where we learn to trust Him more deeply. [03:00]

- Worldly Success Cannot Satisfy the Eternal Longing

No matter how much we achieve or accumulate, there remains a God-given longing in our hearts for something more—eternity. The rich young ruler had everything the world could offer, yet he knew something was missing. Only a life anchored in Christ and lived for eternal purposes can truly satisfy the soul. [42:53]

- What We Withhold from God Can Become Our Greatest Obstacle

The things we are unwilling to surrender—whether wealth, comfort, relationships, or even our own plans—can become idols that pull us away from God’s best for us. Jesus will not share the throne of our hearts; He calls us to lay down whatever competes for our devotion so we can fully follow Him. [49:13]

- Jesus Seeks Surrender, Not Just Interest or Activity

Crowds may be drawn to Jesus for what He can do, but He is looking for disciples who will surrender everything. True discipleship means loving Him above all else, even above good things like family, comfort, or reputation. The call is to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him into a life of purpose and sacrifice. [54:04]

- Eternal Life Begins Now, with Purpose and Impact

God’s invitation is not just to a future in heaven, but to a life of meaning and impact today. Each of us is called to be a light, to serve, and to participate in God’s redemptive work in the world. As we surrender to Him, He uses us to bring healing, hope, and salvation to others—this is the eternal life we are called to embrace. [01:02:13]

Bible Study Discussion Guide

Bible Reading

Luke 18:18-30 (ESV)

And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” 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.” But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 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.” Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” 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, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Observation Questions

1. What did the rich young ruler ask Jesus, and how did Jesus respond to his question? (Luke 18:18-22)
2. According to the passage, what was the one thing the rich young ruler lacked? (Luke 18:22)
3. How did the rich young ruler react to Jesus’ invitation, and why? (Luke 18:23)
4. What did Jesus say about the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of God, and how did the disciples respond? (Luke 18:24-27)

5. What promise did Jesus give to those who leave things behind for the sake of the kingdom? (Luke 18:29-30)

Interpretation Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell everything and give to the poor, instead of just telling him to believe or follow the commandments? [44:13]
2. What does this story reveal about the things that can compete for our devotion to God? [49:13]
3. How does Jesus' call to "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me" challenge the idea of just being interested in Jesus versus being fully surrendered? [54:04]
4. In what ways does the story of the rich young ruler show that even good things (like wealth, influence, or comfort) can become obstacles to following Jesus? [49:13]

Application Questions

1. The sermon said, "The things you withhold from God will become the very things that pull you away from him." Is there something in your life right now that you are holding onto more tightly than you are holding onto Jesus? What would it look like to surrender that to Him? [49:13]
2. The rich young ruler had everything the world could offer, but still felt something was missing. Have you ever experienced a similar feeling, even when things were going well? What did you do with that longing? [42:53]
3. Jesus is not looking for crowds of interested people, but for fully surrendered disciples. What is one area of your life where you sense God is asking for deeper surrender? What is holding you back? [54:04]
4. The sermon mentioned that God's goodness is present in every season, not just when life is easy. Can you share about a time when you experienced God's goodness in a difficult season? How did that shape your faith? [03:00]
5. The passage and sermon both talk about "letting go" in order to "take hold" of what God has for us. What is one practical step you can take this week to let go of something that is competing for your devotion to Jesus? [49:13]
6. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What do your daily habits and priorities reveal about what you treasure most? Is there anything you want to change? [50:40]
7. The sermon challenged us to be a light in our community and to serve others. What is one way you can intentionally serve or point someone to Jesus this week? [01:02:13]

Closing Prayer Suggestion:

Invite the group to pray for courage to surrender anything that is competing for their devotion to Jesus, and for open eyes to see opportunities to serve and be a light in their community.