

What Must We Do to Be Saved?

Luke 18:18-43

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Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." - Luke 18:26-27, ESV

A few days ago, [we saw](#) a stark contrast between the rich man and Lazarus, as we analyzed Jesus' famous parable. We asked the question: [Are you the rich man or are you Lazarus?](#) Over and over again in the Gospels, we see Jesus confronting cultural norms and natural human expectations and aspirations. Why? Because our cultural norms and our natural human standards and desires keep us from the kingdom of God and from the gift of eternal life.

And so today, we meet two real people who are as contrasted as the rich man and Lazarus. We meet the rich young ruler (vv. 18-25) and a blind beggar (vv. 35-43). Each wanted something from Jesus. The rich young ruler wanted information, directions for how to achieve eternal life. He asked, "*Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?*" He thought eternal life was something he could be good enough to deserve. The blind beggar's request was both simpler and more urgent: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*"

The rich young ruler was a scrupulously religious and dutifully moral man. He had been concerned to live a life of moral purity since childhood. But he loved his money and was deceived as to the true condition of his heart. The blind beggar made no pretense of moral purity or of deserving an inheritance of eternal life from God. He simply cried out and would not be silenced: "Have mercy on me!"

It is no coincidence that we have Jesus' prediction of His own coming death and resurrection in between these two stories. Jesus' death and resurrection is necessary because religiously moral people like the rich young ruler could never be good enough to inherit eternal life. No one is good but God alone. Jesus' death and resurrection is necessary because God has determined that He will extend mercy to needy sinners like the blind beggar, even if it costs Him His only Son.

So, what must we do to be saved? We must stop thinking that we can do anything to be saved. We must stop believing in our own goodness and start seeing how desperate our need truly is. Only then will we cry for the mercy we need, the free gift of eternal life, not earned but given, bought and paid for by the death and resurrection of the Son of God.