

New Leaf or New Life?

We're now in or soon will be in the New Year and many will be making or have already made New Year's resolutions. You may be seeking to improve your life in one way or another, and you may have decided to try and abandon a habit in an effort to improve your health, your home, or any number of other things. Why do so many resolutions end in failure? For many, a New Year's resolution is to simply turn over a new leaf in life, which actually depends entirely upon their being able to follow through, to keep a promise to themselves.

In Luke 18:18-23, we see a man looking for something in his life. He seems to be looking for something he has not had to that point in his life, and I believe he was looking for peace in his life. Having a satisfied life is only found in Jesus. If you want a happy, prosperous New Year, it can be found in the Lord. Whatever you may need right now, Jesus is the answer.

Well, the question today is, Do you want to turn over a new leaf or do you want a new life? In Luke 18:18-23, we see the man. His life was an image of so many people in our day. Notice with me if you would he was very prosperous. In Luke 18:23, it says, *For he was very rich.*

This man was a ruler. He was important in the synagogue. Here was a man who, no doubt, had worked hard and had in life what many yearned to have. He was a young man, as Matthew 19 tells us, and we also know by reading the text, Luke 18, that he was a rich man. As we look on and as we study this, we see that, according to the world's standard, he had it all. He was young successful, wealthy, and recognized as a man of position in society. He had all that a man could possibly desire as far as worldly means and yet he was in need.

You see, a person can have wealth, health, success, and even a place of authority and still find himself or herself empty on the inside. A person can be blessed with everything this world has to offer, but that is no sign of real happiness in the heart.

He was very prosperous and he was knowledgeable, and Jesus said, *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.* And the rich man said, *All these have I kept from my youth up,* Luke 18:20-21.

This man was knowledgeable in the Word of God because Christ said that he knew the commandments and that's of God. He had lived a respectable life. He had been faithful to the law of God. He was a ruler in the synagogue and he continually was in the house of the Lord. He lived a life filled with doing good deeds and living an upright life before men, but there was something missing.

Please understand, you ought to live a good life before others. You ought to have a heart of compassion. You need to be in the house of God every time you have an opportunity, but these things cannot satisfy the longing in your soul. You could come to church every time the doors are open. You could spend every free moment of life doing good deeds for others and still live a miserable life. Simply being busy with good things will not provide the peace that Jesus gives. It cannot save your soul from the devil's Hell or take you to God's Heaven.

This rich young ruler was troubled. In Luke 18:18, once again, it says, *Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Here was the man and he reveals here what was bothering him. He lived a good life of prominence, but

that didn't bring him to satisfaction. He was concerned about his eternity. He wanted to know what was required to obtain eternal life.

No doubt, when this young man woke up each morning, he felt well in body. He was young and had the energy for whatever the day would bring. Going to the synagogue, those whom he passed knew who he was. As he arrived at the synagogue, he would take his place of authority. Those who came were looking to him for guidance and instruction, and he likely enjoyed the best meals that money could buy and went to sleep at night confident in the financial gain he had acquired. This young man seemed to have it all. Yet, underneath the surface of his life was a man who was troubled in his heart. All that he had achieved had left him empty inside.

As you listen today, you may have it all as far as the world can see and yet be troubled within. Have you considered your eternal future? A prosperous new year and future can be obtained through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Worldly success may satisfy temporarily, but you will never be content without Jesus. And let me add, Jesus does not promise you wealth. He does not promise you the wealth of this world. He promises you eternal life.

We've taken notice of the man. Now, let's take notice of the situation of choices. As we look at this man, we find that he faced a dilemma in his life. Something needed to change. He was missing something. Something needed to happen in order for him to find what had escaped him throughout his seemingly perfect life. Notice his mistakes. He hadn't yet come to terms as to what he needed in his life. He was confused concerned several things.

First, concerning the Savior. Luke 18:18-19 says: *18And a certain ruler asked him, saying,*

Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 19And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

He addressed Jesus as "Good Master," and Jesus responded with a perplexing question. Jesus was in no way implying that He wasn't who He claimed to be. He wasn't denying His deity. He was challenging the young man to determine who Jesus was to him. The man had actually referred to Jesus as "good." He did not see Jesus as the Messiah. In order to inherit eternal life, he needed to see Jesus as the Savior of men.

The same holds true for each of us. We can never be saved until we see Jesus for who He is. If you need salvation, you must see Jesus as the one who can save. If you need direction, you must see Him as the counselor. If you are lonely, you must see Him as a close friend.

We will never have the peace that passes all understanding, Philippians 4:7, until we meet and acknowledge the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. We must see Jesus for who He is and give Him the place of preeminence in our lives. He is the only way, according to John 14:6. He is much more than a Good Master. He is a great Savior.

Notice with me, the ruler was not only mistaken about the Savior. He was mistaken concerning salvation. As Jesus declared there is none good save one, in verse 19, except God, He wanted the man to search his heart and see himself in need of the Lord. He had lived a good moral life, and he kept the commandments and held a position in the synagogue, but that wasn't enough to secure his salvation.

You can live as good a life as you please and still die lost without Christ and go to Hell. You

must first see yourself lost before you can be saved. It isn't about how good you are, how well you support your family or treat your wife or husband. It isn't about paying tithes or Sunday school attendance. The Bible says, *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*, Romans 3:23. All need His saving grace.

This young man was counting on all the good he had done to earn him a place in Heaven. What he failed to realize is salvation isn't something we do. It is already done. Jesus provided the sacrifice for our sin. It is impossible to work our way to Heaven. Salvation is obtained through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Philippian jailer said to Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* And they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house*, Acts 16:31. Many are confused today regarding salvation. Simple faith is all that is required and it is the only way.

Notice now this young man's confrontation. Luke 18:22 says, *Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, **Yet lackest thou one thing...*** After Jesus heard everything this man had done and who he was, He said, "You lack one thing... ***sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.***

After Jesus dealt with the man concerning mistakes he was making, He confronted him concerning further about what he lacked. The Holy Spirit will confront us about areas in our lives that need attention. Jesus called upon the man to do two things. First, forsake himself. The man was instructed to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. Jesus simply pointed out the problem and expected him to deal with it.

Jesus wasn't offended that the man had acquired wealth. The money wasn't the problem. The problem was the man's love for

money. He loved what he had obtained more than anything else. He wanted to be right with God but his possessions stood in the way. We cannot put anything ahead of God.

Jesus also told the man, ***Follow me***, Luke 18:22. This young man had lived a life that had brought success, and I'm sure there were those who would have loved to have his position. He had lived life with power, prestige, position, and possessions. His world revolved around his life that he had built for himself.

Maybe your life has revolved around yourself instead of revolving around Jesus Christ. Many today are unwilling today to give the Lord what He expects. Think about this. How many times have we heard of the rich and famous being in misery with all their abundance in this world? I don't have a lot, but I have Jesus. I'm happy in my soul. Jesus can do that for you if you'll only follow Him. Accepting Him as Savior brings salvation. Accepting Him as Lord first in your life brings peace and joy.

The young man was also someone who had to make a decision. He had to make a personal choice. He had to receive Jesus as Savior or refuse Him. He had to make an eternal choice and that was to receive Jesus Christ and receive eternal life or to refuse Him.

Have you done that? Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior today? For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. The Bible says that once you do that you have eternal life. Why not receive new life this year. Quit turning over a new leaf and receive new life in Jesus Christ.

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Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.