

## **A Jesus Who Will Provide**

### **Luke 18:15-43**

*Pastor Duane Smets*

April 8th, 2018

- I. Kid Faith (v.15-17)
- II. Rich Faith (v.18-30)
- III. Blind Faith (v.31-43)

Good morning. It's great to be here with you all this Sunday. If you came for your first time last week for Easter and then came back today, we're so glad you came again and if you weren't able to be here last week but are here today, we're glad you're here too. It's our mission and desire to see as many people as possible come in and see, hear, feel and experience the goodness of God along with us.

I'm Duane, the preaching pastor here and today we're jumping back into our study through the book of Luke in the Bible. We took a week off it for Easter but today we pick it back up, taking another chunk in a sermon I've titled, "A Jesus Who Will Provide."

Just a couple months ago in February Kendrick Lamar and The Weekend released a song on the Black Panther soundtrack album called "Pray For Me." Have you guys heard it? It's good. Or I guess I should say, "I like it." It's on the radio a bunch these days, so if you listen to the radio I'm sure you have heard it. It's catchy and one of those songs that sort of gets stuck in your head.

The song starts out with The Weekend coming in singing about a road that we all go down. He says, "it's all the same" and then says,

*Tell me who's gon' save me from myself  
When this life is all I know  
Tell me who's gon' save me from this hell*

*Then the chorus chimes in where he sings,*

*Who gon' pray for me?  
Take my pain for me?  
Save my soul for me?  
'Cause I'm alone, you see."*

Kendrick Lamar comes in then rapping these dope lines saying,

*I fight the world, I fight you, I fight myself  
I fight God, just tell me how many burdens left*

*I fight pain and hurricanes, today I wept  
I'm tryna fight back tears, flood on my doorsteps*

*He goes on to talk about the evils of the world and his own internal demons and then the chorus comes in after that two more times and then the song ends with this depressive resolution,*

*Just in case my faith go  
I live by my own law  
I live by my own law  
I live by my own*

The hope of the song is that someone might come along to pray for him, to take his pain and to save his soul. Who's going to do it? Who is there to put faith in? Who will provide what's needed? The song ends without an answer to that other than just putting faith in yourself, living by your own law on your own.

With that, let's go ahead and stand and read our text for today about a Jesus who promises to provide what we long for and need.

## **Luke 18:15-43**

*Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 17 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*

*18 And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" 21 And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." 22 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." 23 But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. 24 Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 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." 26 Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." 28 And Peter said, "See, we have left our homes and followed you." 29 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, 30 who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”*

*31 And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” 34 But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.*

*35 As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. 37 They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” 38 And he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” 39 And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” 40 And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, 41 “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” 42 And Jesus said to him, “Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.” 43 And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

- Pastoral Declaration: This is the Word of the Lord.
- Congregational Response: Thanks Be To God.

We’ve got three different types or groups of people in this passage, we got kids, a rich man and then spiritually blind disciples and an actual blind guy. So, my three points for us to walk through this morning are, “Kid Faith”, “Rich Faith” and “Blind Faith” and the central idea or theme is simply “Jesus will.” Who gon’ save me, who gon’ heal me, who gon’ love me? Jesus will. Jesus will. Jesus provides what we long for and need.

## **I. Kid Faith (v. 15-17)**

At this time Jesus was seen both as a spiritual man with divine blessing and as a leader of people, attracting large crowds who hoped and thought he might become the next Jewish king and overthrow the Roman government ruling at the time. He’s sort of got this celebrity status thing going on, with people bringing their babies and kids to him but then the disciples step in thinking their going to be his body guards and try and prevent them from getting close to Jesus.

Jesus sees what’s going on and says hold on a minute and uses it as an opportunity to teach one of the most profound and precious truths of Christianity and what Jesus came to offer. He says children not only belong and are welcome but anyone who actually want

to follow Him and believe in Him as the King of the Kingdom must receive Him like a child does.

Christians then are supposed to have a child-like faith in Jesus. What does that mean?

Well first let's talk about kids. Kids are extremely important in and of themselves. The first words God ever speaks to mankind after creating humans are instructions to have kids. Kids are often seen as insignificant and a nuisance, that they get in the way of life and the life we think we want to live. The Bible says the opposite. Kids are central.

This is why we put a big emphasis on family here at our church. Church is meant to have families and to be a big family together. Children belong.

Children belong. So we encourage parents to covenant their kids when they're infants by either dedicating them or baptizing them. It's a sign that they belong not only to the house of their parents but to God's house as well. Which by the way if you haven't done that yet, we'll be covenanting kids here on Sunday July 8th. So save the date.

Children belong. So we put a big emphasis on R | Kids ministry on Sundays. It's not just childcare what we do. It's a wonderful opportunity to be a servant, to learn from kids, to help shape them and invest their life with God. We think every parent and especially parents to be, ought to a part of R | Kids ministry. It's easy and fun, all it requires is a background check, you do a training and then you just serve once a month. So if you haven't thought about being part of the R | Kids team think about it.

Children belong and are central. But what is about children here and how they "receive" the kingdom, which is the way Jesus says we're supposed to receive it?

Children are by nature dependent. They start out life not being able to do anything really accept eat and if someone does not feed them they die. Once they begin to walk and talk they simply trust and believe whatever you tell them.

I love to have fun with my kids and tell them imaginative stories. Recently my youngest, who's five has gotten into unicorns. She asked me the other day if unicorns were real and I said, "Of course. My sister actually had a pet unicorn when we were growing up!" And she said, "Really?" And then I said, "Yeah, it was this beautiful white unicorn and you know what was really funny is that whenever it pooped, it pooped out rainbows." Then she said, "Dad, that's not true! Wait, is it?" And I said, "Yeah!" And then the other day my wife found this rainbow goop at Target we bought for her to help out my story.

The problem is my two older girls are on to me and now don't believe anything I say. They just think I'm a liar. I'm trying to tell them not to ruin their little sister's innocence. Imagination is a good thing.

What's interesting is that part of a parents job is actually to teach their kids not to trust, to teach them that the world is a dangerous place. Literally after church we have to teach them not to run out the gate into the busy street as attractive as all the cars speeding by looks.

Over time though this has a negative effect in our souls. The philosopher Corneilius Plantinga says,

“Once upon a time we know how to receive something uncritically and live off it. But now we are so reliant upon ourselves and so critical of others that it is hard for us to receive anything from anyone.”

Often times it seems that what life teaches us is not to trust...that you can't trust anything or anyone.

This is what I think Jesus is getting at in telling us to have kid faith. To simply see Him and trust Him. Kids are hands down the group of people who are most open to God.

You tell them that there is a God who is our Creator and we're to live life for them and that makes sense to them. They simply believe it and accept it. Kids know that they are bad and you tell them that God sent His Son to die on the cross for all our bad and they get it. That makes sense to them.

I don't have to even say anything to my kids, if I just look at them and open my arms to them, they see me and come running and give me a hug. That's how Jesus is here. He has open welcoming arms. Kids see Him, believe in His love and run to Him. And that's how He calls us to receive Him. To see Him, believe in His love and run to Him.

It's kid faith. It's a simple faith that believes that Jesus will. Jesus will open His arms to us. He will receive us. He will provide what we need, so we don't have to worry about it.

So how are you doing with your kid faith? Are you overcomplicating your relationship with God? It's meant to just be a simple thing. Simple trust. Simple faith. No need to doubt it or question it. Jesus loves you. Jesus welcomes you.

Toys R Us had it right, right? So sad Amazon killed Geoffry. But Toys R Us had it right.

“I don't want to grow up, I'm a Toys R Us kid.”

Friends, I don't want to grow up. Family, let's just be kids. Let's simply be God's kids. Amen?

Alright, let's move on to our second point for today, "Rich Faith."

## **II. Rich Faith (v. 18-30)**

The text in Luke moves from talking about kids who get it to a rich man who doesn't get it at all. Kids simply receive the inheritance of the family, of the kingdom. But this guy wants to know what he must do to get it.

He starts off actually being disrespectful to Jesus. The guy is a ruler in the city and so it would have been proper to address Jesus as rabbi or by one of His messianic titles like the blind guy does later in the story. Instead he calls Jesus, "Good Teacher" which right away tells us he's mocking and challenging Jesus.

Jesus bypasses his question on what he must do and says, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." It's pretty masterful. Jesus just puts His cards straight out on the table and questions whether or not this guy believes Jesus is God or not.

If the guy takes it back and says Jesus isn't good, that puts him in a pickle with the crowds around who have just seen Jesus holding babies. If the guy embraces that Jesus is actually and truly good then he must acknowledge that Jesus is God in the flesh. I imagine Jesus just let this one sit for awhile, pausing and letting it get real awkward.

After he doesn't say anything Jesus entertains his "what must I do" question by bringing up five of the ten commandments, the five that have to do with how we relate to others. Jesus' point is if you want to try and earn an inheritance, earn eternal life, earn God by doing good things then you better do them perfectly all the time. Which is impossible. It's why it was said that only God is only truly good and perfect all the time.

But this rich guy thinks he's so great he says in a proud boast, "All these I have kept from my youth." Sure. In response to that Jesus then goes after the guy's heart before God, what the other five commandments deal with. Jesus says, "Okay great. You think you can do anything and everything perfect? That you love God that much? Then get rid of your riches, what seems to be the true god of your heart." And the guy walks away sad because there was no way he was going to do that.

Then, as the guy is walking away Jesus makes fun of him. Literally. He turns to his disciples and says, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." That's funny. He should've got a good laugh. The image is hilarious. We saw a camel the other day at the zoo. They're big. The eye of a needle is tiny. It's impossible. This is funny.

But the people around aren't laughing. They're cut to the heart. They're panicking. They're thinking what some of you are probably thinking. "If I really want to follow Jesus

do I have to sell everything?” That’s too hard. How many people are actually going to do that? Who can be saved?

The disciples pipe up and are all proud. Peter says, “We have left our homes and followed you!” We’re not camels! They don’t get it either.

Jesus responds to the crowd and to the disciples. To the crowd’s question, “Who can be saved?” Jesus replies, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

You see what the rich man failed to see is his need. He thought he could save himself. But that’s impossible. As The Weekend’s song says, we need someone else to save us. We can’t do it. But God can. What Jesus is saying is that He’s God and He can do the saving.

If the rich man truly saw himself and truly saw Jesus he would have seen that he hadn’t kept the commandments and then would have seen Jesus as the savior. We can’t do it. We’re all camels, but through Jesus he does a impossible miracles and enables us to go through the eye of the needle into the kingdom of God.

When believe in Jesus that way, Jesus tells the disciples that when you really gain everything, you gain eternal life. You see Jesus isn’t saying it’s a sin to have money and possessions. I know a pastor who teaches that, if you really love Jesus you’ll sell everything and just give everything away all the time. That’s not true. That’s a poverty gospel. The Bible has a ton of other things to say about being a good steward of money and providing for you family etc.

What Jesus is saying is the same thing other places when he uses extremes to make a point. He says, “If your eye causes you to sin cut it out. If you hand causes you to sin, cut it off.” Does Jesus really want us to go around cutting our hands off and eyes out? No. He wants us to wrestle with what and who is really God in our hearts and lives.

It’s easy for money and possessions to get a grip on our hearts and then our identity and how it can get wrapped around it. Jesus says it’s better to wrap ourselves around Him. Kids don’t have any money. They receive everything from the beneficence of their mom and dad.

Yes, there’s a cost to following Jesus. Everyone gives up something to follow Jesus. All of your resources get redirected. Your time, your talents and yes, even your treasure. You begin to see it all as tools in service of the kingdom. But you don’t care so much because what you really care about is God. Being a kid in his kingdom is better than anything.

The Bible says it this way in 1 Timothy 6:17-19,

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

And that’s relevant for all of us, because if we live in the US and especially in SD, we’re rich for sure.

If we have Him He will provide for us both now and for eternity. What the rich man failed to see was his need for God, his need for The Savior. He was materially rich but spiritually poor. What Jesus invites us into is to have a rich faith. To put all our money on Him and then watch Him do a miracle in making all us camels go through the eye of God’s needle.

So how’s this section sitting with ya? Here’s a good question for our hearts to try and get at it, “Is there anything you wouldn’t give up for God?” If there’s something that comes to mind, that’s your camel you need Jesus to save you from.

Are you trying to earn what can only be an inheritance for God’s children? Are trying to do and do and do, trying to be a good person? That’s not going to work. Only Jesus is good, and He offers his goodness to us to save us.

Do you feel frustrated, like you’ve given up a lot for God and it’s not paying off? Don’t worry it will. You will be rewarded. And you’ll be glad in heaven because eternity is a long longer than our short time here on earth with the small pleasures it provides.

Jesus will. Jesus will provide for us with everything we need. Well, let’s move on to our final point for today, “Blind Faith.”

### **III. Blind Faith (v. 31-43)**

After talking about what kid faith is, and then what rich faith is, two scenes of two different kinds of blind faith take place.

The first is with Jesus twelve disciples. For the seventh time in Luke Jesus tells them He’s going to die and then rise. And this time He’s really specific. He’s God, so He knows the future and says He’s going to be arrested by the Jews, turned over to the Gentiles, the Roman government, will be mocked, spit on, flogged, then killed and then on the third day rise.

Sounds pretty straight forward right? Apparently not. Verse 34 says, “But they understood none of these things...they did not grasp what was said.” They were blind to what Jesus was talking about.

In the encounter with the rich man Jesus presented Himself as the one who could save and here with the twelve He tells them exactly how He plans to do it, by dying and rising. But they don't get it. Which at first is baffling. Until you put yourself in their shoes.

They believe Jesus is the King of the Kingdom, the promised messiah of God, the savior who was going to save them and the Jewish people. How they thought he would do that was by Jesus leading a revolution, taking up arms and overthrowing the government.

So likely what they thought when Jesus was talking about dying and rising was that He was speaking figuratively. Perhaps some would die. There would be some battles and resistance but in the end they would rise up and be victorious. That Jesus would literally die and rise wasn't even on their radar. They were blind to that.

Which is a lesson for us. Often times for us, even those of us who are disciples and followers of Jesus, Christians, we can be oblivious to God's divine plan and not really get what's going on. And we're still often tempted to just want Jesus to solve the physical problems of our land more than we want to deal with the need of our souls. You see we can fall into the same thing.

The need of our souls is for restoration and what happens next puts that on front display. They're drawing near to Jericho on their way to Jerusalem where everything is supposed to go down. Crowds are following and are excited.

A blind man on the side of the road hears the crowd asks what's going on and someone tells him it's and hears that it's “Jesus of Nazareth” coming by. Apparently the blind man had heard about Jesus and knew the promises of the Bible, because when he heard that something happened in his heart and he cried out not to “Jesus of Nazareth” but to “Jesus, Son of David.”

That's significant because “Son of David” was a special title. It's the title given in several places in the Bible for a savior to come, who would be in the lineage of David and be like David, the greatest king of Israel's history. So by calling Jesus “Son of David” the blind man was proclaiming in a loud voice Jesus as the promised savior. He's not just Jesus of Nazareth to this man.

He cries out to Jesus and the people from the crowd tell him to shut up. Kind of like how they did with the kids we looked at earlier. In response verse 39 says he cried out even more, even louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Once again, Jesus sees what's going on, He always responds to cries for mercy. Jesus sees the man, asks them to bring him close and then he asks him a funny question, verse 41, "What do you want me to do for you?" Isn't it obvious? The guy wants to see right?

But look at Jesus words. Jesus is drawing him out, wanting to heal him deep down and bring him to faith. What do you want ME to DO of for you? Jesus calls attention to himself. And this is the sweetest and most important word in our text today, he says, "Lord." He calls Jesus Lord. It's a statement of personal faith in Jesus as savior. In that moment he saw Jesus, not with his eyes yet but with a heart of faith.

He says, "Lord, let me recover my sight." Then Jesus just speaks these simple words, "Recover your sight, your faith has made you well." And then the man can see.

What interesting is those three words, "made you well" are actually translated from one word. This was originally written in Greek and translated into our English. That one word is actually the word that most often gets translated as "save" or in this case "saved." It's a word that means to be made whole, rescued or restored.

In healing this man, Jesus restored his person. Not just his sight but also his social standing and his relationship to God. And the result is that he and all the people around start glorifying and praising God.

This was a man people had seen as expendable, like a lot of our homeless friends, the people people don't see. But Jesus saw him and in response he saw Jesus. Earlier we read and talked about the rich man who had everything the world had to offer but he couldn't see Jesus. This blind man in his darkness saw the light of the heavenly promise in Jesus.

Helen Keller was a Christian woman from the last century who was the first blind and deaf person to ever earn a college degree. She said this, "It's better to be blind and to see with your heart than to have two good eyes and see nothing."

You see, you ask what faith is? It's simply seeing Jesus. Seeing Jesus as he is. Seeing his welcoming and saving arms and trusting them to provide. Faith is a faith that sees Jesus. And that's what we need. We need blind faith.

Blind faith isn't a stupid faith, throwing our brains away. Blind faith is acknowledging our need for mercy and crying out to Jesus for it.

Today, what are some of the things you've perhaps been blind to? What might God be inviting you to open your eyes and see in Him?

Do you see His welcoming and healing arms? Jesus has what we need. If we ask Him, He will. Jesus will. Jesus will provide for us. And He provides in the best way, by giving us Himself.

The way He has done that for us is by giving up Himself on the cross for all of our sins, our own sins and the sins done to us so that we can be forgiven and healed. Jesus has provided in full measure.

## **Conclusion**

Well, I started out the sermon this morning talking about The Weekend and Kendrick Lamar's song longing for someone to do what we cannot, to save us.

We end today recognizing that in reality we're all just blind camels who need to Jesus to do a miracle in us to see His welcoming arms and like trusting kids just run into them and be safe.

Jesus is good my friends. Jesus the true Son gave His life so that we could be welcomed into His Kingdom family as God's special children.