

180813-2 Introduction to Lk.18, 18-30, The Rich Young Ruler & the Demoniac of Gadara – Craig Thurman

It would be good to give a few brief remarks as we begin to read our text today. The man is a rich, young ruler. He is the very antithesis to the demoniac of Gadara. He was an earnest man, *he came running* to Christ; he was an humble man, *he knelt* before Him; he was diligent, *what shall I do*, (cf. Mk.10.17); he was moral, *all these have I observed from my youth up* (cf. Mk.10.20). He was not a murderer, an adulterer; he didn't steal, he honored his parents; he was an honest and good neighbor, reverent and religious (cf. Mt.19.18, 19). He believed in God and in life after death (as a ruler he may have been chief in the synagogue). Why this man was a model citizen in the nation of Israel, the best of the best in Israel society. How unlike the asocial, self-destructive outcast of Gadara. (cf. Lk.8.26-40; possessed of demons, living in the tombs where dead bodies were laid and in the wilderness, shamefully naked, having unnatural human strength, night and day crying out and cutting himself with knives, suicidal and desirous to die.) But as different as these two men were they shared one thing in common: no matter what men saw in these two, they were both of them dead before God: dead in trespasses and sins. The demoniac of Gadara and this rich, young ruler lacked this one thing: *life* – everlasting life. And what will we learn? That of these two, in this case, isn't the rich man that received the grace of life. It was the demoniac of Gadara. Why? Because the grace of life is dispensed to those of God's own choosing. It is not as men choose, but as God chooses. It was wasn't the rich man, in all of his human glory, which is found sitting at the feet of Jesus, fully clothed and in His right mind, but the man of Gadara. Rather, it was that rich, young ruler that went away from Christ very sorrowful. As far as we know he continued down the broad way to destruction without Christ. And it is certain that the man of Gadara is even at this very moment resting and comforted in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you received the free bestowal of the grace of life? Or are you trying to merit salvation? Those who will ever inherit life, those who will ever enter into the kingdom of God do so based upon the absolute, unchangeable, eternal, meritorious death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, plus or minus nothing. The children of God can rest in the work of Christ. How do you know that you have received the gift of eternal life? Let me ask you this – Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God that died on the cross for sinners? That He is your only

hope of salvation? Has the course of your life been affected by the knowledge of Christ so that you want to turn away from the previous course of life without God to walk with Him? If so, Jesus Christ calls you into discipleship. Be baptized and come into the fellowship of this church and glorify Him here until His second coming. Such actions are not in any way meritorious to being saved, but they are the evidence, if they come from an honest and willing heart, of one who has received the *grace of life*. If this is your desire, Come today!