

# Luke 18:9-14

## Stay Humble

Image Church // Inverted Kingdom Vol. 2 / Radical Week 2

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### Introduction

Well, good morning Image Family I hope you're doing well!

This weekend is the commemorative weekend where we remember the life and work of **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** fought against *racism* and *injustice* and we're grateful for his life and legacy, and we want to remember it by living out the same biblical values that he died pursuing...

As a church, we want to be about *loving God and loving our neighbor*- both of which are a natural **responses** to the gospel...

*Pray for our church and our community...*

**Alright, if you have your bibles go ahead and grab them and turn to Luke 18...**

We live in a self-made culture, and part of being self-made is self-promotion... We see this now more than ever through social media...

- The ability to gain a following now is insane...
- But to get it you have to prompt yourself... you have to let everyone know what you're doing...
- Some of it is dumb... *Hey mom watch this...*

But for many, it's putting on, where there's a perception that's held up and promoted in order to drive up followers...

- Look at what I do, look at how I do things...
- You are known based on what you do, and how you promote it...
- Esp. true when it comes to doing good things or acts of charity...

Over 6.2 Million posts with **#humble** on Instagram alone

- Over 3.3 million **#stayhumble**

Mostly used as a humble brag, or a form of promotion...

**BTW:** A hashtag *for my more season folks* is the pound symbol with something after it that serves as a tag for your post...

*Today we're going to look at a parable about a guy that loves to send selfies and tweets to God... not really...*

- But he loves telling God about all that He's doing...

And then we're going to see another guy **that does the opposite**, not clinging to his works but clinging to the mercy of God...

**And what we're going to see through it this morning is that Jesus doesn't want something from us, He wants to be something for us...**

### Luke 18:9-14

**9** He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else:

So, Luke gives us a heads up that this is the point of the parable... Jesus is addressing those that are self-righteous and looked down on others...

Here's the parable...

**10** "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

Alright, we need to stop right here to realize the cultural context of these two people that Jesus introduces in this parable... Mentioning these two people in the same sentence would have had a **shock factor** then that it's easy for us to miss today...

A **Pharisee** was someone who was looked up to, they were the pinnacle of Godliness in this day... We're like they're hypocrites and jacked up, but they weren't thought of that way back then...

- They were viewed with high regard and were the ones of all people that deserved acceptance from God... They were honored and feared because of their status and role...

And the **tax collector** on the other hand, he was the low of the low, he was viewed as a greedy politician that aligned with the interests of Rome who governed the Jewish...

- Tax collectors would often collect more money than Rome was asking for and they would keep the additional for themselves... They were despised for that, and for their allegiance to Rome... They were social outcasts to the Jewish people...

So for Jesus to even mention these two guys in the same sentence would have been shocking and detestable...

But Jesus is going to use it to make a key point... A point that inverts the cultural norms and flips the cultural perspective on its head...

**BTW** this is a pattern for Jesus... He's always disrupting the normative cultural perspective and in the process, He's showing us God's perspective...

*So you have a Pharisee and a tax collector who went to the temple to pray... Verse 11:*

**11** The Pharisee was standing and praying like this about himself: 'God, I thank you that I'm not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.'

**13** "But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!' **14** I tell you, this one went down to his house justified rather than the other, because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Ok, so you have two very different guys who approach God very differently, one walks away justified, and the other doesn't...

The irony would have been, that the one that the listeners would have thought would have walked away justified, **doesn't**... And the one that they thought would've **not** walked away justified does...

***So, let's take a look at both of these two guys and see what we need to learn from them...***

We will start with **the Pharisee**...

**Illustration:**

In the late 18th and early 19th century, there was an epidemic sweeping across Europe and America called **puerperal fever**...

- It was dramatically affecting women who were giving birth to children... They would give birth and then within 48 hrs. they would get sick and die in the hospital, and no one knew why...
- It killed around **70-80% of women who gave birth during that time**... It was called The **Black death of childbed**...

It sent shockwaves through the community... And Doctors everywhere were trying to prove how good their care was... People were arguing for logical reasons why it may be spreading but they still had no answers...

It wasn't until **1843** that an American physician in Boston **Doctor Oliver Wendell Homes** proposed that it was the doctors that were responsible for the spread...

See, the doctors would perform autopsies in the morning on the women that had died from **puerperal fever** and then attend to their patients who were new mothers in the afternoon... The idea of germs was not well understood...

He was criticized for coming to this conclusion and it was rejected...

It wasn't until **12 years later** the rest of the medical community accepted it and took action and the result... They eliminated puerperal fever...

The doctors didn't want to believe that it was them, but in the end, it was...

The same is so often true for us...

Nobody likes the people like the Pharisee, we like to point out and call out people like the Pharisee, we like to believe that we're not like the Pharisee, and yet so often we are the Pharisee!

So here's where we want to start this morning, we want to look at 3 marks of Pharisaical thinking that we see from our text, and then we'll look at 3 marks of humility... *So here we go...*

### **Three marks of Pharisaical thinking:**

#### **1. My works make me righteous before God**

**9** He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous

At the heart of the Pharisee is a key problem, he ***trusted in himself for righteousness...***

***Righteousness or righteous*** is a big word that means you have what it takes to stand before God... That He sees you as innocent and accepted...

This Pharisee thought that his performance dictated his standing before God...

**Religiosity is not what saves you...** It is Jesus' work on the cross that saves you...

**Example:** If I stick my head in the oven, I can do it as much or as often as I want but it doesn't make me a biscuit...

- I would need a total transformation for that...
- The same is true for you and I...

**Now for many of us, we would say we know this...** Really?

- Guilt shows us we don't believe this...

***But we like religiosity:*** we don't like to feel like our works put Jesus on the cross... We don't like the thought of that...

- We can avoid it by thinking through religiosity...

*Which leads me to the second point we see...*

#### **2. The more I do, the better I feel about myself**

**Verse 11** The Pharisee was standing and praying like this about himself:

This is tongue-in-cheek sarcasm...

He's all about his self-image... This is his motivation...

All y'all in the medical field know that the best way to diagnose a sickness is to look at the symptoms... I want to point out some symptoms for us to watch out for when talking about this sickness...

- Lack of authenticity...
  - I put the "mask on"
  - I know how to act right in certain situations to save or show face the right way...
- Your after the approval of man
  - What people think about you matters more than what God thinks about you...
- Your emotional state is more dictated by your behavior than God's love...
  - Week full of doing good, you feel good about yourself...
  - Week full of bad stuff you feel bad about yourself...

**Here's the problem...**

- This is exhausting...
- And when we fail, we are crushed!

*Let's look at the 3rd mark...*

### **3. I compare myself to others**

**Verse 11:** God, I thank you that I'm not like other people... even like this tax collector

The Pharisee went above and beyond what the law required... He fasted twice a week and the law only required 1 time a year- he tithed on all of his income and not just the required parts...

There's nothing wrong with going above and beyond- but the problem is that he was using it as leverage to hold over the others including the tax collector in order to feel better about himself...

We do this all the time...

***We take good things and we turn them into things that feed our pride...***

- Knowledge of theology/scripture
- How much we serve...
- How much we give...

***Other Examples:***

- If you don't homeschool you're not doing it right...
- If you're kids aren't in public school you're not doing it right...
- You should be a stay-at-home mom....
- You should be a working mom...
- Married people can look down on singles...
- How you vote...

Comparison will ultimately bring disunity and bitterness... It fuels pride which will not bring us closer to Christ...

***The goal is not to be better than other people, the goal is to be more like Christ...***

**Now, let's take a look at the Tax collector...**

Jesus is saying, despite the cultural shock that it would have had... be like the tax collector... *Because he's the one who embodies what humility looks like...*

***Humility is a mental attitude that is the opposite of pride where you lower yourself, or bring yourself low... To define it: It is a state of being where you see yourself rightly before God...***

***Practically speaking, humility is where you're glad that God gets the credit...***

- Humility is recognizing how bad off you are in your sin...
- Humility is boasting about what God's done, not what you've done...

***Ultimately humility is how you respond to God in light of what He's done for you through Christ...***

- Christ humbled himself to save you, you respond by humbling yourself, or lowering yourself in light of who He is and what he's done!

Let's take a look at what this looks like based on this parable...

**Three marks of humility:**

**1. I see my sin and I own it**

**Verse 13: the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!'**

*The difference, however, between these two men was not that one was righteous and the other a sinner. They were both sinners. The difference was that the tax-collector knew that he was a sinner, and he repented of his sin.<sup>1</sup>*

We don't like to own our sin... Makes us feel bad...

The beauty of what we see here is that you see here ***is that God welcomes the sinner who comes humbly to Him...***

*There is power in this...*

Want freedom from the power of sin? You have the greatest weapon... Forgiveness... That comes through you owning your sin and clinging to the cross...

- This is what the tax collector is doing...

There is a word that describes this process... **Repentance...**

- But for sin to lose its power you have to actually embrace forgiveness...

- This is hard... Some of you are stuck here...
- Not flourishing...

Some of you this morning need to see your sin, you need to own your sin, and know that it's okay, and it's the first step toward

*Let's look at the second mark that we see:*

**2. The mercy of God that saves me not my works**

The text shows us that the tax collector isn't justified by his works, He's justified by the mercy that was given to him!

**Justified and righteous come from the same root in Greek:**

This tax collector had what it takes to stand before God... And God sees him as innocent and accepted...

**Define mercy: Not getting what you deserve...**

The crazy part of this is that as Jesus gives this parable as an illustration, he knows that the mercy that is held up by this tax collector would come at the expense of His own life...

**Gospel...**

- **Faith...**

***You have a better grasp of your need for the mercy of God when you have a realistic view of your heart!***

***God's mercy saves you, and it also keeps saving you...***

- *Flesh out...*
- *Gospel is not the start... it's the essence*

*There's freedom in this...*

**You don't work for your salvation, you work from your salvation...**

- **IOW:** You respond to your salvation...

<sup>1</sup> RC Sproul, *A walk with God: An Exposition of Luke*.

### 3. The mercy of God defines me not my performance

14 I tell you, this one went down to his house justified

*Jesus doesn't want something from us, He wants to be something for us...*

*The tax collector went down from the temple in a state of acceptance...*

You're not what you've done...

- Appeal...

Sinner to son or daughter...

*You have a new identity: 2 Cor. 5:17: New creation...*

There's freedom in the finished work of Jesus... And it's a freedom that's life-changing...

*Someone said it like this: One went to brag, the other went to pray; One stands up close, and treads on high, Where the other dare not show his eye. One neared the altar, the other went to the God the altar was for.<sup>2</sup>*

Here's the thing I want you to see, **position in the temple meant nothing; the position of the heart meant everything**<sup>3</sup>

## Conclusion [VAMP]

There was a man that married a woman, she had a tough past...

- He loved her...
- They had children together...
- She left him for another man...
- He went after her and it cost him emotionally, physically and financially...
- She comes back only to leave him again...
- And again he goes after her...
- The one day it finally clicks and she sees the continual grace and mercy... she couldn't articulate it all but she was captivated by it...
- Who would do this...
- He gives her a ring, lavishes her and celebrates her...

This is a picture of us and God...

- No matter how far we run, no matter what we do, His arms are open wide...
- His mercy is there and it's ready, there's nothing outside the bounds of His mercy!

### **Appeal:**

Would you sit in it...

Would you embrace it...

Don't over complicate it!

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Crashaw

<sup>3</sup> Darrell L. Bock, [Luke: 9:51-24:53](#), vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 1465.

