

Parables: Showing the Way of Jesus

The Way of Humility

Luke 18:9-14

Recap: Everybody loves stories! Jesus used them to convey important truths about God and His Kingdom.

Two important elements about parables of Jesus:

- 1) *Reveal Secrets to Those Who Desire the Truth.*
- 2) *Conceal Secrets from Those Who Deny the Truth.*

We better understand these parables as we do **3** things:

- 1) *Listen from the Hearers Perspective*
- 2) *Look for the Main Point*
- 3) *Let the Truth Change Our Perspective*

Receptivity, Obedience, Mercy, Forgiveness, and today:

The Way of Humility

Main Idea: The Way of Jesus Teaches us to Come to Him with a Humble Heart

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this

*man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” **Luke 18:9–14***

2 Heart Postures Before God in Luke 18:9-14

1. A Prideful Heart (9-12)

With our main goals being to listen from the hearers perspective and find the main point of the parable - Jesus makes it easy for us with this one.

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt...”

Luke 18:9

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” **Matthew 23:27-28***

Here there are two men seen in prayer at the temple.

The Pharisee talks to the Lord like this:

*“God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.” **Luke 18:11-12***

Who was the Pharisee’s heart focused on as he prayed? Himself...

Pride Affects our Vertical Relationship with God

- “I thank God, that I’m so good!”
 - Self-focused - Missing out on personal intimacy with God
- “I do even more good than what’s required (fasting/tithing)”
 - Work-based relationship (What I can do for God) - like every religion on the planet
- “Standing by himself” - Empty and hollow performance of a relationship with God - a superficial religion shaped in his own flawed image.
- Insufficient and exhausting - got to keep up the show
- No trust in God’s love and care - self-sufficient (bad way)

Not only does pride affect our relationship w/God but as a result...

Pride Affects our Horizontal Relationship with Others

A prideful heart says:

- “I look out for myself. I’m #1.”
 - **Selfishness**
- “I’m better than _____”
 - **Comparison - steals our joy and creates enemies**
- “I deserve to be treated _____”
 - **Entitlement and Envy**
 - “How dare they _____”
- “I don’t need anyone.”

A Prideful heart says, I’ve got this; I’ll get it done; I don’t need God, and I don’t need others. This person is living a lie:

“For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” Galatians 6:3

A prideful heart makes us do foolish things, and God in his infinite love for us will not allow that to continue in our hearts because of the danger it can cause.

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18

Prayer is an opportunity to redirect our hearts away from ourselves, our problems and our pride, and instead recognize and declare how great and incredible God is.

“I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!” Psalm 34:1–3

We can begin by reminding ourselves of the gospel! Do you need a reminder that God has done great things we could never do?

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:8

If pride is the issue, fix your heart and affection on Jesus. The King of all creation went to the cross for you when you were a traitor and enemy, worthy only of destruction.

Main Idea: The Way of Jesus Teaches us to Come to Him with a Humble Heart

2. A Humble Heart (13-14)

“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 18:13-14

The tax collector stands far off to the side, unnoticed. He’s not there to be seen. He’s not there for the attention of the crowd. He’s there to meet with His God in prayer.

What do we see?

His head is bowed before God

(Normal for us, but not for the Jewish style of prayer in that day. He couldn’t bring himself to lift his head.)

He beats himself on the chest in his sorrow over his own sin.

His words to God show his heart - *“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”*

We look at him and we say, yeah, he was a bad dude, turning on his neighbors, probably cheating people out of their money. He should feel bad in the presence of God. But you and I are no different than that man!

“As it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside;

together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” **Romans 3:10–18, 23**

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” **Psalms 51:17**

That is the beginning of humility. **But it’s not the end!**

What did Jesus have to say about this sinful tax collector?

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” **Luke 18:14**

Approach God with a humble heart because we know we are unworthy of His love and acceptance, but in Christ we are given it freely anyway! **Not because of who we are but because of who HE is.**

“But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.” **Psalms 3:3**

Humility comes from recognizing the greatness of God and the magnitude of His incredible love for you.

Humility Affects our Vertical Relationship with God

Humility allows us to be:

Repentant - Brokenness over our sin

Awed - Marvel in gratitude over His love for us

Justified - Declared to be righteous in Christ

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” **Romans 5:1**

Exalted - He lifts our head, and makes us heirs with Jesus, because we depend on Him alone, and not ourselves.

Humility Affects our Horizontal Relationship with Others

Jesus changes everything.

A prideful heart may say:

- *I look out for myself.*

But Humility says:

- I can look out for the needs of others.

“Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody.” Instead, a truly humble person will just seem like a cheerful, bright person who is genuinely interested in what you have to say.” **C.S. Lewis** (Mere Christianity)

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.” **Rick Warren** (A Purpose Driven Life)

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” **Philippians 2:3-4**

A prideful heart may say:

- *I'm better than _____*

But Humility says:

- I'm a sinner saved by God's grace.

“For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

A prideful heart may say:

- *“I deserve to be taken care of and treated with respect”*

But Humility says:

- I can go out of my way to serve other people, because Christ Jesus served me and gave Himself up for me.

A prideful heart may say:

- *“I don't need anyone.”*

But Humility says:

- I'm better in community with others.

Main Idea: The Way of Jesus Teaches us to Come to Him with a Humble Heart

You and I don't bring anything of value to the table when we meet with the Lord. And yet He loves you dearly and wants you near Him always. What a special gift! Don't miss it and don't take it for granted by having a prideful heart. It hurts your time with God, and affects your relationship with others. Instead live in awe of Jesus and what He has done for you.

Jesus set the bar with humility.

He was one with God, God in human flesh. But it says...

“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Philippians 2:8

You don't have to try like the Pharisee. Just come humbly to Jesus and ask Him to save you. He promises to accept you when you surrender to Him.

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The New American Commentary: Luke* – Robert H. Stein (1992)
- *Exalting Jesus in Luke* – Thabiti Anyabwile (2018)
- *Luke 1-12 for You* – Mike McKinley (2016)
- *ESV Study Bible* – Crossway (2008)
- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- *Opening Up Luke's Gospel* - Gavin Childress (2006)
- *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* - Matthew Henry & Thomas Scott (1997)
- *Commentary Critical & Explanatory on the Whole Bible* - Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown (1997)