

Parables of Luke – part 8

Luke 18:9-14 – As is true of most of the Lord’s parables, this one is counterintuitive.

--This is in fact more than counterintuitive, it was outrageous, scandalous, even shameful by the religious standards of the day.

--[[Read it]]

1. This completely overturned their thinking and theology.

--A self-confessed wicked man left the temple justified and self-confessed righteous man did not.

--What bothers people is that Jesus commends the worst guy in this story.

Why is He telling this parable? From the middle of chapter 17 all the way through to chapter **18:1-8** He’s been speaking of His second coming and this is part of that discussion.

--Who will be in His kingdom and who will be rejected? This is the answer to that question.

--The answer to that question is a stunner!

“Its not the man who is good who is justified, but the man who knows he is not good that is justified.”

--The Jews knew God to be righteous, they knew He demanded perfection “Be holy as I am holy”. “All our righteousness is as filthy rags” to God.

--They knew very well what the Psalmist reiterated: **Psalm 143:2**

--How can this be accomplished? How can a person be justified?

--They should have known what got their original ancestor in: **Gen. 15:6.**

--They should have known the promise of **Isa. 53:11.**

--They knew they needed to be right with God, but by the time Jesus walks the earth, they had forgotten what their bibles taught them.

--They had missed it all together—they didn’t even understand that the Messiah must suffer and die!

--They had lost complete sight of the meaning of the sacrificial system, of Passover, of **Isa. 53.**

--They had decided what the rest of world had decided: **you get to God by being good.**

2. “What must I do to be right with God and have Him let me into His eternal Kingdom?”

--Jesus answers this question with an incredibly simple story.

--You would think that this question would lead to some convoluted, complex, massive discussion of theology and religion—as it often does.

--But with profundity, clarity and simplicity, Jesus answers this question with this little story.

Turns out it’s not complicated or convoluted or complex:

--Either you can make yourself right with God or you can’t.

--Either you can achieve a righteousness that satisfies God or you can’t.

--Either you can make yourself acceptable or it has to be done for you.

--Either you get to God by being good or you have to have it done for you.

--Either you are convinced that you are good or at least better than most and are really too good for God to send to hell, or you know for certain that you’ve more than qualified for hell and throw yourself on God’s mercy.

This is the simple division of every religion on the planet

--Every religion whether it has a huge following or is some kind of self styled religion that a person has concocted out of their smorgasbord of beliefs, can be boiled down by a simple

question: “[what is required for a person to go to heaven?](#)” Almost all will say, “[they have to be good](#)”

--With that answer, you can know that they have departed from the teaching of the Bible, they have left the track of only way that person can be right with God and go to heaven.

--That train jumped the track way back at the gates of the Garden of Eden: two brothers brought different things to God for different reasons.

1. Abel brought a sacrifice of blood –but it is not for the sake of blood as much as it is for sake of him doing what he was told, that he was accepted. “**by faith Abel offered a better sacrifice**”
“**faith comes by hearing**”

--Is he the only one who heard? God told Cain, “**If you do what is right, you will be accepted.**”

2. Cain brought of the fruit of ground – Again, not for the sake of the type of sacrifice as much as it was him not doing what he was told.

--Cain brought what he wanted instead of what he was told.

--He wanted his idea to be accepted instead of doing what God told him.

--He became the first to bring to God his deal, his plan of salvation instead of submitting to God’s plan.

--Two ways divided in these two boys:

-the way of Abel, submitting to God’s way of righteousness

-the way of Cain, coming up with your own standard of being made right with God.

“The Religion of Self” = Another way to label the Way of Cain

--The way of human achievement, of self-righteousness,

--Seeks no mercy, no grace, no forgiveness, no sympathy.

--**You lose everything but keep your pride.**

The Religion of Divine Accomplishment – Where God provides your righteous, where you seek His grace, mercy, forgiveness.

--**You gain everything but lose your pride.**

3. We have the same division in this story.

--The Pharisee – Self-righteous, seeks no mercy, no forgiveness or grace, thinks he needs no sympathy and no help—self-exalted, he goes away unjustified.

--The Tax Collector – sinful outcast, standing as far away as he can, but wanting mercy and grace, distraught that he is not righteous—he goes home justified.

--**Two men, two postures, two prayers, two destinies!**

4. The break-down of the parable.

--This is addressed to any and all who “trusted in themselves (exalted self) that they were righteous” and as a consequence “viewed others with contempt”

--How did a person who read and memorized the Bible get to believe such a thing since the Bible says: “Heart is deceitful above all; righteous works are as filthy rags; **Ps. 143:2**

--Don’t underestimate pride and deception: The Jews got there like everyone else – Ask any person on the street the question: How do you get into the kingdom of God? “[you have to be good.](#)”

--It’s the dominating lie of our planet.

--The Jews took “being good” further than most—they fasted, prayed, tithed, memorized Scripture, invented laws to create a further appearance of holiness.

--Jesus countered their extreme religiosity with: **Matt. 5:20.**

--The Pharisees saw themselves as the only ones going to heaven: they saw anyone else as “[non-existent](#)”

--They viewed Jesus this way—where it says “the stone with the builders rejected” – rejected is the word they used “the same as someone who never existed”.

--“into the temple to pray” – this happened twice a day at 9am and 3pm.

--“standing to pray” – Not an uncommon posture but in this case it was so that the unclean could get a good look as righteous person.

--**Matthew 6:5** – Jesus warns against this.

5. Pharisees prayer

--He refers to himself no less than 5 times in prayer that is not really directed at God but simply a proclamation of his superiority.

--This is no prayer to God, he gives God no praise, he only praises himself.

--He asks for no mercy, grace, forgiveness or help.

--“I fast twice a week” – Only one fast prescribed in the Old Testament on the Day of Atonement.

--Fasting scheme of twice a week on Monday and Thursdays—Why? Because those were market days—the crowds were bigger—better chance of showing off: **Matthew 6:16**