

## Parables of Luke – part 9

**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.

--This was completely counter to how they thought and believed; in their minds salvation was earned and came strictly on your own merit.

--The tax collector had no chance of paying off his debts to God and therefore would not be justified.

Who will 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 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.

--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”

“The Religion of Self” = or works religion

--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.**

--“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 at a righteous person.

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

#### **Pharisee’s 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**

#### **The Tax-collector’s prayer.**

--I’m sure we are pretty familiar with type of person a Jewish tax collector was: They were despicable people, traitors for working for the enemy, thieves because they were not policed as long as the Romans got their money they didn’t care.

--They were able to mark up what they demanded of the people without accountability.

--They were the outcast of society and that is exactly where we find this tax collector standing—on the fringe

--Our Pharisee is standing near the front near the altar, his face turned toward heaven, the place he thinks he’s earned and deserves.

--**A sinner is a sinner,** this tax collector had many public sins: stealing, hatred, usury, adultery, idolatry, Sabbath breaker, blasphemer.

--The Pharisee has been careful to keep his sins private: he’s stolen but only from those he deemed worthy of being stolen from; he’s Murdered but only in his heart, he’s committed adultery but only in his mind;

--The ticket to hell only costs us one sin—the only way out of that is God’s grace.

--Unlike the Pharisee, the tax-collector’s prayer is directed at God: “God, be merciful to me **the sinner.**”

--He’s a big sinner and he knows it: such an incredibly important grace of God is **informing us about our sin.**

--Have you ever asked God to reveal your sin to you?

--Sin is the most intoxicating thing in the universe: if you indulge in it, it will blind you to the fact of your indulgence.

--The Spirit of God reveals to us righteousness and judgment—we are dependent on Him for those things.

--Blessed are the poor in spirit; those who hunger and thirst for righteousness—not those who think they are strong have no need righteousness.

#### **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector have similar theologies.**

--They both believed the Old Testament to be the revelation of God.

--They were committed to the religious system that is set up there.

--They believed in the creator God of the Old Testament.

--They believed in the sacrificial system that God had established to cover their sins.

- They both had faith in God that He was the true and living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- They both believed God was a forgiving God.
- The Pharisee believed he had committed sin, he also believed that he had already earned his forgiveness and didn't need to ask for it.
- It is that notion that is sending him to hell!
- It is that notion that is sending most of the people in the west to hell.

The problem with Mormonism and Jehovah's witnesses is that they teach and believe a similar lie. Mormons believe as we do (it may seem on the surface), that we are saved by grace—they will tell you those exact words and make you believe (as they do) that we believe the same thing. Then ask them what you need to do to be assured of Heaven, they will start with a list of things you need to do be assured of God's grace--right there, they ceased to be Christian and became a cult preaching Satanic lies just like the agitators of Galatians were preaching.

### **Gal.1:7-9**

- When you say, "that doesn't sound like grace." They will say, "Isn't God gracious that He allows us to earn our salvation?!"
- It's the same old lie! Same old religion started by Cain, "I'm not submitting to God's way, I'm going to bring what I want and God will accept me."

### **Hell will be full of sincere people! Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:16**

- Hell will be full of people who thought they were going to Heaven: **Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:24-30**
- The difference runs from the time of Cain and Abel until today: One man thinks he has nothing from which he needs repentance and the other knows for sure that he does.
- The rich young ruler: "I've kept all the laws of God from my youth..."
- One thought he could please God on his own and the other one knew he couldn't.

### **8. "I Tell you" – Jesus couldn't quote any Rabbi unfortunately.**

- "Its not what the Rabbis will tell you, its not what the scribes will tell you, but I tell you" this man was forgiven and the other wasn't.
- This is antithetical to all world religions: in one moment, an extreme sinner can be pronounced instantly righteous without any works or merit either moral or religious.
- No penance, no works, no ceremony!
- How?? The righteous God will only accept perfect righteousness (not comparative righteousness) – since you can't earn that HE will give it you if you will put your full trust in Him as the forgiving, gracious, merciful God.
- That's the gospel! Its scandalous!
- So it will be: whoever exalts himself in this life will be humbled forever, and whoever humbles himself in this life will exalted forever.
- Those headed to hell think they aren't, they think the kingdom is for the worthy, they think eternal life is earned.
- The saved know it comes as a gift, they know they aren't worthy, they know eternal life can't be earned.

- Those headed to hell seek God's commendation;** those headed to Heaven seek His forgiveness.