

Humility and Kingdom Living

Luke 18:9-14

S: Humility shapes the heart to posture our life to receive God's saving grace. Every person can understand a humble posture before God by three applications:

14

parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt. One of them went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee said, '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.' ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his home justified. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.'

9-14

After exhorting people to persist in prayer so they can persevere in faithful obedience, Jesus confronts self-righteousness.

1. Pharisee and a tax collector. He could not create a bigger contrast because one more other utterly deplorable. This whole scenario is unimaginable. No comparison could be more unthinkable to tax collectors. Pharisees were so highly elevated over others. Tax collectors were so despised by all that they were completely undesirable.

At the end of verse ten. Many would not have heard anything else Jesus said after this brief lesson, while others tuned in with complete attention because of the absurd contrast. His comparison, though, is simply this, Jesus does not make it up. [The events that occurred were contrived, and the characters have not been changed to protect their identity.] What are we comparing these two people? The lesson seemed obvious, a foregone conclusion.

2. Professional prayers. He addresses God, but focuses on himself. He demonstrates his righteousness against the unrighteousness of others. Some of these "others" are the unthinkable vile others are just plain old sinners (*unjust*). And he wouldn't want to forget the obvious Pharisees, already referenced by his list. Instead of these unrighteous creatures, the Pharisees that even surpass the requirement of God's law. The prayer positions the Pharisee as a mess, according to God's law, that couldn't possibly be ignored from God's favor. **Thank Him and remind Him of who gets His favor.**

ions of heaven and they are but few. If there be a thousand, I and my son are among them; and if only two, they are I and my son.”¹
at we believe, about God and ourselves, more than the content and posture of our pray

ed good deeds to avoid true righteousness. Only a fool believes this transaction is p
ayer was wrong not because it held incorrect theology about God, but because he believ
enough to satisfy God’s holy standard and dismissed any requirement for how he should
ee’s righteousness centered on this, that God was pleased with him because of the wa
s with no regard for the posture of his heart within.

s prayer is quite different. His placement represented what everyone, himself include
ice before God, “*standing far off.*” And if he could not get near to God, then he surely w
l. Rather, in the only appeal he could make and the only posture he could presume, he
er that he knows he is.

è not worthy to pray at all. His prayer was improper in most every way conceivable, but
surprise to anyone. The only surprise is that he bothered praying at all. **Who could poss
sinner’s prayer? Jesus commends the tax collector as the one who left justified, as the
ed God’s saving grace.**

with His point, “*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who hur*
When we trust in the Lord for all of life, we will humble ourselves to rest in His will and w
ourselves.

commend a script for prayer. We need to learn and grow in our praying. And, we need
where our heart deceives us by pride so we can repent and humble ourselves. It was th
David into sin with Bathsheba, and the tax collector’s heart that led him back to God in
ces of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
anything about God, it is this; **God responds most quickly to display His power most gl
is as most destitute and desperate, thinking they are the most “un-save-able”.**

to celebrate the tax collector, let’s be very careful. This is not about exalting known swin
st tax collectors were known for in that day. Zaccheus confessed this in his conversion.⁴
our own sinfulness, so that we provide any allowance to continue in it. Unrighteousness
celebrated or heralded, but it must always be recognized and confessed. Let us celebra
up in saving power when we are most convinced it could never happen and toward the
uld happen. **Jesus proclaims the readiness of God to forgive in response to the simple
contrite heart.**

rs reveal what’s really inside of us and expose so much about who we really are, throug

MEANING of Humility: God's mercy and grace.

is rightly described not as thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. It is the ability to see and accept what God has said about us. Humility is the posture of the body and tongue, into joyful submission to God's will revealed through His Word. Humility is the Holy Spirit's leading in the Christian's life, that I am decreasing and Christ is increasing.

It is a kind of heart that gets God's response of mercy and grace. He leads us to consider and confess to God with justification from our own actions, thinking of ourselves too highly and to depend upon His saving mercy and grace, looking upon ourselves in truth and honesty. It is not before God because of our right actions, nor are we despised beyond His reach by our sin. We need His mercy and grace to receive God's mercy and grace.

Humility is key to unlocking God's Kingdom in all of life. God's promise is potent to the humble heart. The holiness of God in Proverbs reminds us, *to the humble he gives favor.* ^{Prov3:34} Luke records Jesus saying, *The Son of Man will exalt himself, but he must first be humbled.* The New Testament exhorts us, *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* James 4:10 says, *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.* There is no incident where Jesus was humbled and got rejected by or slighted by God. God always and only looks on the humble and meets our every need.

Humility is not seen as a big problem. We think that humility, in some way, is the opposite of courage. It only enables the opposite. Humility denies self-confidence that trusts in self and provides no courage that comes from God. Humility is the way we confront fears that threaten us and choose to live by faith in God's power to fulfill His promises and bring His glory in all things in this world.

The meaning of humility is that we receive God's mercy and grace in our lives.

BENEFIT of Humility: "justified".

It is a powerful word that tells of a glorious benefit, we've been made right. Jesus says this man we call God, set right with God by having God's righteousness set on Him. WHAT a contrast from what we couldn't do anything with justice's demand! God justifies the one who humbles themselves.

It is all about being right with God. HOW we approach God determines how God responds to us. It is our performance for God, that determines our acceptance from God to receive His mercy and grace. It gives us our right understanding of God, that He is holy and righteous, loving and compassionate, and He is able to give mercy and grace. Trusting God in humility is central to all of life with God in His Kingdom.

God. The tax collector knew none of his actions were enough, but only pleaded for God's mercy. The Pharisee's self-righteous salvation was the one who missed it. The one who believed he was unworthy to be heard. Our prayers are never absent of the reality of our outward, moral actions. Rather, they demonstrate for why God accepts us. In Christ, we are set at peace within because we've been given grace. We know we are loved and accepted. **The heart that is humble toward God completely.**

Sin does not put us out of favor with God. Those most aware of their own sin are best received. Those most comforted and at ease with their own level of righteousness have no need to boast. How much they may speak of Him. This parable shows us that no one gets to God on their own. So far away because of their sinfulness that they cannot be reached by God. No one is too proud to reach / hear their prayers. No one gets status with God because of self-reliance or righteousness. **The shortest route to God, the shortest distance between wherever you are to where God waits for you.**

Be right with others. When we've been made right with God because our sinfulness has been forgiven, there is nothing – and I mean NOTHING – that cannot be overcome to bring peace. The absence of humility. Christians are called to be peacemakers ^{Matt5:9} by doing justice, living righteously with God. ^{Micah6:8} When we live in this way we live as we have been redeemed, to live in peace.

Being made right with others is not always easy to live out. Jesus sees each heart. He helps our discernment here, to know when we are living humbly and when we are not. If we are proud, we are trusting our own righteousness. Peter tells us, *"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility one to another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"* **1 Peter 5:5b Humility is to value others as you value yourself.**

Humility reveals what we really believe about God. Jesus taught this in the Great Commandment: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and strength and all your power. Love your neighbor as yourself."* ^{Matt22:39} How we view and treat others tells us about the source of our own righteousness. When we are comforted by someone more sinners than we are, or condemned by someone better than us, we can know we are not humbling, but exalting ourselves. **Let us love others as we live to extend the same mercy and grace from God that we've received.**

The benefit of humility is that we are justified, made right with God, ourselves and others.

Receiving God's favor upon us. Therefore, growing in humility should be our great desire.

GROWTH of Humility: Transformation.

Humility by intentional, disciplined surrender and practice. No one grows humble by chance. I want to show you the most powerful case study from scripture where humility brought transformation. The story of growing in humility.

"among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God

Is us to understand that humility is our path to transformation, just as it led to his transfi

us as Christ, the perfect, humble Savior, grows within us. We must empty ourselves of poses or dares to compete with God. Most of our trouble with failing to see more of Christ with everything else we're holding on to. **What do you need to empty from your life today? From being bigger in you?** We then humble ourselves to the Father's will to trust Him and **the, attitude of your heart or mind, or action that has God told you to do, or stop doing, in** all we need to do God's will in our life is to humble ourselves, trust and obey. As we humble ourselves, Christ grows within us. **Humility is key to living in God's Kingdom.**

With in humility means God's transforming power is alive in us.

Humility shapes the heart to posture our life to receive God's saving grace.

ies show the work of God's saving grace in our life. And all of them come directly to us from *the one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.*

Prepare yourself to receive God's mercy and grace today!