

- 3) Pride sends more people to hell than perhaps any other sin. Pride robs Christians of their usefulness to God.
- 4) Receiving God's forgiveness is easy; the hard part is humbly admitting our guilt and need for forgiveness.

b. God exalts or abases men justly.

- 1) Jesus said that all who *exalt* (lift up) themselves, God will *abase* (put down), but all who *humble* themselves, God will *exalt*.
- 2) We find this truth frequently in the Bible. (Psalms 138:6) "*Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*" (Proverbs 18:12) "*Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.*" (Proverbs 29:23) "*A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*"
- 3) One of the most direct verses on this topic is (James 4:6) "*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*"
 - a) If we are proud, God actually *resists* us. This word means to oppose us, as with a military force. God will come out against us with His spiritual guns.
 - b) If we will humble ourselves, God will give us grace. *Grace* is the divine enablement to do what we cannot do in our own strength.
- 4) The proud Pharisee exalted himself and God squashed him down. The repentant publican humbled himself and God gave him justifying grace.

Conclusion: Today, God has taught us the harm of being self-righteous and proud, and the value of being repentant and humble. The hard part is honestly evaluating where we stand with God. As you look into God's mirror this morning, what do you see? If you see self-righteousness or pride, are you willing to admit your sin to God and humbly seek his grace to change? If not, you must prepare for a battle with God because He said he would resist you. It is far better to surrender humbly!

Song: I Surrender All - 394

The Potential of Humility

1 August 2021 AM – Luke 18:9-14 – Parables21 – Scott Childs

Introduction: The virtue of humility seems to be going extinct in the 21st Century. From childhood, people are encouraged to dance like a show-off when they get a goal, a prize, a reward or a promotion. We live in a proud generation. "*Humility has been rightly said to be a correct estimate of ourselves.*" Quoted by Spurgeon

Transition: As we study this parable, I want us to note the purpose, the people and the principle of the parable that we might learn what God wants to teach us.

1. The Purpose of the Parable (v.9)

In this parable, Jesus tells us before He begins the clear purpose He had in mind. He spoke to a particular audience with two purposes in mind.

a. Jesus spoke to convict the self-righteous.

- 1) Jesus addressed those who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*.
- 2) As we dig into the parable, we can see that Jesus was not just bashing on the self-righteous. His intent was to convict them of their sin that they may repent.
- 3) Self-righteousness is a destructive sin. **Why is that?** It is because a person who thinks he is good will never admit that he has a sin problem.
 - a) God cannot save your soul until you admit that you are sinful and heading for hell.
 - b) You will never get victory over a sinful habit until you admit that it grieves God and harms your testimony.
 - c) Always blaming your spouse for conflicts and never being willing to admit your guilt is a sure road to heartache.
- 4) Self-righteous people often *despise* or put down *others*. They treat them as unimportant. When we say negative things about others, it is often to make ourselves look better.
- 5) This parable addressed self-righteous pride.

b. Jesus spoke to encourage repentance.

- 1) We see this evidenced at the end of the parable when Jesus identified the way to justification (v.14).
- 2) Jesus was not just putting down the self-righteous; He was encouraging humble repentance.

2. The People in the Parable (v.10-13)

a. The Pharisee

- 1) The Pharisee was one of the most respected people in that society. Everyone thought the Pharisee was very righteous. We may not realise that because the Pharisees were always opposing Jesus. ^{Keathley}
- 2) He went up to the temple to pray. That was a good thing.
- 3) Jesus said that the Pharisee *stood and prayed with himself*. By Jesus' description, we can envision this man proudly standing in the middle of the temple courtyard, with his hands and eyes raised to heaven, praying in a loud voice so that everyone around could hear.
- 4) He addressed his prayer to God, but Jesus said he prayed *with himself*. God does not listen to our prayers if we are not right with God. (Proverbs 15:29) "*The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.*" (Proverbs 28:9) "*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*"
- 5) In his prayer, he bragged to God of all his good qualities.
 - a) He thanked God that he was not like other men. In other words, "*I am not a sinner like other men.*"
 - b) He assured God that he was not an extortioner, an unjust man, an adulterer, or anything like the despised publican who stood afar off.
 - c) He reminded God that he fasted twice weekly and faithfully gave tithes of all that he received.
- 6) Were his qualities bad? No, they were very good. His fault was bragging and proudly denying that he was a sinner like other men. He put down others to lift up himself.
- 7) Often others can see things about us that we cannot see ourselves or do not want to admit.
- 8) For example, a little boy said, "*Dad, did Grandpa make*

you go to Sunday school when you were my age?" His father said, "*He sure did. We went every Sunday.*" The boy said sadly, "*Well, I bet it won't do me any good either.*" You know, folks, our children will see our failures even if we cannot see them ourselves.

- 9) Someone wisely said, "*Pride is the only disease that makes everyone sick but the one who has it.*"
- 10) The Pharisee's self-righteousness did not impress God. On another occasion Jesus said, (Matthew 5:20) "*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

b. The publican

- 1) The Publican was probably the least respected member of society. He was a Jew who went to work for Rome collecting taxes. He was viewed as a traitor. ^{Keathley}
- 2) He too went to the temple to pray, but he *stood afar off*. Evidently, he stood off in a quiet corner (v.13).
- 3) He bowed his head in humble shame as he prayed.
- 4) He beat on his chest as a sign of mourning over his sin.
- 5) His prayer was short, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*"
 - a) By this, he admitted his sin. He knew that he had done wickedly.
 - b) He asked God for *mercy*. This word means to make propitiation for me. He was asking God to forgive the wrongs he had done.
- 6) The attitude of the publican was humble, repentant, and seeking forgiveness.

📖 *As you think over these two men which one best depicts your life? Does God see you as self-righteous and proud, or as humble and repentant?*

3. The Principles of the Parable (v.14)

a. The humble man went home justified.

- 1) Jesus declared that the humble publican went home that day justified but not the proud Pharisee.
- 2) If you want God to justify or forgive you, you must humble yourself, as did the publican.