

Luke 18:9-14 – Justification

Introduction:

1. The Lord Jesus taught by contrasts
2. Questions we need to ask as we study this parable: Which of these men am I? Which description best fits me? Which image best fits my life?

Main Idea: The sinner is justified by grace through faith alone. The object of faith is not the righteousness of the one saved, nor even the righteousness that becomes ours by way of God working it into us. The object of faith is the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ who takes away the sins of the world by satisfying the wrath of God toward us on the Cross.

Justification by Grace Through Faith (Romans 3:20, 28)

1. This parable is about the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone
2. We are not justified by any merit – we cannot work ourselves into heaven; our righteousness is as filthy rags
3. We cannot stand on our religion or morality before God, and we cannot hope that our goodness will somehow wipe away our evil

Important Questions (Luke 18:9-10)

1. Parable are peculiar for on one hand, they are clear to the believer who has been born again, but to those outside the Faith, they are perplexing
2. The Pharisees were the object of Jesus' parable
3. The question most vital for us is this: Which of these two men get into heaven? The Pharisee or the Tax Collector (The Publican)?
4. These men are similar, but vastly different
 - a. They go to the same church and know the same liturgy
 - b. They both engage in private acts of devotion to God
 - c. Differences can be disguised by the likenesses
5. Questions we must ask ourselves as we read this parable:
 - a. How am I accepted by God?
 - b. What causes me to stand before God righteous, and holy?
 - c. How can I have assurance of eternal life?

Rigorous Religion (Luke 18:11-12)

1. Two important truths regarding the Pharisees' Religion: Money & Food
 - a. The Pharisee tithes to the temple and willing to even starve himself
2. If we interviewed this man for church membership, he would look better than the average church-goer
 - a. Are you liberal in your understanding of the Bible? No
 - b. Do you attend church regularly? Yes; every time the doors are open
 - c. Do you practice the spiritual disciplines? Strictly
 - d. Do you give tithes and offerings? On everything
 - e. Is your life different than those around you? But by the grace of God, there go I...
 - f. What is your attitude toward others? I am thankful to God I am not like others, such as extortioners and adulterers

Misplaced Trust (Luke 18:9, 13-14)

1. Interviewing the Tax Collector for Church Membership
 - a. What kind of reputation do you have with those around you? They think I am a traitor because I grow fat off their earnings
 - b. You know theft & dishonest scales make you unfit for heaven? Yes
 - c. You, being rich, can afford to be and adulterer? Yes
2. The Pharisee must be the one going to heaven, right? He is a devoted man of prayer, expressing gratitude for God... like you and me?
3. Why is the Tax Collector justified?
4. The Full Context of the Parable: The Liturgy of the Temple Service
 - a. A lamb is inspected for blemishes, bound, and slain as a substitute for sins, the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the people to symbolize this sacrifice needed to happen for their sins
 - b. After this, private devotional prayers would be lifted up, which is where the parable begins
5. The Pharisee's prayers are centered on himself and his righteousness which he thanks God for giving him
 - a. He misses the point: He thinks he needs no Savior, no forgiveness, for God has accomplished everything he needs to save himself
 - b. He thinks himself righteous, not by what he has done in a legalistic way, but the righteousness God has given him - he trusts in that
 - i. He thanks God for being moral, blameless, and devoted
 - ii. To trust in righteousness, whether your own or in righteousness given even by God, is misplaced trust; it is deadly
 - iii. Trust even in God-produced righteousness for justification is not where we are to place our faith
 - c. The ground for our justification is not acting/doing righteousness
 - d. He trusted in his works which he believed God had given him
6. The Pharisee sounds a lot like us, but to trust in righteousness in order to be justified before God is eternally wrong

Falling Upon the Mercy of God (Luke 18:13-14)

1. The Tax Collector saw the same Temple Service, refused to lift his eyes toward heaven, beat his chest over his sin with a contrite heart
 - a. He did not compare himself with others, he was THE sinner
 - b. His cry was, "Oh Lord, PROPITIATE me... have Your justice and Your wrath appeased..."
2. Propitiation: The Wrath of God is satisfied because of a substitutionary sacrifice given in place of the object of that wrath
3. The Problem: A lamb is not sufficient to finally take away sins and appease God's wrath

The Shadow of the Cross

1. The parable became reality with repentant Zachaeus being justified
2. Sinners are not just let off the hook because they express remorse, or regret, or shed a tear in mourning over their sin; their sin was paid for!
3. The Lamb of God was examined, and even though condemned, was innocent – He was bound to the Cross and His blood was shed for us
4. We are justified by faith in Christ alone!