

How to be Righteous and Lost Luke 18:9–15

Luke 18:9–15 (NKJV)

⁹ Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Introduction:

The most important question that a person can ask is not being asked today.....It is rarely if ever entertained in the modern mind. Men and women and children spend endless hours thinking about

things that are temporary at best and meaningless at worst. Most of modern man's occupation of thought is on the things of this earth that are rapidly passing away.

We are truly in a post-modern post Christian era. God is rarely thought of, sin is redefined as sickness, Heaven is assumed for all and Hell is at best a curse word, or a medieval relic of the past.

Man has achieved his ultimate goal... Living life without the intrusion of God. Meaninglessness is ok just as long as I can have my fun now. Death is normalized and sanitized by the constant diet of movies that see murder as a means of accomplishing ones goals with no consequences for the Soul.

The thought of what happens to me if I die has been removed form the normal human experience. In fact, if you introduce the topic or ask questions regarding it, you are perceived as a nut or a religious freak.

But just because our culture has adopted this mindset does not change the reality that all will have to face....Am I right with God when I die?

Or even more telling, is God alright with me?

In the last century there has been a steady decline of ones view of the Biblical God and and the same time a steady increase in the view of the goodness of man.

The God of modern America is a god that is not the God of the Bible. He is an impotent, man made god who winks as sin and hopes that his creatures will love him and accept him. He is a god that suffers from depression because of the millions who reject him all the time, of which he tries repeated to get them to love him with very little success.

This unholy representation of God has had a devastating affect on the perception of God in our culture. And the incessant constant push that man is basically good but just has some disorders has necessarily removed the need of man for salvation.

The sticker theology of the day is. “Jesus is the answer”. But have we thought at all that no one is asking the question anymore.

More and more it is obviousNo one cares!
Why do I need Jesus?

If I don't have food, I have the food bank

If I don't have a job, I have the government

If I have cancer, I have chemotherapy.

If I have sickness I have medicine.

If I have relationship problems, I have counselors

If I have a addiction or a disorder, or depression, I have drugs I can take.

If I don't like my job, I can get another one.

If I don't like my spouse, I can leave her and get another one.

If I have bad thoughts, so what, everyone has them

If I get drunk all the time, I just have a sickness

If I get depressed all the time, I just have a disorder

If I lie constantly, I just have narcissistic personality disorder. It is simply a self esteem problem.

Robert Reich, M.D., a New York City psychiatrist and expert in psychopathology, says compulsive lying has no official diagnosis.

But, he says,

Lying can have number of purposes and one of the primary purposes is personal gains. Whether of things, like a job or a relationship or helping yourself out of a sticky situation.

“To understand the mind of a fake, Reich suggests considering what lying does for the liar. Deceit as a means to an end -- like lying to get a job -- is easy to comprehend. Much harder to spot, he says, is lying “for primary gains”: deceptions that create a different sense of self without any immediate benefit. "It has to do with self-esteem," Reich says. “You want to be like someone else because you aren't very happy with yourself. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/200310/understanding-compulsive-liars>

What is interesting about this is that the observation may be correct in that you are lying for personal gain, and that you may be lying to make yourself feel better about yourself.

But what is glaringly missing is that lying is a sin. It is a violation of one of the ten commandments.

The fact is that it is not an incidental thing that the ten commandments were removed from or schools and public places. The law of God is the

school master to bring us to Christ. It highlights and intensifies what is already written on the heart.

It is no small thing that our culture and in some cases the Church has been divorced from the law of God.

Men naturally think we are better than we are and that we basically good, as we compare ourselves to the other degenerates around us.

Lost man has a deceitful heart that is desperately wicked. It lies to him all the time, justifying his sinful actions and excusing his behavior.

So the problem that man already has in thinking himself to be good has been fueled even more in a society that divorces itself from the true God.

The culture that Jesus was born into had the same problem. The Jewish leaders and the people of Israel had been seduced into believing that they were better than they really were. That they were more righteous than the pagans who had not law.

They had accomplished this a couple of ways.

1. Redefining the Laws of God in a few hundred external do's and don'ts. So now the Law of God had been reduced down to an external performance. An external pressure that determined your standing with God.

2. They had redefined what acceptable righteousness was. As long as you obeyed the hundreds of laws that they had created, you were ok and considered a righteous person. You could be abhorrently evil inside in your heart and thoughts but as long as you obeyed externally, you would be right with God.

The Jews had created a Self Righteous Religion, that never addressed the real problem of the fallen human heart.

This is the reason for the first recorded sermon in Jesus Ministry. The first thing Jesus addressed was the Self Righteous religion of the Jews.

Matthew 5:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:21–22 (NKJV)

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘*You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.*’ ²² But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.....

Matthew 5:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘*You shall not commit adultery.*’ ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:43–44 (NKJV)

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘*You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.*’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Matthew 6:2 (NKJV)

² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in

the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Matthew 6:5 (NKJV)

⁵ “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Jesus address the Religious leaders of his day again in Matthew 23.

Matthew 23:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Matthew 23:25–28 (NKJV)

²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but

inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

This is a serious and eternally defining issue. Self righteous religion that calls on man to obey the rules, is a damning religion.

And by the way, it is the religion of the world. It may take a variety of different forms, but inherently they are all the same. Obey the rules, do the ceremonies, eat one certain foods, go thru certain rituals, repeat some phrases, abstain from certain passions, and you will be right with God.

John MacArthur wrote,

“There have always been but two systems of religion in the world. One is God’s system of divine accomplishment, and the other is man’s system of

human achievement. One is the religion of God's grace, the other the religion of men's works. One is the religion of faith, the other the religion of the flesh. One is the religion of the sincere heart and the internal, the other the religion of hypocrisy and the external. Within man's system are thousands of religious forms and names, but they are all built on the achievements of man and the inspiration of Satan. Christianity, on the other hand, is the religion of divine accomplishment, and it stands alone....

Jesus repeatedly pointed out two things: the necessity of choosing whether to follow God or not, and the fact that the choices are two and only two. There are two gates, the narrow and the wide; two ways, the narrow and the broad; two destinations, life and destruction; two groups, the few and the many; two kinds of trees, the good and the bad, which produce two kinds of fruit, the good and the bad; two kinds of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ, the sincere and false; two kinds of builders, the wise and the foolish; two foundations, the rock and the sand, and two houses, the secure and the insecure.” (*Matthew 1–7*, The

MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1985], 451, 452)

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 12). Moody Publishers.

John MacArthur went on to say,

“Every religion that has ever existed, except for the religion of divine accomplishment revealed in Scripture, has been based on human achievement—being morally good (by human standards), along with performing rituals and ceremonies. The popular notion is the vain and damning hope that people’s salvation is based on the illusion of their good deeds outweighing their bad ones.”

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 12). Moody Publishers.

This is the typical response today for those willing to engage in any thought beyond the obvious physical world.

If you ask a person, does he believe he will go to heaven when he dies,
He will say, I believe so, I believe my good outweighs my bad.

The assumption is that I have enough righteousness to get in and not enough sin to keep me out.

This may not have the robes or the rituals, the ceremonies or the services, but it is a religion. It is called **SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

Regarding Israel, Paul states.

Romans 10:3 (NKJV)

³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Romans 9:31 (NKJV)

³¹ but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

Israel with all their privilege and blessing failed to attain the righteousness that would make them with with God. They pursued it with all that the could do, and missed it completely.

This is the ultimate and most important question for any man, woman or child. How can I be made right with God. How can I, a sinner be reconciled to a Holy and Just God who is the Judge of all people.

Jesus very clearly answers this question in our text.

Luke 18:14 (NKJV)

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other;....

So if we want to learn what it is that makes a man right with God, we can learn it from Jesus here.

Lesson:

I. The Audience

II. The Analogy

III. The Answer

I. The Audience

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

This is very telling and specific as to who is audience it. Who it is that he is addressing here is very clear.

It is the ones who

1. Trusted in themselves
2. Despised others.

1. The ones trusting in themselves are the self-righteous Pharisees of Jesus day.

to some who trusted —the certain ones, or

τις τις; a prim. enclitic indef. pron.; ***a certain one, someone, anyone:—***any(36), any man(9), any man's(2), any one(4), any way(1), any woman(1), anyone(90)

Thomas, R. L. (1998). In [New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition](#). Foundation Publications, Inc.

(lit., “whoever the ones”) encompasses all those outside the true faith—all those who trust that their own righteousness will gain them entrance to the kingdom

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (pp. 14–15). Moody Publishers.

Trusted, Perfect Part. Having trusted and continuing to trust.

Obviously the specific ones he has in mind are the Jews, but it has much broader application to anyone who trust in themselves...

the Pharisees and their followers also represent all those who seek salvation through self-effort and self-

righteousness; all who believe that they have the power to live a life that pleases God sufficiently to gain them eternal life in His kingdom. That has always been and still is the dominant, commonly believed, and damning lie that Satan has used to lure people to their eternal doom.

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 15). Moody Publishers.

Paul believed this before his conversion. He was neck deep in self righteousness

Philippians 3:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Galatians 1:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

But when Christ came to save him, his whole world was turned upside down. His view of self righteousness was shattered and crushed.

Philippians 3:7–9 (NKJV)

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

In the sixteenth century, a German monk named Martin Luther sat in the tower of the Black Cloister in Wittenberg, meditating on the perfect righteousness of God. Although he was the most scrupulous of monks, attending confession for hours each day, seeking forgiveness for the minutest of sins, he realized that the standard of perfect righteousness was absolutely unattainable. He thought of divine righteousness as an unrelenting, unforgiving, avenging wrath and

believed his state was hopeless. Recounting the experience that transformed his life, he later said:

That expression “righteousness of God” was like a thunderbolt in my heart.... I hated Paul with all my heart when I read that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel [Rom. 1:16–17]. Only afterward, when I saw the words that follow—namely, that it’s written that the righteous shall live through faith [1:17]—and in addition consulted Augustine, I was cheered. When I learned that the righteousness of God is his mercy, and that he makes us righteous through it, a remedy was offered to me in my affliction.

The remedy Luther found was the doctrine of justification by faith. His discovery launched the Reformation and put an end to the Dark Ages. What Luther came to realize is that God’s righteousness, revealed in the gospel, is reckoned in full to the account of everyone who turns to Christ in repentant faith. God’s own righteousness thus becomes the ground on which believers stand before him.

(John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, Revised and Expanded Edition [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 196)

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 16). Moody Publishers.

Self Righteousness is very serious and utterly deceptive reality.

It exalts ones self to lofty position of self
proclaimed purity and holiness

While at the same time looking down its nose at
the pitiful sinner that has not or cannot achieve his
lofty position.

It is sickening.

The Pharisees, not only trusted the believe they
were righteous, but they also considered others as
worthless, and defiling

9 Also He spoke this parable to some
who trusted in themselves that they
were righteous, and despised others:

Luke 18:9 (NASB95) and ESV

- 9** And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they
were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

They remained sickeningly, obnoxiously
selfrighteous—so much so that they **viewed others**,
whom they considered to be less righteous than they
were, **with contempt.**

exoutheneó: to despise, treat with contempt

Original Word: ἐξουθενέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: exoutheneó

Phonetic Spelling: (ex-oo-then-eh'-o)

Definition: to despise, treat with contempt

Usage: I set at naught, ignore, despise.

1848 eksoutheneō (from 1537 /ek, "completely out from," which intensifies outheneō, "bring to naught, reduce to nothing") – properly, cast out as nothing; set at naught; "to count as nothing, to treat with utter contempt, i.e. as zero" (WP, 2, 281); "set at naught, despise utterly" (A-S); to regard something as lacking any standing (value).

Exoutheneō (**contempt**) means “to despise,” “to treat as if of no account,” “to consider worthless or of no value.” In its only other use in the Gospels, it describes the mocking treatment Jesus received at the hands of Herod and his soldiers (Luke 23:11). In **Acts 4:11**, Peter used it to describe the Jewish authorities’ contemptuous rejection of Jesus

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 16). Moody Publishers.

I. The Audience

II. The Analogy

10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The comparison is startling. The 2 men are polar opposites of each other

One is self righteous

The other is Contemptible and unrighteous

One is accepted

The other is despised

One is respected

The other is rejected

One is the most pious, prestigious positions

The other is the most hated and lowest of positions.

10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

In the Lord's story, the **two men went up** the steps **into the temple to pray**, either at the time of the morning (9:00 a.m.), or more likely the evening (3:00 p.m.), sacrifice. After the atoning sacrifices had been made, prayer and worship could be offered. The scene would have been a familiar one to Jesus' hearers; it was only natural for prayers to be offered at the temple, the "house of prayer" (Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13).

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (pp. 17–18). Moody Publishers.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,

The **Pharisee stood** as he prayed, since standing was one of the acceptable postures of prayer (Gen. 24:12–14; 1 Sam. 1:26), along with sitting (Judg. 21:2–3; 2 Sam. 7:18; 1 Kings 19:4), kneeling (1 Kings 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Dan. 6:10), bowing (Ex. 34:8–9), lying facedown (Ezek. 9:8; Matt. 26:39), with uplifted hands (Ps. 28:2; 1 Tim. 2:8), looking up (John 11:41; 17:1), and looking down (Luke 18:13). But while praying standing up was acceptable, doing so to be noticed by men was not (cf. Matt. 6:5). The

Pharisee's posture was one of self-promoting pride, intended to showcase his supposed spirituality.

His prayer also displayed a hypocritical, self-righteous attitude, as the interesting statement that he **was praying this to himself** reveals. That could mean that he was praying inaudibly, as Hannah did (1 Sam. 1:13). More likely, however, the idea here is that he was focusing his prayer in the direction of himself in a self-congratulatory fashion. This was no prayer to God. He gave Him no praise, and asked nothing from Him; no mercy, grace, forgiveness, or help. His pompous, arrogant declaration, **God, I thank You that I am not like other people**, was sheer hypocrisy.

It was an unequivocal declaration to God of his worthiness and self-righteousness; of what he was and had achieved on his own. It expressed his confidence that his own virtue was sufficient for him to have a relationship with God.

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (pp. 17–18). Moody Publishers.

Luke 18:11 (NKJV)

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

To make sure the God doesn't miss any observations of just how righteous this guy is, he compares himself to the low-lives and riffraff of society, the depraved degenerates...

extortioners. swindlers

harpax: rapacious

Original Word: ἄρπαξ, αἶνος, ὁ

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: harpax

Phonetic Spelling: (har'-pax)

Definition: rapacious

Usage: rapacious, ravenous; a robber, an extortioner.

Cognate: 727 hárpaks – properly, seizing; a sudden snatching (like in a robbery). [See 726](#) (harpazō).

unjust,

adikos: unjust, unrighteous

Original Word: ἄδικος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: adikos

Phonetic Spelling: (ad'-ee-kos)

Definition: unjust, unrighteous

Usage: unjust, unrighteous, wicked.

(cheaters, dishonest people

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 18). Moody Publishers.

adulterers. plural**moichos**: an adulterer**Original Word:** μοιχός, οὐ, ὁ**Part of Speech:** Noun, Masculine**Transliteration:** moichos**Phonetic Spelling:** (moy-khos')**Definition:** an adulterer**Usage:** an adulterer, that is, a man who is guilty with a married woman.

(immoral sexual sinners)

These are the dregs of society. The scum, refuse, the dung. The thieves are crucified on both side of Christ, the adulterer was caught and condemned in John 8, and wicked where everywhere, because they did not meet the standard of the Pharisees

These were commonly associated with the lowest of the low,....the tax collector.

The traitor, who had no moral compass, who in betrayal of his own people, had sided with Rome for money. He could charge whatever he wanted in taxes just as long as he gave what was due to Rome. They usually lived sumptuous life of debauchery at the expense of the poor of Israel.

They were the most hated of society.....

The Pharisee would have kept his distance from such an unclean person, lest he inadvertently touch him and become ceremonially defiled. Such physical isolation was a statement by the Pharisee of his spiritual superiority to the common people the Pharisees considered “accursed” (John 7:49). He and his fellow Pharisees held themselves aloof from the common people, associating only with each other. This one may have wondered why the tax collector had not been ushered out with the other impure people (cf. Mishnah, Tamid 5.6).

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 18). Moody Publishers.

Then he turns to all the good that he does shows just how good of a man he really is..

12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

Not content with saying what he was not, the Pharisee wanted everyone (including God) to know what he was. He then proceeded to list his religious credentials, contrasting himself with the irreligious tax collector. Though the Old Testament prescribed only one fast, in preparation for the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29–31), the Pharisees fasted **twice a week** (normally on Monday and Thursday). He was careful to **pay tithes of all that** he received, going beyond the tithing required in the Old Testament law to include such minutiae as “mint and dill and cummin” (Matt. 23:23) and “rue and every kind of garden herb” (Luke 11:42).

His ostentatious, self-promoting prayer was typical of the Pharisees, **as William Hendriksen notes:**

A Pharisaic prayer, dating from about the time Jesus told this parable, runs as follows:

“I thank thee, Jehovah my God, that thou hast assigned my lot with those who sit in the house of learning, and not with those who sit at street corners [i.e., moneychangers and traders]. For I rise early and they rise early: I rise early to study the words of the Torah, and they rise early to attend to things of no importance. I weary myself and they weary themselves: I weary myself and gain thereby, while they weary themselves

without gaining anything. I run and they run: I run toward the life of the age to come, while they run toward the pit of destruction.” (*New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978], 820)

Jesus condemned praying, fasting, and tithing intended merely to “make a good showing in the flesh” (Gal. 6:12) in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:1–18).

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (pp. 18–19). Moody Publishers

Now by comparison, Look at what Jesus points out about the Tax collector. This is the antithesis of the Pharisee. The polar opposite.

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

Notice a few things about the tax collector that speak volumes about the man....

1. His position

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off,

He knew he was not worth to approach God and expressed it by his unwillingness to approach the temple. Utterly overwhelmed with his own sinfulness, He could only bring himself to the outer fringes of the temple but not in it.

“This man was acutely aware that he was unworthy to be in God’s presence, or even in that of the righteous. He was a pariah not only in his own eyes, but more importantly in God’s”

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (p. 19). Moody Publishers.

I. His Position

2. His Posture.

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven,

The Pharisee, stood and prayed

The Tax collector could not lift his eyes to heaven.

Luke 18:13 (NASB95)

13 “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’

theló: to will, wish

Original Word: θέλω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: theló

Phonetic Spelling: (eth-el'-o,)

Definition: to will, wish

Usage: I will, wish, desire, am willing, intend, design.

οὐκ

ἤθελεν

οὐδὲ

Overwhelmed with guilt and shame, he had an overpowering sense of his own unworthiness and alienation from God. His sin, disobedience, and lawlessness brought him pain, along with fear and dread of deserved punishment.

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast,

His humility is also seen in his behavior; he was **beating his breast**. When they prayed, the Jewish people sometimes put their hands over their chests and put their eyes down. But this man did something unusual. Clenching his hands into fists, he began pounding his chest rapidly and repeatedly in a gesture used to express the most extreme sorrow and anguish. There is only one other reference in Scripture to this practice. Luke 23:48 records that after Christ's death on the cross "all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts." The gesture acknowledged that the heart is the source of all evil (cf. Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Jer. 7:24; 16:12; 17:9; Matt. 12:34; 15:19; Luke 6:45).

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (pp. 19–20). Moody Publishers.

1. His Position

2. His Posture

3. His Plea

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes

to heaven, but beat his breast, **saying,**
‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

God, be merciful to me THE sinner.....

τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ

This reminds us of the word of Paul

1 Timothy 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

1 Corinthians 15:9 (NKJV)

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Ephesians 3:8 (NKJV)

⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Job 42:5–6 (NKJV)

- 5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
- 6 Therefore I abhor *myself*,
And repent in dust and ashes.”

This was the reason the Lord started the Sermon
this way

Matthew 5:3–6 (NKJV)

- 3 “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
- 5 Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
For they shall be filled.

I. The Audience

II. The Analogy

III. The Answer

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

This stunning statement by the Lord shocked the legalists in His audience, absolutely shattering their theological sensibilities. *Dedikaiōmenos* (**justified**) is a **perfect passive participle** that literally means “having been permanently justified.”

dikaioó: to show to be righteous, declare righteous

Original Word: δικαιόω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: dikaioó

Phonetic Spelling: (dik-ah-yo'-o)

Definition: to show to be righteous, declare righteous

Usage: I make righteous, defend the cause of, plead for the righteousness (innocence) of, acquit, justify; hence: I regard as righteous.

Cognate: 1344 dikaiōō (from dikē, "right, judicial-approval") – properly, approved, especially in a legal, authoritative sense; to show what is right, i.e. conformed to a proper standard (i.e. "upright").

Moreover, Jesus did not appeal to rabbinic authority; His declaration **I tell you** asserted His

absolute divine authority. Here is sound soteriology from God incarnate.

Without any works, merit, worthiness, law keeping, moral achievement, spiritual accomplishment, ritual, penance, good works, or any other meritorious activity, this guilty sinner was pronounced instantly and permanently righteous. The only righteousness acceptable to God is the perfect righteousness that no amount of human effort can earn. Since it cannot be earned, God gives it as a gift to penitent sinners who put their trust in Him. But the self-righteous pride of the Pharisee, and those like him, only increased his alienation from God. His soliloquy merely solidified his confidence in his own righteousness, and he left in a more wretched condition than when he came. Atonement is worthless to the self-righteous.

The work of Jesus on the cross is not mentioned in the story because it had not yet occurred. The salvation of the tax collector was an Old Testament, pre-cross conversion. But in any age, righteousness and justification are granted by God apart from works through the application of Christ's atoning sacrifice before and after His death and resurrection.

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Jesus closed His story with a **truism or proverb**.

Exalted in this context is a synonym for salvation; for being in the spiritual kingdom. In its Old Testament usage, only God is truly exalted and only God can exalt men, who are unable to exalt themselves to His level.

Thus, **everyone who exalts himself will be humbled** in the severest sense of the word; crushed in eternal loss and punishment. The path of self-exaltation ends in eternal judgment;

James 4:6–11 (NKJV)

..... Therefore He says:

*“God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.”*

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. ⁹ Lament

and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

On the other hand, all who humble themselves and confess that they can do nothing to save themselves will be exalted to eternal glory.

The damned think that they are good; the saved know that they are wicked. The damned believe that the kingdom of God is for those worthy of it; the saved know that the kingdom of God is for those who know that they are unworthy of it. The damned believe that eternal life is earned; the saved know it is a free gift.

MacArthur, J. (2014). [Luke 18–24](#) (pp. 21–22). Moody Publishers.

The damned believe they are Righteous, the saved believe they are sinners.

The damned believe God commends them, The saved believe God Condemns them.

The Damned believe they are rich in righteousness, The saved believe they are desperately poor in purity.

The Self Righteous DIE. The Sinner who Cries to God for Mercy in Christ LIVES and Lives forever.....

