

The Posture of the Heart | Luke 18:9-14

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. Well, good morning, everyone. How's the time change? So some of us absolutely like the time change, some of us don't, and I'm reminded how in Hawaii there is no time change.

So for those of us who visit or have any relatives in Hawaii, it stays constant every single time. So that's pretty cool for that. Well, today, we are going to do, we're continuing our sermon series through the parables that's found in Scripture.

We've been going through the Gospel of Matthew, where we've gone over quite a few parables. The parable of the net for last Sunday, if you remember. Someone who was casting the net into the sea, pulling up fish and separating it, representing the final judgment that we see that is directly tied into Revelation 20, which is really awesome when you start seeing connections not only throughout the bulk of Scripture, but also even in books that sometimes cause controversy, such as Revelation.

[1:33] But it's still part of the Word of God, and it's still important for us to read, to discover, to learn, to observe, and to apply to our very lives. And so today, we are going to go over to the Gospel of Luke.

And it's going to be Luke chapter 18, verses 9 through 14, if you want to turn there. You are welcome to use the ESV Pew Bible that's on page 1042, or whatever mobile device, or whatever Bible translation of your choice.

You know, one thing that's always, has been very interesting. How many of you? I want to ask all of you. How many of you have met someone that you just know they like to boast?

Some of us don't know anybody like that. I'm sure you do. We've all met someone like that. Someone that's very arrogant. Someone that's very proud.

Especially those kind of people where they like to one-up you. You tell them one story of something that's going on. Well, I know something. Let me tell you what happened the other day. Ah, your story's not that significant.

[2:44] We've met people like that. We find that not only in people that we interact with on a personal level, but also when we consider these little fun guys known as our phones.

We look at, you know, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X. People that are living their best lives, right? When really what they're doing is setting up an image to make it look better than what's actually going on.

Let's be honest here, right? It's just like how if you have someone that's coming to visit your house and you've got to clean up really quick so you sweep things under the rug to put your best foot forward, and rightfully so.

But for many of us, we know someone who loves, who's very prideful, very arrogant, and loves to just constantly compare themselves to you. And what we're going to find in Scripture today is that Jesus tells a parable about two men who come before God in prayer.

One of them is filled with arrogance, with pride, and the other one is filled with humility. And it is one of them who leaves and is justified.

[3:54] Let's pray together, and we'll go ahead and read this verse together. Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, we are grateful that we are here today in this time and in this place with this time change.

We are reminded that you are the God of all time and of every season. We certainly appreciate when the seasons change and things begin to warm up, but we are reminded that you are the God of all.

Father, we ask that you are with us in this time and in this place. May we all recognize that you are the Lord of all.

And I pray that no matter where anyone here today is on life's journey, may they come to you. And may they do life living and loving like you.

Father, we've been going over these parables. May we have ears that listen to you. May we have eyes to see the truth and the beauty of what you provide for us.

[4:59] And also, may we have our hearts ready to receive your word and to live in love like you. It is in the name of Jesus that we pray together and we all say together, amen.

Amen. All right. So the Gospel of Luke, like I said, we've been going through the Gospel of Matthew for a lot of their parables. Now we're in the Gospel of Luke, page 1042.

We're going to start at verse 9 here, 9 through 14. We all there? All right. He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt.

Two men went up into the temple to pray. One of them was a what? A Pharisee. And the other was what? A tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I'm not like other men.

I'm not like those extortioners, the unjust, the adulterers. This is my favorite part. Or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week.

[6:12] And I give tithes of all that I get. So we have the scene of the Pharisee right there. But what about the tax collector? But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, saying what?

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. I want you to picture the scene here.

You have two men that are going to the temple. And one of them, what's very interesting, when the Jewish people would go to the temple to pray, they would look up to the heavens.

And so I want you to imagine someone who's finely dressed, standing by himself, praying, God, I thank you that I'm not like these other men.

[7:16] I'm not like the adulterers. I'm not like the extortioners. And I'm certainly not like this tax collector. You can get an idea of how he is posturing himself, how he's positioning himself.

And we also can think about the posture of his heart. We then can see that there is this tax collector. Now, for many of us, we may know that the tax collectors were not really viewed upon highly in society.

I mean, if you don't know that, you should know that. And we can think right off the bat. We can think of maybe people that are outcasts in society even today.

I mean, tax collectors may not have the greatest viewing even today. So imagine this tax collector. He's going into the temple. Now, it was customary for, again, the Jewish people to stand when they're praying.

But he's not lifting his eyes up towards heaven. But instead, as it says in the scripture here, he is saying, standing far off would not even lift his eyes to heaven.

[8:29] So instead of looking up in reverence, as it were, he beats his chest, saying what, church?

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And even in that verse, you see that it says, the language is saying that he stood far off.

Now, that's kind of an interesting one. There's some debate on scholars on what that means. Some of them say, well, the tax collector was completely away from this Pharisee.

Maybe the Pharisee looked at him funny. You guys have had those moments in life before where you can tell someone's judging you. Maybe the tax collector was far off from the Pharisee because he wanted nothing to do with him.

It's also been stated, again, there's some debate on this, but we can think nonetheless, that the tax collector was in the outer courts. That instead, he was far off, not just from the tax collector, but from the presence of God.

[9:33] That he felt convicted, as it were. He felt the weight of the wrong that he had done. In other words, he felt humble before God.

And he's praying this prayer, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Isn't that like what we would call a sinner's prayer? I mean, a form of one, at least.

And we see that this parable is kind of smashed into a couple things that are going on. The first being the parable of the persistent widow, which we're not going into today.

But the parable of the persistent widow is talking about humility. The widow that's constantly going before the judge and asking for justice, humbling herself before the judge.

Here, we're seeing humility of the tax collector. And then further on, when it's talking about, let the children come to me, we have all heard that before, pretty much, right?

[10:34] Let the children come to me, because the mind of a child is in awe and in wonder of the Lord. And to think that we are to have a similar mind of a child can be very challenging for us.

But it's still showing this connection with humility. So the Pharisee stands by himself and he prays about himself, that he is boasting his own ego.

And he's listing his religious accomplishments, saying that he fasts twice a week, which is above the requirement, and gave a tenth of all that he had beyond what the law required.

And he's justifying himself by comparison, rather than by humbling himself before God. The tax collector, on the other hand, humble and repentant.

Again, he's standing at a distance. His eyes are downcast. He beats his chest, which is a sign of deep sorrow. When we think about that. And prays but the simplest prayer.

[11:45] Not about his accomplishments, but coming before the Lord. God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And for those of you who love the Greek, he's saying, make atonement for me.

Right? Again, think of the humility in that. And we find that in that verse 14, where Christ is saying, I tell you that this man, the tax collector, rather than the other, went home justified before God.

And it's this idea that the one who humbles himself will be exalted, and the one that exalts himself will be humbled. It's this very idea, church, about the posture of the heart.

It's not about what we do or our accomplishments. Rather, it's about us coming before the Lord. And so when we look at this then, what can we learn from this?

I mean, not only can we, I want you to consider this on the screen, but also think for a moment, this parable is more common. We can think of the tax collectors that exist in the world today, and the Pharisees that exist in the world today.

[13:08] How many of us, well, you don't have to raise your hand here, but you might know a Pharisee who's more interested on the things that they have accomplished rather than coming before the Lord and relying on Him.

Some of us may know the tax collectors. We may know the outcasts of society who are coming before the Lord just wanting to be in His presence, to be close to Him.

Can we think about people like that? I'm sure that for all of us in our own network, our own friends and families, co-workers, students and teachers, we can think of people who can fit that kind of mold.

And so what we can learn from this then, number one, is that grace matters more than works. We think about it, us as Christians today, as opposed to what was happening back then, is that the Jewish people would constantly go into the temple for the forgiveness of sins.

As Christians today, we know that Christ, Jesus paid it all, right? Like that song says, all to Him I owe. And so we recognize that there's that sense of humility before God that existed then and certainly can exist now and does exist now.

[14:39] That we need Jesus Christ in our life. And it's knowing that God extends that invitation to every single one of us. And it's the question

of if we respond to that invitation, humbling ourselves before God.

recognizing that we need that which is higher, that which is greater than us. And so in this, the grace that comes from God is more powerful than what we can do.

Can you imagine for a moment? Imagine for just a second here if heaven was filled with only the rich. man, talk about arrogance, right?

Who gave more? Who had more? But instead, instead of what we can do, it is what Christ has done for you by His death on the cross.

Knowing that salvation is not contingent on how much money you have. It's not contingent on where you come from, what you have gone through or what you're going through, how many degrees you may have.

[15:53] And let's face it, in the world that we live in, we live in a world where it's all about stacking things up, right? I don't want one Ferrari, I want five of them.

I don't want five houses, I want 50 houses. Right? I mean, sometimes, I'll be very honest, when I go on YouTube or TikTok, I sometimes see videos, I got my third master's degree and I'm on my way to my second doctorate's.

Cool. Good for you, man. But that's the kind of world that we live in. Where people like to, and, that's the world we live in.

People like to showcase their accomplishments. But when it comes to salvation that comes from the Lord, it's a very different situation about what God has done for us rather than what we can do.

The second thing being, this one's a little harder, right? Comparing our faith with others' faith is what, church? It's foolish, right? And not only can we think about this in our own accomplishments, my dad used to tell me when I was very young, don't compare yourself with others because there will always be someone better than you, especially how you define better, right?

[17:12] So not only is that unhealthy when we're constantly comparing ourselves with others' accomplishments, who makes more, who does more, who's stronger, et cetera, et cetera, but when it comes to our own faith, I pray that every single one of you come to know who Jesus Christ is.

For many of us, we may be on a journey seeking to find truth. And I pray that your pursuit of truth will be coming to find that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

And upon believing in Christ and being saved, may your journey be one that is in Christ. Being molded by him, right?

Just as I've mentioned before, that God is the potter and we are the clay, the work of his hands. May God mold you and transform you into who the Lord wants you to be.

That's the beautiful thing about being a Christian. Not only the greatest thing, that we receive salvation, that we will have eternal life, but that God transforms our very lives.

[18:21] How many of you know someone that wasn't a Christian and became a Christian and you saw drastic changes in their life? I know I have.

You don't have to raise your hand, but I'm sure, I hope you know someone like that. Maybe that's yourself that has gone through such a transition. And so comparing our faith with others' faith is foolish.

In 2 Corinthians 10, verse 12, there's a mentioning where the apostle Paul rebukes false teachers who define righteousness by human comparison.

We can also see how in Scripture there's this constant obsessive comparison disorder, as it were. People constantly comparing themselves nowadays in the world that we live in, but also even in Scripture.

You know, Cain and Abel. Right? Or we can think of Jonah, how he had a hardened heart towards the city of Nineveh. Or you can even think of the elder brother, right?

[19:23] The prodigal son. You can think about that. There's many times in Scripture where we see this. And so we have to remember, the Pharisee felt that he was justified by what he was doing.

Being prideful and arrogant by what he accomplished rather than the mercy that comes from the Lord. And the third thing is that salvation comes through faith, humility to God.

It is the recognizing. When we believe in Christ, it's believing in the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ. Do you realize that it's acknowledging the power that comes from the Lord?

That the power of God is far greater than what we can do. I mean, if you think about the miracles of Christ, turning water to wine, walking on water, healing the sick, raising people from the dead, we don't have that kind of power, let's be honest.

And if you think you do, I'll talk to you later after it. The reality is, it's showing the power that comes from the Lord. That God is far beyond our understanding.

[20:33] His power, His mercy, His healing, His presence is far greater than we could understand or we could ever do. Is that not humility?

Is that not recognizing that, hey, look, I can't do it on my own. I need you, God. Be merciful to me, a sinner.

For we are all sinners that are in need of a Savior. Savior. And when we believe in Jesus Christ, yes, it is the changing of the mind, but it's recognizing the power and the glory and the truth that come from Christ.

And so, many of you know the Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 through 9. Don't forget that verse 10 that comes after it. Many of you can quote it verbatim.

For by grace you have been saved, right? Not of works so that no one may boast, right? That verse 10 speaks to the idea of works because there's some people that believe, well, you're saved by grace.

[21:42] I'm good to go. There's still a call for us to grow in the Lord and to do good in His name. Where it says the language in there, we are His workmanship created in Jesus Christ for good works.

Saved by grace through faith, right? So that no one can boast, no one can compare themselves. And we are created so that we can do good in the name of Christ.

That then comes to the application then of, okay, so we've gone over a parable where there's this Pharisee who's just puffed up with pride and this tax collector and there's things that we can learn. Let us always remember when we come together, we should come together united in Christ, opening the Word of God as the source, learning lessons for our own growth and development, but let us not forget the application.

How can I live and apply this to my very life? Number one, examine the posture of your heart. As I mentioned, are there Pharisees anymore?

[23:00] Maybe not literal Pharisees, but there are still people that have that kind of heart, aren't there? I see some of you shaking your head. You may know someone, right? You may know a few people who are like that, who are so focused that their heart gets hardened, as it were.

They get angry. They compare themselves. I'm glad I'm not like... And you fill in the blank. This is a call for you to reflect on.

Do you identify more with the Pharisee? If you do, let this be a call for you to submit to the Lord. To recognize, I get it.

You're accomplished. You've done a lot. But when it comes to God, it's not about what you do. It's about what's been done for you. For those of you that know any modern day Pharisees, let this be a call for you to pray for them.

Pray for the ones whose hearts have been hardened, that God will soften their heart. Whether that's you or someone you know. So examine your heart and maybe you're like the tax collector.

[24:21] Recognizing your need for the Lord. That Jesus Christ is all that you need. Number two, look to Christ and don't what?

Don't compare yourself with others. Right? Just like we see on Instagram or we see in the world that we live in, there are some people who just look so put together.

Now, I'm not saying don't put your best foot forward. But sometimes the image that we see may not be reality of what's actually going on behind the scenes.

I should have put some of those photos where it shows the image that's on Instagram and then it zooms out a little bit and it's nothing like what the photo is actually.

Many of you can, you understand what I mean when I say that. And so, let this be a call for you to be on a journey in Christ if you haven't begun already.

[25:26] And if you are, continue to grow. encourage one another but certainly don't compare. Where you are at, what the Lord is teaching you today is certainly going to be different to the person next to you and to

the person next and so on.

Let's remember that. The idea is that we all come to know Christ and we're all growing nonetheless. When we think of the scattering of seeds on the ground, plants, do they all grow at the same time? Well, they kind of grow in the same season, sure. They don't all grow at the same time. Some shoot up, some take a little bit of time. So too is it in our spiritual walk with the Lord.

We are all called to grow and to bear fruit. And then finally, extend grace to others devoted like the tax collectors.

it's important for us to reflect and it's important for us not to compare ourselves, but let this be a call for you to share in the love and the grace that comes from Jesus Christ.

[26:37] What that can look like is again praying for those with hardened hearts. It can be having a simple conversation with someone that doesn't know the Lord.

It can be a conversation with a Pharisee. let us be encouraged. It's okay to share in your testimony and to share in the gospel message with others that whosoever believes shall not perish but have eternal life.

And I pray that many of us may have family members that we can think of right away that we can pray for or we can have a discussion with.

Let us be like the tax collector who said that simple prayer God be merciful to me a sinner and even if we are saved by grace through faith it's still important just like when we share in communion when we are called to do this in remembrance of Christ we are reflecting on the sacrifice that Christ did for us and in the same way let us never forget what the Lord has done for us the mercy that he has shown for us and so in that final verse for all those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted and Jesus asks the question what posture do you take before God only you can answer that but I pray that you may all have a softened heart ears to hear eyes to see and a heart to receive let's pray together and father we thank you for this time and this opportunity to go through this parable through the gospel of Luke it's certainly a parable that we can all identify with father we pray for the well the

Pharisees in our life for their hardened hearts or a misunderstanding we pray that there will be a repentance as it were which we know is the changing of the mind if there is anyone here who has a hardened heart we pray that you soften it we pray for that transformation for those of us that identify with the tax collector may we continue on our journey and path not comparing ourselves not to become a Pharisee but to be fully devoted to you and I pray father that we may come to know you that we all grow together in you but also may we all be moved to do good in your holy name you call for us to be transformed and to act upon this faith that we we love you for you loved us first and foremost we thank you so much again that you give us this time together to worship together to read from your word and to delve into it together and father

[30:06] I pray if there's anyone here that has that hardened heart just be with them comfort them and show them it's not about what you do rather what's been done because of you father and we thank you what you have done for us we love you we praise you we glorify you and we honor you it is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and we all say together amen thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ for more sermons and resources visit Ontario Community Church dot org may God bless you as you live out his grace and truth every single day