



Sunday, March 21, 2021

Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Luke 18:9-14

Have you ever tried to impress someone with your prayer? Or have you ever tried to impress someone with how righteous you are? I think most of us as Christians have done one of those two things. We are born proud. We have a natural inclination to want to view ourselves as better than others, which often requires putting others down. This pride gives birth to all kinds of other sins, like gossip and slander and embellishing the good in us and the bad in others.

Thankfully, Jesus knows our hearts, and He knows that even as His disciples, we will fall into these traps. So, is important for us to hear this parable with fresh ears—to be reminded that we are who we are not because of our own innate goodness or righteousness, but we are who we are by the grace of God alone. John Newton’s famous quote is applicable to us in light of this parable: “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.”

Context

This is one of the more famous parables in Jesus’ teaching ministry because of its close connection to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which the Apostle Paul develops in much greater detail. However, there are significant implications for this parable in the context of Luke’s Gospel. For instance, while this is a fictional story, Luke quickly reminds the readers that people like the Pharisee really exist (18:18-30) and people like the Tax Collector really exist as well (19:1-10). This has significant implications for how we understand what it means to follow Jesus.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Luke 18:9-14

“The Hero and the Crook”

Pharisee Prays

- Position
- Audience
- Rejoices in his goodness
- Critical of others

Tax Collector Prays

- Position
- Beating his breast
- Audience
- Begging for mercy

One stood on his own merits and left the temple without pardon.

The other begged God for mercy and Jesus called him justified.

