

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

February 19, 2020

The Gospel of Luke

*Luke 18*

Topics – Luke 18; Unjust Judge; Importunity; Pharisee and Publican

Text – Luke 18

### Introduction

In chapter eighteen, we still are in exclusively Lukan territory, at least for the first fourteen verses. When we get to verse fifteen, Matthew and Mark's accounts will each support what Luke discusses. Since chapter ten, there Luke has had the monopoly of recording this portion of the last year of Jesus' ministry as headed to Jerusalem just before his crucifixion.

Note – the only exception to this is the account given in John chapter eleven, which records Jesus' activities in Bethany. We believe this fits in between Luke 17:10 and Luke 17:11.

When we get to Luke 18:15, Matthew and Mark will both join Luke in commenting on Jesus activities.

Last week, we studied Luke 17:20 – 37 and looked at Jesus' instructions regarding His second coming to the earth and the setting up of His Kingdom.

Here in chapter eighteen, Jesus is teaching His disciples principles that would be particularly relevant to them as they lived and ministered in a world that became increasingly hostile to the disciples of Christ. In a sense, the instructions given would be very practical for a Christian living in the first century, but would also be prophetically practical for Christians living in the last days.

#### I. The Parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1 – 8)

You will notice that we are given no indication of a change in historical context here. We must conclude that we are just continuing in the same setting as in chapter seventeen.

You will note that this story is clearly described as a parable. Oxford defines a parable as a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels. Simply stated, a parable is an earthly illustration of a spiritual truth. J Vernon McGee believes that all of these parables are real in the sense that they were all derived from real situations that Jesus had observed.

Jesus not only tells us that this is a parable, He also tells them the spiritual truth regarding importunate, or persistent, prayer that the parable teaches. *"Men ought always to pray and not to faint."*

Jesus already taught them this principle using a different illustration back in Luke 11:5 – 8:

*"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto*

*you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Luke 11:5-8)*

He then drove the point home by stating that they needed to keep asking – be persistent – in their prayers:

*"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:9-13)*

The verbs used in these verses are in the “present tense, active voice, and imperative mood.” It carries the idea of continuing to ask, seek, and knock until you receive the request.

*"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." (James 4:2)*

Keep asking until God answers your prayer (yes or no); or changes your request.

“I am persuaded that we are all more deficient in a spirit of prayer than in any other grace. God loves importunate prayer so that he will not give us much blessing without it. And the reason that He loves such prayer is that He loves us and knows that it is a necessary preparation for our receiving the richest blessings that He is waiting and longing to bestow.” (Adoniram Judson)

In verse 1 – notice that the judge’s view of God impacted his relationship with his fellow man.

In this parable, we have a woman who is seeking justice from an unjust judge, who eventually yields to her request because she is persistent. How much more will a loving and just God answer the prayers of His elect.

Notice, however, that, these specific requests are directly related to the persecution that they will be receiving at the hands of God’s enemies.

This parable does not just teach us to be persistent in our prayer; it goes a little deeper and admonishes us to be persistent in our faith, especially during times of intense persecution:

*"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; ... For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:1, 16)*

*"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9)*

*"But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing." (2 Thessalonians 3:13)*

Notice in verse 8 - Jesus points out that true faith will be relatively rare when He comes back.

## II. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9 – 14)

Illustration - "In contrast to the two commands of Christ, the Pharisees had developed a system of 613 laws, 365 negative commands and 248 positive laws...By the time Christ came it had produced a heartless, cold, and arrogant brand of righteousness. As such, it contained at least ten tragic flaws. (1) New laws continually need to be invented for new situations. (2) Accountability to God is replaced by accountability to men. (3) It reduces a person's ability to personally discern. (4) It creates a judgmental spirit. (5) The Pharisees confused personal preferences with divine law. (6) It produces inconsistencies. (7) It created a false standard of righteousness. (8) It became a burden to the Jews. (9) It was strictly external. (10) It was rejected by Christ." (Joseph Stowell)

The Pharisees attempted to justify themselves:

*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3)*

The Publican sought justification from God:

*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: (Philippians 3:8 – 9).*

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican we can clearly see:

A Contrast in Attitude

**The Pharisee had an attitude of Criticism**

**The Publican had an attitude of Contrition**

Illustration – A man from the Christian Bible Church - always bashing other people - always talking about other people's dirty laundry. He reaped what he sowed. His mother said she didn't like all of the "scummers" coming from Seaside Heights - she gave \$10,000 to the church that the pastor returned.

Turn to Matthew 7:1 - 5

**The Pharisee had an attitude of Self-worth**

**The Publican had an attitude of Unworthiness**

"The trouble oftentimes with religious people is that they try to be more spiritual than God himself." (Frederick Buechner)

Remember the parable of the Prodigal Son - same thing happens there. He realized his unworthiness, while his older brother spouted off about his worth.

**The Pharisee Spoke about himself (and to himself)**

## The Publican made Supplication to God

Notice in verse 13 that the Publican asks for mercy. The word translated mercy here is the Greek word *hē-lä'-sko-mī*, which means propitiation or atonement.

In the Old Testament we learn about the mercy seat. (Explain)

In the temple of Jesus Day, this Publican because of his sinful condition and his detested position, would not be allowed to participate in the atonement made the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement. He asked the Lord to make a mercy seat for him. He asked the Lord to atone for his sins, which, of course, the Lord would do in just a few short months. This Publican was trusting in the coming atonement for sins.

Note – This story will be illustrated before all of their eyes in chapter nineteen through the story of Zacchaeus.

### III. Jesus Loves the Little Children (Luke 18:15 – 17)

Note – this account is also found in Matthew 19:13 – 15, and Mark 10:13 – 16.

We should also point out that in-between verses 17 and 18, according to both Matthew and Mark's accounts, Jesus travels into Judaea by way of the Jordan River and along the way he has a discussion with first the Pharisees, and then with the disciples regarding divorce and remarriage.

The point of this story is that Jesus wants children to come to Him, and He does not want adults to keep the children from coming to Him. In order for anybody to come to Christ, they have to come in simple, childlike faith. They have to be willing to swallow their pride. They have to lay down all of their previous ideas about God, and allow Him to teach them about Himself. Children have no trouble doing this, and that is why it is easy to reach children with the gospel. That is why we spend a lot of energy and resources reaching children.

### IV. The Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18:18 – 30)

Note – this account is also found in Matthew 19:16 - 26, and Mark 10:17 - 27.

The message to this rich young ruler is a salvation message. In the passage here in Luke as well as in the complementary passages found in Matthew and Mark, Jesus will clearly teach us how a person is saved or how a person can know for sure that he or she is going to Heaven when they die. The most important principle that any person can learn in this life is how to be saved:

*"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* (1 John 5:11-13)

Jesus prefaces this account of the rich young ruler with a wonderful truth regarding children. (Luke 18:15 - 17) Salvation can only come through childlike faith, simple trust in the Lord.

Read Luke 18:18 - 30

In this passage we have a wealthy young ruler coming to the Lord Jesus inquiring about everlasting life. His question is actually "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" In his question, we can see his problem, and we also can see the problem that most people in the world have regarding this subject. In his question we can see that this young man was dependent upon himself. He wanted to know what he could do. In his mind, his salvation was to be dependent wholly upon himself and his good works.

Notice - He did not ask the question "What must I do to be saved?" as the Philippian jailor asked in Acts 16:32. There is a very subtle difference in the questions. The Philippian jailor was completely helpless, but this rich ruler was not, and until you get to the place where you are completely helpless and understand that you are at the complete mercy of God, you cannot be saved. Salvation is of God. It comes completely through dependence (or faith) in Him, and it is apart from any good works on the part of the receiver.

*"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." - (Acts 16:31)*

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - (John 3:16)*

*"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." - (1 John 5:12)*

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." - (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

*"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" - (Romans 10:9-15)*

Jesus is going to prove to this young ruler (and to us) that he cannot possibly earn his salvation, because he could never do enough to "inherit" it or earn it.

#### **A. Jesus Teaches The Young Man That Perfection Is Required (Luke 18:18 - 22)**

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus makes the statement:

*"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Matthew 19:21)*

He is revealing the young man's need

1. Notice in v. 19 - Jesus reveals that the young man did not really know Who he was talking to.

2. Notice in vs. 20 - 21 - that this fact is further brought out by the young man's insistence that he has done "all" of the commandments that Jesus mentioned, which he had not; could not. Neither can we.

Turn to Romans 3:10 - 23

You must know that you are lost, before you can be saved. You must see your need. You must realize that you are a hell deserving sinner, and that you are utterly dependent upon God. You have no hope at all on your own.

Turn back to Luke 18:9 – 14 – The Pharisee in this story thought he was righteous in himself and he thought he was superior to the "sinner" in the passage. Yet, Jesus said the sinner went away justified. In order to be saved, you have to recognize that you are a sinner.

### **B. Jesus Teaches the Disciples Two Great Principles (Luke 19:23 – 27)**

1. It is very hard for people to stop trusting in themselves.

Jesus specifically talks here about rich people; but the same principle can be applied to smart people, or powerful people. (vs. 24 - 25) Pride must be abased. Faith is dependence and it is extremely hard for proud people to stop depending on themselves.

2. In order for someone to be saved, it will take a supernatural act of God. (vs. 26 - 27)

Salvation by good works is an impossibility, because no man is good.

*"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**" (Romans 3:12)*

### **C. Jesus Teaches the Disciples (and us) that Reward Follows Discipleship (Luke 19:28 - 30)**

You do not get saved by obeying commandments, but obedience (discipleship) is the will of God for all those who do trust Him as Savior.

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." - (Ephesians 2:10)*

*"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." - (1 Corinthians 6:20)*

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." - (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

### **V. Jesus Forewarns the Disciples Regarding His Death (Luke 18:31 – 34)**

Note – this account is also found in Matthew 20:17 - 19, and Mark 10:32 - 34.

Though Jesus had revealed His future rejection and death to the disciples, they did not understand what would take place until after it happened. (See also Luke 9:43 – 45; Matthew 20:17 – 19; and Mark 10:32 – 34)

## **VI. Healing of the Blind Man Near Jericho (Luke 18:35 – 43)**

Note – this account is also found in Matthew 20:29 - 34, and Mark 10:46 - 52.

Note - Matthew's gospel tells us that there were actually two men that were blind that called out for Jesus, and Mark's gospel tells us that one of the men was named Bartimaeus.

### **A. His mouth was open - He called on the Lord**

A significant point from this passage is that the people tried to get the man to keep quiet as he was calling out to Jesus. Had He done that, He may not have received His sight. We have seen this often in the Scriptures. The disciples tried to keep the children away from Jesus. The moral to the story is that we should not allow anybody to keep us quiet as we are calling out Jesus, and we should not let anyone silence us as we are praising Jesus.

### **B. His eyes were opened**

He expressed his faith in the Lord, and the Lord healed him.

*"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." - (Matthew 13:15-16)*

Physical sight is a picture of spiritual sight.

*"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." - (1 Corinthians 2:14)*