

Series: God's Life-Changing Truth – Part 9

Luke 18:9-14 ESV

Does Everyone Need God's Mercy?

Wednesday, March 18 at 11:00 & 7:00

Fifth Wednesday of Lent – 2015

During Lent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ:

What is mercy? According to Google, it is *“compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.”*

Now, think about God's mercy to us: We have sinned against God in countless ways, so we are rightly deserving of His punishment. Logic might tell us that we can fix our mess, *but the Bible tells us that there is nothing we can do to make up for our wrongs or somehow win God's favor.*

Therefore, unless **God** takes *positive* and *extraordinary* action toward us, we are doomed! That brings us to today's key question: Does everyone need God's mercy? Let's clarify the answer even more by going to today's text: **Luke 18:9-14:**

1. **The Setting:** ⁹ **He [Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:** // Let's clarify the *kind of people* Jesus was talking about:
 - a. People who did good, even extremely good.
 - b. People who *thought their good could save them.*
 - c. People who were *trusting in their own good for their entrance into heaven.*

- d. People who *looked down upon others who did not measure up to their standard of good.*

Of course the first quality is okay – *to be good*, but if we think ➔ *such good* can save us **or** ➔ we are more worthy of heaven than others; then Jesus is speaking this parable to us:

2. **The Parable:** ¹⁰ **“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. //** We live in a world today of *many kinds of people*; however, every person can be put into one of **two categories**: Pharisee **or** tax collector. As Jesus continues, let us examine our thoughts about **our** good, **our** view of others, and **our** need for God's mercy.
 - a. **Pharisee:** ¹¹ **The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other [the rest of] men, extortioners [robbers, swindlers], unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’**
 - i. **His prayer in general:** He stood *so people would notice him* and thanked God for all the ways he, *not God*, was good. Furthermore, he had ☹no praise for God, ☹no confession of sin, and ☹no concern for the needs of others : (
 - ii. **His view of himself:** He thought he had put himself in a *good situation*, not like the rest of men who had put themselves in a *bad situation*:

1. He did not rob or cheat others; he did right rather than wrong; he avoided all sins of the flesh; and he was not like the openly sinful tax collector.
2. Instead, he fasted far beyond what God commanded – not only on *the Day of Atonement* each year, but each week on *Monday and Thursday*. He was also very careful to give a tenth of all that he got.

His ↗avoidance of sin and ↗doing of good were not bad, *but they cannot save!*

- b. Tax Collector: ¹³ **But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’” //**
 - i. His prayer in general: He stood far away, *not feeling worthy to draw near*, and looked down with sorrow and humility.
 - ii. His view of himself: He knew he ↗was a sinner and ↗had nothing good to offset his bad; therefore, *beating his chest*, he earnestly prayed: **“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”**
3. **The Explanation**: Jesus said to those who heard the parable: ¹⁴ **“I tell you, this man [the tax collector] went down to his house [having been] justified, rather than the other [the Pharisee]. For everyone who exalts himself [like the Pharisee] will be humbled, but the one**

who humbles himself [like the tax collector] will be exalted.” // Dr. Kretzmann wrote this summary:

- a. **“All the great saints after the manner of the Pharisees are in actual fact unrighteous; their worship, praying, praise is nothing but hypocrisy and boasting; they are not honest toward God and men... therefore they remain in their sins and are looked upon by God as unjust and treated accordingly.**
- b. **The poor sinners, on the other hand, that acknowledge their sinfulness and desire nothing but mercy, they receive the mercy for which they long....**
- c. **He that believes’ himself to be pious and righteous, that exalts himself above all sinfulness and above all sinners, will close the door of mercy before his own face, [and] will bring upon himself damnation.**
- d. **But he that confesses his condition as that of a lost and condemned creature, and puts his... only trust in the grace of God, will be accepted by God as His dear child in Jesus the Savior.” (NT 1:364)**

The Conclusion: Dear friends: We all definitely need God’s mercy, so let us always ↗see our sins, ↗be sorry, and ↗look to Jesus alone as our Savior!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**