

STBC IMPACT Bible Study: “I’D RATHER BE...”

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Our Opening Thoughts: In Luke 18, Jesus taught on the **centrality of prayer** in the life of a disciple, and He used **two parables** to do so. **A parable is a simple story with a spiritual meaning.** Remember, when Jesus tells a parable there is usually an **unexpected twist** at the end, or an **unsuspecting hero** to emulate.

Since the Bible was largely written BY persecuted people TO persecuted people ABOUT a persecuted Messiah, we must learn to read and interpret the Bible from the vantage point of **lowliness** and **humility**.

If we make the mistake of reading and interpreting the Bible solely from **the top down**, i.e., from a place of **dominance** and **arrogance** (male, western, protestant, denominational, economic, Anglo), we will likely miss the original intended meaning. And even if we do get the intended meaning, there is a great chance we won’t apply it. We must retrain ourselves to read, hear, and interpret the word of God from a humble, **bottom to top** mentality.

The first parable Jesus told in **Luke 18:1 – 8** was about **the persistence of prayer** (in which He highlights a widow). The second parable in **Luke 18:9 – 14** is about the importance of **humility in prayer** (in which Jesus highlights a tax collector).

Finally, Jesus **blessed the children** through prayer in **Luke 18:15 – 17** and told the adults they must receive the kingdom like a little child otherwise they wouldn’t be able to enter it.

Our Text: Luke 18: 9 – 14

Our Focus: “I’d Rather Be A Tax Collector Than A Pharisee”

- **What was a Pharisee?** A Pharisee was a Jewish religious leader who was known for being scripturally orthodox and the standard of holiness. However, Jesus often called them hypocrites, vipers, and white-washed sepulchers.
- **What was a Tax Collector?** A tax collector was a Jewish man who worked for the Roman government to collect taxes from the Jews. Tax collectors were considered traitors and thieves because they would personally rob the people while collecting taxes for the Romans.
- These two men were **extreme opposites**, and Jesus had the audacity to highlight and uplift the man on the lowest rung of society. His listeners were challenged to follow the example of a tax collector! This was a radical teaching for that time!

1. Three Disadvantages of Being an Unrepentant Pharisee

- A. Having a preoccupation with self- **Read Luke 18:11**

- B. Being judgmental of others- **Read Luke 18:11**

- C. Being performance driven- **Read Luke 18:12**

2. Three Advantages of Being a Repentant Sinner

- A. Having a preoccupation with God- **Read Luke 18:13**

- B. Being judgmental of self- **Read Luke 18:13**

- C. Being mercy dependent- **Read Luke 18:13 – 14**

Our Closing Thought: When Jesus told this parable, He wanted the self-righteous Pharisees in the audience to see themselves as **sinners in need of God's mercy**. Sadly, there are Pharisees in every audience, but most of **US** will never admit it that it's **US**.

This is why we keep missing the transformational power of the mercy of God which can only be obtained and experienced through humility. The tax collector understood this truth about God whereas the Pharisee did not.

After studying this passage, who would **YOU** rather be? The tax collector or the Pharisee?

Our Discussion Questions:

1. Is learning to read the Bible from “the bottom up” as opposed to “the top down” difficult for you?
2. Even though you are a saint (i.e., ‘Holy one’) by position, do you have a problem calling yourself a sinner? What is a danger of not seeing yourself as a sinner?
3. What was unique about the tax collector’s “prayer of salvation.”
4. Do you typically have trouble extending mercy to others? Name a person who freely extends mercy to you in your time of need.