Believe in the Gospel September 19, 2021

*Luke 18:9-14 Series: The Unstuck Life: Believe. Connect. Share.*

I now see the reason I did the good things was pretty much the same reason for which I did the bad things. I’ve always wanted to be my own savior. – Tim Keller

Intro: What if the papers aren’t shredded?

1. People who expect a reward will be disqualified
2. Do you trust that you’re good enough?

v. 9 *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous …*

v. 9 *and treated others with contempt*

v. 10 *Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee …*

1. Do you really think that you need God?

v. 11 *The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed …*

v. 11 *God, I thank you that I am not like other men …*

v. 11 *extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector*

1. What have you done with your list?

v. 12 *I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.*

v. 14 *everyone who exalts himself will be humbled*

Philippians 3:7 *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

* What does it mean to trust in yourself that you’re righteous?
* Why would ‘good’ people look down on others?
* What evidence could you give that you feel your need of God?
* What did Paul mean when he said he counted his gain as loss?

1. People who seek mercy will receive it
2. There’s hope for those who never measured up

v. 9 *and treated others with contempt*

v. 10 *Two men went up into the temple to pray … the other a tax collector.*

1. To seek mercy, you need to have had enough of your sin

v. 13 *But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven …*

Ezra 9:6 *O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.*

v. 13 … *but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’*

Matthew 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Hebrews 2:17 *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

Donald Bloesch: The Christian alternative to Pharisaism is not Publicanism but costly discipleship. The laxity of the Publican is just as repugnant to God as the self-righteousness of the Pharisee. In the parable it is not the Publican as such but the repentant Publican who is praised.

* How is the tax collector’s attitude different than the person who says, ‘Nobody’s perfect, but I think God will be merciful to us’?
* What do you learn about the tax collector from his body language?
* What do you learn about the tax collector from his prayer?
* Should the tax collector’s prayer be a one-time thing? Why/why not?

1. You either justify yourself or trust God to justify you
2. Spiritual pride is the sin that blinds you to all the others

v. 14 *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.*

v. 14 *everyone who exalts himself will be humbled*

Romans 3:20 *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

1. Spiritual humility helps you see your need of the Saviour

v. 14 *the one who humbles himself will be exalted*

Romans 4:7-8 *Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.*

Philippians 3:9 *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*

* How can you know if God will declare you righteous?
* How do you know that it’s not spiritual pride that makes you think that God will declare you righteous?
* What’s the difference between someone who believes that their “sins are covered” and someone who believes that their sins aren’t that bad?
* What does Philippians 3:9 mean?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study James 2:14-26.

Notes