

Luke 18:9-14

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- [0 : 0 0] Now, Luke chapter 18, starting at verse 9, says, And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.
- Two men went up to the end of the temple to pray, the one of Pharisee and the other a Republican. The Pharisees stood and prayed thus with themselves, God, I think me that I'm not as other men, are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
- I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes into heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, God, be merciful to be a sinner.
- I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalted himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
- That's where we're going to end our reading. So this parable, Jesus speaks here, like I said, I know we've all heard it, taught and preached, and referred to and other sermons and other lessons, but there's a lot to be said about this parable.
- [1 : 1 4] But it begins saying that he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others. Then he goes on to talk about two men.
- They went up to the temple, and they went up there for the same purpose. They went up there to give obeisance to God, to worship God. They went up there to make their prayers known unto God.
- Now, folks, this normally happened either during the morning sacrifice or during the evening sacrifice. There were people that trickled into the temple courtyard at various points during the day to make their petitions known unto the Lord.
- But these times of sacrifice, they were special to these Jews. The times of sacrifice is when the Jews felt that the Lord would most hear their prayers when they felt like they could most get through unto God.
- So this would have more than likely happened at one of these sacrifices. But it says two men went up to the temple to pray, the one of Pharisee and the other a publican.
- [2 : 2 0] And the Pharisee is the one that we know that Jesus Christ, he spoke against the Pharisees through about all of his ministry. These are the very same Pharisees that Jesus Christ called hypocrites.
- He called them vipers. John the Baptist called them the same. The people that the Pharisees sent, the Pharisees and the scribes, sent down to John as he was baptized in at the Jordan River.
- And he said, he called them vipers. He said, who has warned you to plead the wrath to come? And so these Pharisees, they weren't looked upon very highly by Jesus Christ, nor by John the Baptist, nor by the disciples, and by many of the commoners that were around.
- But because the Pharisees, they were self-righteous in their ways. They were self-righteous, they thought that they were keeping the law better than anyone else was.

They thought that they were not sinning more so than anyone else was. They looked on the common man, on the lame members of the synagogues. They looked on the common people as beer peasants compared with what they were as far as their knowledge, as far as their keeping of the law, as far as anything to do with religion, or with God, or the Torah, or anything else.

[3 : 41] They looked on other people as lower than what they were. This Pharisee goes into the temple, he goes into the courtyard, he offers up his prayer, but his prayer is nothing more than a brag session for himself.

He says, I thank thee that I am not like these others. I thank you, Lord, that I am not an extortioner. I'm not this and I'm not that. He says, I thank you, God, that I'm not a sinner, even as this publican standing over here, a bar off to the side of that publican.

He knew what he was doing. He knew who he was dealing with, knew who he was praying to. That's why he stood to the side. That's why the scripture says he went so much as looked his eyes toward the heaven because in his sin, it made him blush, it made him ashamed to lift his eyes, lift his head, lift his face toward heaven, toward an almighty God who he knew and never committed sin.

Who he knew was perfect in all his ways. That's the difference between this publican and this Pharisee. The Pharisee thought that he knew who God was, and the publican knew who God was.

The publican was going about it the right way. Not eating not so much as lifting his eyes toward the heaven. You read the book of Ezra sometime.

[5 : 11] You'll read the ninth chapter of Ezra. Very long chapter, but very deep chapter in Ezra. One of the great, one of the great ninth chapters in all scripture, you got the ninth chapter of Daniel.

You got the ninth chapter of Ezra. You got the ninth chapter of Nehemiah. All these chapters have wonderful prayers spoken in them. I say that God's obsessed with the number nine or anything along those lines, that there's some ninth chapters in the Bible that have beautiful prayers spoken in them.

And the ninth chapter of Ezra is one of those chapters. After the second wave of the exiles have been released and they've come back into the promised land.

They've had their vessels of silver and their vessels of gold given to them and they're gonna dedicate them to the temple which has already been rebuilt by the first wave of Jews that got released to go back in to the holy land.

Ezra shows up and they've put all the vessels in the service of God. They accounted for everyone that left Babylon and made it back to the promised land.

[6 : 17] They accounted for them all but then the princes of the area, they come to Ezra. They say these people that came here years before you did. There were decades for those Jews to intermarry and to intermingle with the people of the land, with the Canaanites, with the Amorites, with these other people and the Moabites, with all these people that God had forbidden them to intermarry with and to intermingle with.

Not because they were different skin color, not because they were different in height or in width or anything else but because they would fall in to their idolatrous ways, they would fall in to their religion.

God's people are our holy people. They are consecrated, they're peculiar, they are separated for the service of God.

That's the way we should be now. It was that way back in Ezra's day and it's that way now. We are separated for God's service but you read in the ninth chapter of Ezra sometime.

It says that Ezra, this broke Ezra's heart that these people had done this. It says that Ezra, he plucked his own beard out, he yanked his own hair out, he rent his clothing, not once but twice.

[7 : 34] Folks, that was a sign of great remorse. Not only in the Bible or not only with the people of God, it was a sign of remorse with the pagans, with the heathens, with anybody that was over there in the mid-east and the near-east that was accustomed of their day then and both is accustomed of their day right now in 2021.

They practiced some of the same things but to read your clothes twice shows that you are doubly sorry for the news that you've gotten. You're doubly sorry for what you've heard or for what you've done.

Something has pricked your conscience and this pricked the conscience of Ezra that the people had gone and they had married into these people, these other people that God had told them not to marry into.

Ezra, he says that he plucked his beard, he ripped out his own hair, he rents his mantle, he rents his clothes but he prays to the God and he calls him my God.

He says our sins are above our heads. Our sins have reached to the heavens and basically what he was saying was our sins are crying out for vengeance from you.

[8 : 48] Ezra, a priest saying God, whatever you do to us, we deserve it. Folks, ain't nobody sitting here right now and nobody standing in here and me right now other than by the mercies of Almighty God.

Jeremiah said that it is the mercies of God that we are not consumed. That is the only reason that we are not consumed by the wrath and the fury is the mercies of God.

This public in Luke chapter 18, he understood something about the mercy of God. He understood that he couldn't go before God with a haughty spirit or with a proud full heart.

He couldn't go before God and get anywhere with it. That's why he stood so far off. That's why he didn't let his head, that's why he simply smote himself on the breast and he said, God be merciful to me a sinner.

He knew that he was a God of mercy. He knew that he was also a God of judgment and a God of wrath. But this public in Luke 18 was depending on the mercy of God.

[9 : 56] He dependent on the mercy, on the grace, on the pity, on the compassion. He dependent on all of these aspects of God. This Pharisee was trying to make himself look good.

We as Christians are guilty of the same thing. We try to make ourselves look good before God. But God, I've done this and God, I've done that. God, I don't deserve this ache in my body.

God, I don't deserve this runny nose. God, I don't deserve this headache. I haven't done anything to deserve it. It's not a matter of what you deserve and what you don't. It's a matter of the mercies of God in your life.

Hey, you're a sinner and I'm a sinner. These things will come to be on every one of us. Death will come to pass on every one of us. Because of sin, the Bible said, for the wages of sin are his death.

But the gift of God is eternal life and Jesus Christ, our Lord, the wages of sin is death. Sin is because of sin. Heartache is because of sin.

[10 : 59] Sadness, depression, problems in general are all because of sin. Not necessarily a sin that you've committed or a sin that I've committed.

On particular sin, it's because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden that we suffer these things. When sin entered in, problems entered in. There were no problems up to that point.

There were no problems before sin came in. This publican recognized that he was a sinner. He simply spoke himself upon the breast and said, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.

Be merciful to me a sinner. God is a God of wrath. God is a God of judgment. And his judgment has already been pronounced. Sentencing's already been pronounced.

You read it all through the pages of scripture that sentencing has already been pronounced on all the world. Sentencing's been pronounced on you and on me and on everyone since Adam and Eve.

[12 : 01] Sentencing and judging, judgment, were all pronounced on them. Death will come. But folks, the thing is physical death's gonna hit everybody and everybody within these walls this morning.

Physical death will come. But the spiritual death is the death that we should be more concerned about. Spiritual death, that's the death that Paul wrote to the Ephesian church about when he said that we were dead and our trespasses and our sins, not dead.

Physically, we were dead spiritually until God came by and God showed mercy. Why did God show mercy? Because God is compassionate. God is long-suffering.

He looked at us in our helpless state. He looked at us in our depraved state, knowing that we couldn't do anything for ourselves. He came to where we were, were and did for us.

God came to earth and suffered, bled and died for an entire human race because we could not do it ourselves.

[13 : 04] And if we did it, it would have done no good. If I had died for the sins of the world, the world would still be in all its sin. If you had died for the sins of the world, the world would still be in all its sin.

If Paul, Paul, the most holy man in the Bible outside of Jesus Christ in my own personal humble opinion, if Paul had died for my sins, I would still be in sin to this day because it would have done no good.

The public in here recognized who he was, recognized what he was. The Pharisee recognized who the public in was. He didn't recognize his own sin.

Oh, there's too many people in the church world that have the attitude of this Pharisee. They have the attitude, I'm not as bad as this one.

I'm not as bad as that one. God said, yes, sure, I'm a sinner, but I'm not as bad of a sinner as this one over here, that one over there. We're not as bad as the folks in this church or as that church.

[14 : 13] Folks, you're not as bad, you're worse, you're worse than what you ever thought that you were. Folks, you're a completely depraved, a wretched soul, such an eye in the same boat that you are.

We are worse than what we ever dreamed possible. We are worse sinners than any of us will think of ourselves to be in this public and I believe he recognized that fact, but the Pharisee, he did not see that, didn't want to see that.

All he did was say, God, I'm not as bad as this one over here. I tithe, I tithe everything that I possess. I fast twice in a week.

It was all, look at me, look at me, look at me. The public was saying, I don't want you to look at me. I'm nothing more than a simple man.

I want you to look at yourself, God, your mercy, your grace, your forgiveness, and have mercy on me. That's the attitude we should all have.

[15 : 16] I don't want God to see me because if he looks down, he sees me, I'm in trouble. He better see Jesus Christ when he looks on me. That's what it means to be in Christ and for Christ to be in me.

If I'm in Christ and Christ is in me and the Father looks down, he won't see me. And I praise God for that. I don't want him to see my richness.

I don't want him to see my filth and my sin. I want him to see the blessed Son that came here and gave his life for me. If he doesn't see that, I'm on the road to hell.

But if he does see that, hey, he'll be well pleased. He's not pleased with the works of Spencer Bungarner. He is pleased with the works of Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, and that is all he is pleased with.

And keep in mind, Jesus is the one speaking this parable here. Jesus hadn't even died yet. Jesus had taught about his death.

[16 : 14] He had taught his disciples. He had said, the Son of Man, he said, I've got to go to Jerusalem. He said, I've got to be handed over into the hands of sinful men. I've got to be rejected this generation.

I've got to die. But he also told him, hey, on that third day, I will rise. On that third day, I will be resurrected. On that third day, I will come again.

But Jesus here is speaking a parable about forgiveness, about the mercy of God. Folks, Ezra, over there where I was talking about the book of Ezra chapter nine, he understood the mercy of God.

He played it for the mercy of God. He was also talking about his fellow Israelites. He said, our sin. He referred to himself and the Israelites when he said, our and we.

He wasn't exempting himself from it. He wasn't saying, God, I'm your priest. I'm your man. I've been consecrated over into your service, the service of the temple, whatever it is you'd have me to do, God.

[17 : 13] He said, our sin, we are guilty of this. But he went on and he explained later on in chapter nine, Ezra explained, he said, hey, if we didn't get, he said, God is not punished our iniquities as much as we deserve.

Hey, if we all got what we deserve, you and me, we would all be in hell right now. God does not give us what we deserve because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Not my works, not my goodness, my goodness, and my righteousness are a filthy rag. But the righteousness of Christ, that's what I'm dependent on.

That's what I'm dependent on. This public, he didn't even have the righteousness of Christ. He had God. Christ was the one speaking this parable.

He didn't have the blood of Jesus Christ yet. Christ was not yet crucified. He was depending on God. He was depending on the Father to be merciful to.

[18 : 17] Ezra says, you have not punished us. So much as our iniquities deserve. You have not punished us as much as we deserve. What were they guilty of?

They had just come out of 70 years, we're back to Ezra now. They had just come out of 70 years of captivity in Babylon. 70 years of God's chastising rod coming down on his people.

70 years of bondage that they were under in Babylon. They had just come out of that, got back to Jerusalem, got back to the holy city, got back to the promised land that God had promised Abraham generations before Ezra.

They had gotten back to where God wanted them to be. And it took them less than a few decades to fall right back in to what God then put in Babylon for 70 years.

It took them just a few decades to get back to that point. It didn't take very long at all, folks. Hey, you read in the scriptures. You read in Genesis chapter four.

[19 : 19] That's when God, that's when man began to call on God but plum over to Genesis chapter six. Just two chapters difference is when God said, even though man has called on me, I'm going to flood the world.

Two chapters, two chapters between Genesis four and Genesis six. Man began to call on God in Genesis chapter four. Genesis chapter six, it had taken two chapters.

I don't know how many years, but only two chapters in scripture for God to decide, for God to say the thought of every man is wicked continually. I'm not putting up with it anymore.

Noah, you build a boat, you get your family on that boat. I'm killing everything. I'm killing everybody. Two chapters, folks, for God to make that decision. And then you see in Genesis chapter eight, after the flood, you see Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives.

You see eight people step off the ark, upper up a sacrifice under God. In Genesis chapter 11, three chapters later, God sees them building the tower of Babel because no people thought they were mightier than God.

[20 : 32] Three chapters, three chapters from stepping off of a boat onto a world that had been flooded. Everybody been killed, save eight people. Three chapters it took.

Three chapters, I don't know how many years. I used to know how many generations, but I can't think of it right now. But three chapters, folks, for man to decide he was higher and better than God was.

No wonder God dealt with us. No matter God is angry with mankind because we constantly turn against him. We constantly do so. Read the book of Judges sometimes.

As the most political book in all of the Bible, is also probably the most violent book in all of the Bible. It says, every man done that which was right in his own eye because there was no king in Israel.

Because there was no king. You know why they didn't have a king? Because they didn't want God as king. That's why God gave him Saul. God gave him Saul and he gave him Saul in his wrath.

[21 : 32] He gave him Saul. He kept telling him, no, I will be your king. I will be your leader. He told Moses that. He told the judges these things. He told people, he said, I will be your leader.

I want to be your king. You don't need an earthly king. And these people, these Israelites, these Jews kept screaming. We want to be like the nations around us. We want to be like the Emirates and the Hittites and the Jebusites and all these other people around us.

God said, I will be your king. And they kept pleading and God gave them what they asked for. But when he gave him Saul, he gave him to him in anger. And the Bible says that.

He gave him to him in his wrath, in his fury. He didn't give him to him because he was happy with them. He gave him Saul to teach him a lesson.

That he was supposed to be king, that God was supposed to be king. Even my Saul was yet king. There was a young shepherd boy named David that was anointed king over Israel.

[22 : 31] That didn't come to pass for years. But Saul continued to be king until Saul's death, of course. But while Saul was still living, he sold out David.

He sought to kill David. He was jealous of David because he knew David had the anointing and he didn't. Saul did not have the anointing of God. Saul was simply given as in the wrath of Almighty God to show his people a lesson.

These parables that were given in Scripture, if they don't teach us a lesson, something's wrong. If this parable of the Pharisee and the publican is going up to the temple and making their petitions, knowing them to God, if it doesn't teach us a lesson, there's something bad wrong.

There's something horrible wrong. And listen, these were two people, just two regular joes, we would call them nowadays. Grandad the Pharisee thought that he was all up to the E.

He thought he was something else. He looked upon himself. What's the Bible saying about things like that? It says, pride goes before destruction and a holy spirit before a fall. If we go to God in pride, folks, we will fall.

[23 : 42] The Bible says to take heed, lest ye fall. Folks, we need to be careful in our actions, need to be careful in our speech, be careful in your prayers. Don't go to God and say, I've done this or I've done that.

Don't tell God, hey, I'll give \$1,000 this week in the copper or I'll give \$8 in the copper. Hey, God knows what we give. God knows what we do.

God knows our heart. The Bible describes him as one that searches the rays of the heart. He knows your heart, knows mine. In fact, when he went, when he sent Samuel in the back of him to anoint David, it said, God doesn't look on the outward appearance.

He looks upon the heart. That should scare us. That should scare us knowing that Jeremiah says, the heart is deceptive of all things and desperately wicked.

Who should know? Who should scare us? But thank God, when we get saved, the Bible teaches he takes out that stony heart. And he puts in a fleshly heart. He puts in a soft heart.

[24 : 45] He puts in a heart that he can work with, but folks that does not change our human nature, that does not change the fact that Adam and Eve were our original parents and their sin nature was passed on down to us.

Don't let the fact that we are saved getting the wave of our prayer life with God. Don't let the fact that we are born again. Don't let that get in our heads that we're better than anybody else.

The only thing that makes us better is Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ, I am nothing. You are nothing. We are worthless in the eyes of God without Jesus Christ.

This Republican here, he saw himself as worthless outside of God. He was dependent on God for mercy. What is mercy?

Mercy is just what Ezra says in Ezra chapter 9, when he says, you haven't punished us so much as our iniquities deserve. Folks, that's mercy, is us not getting what we deserve.

[25 : 47] What is grace? What is grace? Because this publican was dependent on grace as well. This publican in Luke 18, grace is us receiving something that we don't deserve.

We deserve hell. I don't care whether you're lacking or not. I don't care if you agree with it or not. The Bible will back it up. We deserve hell. Every one of us deserve hell. We deserve the judgment of God.

We deserve the wrath of God. We deserve his fury. And we deserve it for all eternity, just like the Bible teaches. But because of his mercy that he has imparted on us, not punishing us as our iniquities deserve, and that mercy leads God to present grace on us, giving us something that we don't deserve, which is eternal life, which is heaven, which is being washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Hey, you didn't deserve it. And I didn't either. But God in God's mercy, he imparted his grace to us. And what led up to all that? God's compassion.

God's compassion. This publican was dependent on the compassion of God. And the Old Testament describes God's compassion just as much as the New Testament does. People think that the Old Testament God was just a God of vengeance.

[27 : 01] He was a God of fury and a God of wrath. And he was, folks. But it describes him as compassion and as will. It describes him as a father to the fatherless. It describes him as the one that will take care of his own people.

It describes him as a father more times than we can count in the scriptures. It describes him as a father to Israel. Israel didn't do anything to deserve God.

God simply chose Israel. God simply chose you. God simply chose me. God came to where we were. If he'd never chosen us, he'd never come to where we was.

God sent his son to die for your sin and for my sin. And not because of who we were. It was because of who he is that he done that. I'm saved not because of who I am, but because of who God is.

I'm kept not because of who I am, but because of works that I perform. I'm kept because of who God is and because of his promises in scripture that the scripture says he's not a man that he could lie.

[28 : 00] He's not a man that he should lie. Hey, folks, God cannot lie. God cannot fib. God cannot break a promise. God will not do any of these things. But I am saved.

I am glory bound because of who God is and because of what he done, nothing to do with who I am or anything that I've done.

This publican was dependent on God. He was a publican despised, despised by Jews because he collected taxes from the Jews and despised by the Romans because he was a Jew.

He was a despised person. But he sought God. He sought God for mercy. He sought God for somebody that wouldn't despise him. He sought God for compassion.

He sought God for forgiveness. He sought God for mercy. He sought God for salvation. He sought God for redemption. Most of his publican had always done it in a room, we would call it around here.

[28 : 56] He had everything in his mind. He knew what he was doing. The Pharisee thought that he knew what he was doing. But he was wrong. He was wrong.

And I hate to think where that Pharisee in this parable is right now. I hate to think of it. He didn't repent just like Jesus said in Luke chapter 13, accept you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

OK, if there ain't repentance, we never got salvation. If salvation was never offered to us by Almighty God, we would never repent of our ways.

It's not in our nature. It's not in ourselves to do that. It takes God to show us that we need to do that. People will say that I'll get right next week.

I'll do this next week or tomorrow, or maybe next year, or maybe next month or whenever. Hope if the drawing spirit of God isn't there, they won't get right with God.

[29 : 58] They might lay down the bottle. They might lay down the pills. They might do all these things of themselves. And listen, we got power to do so. Maybe you don't have that much willpower.

But we've all set things to the side on our own back when we were sinners. And we said, OK, I'm not going to touch this again. Or maybe I'm just not going to touch this for a week or for a couple of weeks.

Whoever in the case says, we've all got that power. But I've used an example before, and I'll use it again. In Mark chapter 5, you read about a man named Legion. He was possessed with devils.

He was possessed with thousands of devils. And Jesus crossed. And as disciples, they sailed over to this land called the Gadarenes. This man named Legion. He was up in the tombs.

He lived there. He ran around naked. He cut himself. He terrorized all the people that were around there. Hey, folks, the man was possessed. But he was able to break his own fetters and chains.

[30 : 54] When the locals were gathered around him, they would bind him up with chains. They would put fetters around his ankles. They would bind him to things. He was able to break those. But that did not stop the possession.

And that did not get rid of the fact that he needed a touch from Jesus. Jesus shows up. Jesus touched him. Jesus spoke to him. He came running to Jesus.

And Jesus healed him. And the next time you see Jesus, he is mercy Legion. He is seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.

Because of Jesus. Not because he broke his own chains. It was because of Jesus that happened. It's publican. I know I'm bound to him back and forth, and that's OK.

Hopefully I'm making sense. This publican recognized his need. The Pharisee didn't. The Pharisee thought he was meeting his own need.

[31 : 51] The Pharisee thought he was doing right in the eyes of God. The publican realized he had not done right in the eyes of God. Just like Saul.

We'll go back to Saul again over in the Old Testament. What got Saul in trouble? Anybody know? Saul was told by a prophet of God, he said, you go in here, you kill everything.

Just like the Israelites, when God brought him over into the promised land, God said, when you go into this land, which I promised them, kill them all. Get rid of everybody. They're in your land that I have promised to you.

Get rid of them. He said, I'll go before you. I will clear the way. He told Saul the same thing through a prophet. He said, when you go here, you kill them all. Don't you take their livestock?

Don't take their cattle? Don't take their goats? Don't take their land? Don't take a beating in these things. When Samuel showed up after the battle, the prophet of God, he shows up. And Samuel saying, I've done everything that God, or not Samuel, Saul says, I've done everything that God required of me.

[32 : 56] I've done everything that he asked me to do. What does Samuel say? What means this bleeding? Bleeding. The bleeding of the sheep.

What means this sound that I hear? You didn't kill everything. You didn't get rid of everything. And Saul tries to cover his tracks. He says, oh, well, I was saving that for the sacrifices. These were really good critters, and I was going to offer them up to God as an offering, or as a sacrifice.

That's not what God said. But in Samuel, or in Saul's thoughts, and in his heart, he thought that he was doing right in doing that. He thought that he was doing right, but really and truly, he had done wrong.

And folks, that began the backslide of Samuel. That began his backslide from God. And he, very far in the scriptures that you read, where it says that God removed his spirit from Saul, and he sent an evil spirit upon Saul, Almighty God, Jehovah God, the same God that we're talking about, is compassionate, and is full of mercy, and is full of grace.

That same God sent an evil spirit to Saul. He removed his spirit and sent an evil spirit to the man, don't tell me God is not serious about this thing.

[34 : 10] When I read scriptures like that, I see exactly how serious God is. But if you want to know how serious God really is about sin, read about the crucifixion in Jesus Christ.

You'll see how much God hates sin. Read about what he had done to his son. Read about the beating. Read about him plucking his beard out over in the Psalms. Read about the nails being driven in.

Read about how not a bone of his body would be broken, but, folks, he was broken all over, down on his bones, because the scripture said that that wouldn't happen. But, folks, that is how serious God is about sin.

He sent his only begotten son to not only die, but to suffer and to completely bleed out so that your sins could be washed away and mine.

That's why we praise God. That's why we praise God. Again, this publican didn't have that. He was just dependent on God. He knew the promise of the Messiah.

[35 : 06] I don't even know this publican or this parable. I don't even know that he knew Jesus Christ, knew who he was. Hey, that happened several times in the gospels.

Jesus healed a blind man over in John chapter nine. The Pharisees asked him, they said, who did this? I don't know. All he knew was, and that was his very words, he said, oh, I know, I was blind and now I see.

That was his very word. He didn't know who done it. He didn't know who Jesus was. He had no clue who it was. The folks, this publican here, I don't know that he knew who Jesus was, but God had made a promise.

God had made promise after a promise for him Messiah to redeem his people. Simeon over in the gospel, or further back in the gospel of Luke. Simeon, who was a priest of the temple, he, God had promised him, God had made covenant with Simeon.

He said, you're not gonna die before you see Messiah. You will not die before you see redemption come into this world. And when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to have him circumcised after the eight days and for Mary to offer up her sin offering over having a child, and yes, that's what the Bible says.

[36 : 20] The folks, when all these things happened, Simeon held that little baby in his arms. He said, God, I've seen you, Lord. God, I've seen redemption. I've seen Messiah. Now let your servant depart in peace.

Let me die in peace. Hey, your promises come true. Most, he was dependent on their promise. He was a servant of God in the temple. He was busy about the Father's works. And he never, never forgot the promise of God.

And he recognized the promise as he laid in his arms. And we recognize the promise. I recognize it. And I'm glad that I do, but folks, without God, I never would have.

Without God showing it to me, I never would have. This publican was dependent on nothing more than Old Testament scriptures. Old Testament scriptures of a promised Messiah, of a God that was merciful, of a God that would subdue his own wrath if we came to him with a penitent attitude, if we came to him in repentance, this publican would have been dependent on Old Testament scriptures for a God like that.

But we read about how God flooded the world. We read about how he ran fire and brimstone down on Solomon, Gomorrah. We read about him opening up the ground, then swallowing up the tribe of Korah.

[37 : 39] We read about all these horrible things in scripture, and that's what gets ingrained in our mind. But he was still a God of compassion then. He was still a God of mercy then. Why did he tell Cain over there after Cain slew Abel?

He said, hey, if thou doest well, will ye not be accepted? But if thou doest not well, sin lie at the door. That was a God of compassion. That was a God of mercy.

He was giving Cain another chance. But we look at him just as a God of wrath. He's a God of compassion. That's why we have no right to look at the prostitutes and at the drugheads and at the drunks and all these other people.

We have no right to look at them like we are better than they are. Because without Jesus Christ, we are no better Satan than they are. This publican came to the temple.

He came to the temple courtyard and done one simple thing. He asked forgiveness. Why? Because he knew he was a sinner. The Pharisee, he never see him ask forgiveness.

[38 : 38] He never see him ask for mercy. He never see him seek God out for mercy. You see him with this list of things that he done. This publican, he was a tax collector and spies by everybody, but he sought one out.

Whom he had read about or whom he had heard about will be compassionate on him. Almighty God, Almighty God, this God of fury, he was seeking him out to be merciful.

And the Bible says Jesus sent him so, I tell you, this man went down to his house to justify it rather than the other. This man, the publican, the one that everybody hated, he went down to his house to justify rather than the other.

And Jesus tells why that word for substitute that with because, for everyone that exalted himself should be abased. And he, that humbled himself, shall be exalted.

We cannot go before God in pride. We cannot exalt ourselves before God. What does the Bible say? The Bible says to humble yourselves in the sight of Almighty God and he shall exalt you in due time.

[39 : 48] I'm way young God to exalt me. I don't need exaltation. That's why I've warned you all and I've warned other people at other churches, don't put your pastors up on a pedestal.

Don't exalt your pastor. I understand respect and I appreciate respect. And I respect you all just as much. If I didn't, I wouldn't preach to you about repentance and I wouldn't preach to you about the things I do but I respect you and I love you.

And God called me to preach the gospel of Christ and that's what I try and do. But don't exalt me. Don't exalt me. Don't exalt me. I've told other people at other churches, don't exalt you pastors, don't exalt you deacons.

No matter how much you think of it, no matter how much scripture they know, no matter how much they have helped you and your wall do not put them up on a pedestal because all they can do once they're up there is fall.

I don't wanna be exalted by man. God will exalt me. It says that the one who's humble, he that humbles himself shall be exalted. Folks, we got, we got a choice in this thing.

[40 : 56] We can either, as children of God, we can either humble ourselves or God can humble us. And I have 10 times rather humble myself as for God to do it.