

Luke 18 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Luke 18:1](#)

[Luke 18:2](#)

[Luke 18:3](#)

[Luke 18:4](#)

[Luke 18:5](#)

[Luke 18:6](#)

[Luke 18:7](#)

[Luke 18:8](#)

[Luke 18:9](#)

[Luke 18:10](#)

[Luke 18:11](#)

[Luke 18:12](#)

[Luke 18:13](#)

[Luke 18:14](#)

[Luke 18:15](#)

[Luke 18:16](#)

[Luke 18:17](#)

[Luke 18:18](#)

[Luke 18:19](#)

[Luke 18:20](#)

[Luke 18:21](#)

[Luke 18:22](#)

[Luke 18:23](#)

[Luke 18:24](#)

[Luke 18:25](#)

[Luke 18:26](#)

[Luke 18:27](#)

[Luke 18:28](#)

[Luke 18:28](#)

[Luke 18:30](#)

[Luke 18:31](#)

[Luke 18:32](#)

[Luke 18:33](#)

[Luke 18:34](#)

[Luke 18:35](#)

[Luke 18:36](#)

[Luke 18:37](#)

[Luke 18:38](#)

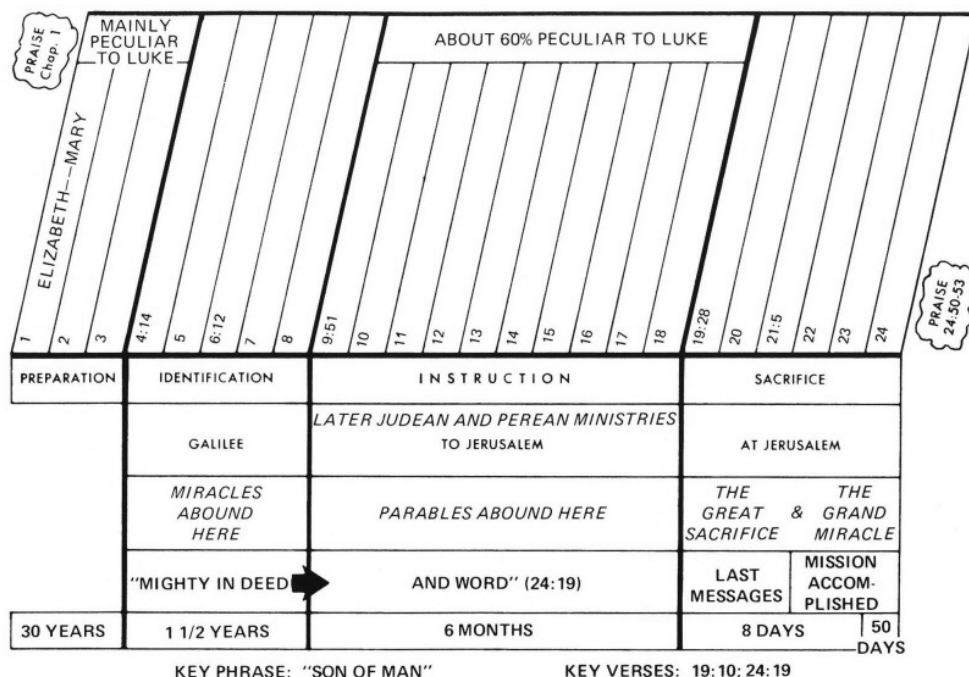
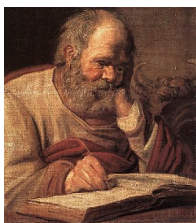
[Luke 18:39](#)

[Luke 18:40](#)

[Luke 18:41](#)

[Luke 18:42](#)

[Luke 18:43](#)



From [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) by permission
[John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke](#)
[Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke](#)
[Luke Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll

Luke 18:1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

- **that at all times they ought to pray:** Lu 11:5-8 21:36 Ge 32:9-12,24-26 Job 27:8-10 Ps 55:16,17 65:2 Ps 86:3 Ps 102:17 142:5-7 Jer 29:12 Ro 12:12 Eph 6:18 Php 4:6 Col 4:2,12 1Th 5:17
- **not to lose heart:** Ps 27:13 Jon 2:7 Ga 6:9 Heb 12:3-5
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

PARABLE OF UNJUST JUDGE AND HELPLESS WIDOW

We often read this passage and think of it as a call to persevering, persistent prayer in general (keep pestering the judge until he gives in, so to speak), and persevering prayer is surely a valid application. But we need to recall the preceding context and the opening question in Lk 17:20 about the Kingdom of God which launched Jesus into prophetic teachings related to His return and the implication that there would be a some delay, the implication being that one might lose heart because of the delay. So it seems reasonable that this parable teaching the call for the necessity of prayer and not losing heart relates to the Lord's Second Coming of Luke 17. This important aspect of this parable on prayer only found in Luke will be discussed in greater detail in [Luke 18:8+](#).

J Vernon McGee agrees writing "Now, I have heard many Bible teachers say that this parable teaches the value of [importunate](#) (troublesomely urgent, overly persistent in request or demand) prayer. Although I don't like to disagree with men who are greater than I, that isn't so. This is not a parable on the [persistency](#) or the [pertinacity](#) of prayer—as though somehow God will hear if you hold on long enough. This is a **parable by contrast**, not by **comparison**....If this unjust judge would hear a poor widow because she kept coming continually, then (BY WAY OF CONTRAST) why do you get discouraged going to God who is not an unjust judge, but Who actually wants to hear and answer prayer?"

Wiersbe - This parable is not urging us to "pester God" until He acts; it is saying that we do not need to "pester" Him because He is

ready and willing to answer our prayers. (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

R Kent Hughes in a sense responds to McGee's comments asking "Does this mean we must never engage in importunate prayer, fervently beseeching God? Not at all. The teaching of the parable is that we must continue in our prayers, even when there seems to be no answer, because God, unlike the unjust judge, is loving, good, and gracious. We persist in prayer not because we have not yet gotten God's attention, but because we know He cares and will hear us....The Christian (actually sub-Christian) version of this parable is to imagine that our fervent prayers will begin to accumulate a meritorious critical mass that God cannot ignore. Such a view is idolatrous because it imagines that God is something like the unjust judge. C Samuel Storms poses some relevant questions in his book [Reaching God's Ear](#) that we can use to evaluate our prayer lives.

- Do we repeat a request because we think that the quality of a prayer is dependent on the quantity of words?
- Do we repeat a request because we think that God is ignorant and needs to be informed, or if not ignorant at least he is unconcerned and therefore needs to be aroused?
- Do we repeat our prayers because we believe that God is unwilling to answer and we must prevail upon him, somehow transforming a hard-hearted God into a compassionate and loving one?
- Do we repeat a petition because we think that God will be swayed in his decision by our putting on a show of zeal and piety, as if God cannot see through the thin veil of hypocrisy? (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

This parable is a contrast between the **worst of man**, (THE JUDGE) and the **best of God**.

ESV Study note adds that "The parable consists of a "lesser to greater" argument—i.e., if A (the lesser) is true, then how much more B (the greater) must be true (cf. Luke 11:11-13; 12:6-7; 12:25-27; 13:15-16). The comparison (**ED**: IN A SENSE IT IS MORE OF A CONTRAST BECAUSE GOD IS NOT LIKE THE JUDGE - [SEE TABLE BELOW](#)) here is between the reluctant action of an unjust judge (the lesser) and "how much more" just will be the action of a just God (the greater). (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

So a distressed bugging of God is in fact inadequate prayer.

-- R Kent Hughes

R Kent Hughes adds "This parable's lesson has often been greatly misunderstood, because **most people think it teaches that feverish importunity (troublesome persistence) in prayer is a virtue. Untold numbers of sermons have wrongly used this text to teach that we must frantically beg God to answer our prayers. This is not the idea at all.** The parable of the unjust judge and the pestering widow is a **parable of contrast**. The clear lesson of the parable is that God is not like the judge, for God is good and gracious. And we are not like the nameless widow, for we are his chosen ones. So a distressed bugging of God is in fact inadequate prayer. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#)) (Bolding added)

J Vernon McGee - This is a **parable by contrast**, not by comparison. Parables were stories given by our Lord to illustrate truths. The word parable comes from two Greek words. Para means "beside" and ballo is the verb, meaning "to throw"—(we get our word ball from it). A parable means something that is thrown beside something else to tell you something about it. For instance, a yardstick placed beside a table is a parable to the table—it tells you how high it is. A parable is a story our Lord told to illustrate divine truth. There are two ways He did this. One is by comparison, but the other is by contrast. Our Lord is saying, "When you come to God in prayer, do you think that God is an unjust judge? When you come to Him in prayer, do you think He is a cheap politician? Do you think God is doing things just for political reasons?" My friend, if you think this, you are wrong. God is not an unjust judge. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#)) (See also [F B Meyer's analysis of the contrasts in Luke 18:1-8](#)).

LUKE 18:1-8 A PARABLE OF CONTRASTS

Lk 18:1	Praying	Losing heart
Lk 18:2-5	The Widow	God's Elect
Lk 18:6-8	Widow was a stranger	We are God's children
Lk 18:6-8	Widow did not have open access (in that culture)	God's children have open access (Ep 2:18+; Ep 3:12+; Heb 4:16+; Heb 10:19-22+)

Lk 18:6-8	Widow did not have an advocate	We have an Advocate (1 Jn 2:1), a continual Intercessor (Ro 8:34+, Heb 7:25+), a High Priest (Heb 4:14-15+)
Lk 18:6-8	Widow had no promises she could claim	We have promises of God in His Word to claim (Lk 11:9-10+)
Lk 18:6-8	Widow had no internal helper	We have the Spirit Who helps us pray (Ro 8:26-27+)
Lk 18:6-8	Widow came to a court of law	We come to a throne of grace (Heb 4:14-16+)
Lk 18:6-8	Widow pled out of her poverty	We plead from perspective of God's plenty (Php 4:19+)
Lk 18:6-8	The judge was unrighteous	God is righteous
Lk 18:6-8	The judge could be bribed (common in that time)	God cannot be bribed or argued with
Lk 18:6-8	Judge answered for fear of her forever wearying him	God answers for His glory and our good

Leon Morris introduces this parable pointing out that "Jesus is not, of course, likening God to an unrighteous judge. The parable is of the '[How much more ...](#)' variety. If a wicked man will sometimes do good, even if from bad motives, how much more will God do right!" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries –[The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

Now He was telling them a parable ([parabole](#)) (literally "and He was saying" - cf Lk 5:36, 6:39, 21:29) - As has been discussed above, the chapter break tends to obscure or "hide" the previous context from Lk 17:20-37 which gave details about the **days of the Son of Man** (the days preceding the Second Coming - Lk 17:26+) and the **day of the Son of Man** (Second Coming - Lk 17:24, 30+). Who is **them**? NIV adds "His disciples" but is this correct? We have to check the immediate context and when we do, we will find the previous passage that says "**He said to the disciples.**" (Lk 17:22). So the target audience is the disciples of Jesus. Beloved by application that includes you and me! So we need to listen up to our Master's voice. In Luke 17:22 Luke writes "And He said to the disciples, "The days shall come when you will long ([epithumeo](#)) to see one of **the days of the Son of Man**, and you will not see it." With that thought in mind one can better understand this parable "to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." I can identify with that sentiment, for in 2022 America is no longer a land "in God we trust" and I find myself crying out more and more "Maranatha Lord!" (1Cor 16:22).

Parable to show that - This is the translation of the preposition "pros" which primarily means movement toward but can speak of a goal, the idea being "for the purpose of." So here Jesus gives us the "key" to this parable before we even walk in the "door!" The purpose of the parable is that they (we) **ought to pray and not lose heart.**

Norman Crawford - There is a clear link between this parable and the teaching about **'the day of the Son of man'** that closes the previous chapter. There is to be an interval, perhaps a long one, between the promise of His coming and its fulfilment. **Those who are faithful to Him will be sorely tried, and they will be tempted to give up their faith and cease to pray with simple confidence that the day of their vindication will truly come.** The principle of the delay or the tarrying can be seen throughout the parable, and the question that closes this section adds much weight to this interpretation (Lk 17:8). The writer to the Hebrews uses this encouragement for those who had suffered the loss of all their worldly goods for the Lord's sake, urging them, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb 10:35, 36). He then assures them that the Lord will surely come (v. 37). ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

Matthew Henry - This parable **has its key hanging at the door**; the drift and design of it are prefixed. Christ spoke it with this intent, to teach us that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

At all times ([pantote](#)) **they ought** ([dei](#)) **to pray** ([proseuchomai](#)) **and not to lose heart** ([egkakeo](#)) - This answers the "when" of prayer. **At all times** which is a clear statement that we should pray whenever and wherever. On every occasion. This is re-emphasized with the phrase "day and night" in Luke 18:7+. There are no exception clauses. Prayer is to be like breathing. We are to breathe at all times or we suffocate. Similarly, we are to pray at all times lest we "suffocate spiritually," and specifically in context so that we do not lose heart. In this context it the idea is **continual prayer** (recurring frequently, especially at regular intervals), not **continuous** (continuing in time or space without interruption), nonstop prayer.

Wiersbe on at all times - It certainly doesn't mean that we should constantly be repeating prayers, because Jesus warned against that kind of praying (Matt. 6:5–15). Rather, it means to make prayer as natural to us as our regular breathing. Unless we are sick or smothering, we rarely think about our breathing; we just do it. Likewise with prayer—it should be the natural habit of our lives, the "atmosphere" in which we constantly live. Prayer is much more than the words of our lips; it is the desires of our hearts, and our hearts are constantly "desiring" before Him, even if we never speak a word. So, to "pray without ceasing" means to have such holy desires in our hearts, in the will of God, that we are constantly in loving communion with the Father, petitioning Him for His blessing. Take your choice: do you want to pray—or faint? (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

In sum one might put it this way...**PRAY OR PASS OUT!** Or as someone else has said if your knees are knocking, then kneel on them!

Robert Stein on why we need to pray **at all times** - In light of the context in Luke 17:22–37+, the content of this prayer is no doubt "**Your kingdom come**" (Lk 11:2+; cf. also Lk 21:36+). Because of the **delay** in the consummation of the kingdom (cf Lk 18:7), it is especially important for persistent prayer to characterize the Christian life. This will insure that a community of faith will exist when the Son of Man comes (Lk 18:8+). (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

Guzik on **at all times** - Jesus did not mean that we should always have our knees bent and eyes closed in prayer; but we must always be in what is sometimes called the *spirit of prayer*. Paul mentioned this idea in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 when he wrote, pray without ceasing. It's hard to measure how much good such constant prayer would do, and how much bad it would keep us from. ([Luke 18](#))

Constable on **at all times** - The reference to "all times" or "always" indicates that the interval between Jesus' present ministry and His future return is in view (Lk 17:22–37+; cf. Lk 18:8+). This was, then, instruction concerning what the disciples should do in the inter-advent period in view of Jesus' Second Coming. When He returns, Jesus will balance the scales of justice.

John Piper uses the illustration: Faith is the Furnace in your life. Fuel = Grace; Shovel = Prayer. If you set down your shovel...your burner goes out! Keep shoveling! Shovel without stopping; pray without ceasing.

Brian Bell - How can we pray always? What is prayer? Not just uttering words. It's the urge of the life towards God & spiritual things. It's the setting of the mind on the things above. It's every detail of every day being mastered by that urge.

Be careful not to confuse Jesus' call to **at all times pray** with His condemnation of the long, repetitious prayers He described in (Mt 6:7+). The difference is one of "*quality*" not "*quantity*." Stated another way God is more concerned with the *strength* of our prayers than the *length* of our prayers. We are not heard for our "many words," but for our sincere "cry."

Richards writes that "**Always**" in the Bible does not link time with eternity. It is a word that focuses attention on experience within the world of time and space. "**Always**" may direct our attention to that which is stable over a period of time or to that which is to be experienced continually. When the issue is God's relationship with us, "always" reminds us powerfully that God is present at every moment in time and thus is with us constantly. When the issue is our relationship with God, "always" calls us to continual commitment and to consistent holiness." ([Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

In Luke 21:36+ Jesus gives a similar instruction clearly in the context of the imminency of His Second Coming

"But keep on the alert (cf Lk 21:28) **at all times, praying** that you may have strength to escape (cf Jesus' words here "not to lose heart") all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

MacArthur comments - You need to pray that Christ will come. You need to pray that you'll have the strength to endure to the end; the end of your life and the end until the Lord Himself comes, should you live until we are gathered to Him.

Leon Morris on **at all times they ought to pray** - Jesus' teaching goes beyond that of the Jews, who tended to limit the times of prayer lest they weary God. Three times a day (on the model of Dan. 6:10) was accepted as the maximum. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

Henry Morris on pray at all times - The context makes it clear that such commands refer, not to interminable prayer, but to persistent prayer (Luke 18:7). (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

Kistemaker - Jesus tells them that during the lengthy and increasingly difficult period of time before the Son of man returns (see Lk 17:22, 23+), His followers down through the ages, instead of losing heart, should persevere in prayer. (Ibid)

They ought (dei) to pray (proseuchomai) - The verb "ought" is in the present tense calling for prayer to be a lifestyle (cf "lifeline!"). Prayer is not "Plan B" but is God's "Plan A!" This means we give prayer priority, which one dictionary defines as "something important that must be done first." What's the first thing you do in the morning? Brush your teeth? Do a mental checklist of your daytimer and your appointments, etc? If so you've already [deprioritized](#) prayer.

Steven Cole on ought - The word ought has the idea of necessity. Prayer is not an optional activity for the more committed. It is a necessity for every believer because it acknowledges our total dependence on God. Not to pray is arrogance, because I am really saying, "Thanks, God, but I can handle this by myself." But the truth is, I can't handle anything by myself apart from God's grace and power! ([Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#))

Warren Wiersbe on praying and losing heart (fainting) - If we don't pray, we will faint; it's as simple as that! The word faint describes a believer who loses heart and gets so discouraged that he or she wants to quit. I can recall two occasions when I have fainted physically, and it is the most helpless feeling I have ever experienced. I felt myself "going," but I couldn't seem to do a thing about it! There is a connection between what our Lord said in Luke 18:1 and His statement in Luke 17:37. If society is like a rotting corpse, then the "atmosphere" in which we live is being slowly polluted, and this is bound to affect our spiritual lives. But when we pray, we draw on the "pure air" of heaven, and this keeps us from fainting. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Not to lose heart (egkakeo) - Literally means "not to give in to the bad" which is very apropos for as Paul writes "the days are evil" (Eph 5:16b+, cf 2Ti 3:1-4+). To not lose heart is a repeated refrain in the NT. All believers are prone to lose heart! The [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) wear away at us seeking to curb our resolve to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus (Php 3:14). This admonition is especially relevant to losing heart in praying (I speak from personal experience). Here Jesus turns it around so that praying precedes not losing heart. The practical application is to pray **at all times**, because the tendency of our fallen flesh is to cause us to **lose heart** in the promises of God. We see ourselves in the "here and now" and His promises many times in the "then and there" of the future kingdom. We forget that faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen, such as Messiah's glorious future earthly kingdom in the present context. In short, persistent prayer is one of God's great preventatives and antidotes for flagging faith and weakening of our heart in this present evil age (Gal 1:4+, Eph 5:16+).

Why would a disciple lose heart? Keeping the context in mind (the immediately preceding section Lk 17:20-37+), they might lose heart because of the delay in the Lord's Second Coming. In the parable the widow is praying for justice and we as Jesus' disciples are to pray persistently for justice for God's people, which will ultimately be meted out on this godless, Christ hating world when Christ returns. One thinks immediately of all the Christians who are martyred each year by godless Christ haters (see [Voice of the Martyrs](#)). We are also tempted to **lose heart** because of the afflictions and hardships of life. In Acts we read Paul and Barnabas were "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, **"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."** (Acts 14:22+) The King of that Kingdom is returning to bring in the visible aspect of the Kingdom for 1000 years on earth. In the meantime many tribulations are our lot. Recall Jesus' last words summarizing the "Upper Room Discourse" when He declared "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you have tribulation**, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (Jn 16:33)

So let us not lose heart (egkakeo) or hope that Jesus is returning, even though many mockingly ask (I've actually even heard *believers* asking "What's the big deal about His return?") **"Where is the promise of His coming?"** (2 Peter 3:4+). Peter warned the first century saints **"Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts."** (2 Peter 3:3+). They will live lives of lust, lifestyles that in effect deny the Second Coming of Christ, the One "Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom." (2 Ti 4:1+). As followers of Jesus, we can rest assured that we will be ridiculed for saying that Jesus is coming again (cf 2 Ti 3:12+, Php 1:29+), but we are not to lose heart or become cowardly. Instead, we are to **pray** for His return **at all times!**

Guzik on not lose heart (egkakeo) - Often we fail in praying because we lose heart. We become discouraged, and then no longer pray as we should. It is easy to **lose heart** in prayer because prayer is hard work that we too often approach lightly. In Colossians 4:12+, Paul praised a man named Epaphras because he was always laboring fervently...in prayers. Paul knew that prayer was hard work that required fervent labor (ED: NOTE ALSO THAT EPAPHRAS WAS A BONDSERVANT OR SLAVE OF JESUS. A SLAVE BELONGS TO AND OBEYS HIS MASTER'S VOICE. JESUS TELLS US TO PRAY AT ALL TIMES. WE ARE MOST LIKE HIS SLAVE WHEN WE OBEY HIM. DO YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS DEMONSTRATE YOU ARE A SLAVE OF JESUS?).. Morrison tried to

explain why prayer was difficult, because three parts of the human being are engaged in prayer: "There is the understanding, by which we work intelligently; there is the heart, but which we labour willingly, there is the will by which we labour doggedly." (Morrison) It is easy to lose heart in prayer because the Devil hates prayer. If prayer were powerless, it would be easy.. It is easy to lose heart in prayer because we are not always convinced of the reality of the power of prayer. Too often, prayer becomes a **last resort** instead of a **first resource**. Remember that Jesus lived a prayerful life, and He lives on the pray for His people (Hebrews 7:25). We must therefore not lose heart in prayer. The woman of Canaan kept praying though she was first denied. Jacob refused to let go even when his leg was crippled. Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Stein on not lose heart ([egkakeo](#)) ("and not give up" = NIV) - The thought is not to give up in light of the delay of the [consummation](#) (ED: of the Kingdom of God on earth).

Matthew Henry's comments deal more with prayer in general - It supposes that all God's people are praying people; all God's children keep up both a constant and an occasional correspondence with him, send to him statedly (in a regular or fixed manner. in a stated or alleged manner), and upon every emergency. It is our privilege and honor that we may pray. It is our duty; we **ought** to pray, we sin if we neglect it. It is to be our constant work; we **ought** always to pray, it is that which the duty of every day requires. We **must** pray, and never grow weary of praying, nor think of leaving it off till it comes to be swallowed up in everlasting praise. But that which seems particularly designed here is to teach us constancy and perseverance in our requests for some spiritual mercies that we are in pursuit of, relating either to ourselves or to the church of God. When we are praying for strength against our spiritual enemies, our lusts and corruptions (Mt 6:13+), which are our worst enemies, we must continue instant in prayer (Col 4:2KJV+), must pray and not faint, for we shall not seek God's face in vain. So we must likewise in our prayers for the deliverance of the people of God out of the hands of their persecutors and oppressors.

Parable (3850) ([parabole](#) from **para** = beside, near + **ballo** = throw, cast; English "parable") is literally a throwing beside or placing of one thing by the side of another (juxtaposition as of ships in battle in classic Greek). The metaphorical meaning is to place or lay something besides something else for the purpose of comparison. (Mt 24:32, Mk 13:28, Mk 3:23, Lk 14:7). An illustration (Mt 13:3). In Hebrews 9:9 the idea is of something (OT Tabernacle) that serves as a model or example pointing beyond itself for later realization and thus a type or a figure.

Luke's uses of parabole - Lk. 4:23 = "proverb"; Lk. 5:36; Lk. 6:39; Lk. 8:4; Lk. 8:9; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 8:11; Lk. 12:16; Lk. 12:41; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 14:7; Lk. 15:3; Lk. 18:1; Lk. 18:9; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 20:9; Lk. 20:19; Lk. 21:29

All times (always) (3842) ([pantote](#) from **pás** = all, every + **tóte** = when, then) an adverb which literally is "every when" means always, at all times, ever (more), on all occasions. In **English always** is defined - invariably, forever, perpetually, on every occasion, throughout all time, without variation. Continually, regularly, repeatedly or constantly during a certain period, or regularly at stated intervals (eg Mephibosheth - 2Sa 9:10KJV = "always"); At all convenient times. Without exception. Every time.

Pantote - all times(1), always(40). Matt. 26:11; Mk. 14:7; Lk. 15:31; Lk. 18:1; Jn. 6:34; Jn. 7:6; Jn. 8:29; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 12:8; Jn. 18:20; Rom. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 15:58; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 4:10; 2 Co. 5:6; 2 Co. 9:8; Gal. 4:18; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 1:4; Phil. 1:20; Phil. 2:12; Phil. 4:4; Col. 1:3; Col. 4:6; Col. 4:12; 1 Thess. 1:2; 1 Thess. 2:16; 1 Thess. 3:6; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Thess. 5:16; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:7; Phlm. 1:4; Heb. 7:25

Pray at all times - This is a frequent Pauline exhortation...

Romans 12:12+ rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

Ephesians 6:18+ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

Philippians 4:6+ **Be anxious** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Colossians 4:2+ **Devote** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

Colossians 4:12+ (A GODLY EXAMPLE) Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17+ **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) without ceasing

Ought (1163) (**dei** from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. **Dei** refers to inward constraint which is why it is often translated "**must**". **Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place, and as stated above, conveys a sense of inevitability. To express the sense of necessity **dei** is translated "one ought", "one should", "one has to" or "one must".

Dei in Luke in Acts - Lk. 2:49; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 11:42; Lk. 12:12; Lk. 13:14; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 13:33; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 18:1; Lk. 19:5; Lk. 21:9; Lk. 22:7; Lk. 22:37; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:26; Lk. 24:44; Acts 1:16; Acts 1:21; Acts 3:21; Acts 4:12; Acts 5:29; Acts 9:6; Acts 9:16; Acts 14:22; Acts 15:5; Acts 16:30; Acts 17:3; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:35; Acts 23:11; Acts 24:19; Acts 25:10; Acts 25:24; Acts 26:9; Acts 27:21; Acts 27:24; Acts 27:26

To pray (4336) (**proseuchomai** from **pros** = toward, facing, before [emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays in seeking God's face] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, utter aloud, express a wish, then to pray or to vow. Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun **proseuche**). **Proseuchomai** encompasses all the aspects of prayer -- submission, confession, petition, supplication (may concern one's own need), intercession (concerned with the needs of others), praise, and thanksgiving. Vine says that **proseuchomai** carries with it a notion of **worship** (but see the Greek word for worship = **proskuneo**) which is not present in the other words for prayer (eg, **aiteo**, **deomai**, both of which involve spoken supplication)

Wuest adds that the prefixed preposition **pros** "gives it the idea of definiteness and directness in prayer, with the consciousness on the part of the one praying that he is talking face to face with God...(thus **proseuchomai**) speaks also of the consciousness on the part of the one who prays, of the fact of God's presence and His listening ear."

Proseuchomai - make...prayers(1), offer...prayers(2), pray(44), prayed(14), prayer(1), praying(24), prays(1). Lk. 1:10; Lk. 3:21; Lk. 5:16; Lk. 6:12; Lk. 6:28; Lk. 9:18; Lk. 9:28; Lk. 9:29; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 11:2; Lk. 18:1; Lk. 18:10; Lk. 18:11; Lk. 20:47; Lk. 22:40; Lk. 22:41; Lk. 22:44; Lk. 22:46; Acts 1:24; Acts 6:6; Acts 8:15; Acts 9:11; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:9; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:5; Acts 12:12; Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23; Acts 16:25; Acts 20:36; Acts 21:5; Acts 22:17; Acts 28:8

Related Resources on Prayer

- [Prayer Quotes, Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
- [Praying His Word](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [Colossians 1:9 Commentary](#)
- [Colossians 4:12 Commentary](#)
- [Devotional on Prayer](#)
- [Guide to Praying for Missionaries](#)
- [Pithy Prayer Phrases](#)
- [Prayer - Greek Words for Prayer](#)
- [Prayer Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
- [Prayer Hymns and Poems](#)
- [Prayer Quotes](#)
- [Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer](#)

Lose heart ("not to faint" = KJV) (1457) (**egkakeo/enkakeo** from **ek** = out of or an intensifier + **kakos** = bad, evil) means to grow weary (especially in the spiritual sense), to become tired and it is interesting that it always is used in the NT in a negative construction, to not grow weary or lose heart, which in essence is really a "positive" admonition to keep on keeping on, to endure, to persevere despite obstacles, setbacks and adversaries. Some lexicons add it means to become a coward, to lose courage or to lose the motivation to accomplish a valid goal or to continue in a desirable pattern of conduct. To become discouraged and give up. To give in to evil. Real courage requires that we leave the problem with God (J. M. Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Unjust Judge," NTS 18 [1972]: 191). In the most desperate circumstances they must continue to ask doggedly and intensely and never desist. It is not so much a matter of omission as of relaxing one's efforts, giving up rather than continuing the fight (TLNT, 1:398-99).

Cleon Rogers writes that this word "is also used in the papyri in the sense of treating someone badly. It became a Christian technical term expressing the unflagging pursuit of the goal of service to neighbor, or of

apostolic ministry, as well as the tautness (having no give or slack -- tightly drawn, chiefly a nautical term signifying in proper order or condition) of the determined heart that does not let up or lose courage. (Borrow this interesting resource - [Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament](#))

Spicq on **egkakeo** - It is not so much a matter of omission as of relaxing one's efforts, losing heart in the midst of difficulties, letting go, interrupting one's perseverance before attaining one's goal; giving up rather than continuing the fight. Hence, on the moral level, the exhortation is to overcome lethargy, boredom, duration, even distress in tribulation; one must not give in to the apparent uselessness of appeals to God and succumb to exhaustion, but on the contrary overcome fatigue and continue without yielding or softening." (TNLT)

Egkakeo conveys the idea of becoming exhausted or fainthearted in view of a trial or difficulty and therefore giving up ("throwing in the towel" to use a modern expression). This attitude is the opposite of Paul's charge that we be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing** (let this truth motivate you to keep on keeping on!) that your toil is **not** (*absolutely* is not) in vain in the Lord" (1Co 15:58+).

Friberg says **egkakeo** means (1) strictly to act badly in some circumstance; with a participle following become weary or tired of doing something (2 Th 3:13); (2) as failing to hold out successfully give up, become discouraged, lose heart (2Co 4:1) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Thayer says "to be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted."

TDNT - This word has two senses, "to act of treat badly" and "(wrongly) to cease." In Luke 18:1, just after the apocalyptic discourse in Luke 17, the point is obviously that, with a view to the end, the disciples should not grow slack in prayer. The meaning is the same in 2 Cor. 4:1: Paul will not let any difficulties cause him to fail or grow weary. In virtue of the eternal purpose of God, Paul in Eph. 3:13 asks his readers not to be discouraged by the pressures of his present situation, which are in fact their glory. Similarly, there is an exhortation not to grow weary in well-doing in 2 Th. 3:13; Gal. 6:9, with the promise of an ultimate reaping of eternal life (Gal. 6:8). (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume)

TLNT - The first usage is in Polybius in the sense of doing ill, being at fault, committing culpable negligence: "The Macedonians neglected to send the prescribed help" (to pempein tas boētheias ... enekakēsēn). In the second century AD, Didymarion writes to Paniskos that his brother was not the object of any reproach, and he draws the conclusion that he did not conduct himself amiss (legō mē enkakēsē, P.Petaus 29, 12). But with respect to Gen 27:46, where Rebekah declares, "I am tired of living (prosochthizō) because of these Hittite women," Symmachus uses the verb enkakeō to mean "lose heart." The first NT attestation is in St. Luke's introduction of the parable of the Widow and the Judge, which says that the lesson is "that they should always pray kai mē enkakein" (present infinitive); that is, that in the most desperate circumstances, they must continue to ask doggedly and intensely and never desist. But how should the verb be translated? The best equivalent is "non segnescere" (Bengel), and better yet "**not to slacken**."

In conclusion, the verb enkakeō in the NT is

- (a) found exclusively in the writings of Luke and Paul;
- (b) both made it a Christian technical term to express the unflagging pursuit of the goal of service to neighbor or of apostolic ministry as well as the "tautness" of the determined heart that does not let up, does not lose courage;
- (c) this absence of letting up is a precept of the new morality, a catechetical rule that each Christian must apply in his or her personal life;
- (d) in almost all of these contexts, notably Luke 18:1; Gal 6:9, this moral obligation is expressed as a function of eschatological [peirasmos](#) (trial, proving) and of the Parousia (coming, usually referring to Second Coming). During the wait for deliverance, judgment, and glory, letting up and weakening are not permitted. (Theological Lexicon of the New Testament)

Egkakeo - 6x in 6v - grow weary(2), lose heart(4).

Luke 18:1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not **lose heart**,

2 Corinthians 4:1+ Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not **lose heart**,

2 Corinthians 4:16+ Therefore we do not **lose heart**, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Galatians 6:9+ Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not **grow weary**.

Ephesians 3:13+ Therefore I ask you not to **lose heart** at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

2 Thessalonians 3:13+ But as for you, brethren, do not **grow weary** of doing good.

Steven Cole - One of the most difficult aspects of prayer is persevering when it seems that God is not answering. Jesus instructed us to pray that the Father's kingdom would come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And yet here we are, almost 2,000 years later, and that prayer, prayed millions of times by millions of Christians down through the centuries, is still not answered.

In spite of years of prayer and missionary efforts, some of the Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu sections of the world seem as resistant to the gospel as ever and so it is easy to become discouraged about praying for world missions. On a personal level, all of us have requests that we have brought before God for years—requests that would be to His glory to answer—and yet it seems like God isn't answering His phone and He doesn't even have an answer machine! In light of these problems, it is easy to lose hope and even to give up praying.

The Lord Jesus knew the weakness of our flesh and that we all are prone to lose heart. In light of that, He graciously gave His disciples and us this parable "to show that at all times they [and we] ought to pray and not lose heart." This instruction fits in with the preceding context where the Lord told the disciples that the days would come when they would long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but they would not see it (Luke 17:22). **During the time between His ascension and His Second Coming, the world would go on in its disregard of God, much as it had in the days of Noah and of Lot. The church would be much like this widow, left without her heavenly Bridegroom, much maligned and persecuted by the ungodly. During this time of waiting and struggle, how can the saints persevere? Jesus shows that we will persevere as we continue in believing prayer.** ([Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#))

In the following passages related to praying without ceasing, notice the repetitive use of the present imperative and the present tense.

Seek (Qal imperative) the LORD and His strength; **Seek** (Qal imperative) His face continually. (1 Chronicles 16:11)

Ask (present imperative = commands continual asking), and it shall be given to you; **seek** (present imperative = commands continual seeking), and you shall find; **knock** (present imperative = commands continual knocking), and it shall be opened to you. (Mt 7:7+)

Keep watching (present imperative = commands continual attention to) and **praying** (present imperative = command to continue in an attitude of prayer), that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41+)

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to **pray** (present tense = continually, as the habit of their life) and not to lose heart (Luke 18:1+)

But **keep on the alert** (present imperative = commands continual attention) at all times, **praying** (present tense = continually, as the habit of their life) in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:36+)

rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, **devoted to** (imperative sense, present tense - always be prayerful) prayer (Ro 12:12+)

With all prayer and petition **pray** (present tense = continually, as the habit of their life) at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints (Eph 6:18+)

Devote (present imperative = commands continual attention to) yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving (Col 4:2+)

Pray without ceasing. (1Th 5:17+)

Comment: **Adialeiptos** is used to describe that which is continuously done - uninterrupted necessary payment of hard taxes, continual uninterrupted cough, repeated military attacks, continual failing of a military effort, regular and consistent production of fruit. We've all had an unceasing, hacking cough. What happens? When you get a tickle in your throat, you cough. Applying this thought to unceasing prayer, when opportunity knocks or the Spirit gives you a "tickle" (a "burden" ~ [Praying in the Spirit](#)), then your

reflex reaction should be to pray. Keep the telephone receiver off the hook so that you are ready to speak to Heaven at moment's notice!

Therefore I want the men in every place to **pray** (present tense = continually, as the habit of their life), lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. (1Ti 2:8)

The end of all things is at hand; therefore, **be of sound judgment** and **sober spirit** (both verbs aorist imperative = do this now! don't delay!) for the purpose of prayer. (1Pe 4:7+)

Pray without ceasing - Out of approximately **667** recorded prayers in the Bible, there are about **454** recorded answers. This should encourage and motivate us to **pray without ceasing**!

Daniel "prayed without ceasing", in fact making it a practice to pray three times each day, even when he knew it might well cost him his life in a lion's den

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. (Daniel 6:10+)

David "prayed without ceasing"...

Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice. (Ps 55:17).

Spurgeon comments "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray. Often but none too often. Seasons of great need call for frequent seasons of devotion. The three periods chosen are most fitting; to begin, continue, and end the day with God is supreme wisdom. Where time has naturally set up a boundary, there let us set up an altar stone. The psalmist means that he will always pray; he will run a line of prayer right along the day, and track the sun with his petitions. Day and night he saw his enemies busy ([Psalms 55:10](#)), and therefore he would meet their activity by continuous prayer.

And cry aloud. He would give a tongue to his complaint; he would be very earnest in his pleas with heaven. Some cry aloud who never say a word. It is the bell of the heart that rings loudest in heaven. Some read it, "I will nurse and murmur;" deep heart thoughts should be attended with inarticulate but vehement utterances of grief. Blessed be God, moaning is translatable in heaven. A father's heart reads a child's heart.

And he shall hear my voice. He is confident that he will prevail; he makes no question that he would be heard, he speaks as if already he were answered. When our window is opened towards heaven, the windows of heaven are open to us. Have but a pleading heart and God will have a plenteous hand.

W A Criswell quoted the following prayer from a source unknown...

When you are weary in body and soul
Cumbered with many a care
When work is claiming its strength-taking toll
Make it a matter of prayer.

And when you're discouraged, distraught or dismayed
Sinking almost in despair
Remember there's One who will come to your aid,
If you'll make it a matter of prayer.

And when you are lost in this world's tangled maze
When life seems a hopeless affair
Direction will come for all of your ways
If you'll make it a matter of prayer.

Regular, daily prayer takes discipline and concerted effort. It is sadly possible for a believer to go through the whole day and not speak to God even once. This should not be. Prayer is a vital aspect of man's role as one who is beloved of God the Father.

How many times have you told someone you would pray for them and then you did not? We've all done that haven't we? But here's a little exercise that dovetails nicely with Paul's command to pray without ceasing...

Stop saying you will pray about a thing.

Instead stop right there and pray about it.

The greatly used preacher **Charles Spurgeon** (1834-1892) put great emphasis on prayer in preparation for preaching. He felt that ministers ought to pray without ceasing and in fact once wrote that...

All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets (**Ed note:** our "prayer closets" - Mt 6:6+). We grow, we wax mighty, we prevail in private prayer

When Spurgeon prepared to preach, he would pray at all times -- before choosing his topic, as he was getting into the spirit of the text, as he sought God's help for deep truths and the lifting out of those truths, as he sought to receive fresh streams of thought regarding the application of the text, and of course for his delivery of the message thus prepared. **Spurgeon** declared that...

nothing can so gloriously fit you to preach as descending fresh from the mount of communion with God to speak with men. None are so able to plead with men as those who have been wrestling with God on their behalf.

Tony Evans speaking of abiding in the Vine, Christ Jesus, asks...

How do you stay connected to Jesus every moment? One way is through prayer. Remember the command, "Pray without ceasing" (1Th 5:17)? You don't have to be on your knees moving your lips to pray. Prayer can be the atmosphere in which you exist. You can bring the Lord to bear on every aspect of your day by staying in touch with Him, communing with Him in your spirit. Prayer is an expression of your dependence on Christ. And because He is also your Great High Priest as well as the vine, He can do something about your situation. The Lord who is sitting at the right hand of God in the place of authority wants to work in your life to bear spiritual fruit. The key to fruit bearing is abiding in Him, and the key to abiding is obedience. (See [Who Is This King of Glory?](#))

Jesus told His disciples to...

keep on the alert (present imperative) **at all times**, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36+)

Comment: This passage is an especially good parallel with the present parable on prayer for both imply there will be delay in the Lord's return and the times on earth will involve tribulation. Praying brings spiritual strength to maintain alertness. It enables disciples to withstand their temptations to depart from God's will. Disciples are to watch and pray at all times, thus separating themselves from the ungodly world which is doomed to experience the wrath of God.

(He also said) **"Ask** (present imperative = command to keep on asking), and it shall be given to you;**seek** (present imperative = command to keep on seeking), and you shall find;**knock** (present imperative = command to keep on knocking), and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who **asks** (present tense = as their habitual practice) receives, and he who **seeks** (present tense = as their habitual practice) finds, and to him who **knocks** (present tense = as their habitual practice) it shall be opened. (Mt 7:7-8+)

Spurgeon's Morning and Evening -

"Men ought always to pray." —Luke 18:1

If men ought always to pray and not to faint, much more Christian men. Jesus has sent his church into the world on the same errand upon which he himself came, and this mission includes intercession. What if I say that the church is the world's priest? Creation is dumb, but the church is to find a mouth for it. It is the church's high privilege to pray with acceptance. The door of grace is always open for her petitions, and they never return empty-handed. The veil was rent for her, the blood was sprinkled upon the altar for her, God constantly invites her to ask what she wills. Will she refuse the privilege which angels might envy her? Is she not the bride of Christ? May she not go in unto her King at every hour? Shall she allow the precious privilege to be unused? The church always has need for prayer. There are always some in her midst who are declining, or falling into open sin. There are lambs to be prayed for, that they may be carried in Christ's bosom? the strong, lest they grow presumptuous; and the weak, lest they become despairing. If we kept up prayer-meetings four-and-twenty hours in the day, all the days in the year, we might never be without a special subject for supplication. Are we ever without the sick and the poor, the afflicted and the wavering? Are we ever without those who seek the conversion of relatives, the reclaiming of back-sliders, or the salvation of the depraved? Nay, with congregations constantly gathering, with ministers always preaching, with millions of sinners lying dead in trespasses and sins; in a country over which the darkness of Romanism is certainly descending; in a world full of idols, cruelties, devilries, if the church doth not pray, how shall she excuse her base neglect of the commission of her loving Lord? Let the church be constant in supplication, let every private believer

cast his mite of prayer into the treasury.

Oswald Chambers - What to pray for

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Luke 18:1.

You cannot intercede if you do not believe in the reality of the Redemption; you will turn intercession into futile sympathy with human beings which will only increase their submissive content to being out of touch with God. In intercession you bring the person, or the circumstance that impinges on you, before God until you are moved by His attitude towards that person or circumstance. Intercession means filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," and that is why there are so few intercessors. Intercession is put on the line of—"Put yourself in his place." Never! Try to put yourself in God's place.

As a worker, be careful to keep pace with the communications of reality from God or you will be crushed. If you know too much, more than God has engineered for you to know, you cannot pray, the condition of the people is so crushing that you cannot get through to reality.

Our work lies in coming into definite contact with God about everything, and we shirk it by becoming active workers. We do the things that can be tabulated, but we will not intercede. Intercession is the one thing that has no snares, because it keeps our relationship with God completely open.

The thing to watch in intercession is that no soul is patched up, a soul must get through into contact with the life of God. Think of the number of souls God has brought about our path and we have dropped them! When we pray on the ground of Redemption, God creates something He can create in no other way than through intercessory prayer.

David Jeremiah - PRAY AT ALL TIMES

LUKE 18:1 He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

Here is something I have learned about prayer that I have not seen mentioned in books on prayer I have read: Prayer is meant to be preventative more than remedial. We usually treat prayer as remedial, meaning we pray when we have a need or are in trouble. But in Luke 18:1 Jesus says that at all times we "ought to pray ... and not lose heart." In other words, prayer isn't the last thought; it's the first thought. It is preventative, not remedial. Also instead of praying when we are tempted, Jesus says we should pray that we "may not enter into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). When we are not under pressure and stress, we should be praying so that we might be shored up and defended against the pressures that will come.

Until we come to the place of prayer, we will never find release from stress. If we treat prayer as just a religious ritual or option, then we are not truly living in dependence upon God. Prayer is the soul of man crying out in inadequacy to a God who is adequate, a God who is able to do what man cannot.

John MacArthur (Drawing Near) - UNLIMITED PRAYER

"Men ought always to pray" (Luke 18:1, KJV).

Prayer should never be limited to certain times, places, or circumstances.

As a child I was taught to pray with my head bowed, eyes closed, and hands folded. Even as a young man I thought that was the only acceptable mode of prayer.

In my seminary days I sang in a quartet that traveled to various churches throughout the United States. The first time I traveled with them we had a prayer meeting in the car, and the driver prayed with his eyes open. All of us were glad he did, but I wondered if God really heard his prayer.

I have since learned that praying with my eyes closed is a helpful way to avoid distractions, but it isn't mandated in Scripture—nor are most of the other limitations people often place on prayer. For example, some people want to limit prayer to a certain posture, but Scripture tells of people praying while standing, sitting, kneeling, looking upward, bowing down, and lifting up their hands.

Some try to limit prayer to certain times of the day, such as morning or evening. But in the Bible people prayed at all times: morning, evening, three times a day, before meals, after meals, at bedtime, at midnight, day and night, in their youth, in their old age, when troubled, and when joyful.

Similarly, Scripture places no limits on the place or circumstances of prayer. It tells of people praying in a cave, in a closet, in a garden, on a mountainside, by a river, by the sea, in the street, in the Temple, in bed, at home, in the stomach of a fish, in battle, on

a housetop, in a prison, in the wilderness, and on a cross.

The point is clear: there is no specific correct mode or kind of prayer, and prayer isn't limited by your location or circumstances. You are to pray always. That includes any kind of prayer, on any subject, at any time of the day or night.

Kenneth Osbeck - Amazing Grace - PRAYER IS THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE

James Montgomery, 1771–1854

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (Luke 18:1 KJV)

Living a life without prayer is like building a house without nails.—Unknown

Prayer is releasing the energies of God. For prayer is asking God to do what we cannot do ourselves.—Selected

Except for Charles Wesley or Isaac Watts, no writer has made a greater contribution to English hymnody than the author of this text, James Montgomery. He wrote more than 400 hymns, many of which are still in popular use: "Stand Up and Bless the Lord," "Angel From the Realms of Glory," "In the Hour of Trial," and "According to Thy Gracious Word." Though trained for the ministry, Montgomery spent his lifetime as a journalist and newspaper editor. He became widely known for his writings and poetry, yet when once asked, "Which of your poems will live?" he replied, "None, sir, except a few of my hymns." His words were prophetic. It is by his hymns that Montgomery is remembered, rather than by his more classic poetry.

Many have acclaimed this hymn as one of the finest definitions and descriptions of prayer to be found in short form. Such colorful metaphors as "hidden fire," "a sign," "a falling tear," "an upward glance," "vital breath," and "native air" describe in poetic language the mystic meaning of prayer—understood by experience, yet often difficult to express in words. Perhaps those terms will lead you to a new appreciation for the "soul's sincere desire." ([Listen to hymn](#)).

[Prayer is the soul's sincere desire](#), uttered or unexpressed, the motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh, the falling of a tear, the upward glancing of an eye when none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try; prayer, the sublimest strains that reach the Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air; his watchword at the gates of death: He enters heav'n with prayer.

O Thou by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way! The path of prayer Thyself hast trod: Lord, teach us how to pray!

We Don't Have Time Not To

Read: Luke 18:1-8

Men always ought to pray and not lose heart. —Luke 18:1

Things we ought to do, but we don't take the time to do:

- Balance our checkbook.
- Change our car's oil and filter.
- Get a physical examination.
- Pray.

That's right, pray!

Jesus said that we "always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Lk. 18:1). And the apostle Paul exhorted believers to "pray without ceasing" (1 Th. 5:17).

We know that our lives would be deeper and fuller, and that we would be better prepared to face life's challenges if we would talk to God. But so often we do not take the time, and as a result we feel spiritually dry and weak.

In his book *Prayer: A Holy Occupation*, Oswald Chambers wrote, "We can hinder the time that should be spent with God by remembering we have other things to do. 'I haven't time.' Of course you have not time! Take time, strangle some other interests and make time to realize that the center of power in your life is the Lord Jesus Christ and His atonement."

If we fail to balance our checkbook, service our car, or get a physical exam, we can run into serious problems. But if we neglect prayer, we will lose our spiritual power.

We don't have time not to pray.

I must tell Jesus all of my trials;

I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.
—Hoffman

If we are too busy to pray, we are too busy.

By David C. Egnor [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Fight Or Pray?

Read: Luke 18:1-8

He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. —Luke 18:1

When my son Ben was 6 years old, he had a playground adversary. According to Ben, this fellow had gone too far, and he thought the only solution was to fight it out. So I talked to him about the Christlike way to handle the situation.

I asked him, “Did you pray to the Lord for understanding and help to avoid a fight?” He didn’t answer, so I asked him again. This time with childish candor he blurted out, “No, I don’t want to pray. I’d rather beat him up.”

How revealing! The problem was that he didn’t feel weak enough to seek God’s help.

We often hesitate to pray for the Lord’s guidance in a tough situation because we think we can work it out ourselves. But if that’s our attitude, we are not yet in the place where God will come to our assistance. He wants us to sense that we really are helpless.

Jesus told the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to encourage us to continue bringing our concerns to the Father. If we are not persistent in seeking His help, we may “lose heart” (Lk. 18:1) because our own efforts are inadequate. And God, unlike an unjust judge, longs to come to our aid.

What problems are facing you? Are you going to fight or pray?

Pray, always pray, the Holy Spirit pleads,
Bring to thy God thy daily, hourly needs;
All earthly things with earth shall pass away;
Prayer grasps eternity; pray—always pray!
—Bickersteth

The best way to stay on your feet is to get down on your knees.

By Mart DeHaan [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Always Pray and Don’t Give Up

Read: Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1

Are you going through one of those times when it seems every attempt to resolve a problem is met with a new difficulty? You thank the Lord at night that it’s taken care of but awake to find that something else has gone wrong and the problem remains.

During an experience like that, I was reading the gospel of Luke and was astounded by the opening words of chapter 18: “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up” (v. 1). I had read the story of the persistent widow many times but never grasped why Jesus told it (vv. 2-8). Now I connected those opening words with the story. The lesson to His followers was very clear: “Always pray and never give up.”

Prayer is a process of recognizing God’s power and plan for our lives.

Prayer is not a means of coercing God to do what we want. It is a process of recognizing His power and plan for our lives. In prayer we yield our lives and circumstances to the Lord and trust Him to act in His time and in His way.

As we rely on God’s grace not only for the outcome of our requests but for the process as well, we can keep coming to the Lord in prayer, trusting His wisdom and care for us.

Our Lord's encouragement to us is clear: Always pray and don't give up!

Lord, in the difficulty I face today, guard my heart, guide my words, and show Your grace. May I always turn to You in prayer.

Prayer changes everything.

By David C. McCasland | [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Luke 18:2 saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man."

- **a judge who did not fear God:** Lu 18:4 Ex 18:21,22 2Ch 19:3-9 Job 29:7-17 Ps 8:1-4 Jer 22:16,17 Eze 22:6-8 Mic 3:1-3 Ro 3:14-18
- **did not respect man:** Pr 29:7 Isa 33:8
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

NEITHER A GOD FEARER NOR A MAN LOVER

In a certain city there was a judge ([krites](#)) who did not fear ([phobeo](#)) God and did not respect ([entrepo](#)) man - Recall that this is a parable so the Lord illustrates by giving us the "Where?" It is a certain city, which could be any city, but it is a city as that is where one would have need of a judge. Jesus paints a clear picture of the "blackness" of this judge's heart, for here we see he lacked the most fundamental requirement in life, the fear of God (see Pr 1:7, 9:10 below)! As Luke continues his description we see that this judge was not only anti-God but was also anti-people! This has to be the basic definition of a completely wicked, despicable heart! And so first Jesus says this judge lacks a basic attribute which is one of the keys to life, for if one has no fear of God, He will have no desire to walk in His ways, no desire to serve Him and no desire to keep His commandments (and in context clearly no desire to dispense justice).

THOUGHT- This begs the basic question "Do you have have a healthy fear of God?"

Solomon writes "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Pr 1:7+) **Comment:** As an aside, according to Solomon, how would we characterize this judge in Lk 18:1? How sad when a man who needs to make wise decisions that can so radically impact people's lives lacks a **fear of the LORD**! Does this sound like anything we are seeing take place in so many of the courts in America? Clearly many of the judges in our nation today would sadly fit the characterization of this judge in Lk 18:1! Believers need to pray at all times for their leaders, including their judges. Have you (I) ever prayed for the Supreme Court justices (cf 1 Ti 2:1,2)?

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Pr 9:10)

As **Jon Courson** says "Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon says the fear of the Lord is the foundation. The fear of the Lord is the single most important essential. The fear of the Lord is where it all begins."

Moses gives us the basic formula for a godly life (and a godly judge) - "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to **fear the LORD your God**, to walk in all His ways (notice a holy fear precedes a holy walk) and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart (or as we might say today totally "sold out" - Are you? Am I?) and with all your soul, and to keep ([shamar](#) - guard) the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today (WHY?) for your good (Septuagint has "in order that [[purpose clause](#)] it may be will with thee")? (Dt 10:12-13+)

What made **Job** such a godly man? "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, **fearing God** and turning away from evil." (Job 1:1) **Comment:** So why did Job turn away from evil? In context, the answer is clearly because he feared God. A corollary thought is what is my mindset when I contemplate sinning or am tempted to sin? If not, I have at least temporarily effectively jettisoned the "protective power" of a healthy fear of the Lord and will be vulnerable to the temptation and falling into sin. Lord, by Thy Spirit please teach us the fear of the LORD (Ps 34:11, cf Ps 86:11-see [Give Me An Undivided Heart](#)).

In light of the Old Testament's emphasis on the fear of God, many saints today believe that the fear of God is relegated to men and

women who lived in OT times, but this is clearly an aberrant belief, for the NT has many passages that advocate a healthy fear of the Lord as a prerequisite for a "healthy" Christian walk. For example, Paul spoke of the importance of godly fear in addressing the at times somewhat lawless saints at Corinth "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in (sphere of) the fear of God. (2 Cor 7:1+) **Comment:** Saints are commanded to **be holy** as God is holy (1Pe 1:15-16) and to **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). In short, saints should be growing daily more like Christ (progressive sanctification), and a key component of this increasingly holy walk ("perfecting holiness") is a healthy **fear** of the Lord. Can you see how vital it is that all saints have a healthy **fear of God**? This quality undergirds, motivates and empowers **ALL** of our Christian behavior. That's how important reverential fear of the Lord is to one living a godly life.

THOUGHT - So let me ask you -- Do you have a genuine fear of the Lord? Or are you more like this "certain judge" described by Jesus?

Given the scriptural importance of the fear of the Lord, most of us must confess that although we have been going to church for many years, **we have never heard a single sermon on the fear of God** When was the last time you had a Sunday School lesson on the **fear of God**? Have you ever seen a book devoted solely to this topic, the fear of God? The typical Christian today has heard many sermons on the love of God, but absolutely nothing about the fear of God. This is sad as well as thoroughly unbiblical. Of course we should love God. That is not the issue. What we are saying is that we must relate to God in more than one way. Loving God is not enough according to the Bible. We must also FEAR Him. If we take the Bible seriously, the fundamental aspect of our relationship to God should be the fear of the Lord! Fear goes hand in hand with love: love is the positive side, fear the negative; love prompts one to do what pleases God, fear prompts one to refrain from what displeases God.

But what is the fear of the Lord? It is that affectionate reverence; by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law (enabled by His Spirit giving us the desire and the power - Php 2:13+). His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and—because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations—a holy watchfulness and fear, "that he might not sin against him" (Heb 12:28, 29).

So in summary, we all need to cultivate a healthy, holy fear of the Lord, for this is clearly a key truth in the entire Bible which speaks of "**fear**" of the Lord in some 295 verses! Scripture speaks of men fearing God, His name, His Law or His Word. In the OT there are 235 references to the **fear of God**. In the NT there are 43 references to the fear of God which, by the way, is the same number of references that speak of man's love toward God. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible proclaims that the **fear of the Lord** is a fountain of life (Pr 14:27) and those who drink deeply of it shall have the blessings of God in this life and in the life to come. However, those who reject the fear of the Lord will end up in the ways of death. The fear of God is the predominant response to and fundamental attitude toward God, His Word, His Law and His name, and what God desires. This is why it is mentioned more times than any other aspect of vital piety. If you are so inclined, let me encourage you to do a simple study on the Fear of the Lord, which you can find at this link.

Related Resources:

- In Depth Analysis of the Fear of the Lord
- [How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about fear?](#)
- [What does it mean to work out salvation with fear and trembling \(Philippians 2:12\)?](#)
- [What does it mean to have the fear of God?](#)
- [What does "perfect love casts out fear" mean?](#)
- [How can I overcome the fear of death? How can I stop being scared of dying?](#)
- [How does fearing God add length to a person's life \(Proverbs 10:27\)?](#)

Guzik - Barclay points out that this would not have been a Jewish judge, because disputes in the Jewish world were brought to the elders. "This judge was one of the paid magistrates appointed either by Herod or the Romans. Such judges were notorious." ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Jamieson on **did not fear God and did not respect man**= defying the vengeance of God and despising the opinion of men.

And did not respect (entrepo) man - Clearly this negative attribute links closely with the former (no fear of God), for a low view of the Creator will lead to a low view of men created in His image (cf society's low view of the value of human lives in the womb and rising cries for euthanasia, etc!). In other words, how we view God, directly affects how we view our fellow human beings. If you are having trouble loving men, it may be because you are faulty in your love of God, which is the first of the two great commandments

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL,
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF (from Lev 19:18+, most quoted verse in the NT!).' There is no other commandment greater than these."(Mark 12:30, 31+)

In Lk 18:6+ Jesus adds to his list of character traits that the judge is **unrighteous** which means he is one who deceives, who suppresses the truth and thus brings about injustice rather than justice. An unrighteousness person loves sin more than they love God and His truth (cf those described by Micah 3:11+, Mic 7:3-4+).

John MacArthur observes that a judge ([krites](#)) who did not fear ([phobeo](#)) God and did not respect ([entrepo](#)) man "is a very well chosen characterization because you find such references to people in literature from ancient times outside the Bible and this kind of description is used to describe the most wicked person, someone who has absolutely no reverence for God and no interest in people, no concerns regarding the law of God, the will of God and completely indifferent to the needs of people and their just causes. This man is ultimately and finally wicked. There is no way to penetrate this man's wickedness from the viewpoint of the law of God or from the viewpoint of the need of man. He is not moved by reverence or worship and he is not moved by compassion or sympathy. He has no interest in the first commandment, loving God (Mk 12:29, Dt 6:4); no interest in the second commandment, loving his neighbor. He is the most wicked man." ([Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#))

Henriksen on the wicked character of this judge - He did whatever he pleased, never asking himself, "What does God want me to do?" or even "What do the people in general approve or disapprove?" He was nothing but a hateful egotist. Here, then, is a judge without any love for justice. And as to sympathy for the oppressed and satisfaction because, in his capacity as judge, he might be able to help them, he did not know what sympathy was. Tender feelings were completely foreign to him. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

W A Criswell - The judge does not care for man, but in contrast, God does care for man. The judge is "unrighteous" because he lacks an adequate sense of justice. God has no such deficiency. ([Believer's Study Bible](#))

The OT was clear on the requirements of how one was to function as a judge. **King Jehoshaphat** (whose name fittingly means "God has judged!") gave a good judicial plumb-line....

So Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem and went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers. 5 **He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city.** 6 He said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD Who is with you when you render judgment. 7 "Now then **let the fear of the LORD be upon you** (See godly Nehemiah's powerful testimony - Neh 5:9,15); **be very careful what you do**, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe." (2 Chr 19:4-7)

Comment: Would it be that King Jehoshaphat's admonition and exhortation would be written on a placard in plain sight on the desk and bench of every sitting judge in the United States of America (and the world for that matter)! One wonders if that would impact the issuing of unjust verdicts and/or sentences by those judges who are unrighteous?

Respect ([1788](#))([entrepo](#)) means to turn back or about. In the active sense it means put to shame, make ashamed, reprove (1Cor 4.14). In the passive it means to be put to shame, be ashamed (Titus 2.8). Finally in the passive with the middle sense, it means strictly to turn oneself toward someone; hence respect, reverence, have regard for (Mt 21.37). The idea is to be shamed into respect.

Gilbrant on **entrepo** - The verb **entrepō** was used from the time of Homer to well into the post-Biblical era in two seemingly opposite ways. On the one hand, the word means "I have shame," while on the other, it means "I show respect or honor." This difference of meaning is also reflected in the use of the noun form. Some scholars have thought Paul changed the meaning of **entrepō** from "to respect" to that of "to have shame." They have not noted, however, that both meanings occur in the Septuagint and in early and late extra-Biblical writings. In fact, depending upon the context three meanings may be involved: "to have shame," "to have respect," and "to turn toward someone or something." **In the Septuagint, **entrepō** translated eight Hebrew words.** Like **entrepō**, the Hebrew words can be placed into two broad categories as noted above. Most references in which "shame" is meant are in the Psalms. In the Psalms themselves without exception, **entrepō** involves "shame." There the enemies of God will experience shame, while His people will not. In the **New Testament **entrepō** is used nine times.** In its five occurrences in the Synoptics, the idea of "reverence" or "respect" is intended. However, in Paul's epistles **entrepō** means "to have shame"; in both the active and middle/ passive voices the verb means "shame." This is similar to the use of **entrepō** in the Psalms of the Septuagint. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Entrepo - 9x in 9v - put to shame(2), respect(5), respected(1), shame(1). Matt. 21:37; Mk. 12:6; Lk. 18:2; Lk. 18:4; Lk. 20:13; 1 Co. 4:14; 2 Thess. 3:14; Tit. 2:8; Heb. 12:9

Entrepo - 43x in 42v - Exod. 10:3; Lev. 26:41; Num. 12:14; Jdg. 3:30; Jdg. 8:28; Jdg. 11:33; 2 Ki. 22:19; 2 Chr. 7:14; 2 Chr. 12:7; 2 Chr. 12:12; 2 Chr. 30:11; 2 Chr. 30:15; 2 Chr. 34:27; 2 Chr. 36:12; Ezr. 9:6; Job 32:21; Ps. 35:4; Ps. 35:26; Ps. 40:14; Ps. 69:6; Ps. 70:2; Ps. 71:24; Ps. 83:17; Isa. 16:7; Isa. 16:12; Isa. 41:11; Isa. 44:11; Isa. 45:16; Isa. 45:17; Isa. 50:7; Isa. 54:4; Ezek. 36:32;

Luke 18:3 "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'

- **a widow:** Dt 27:19 2Sa 14:5-24 Job 22:9 29:13 Isa 1:17,21-23 Jer 5:28
- **Give me legal protection:** Lu 18:7,8 Ro 13:3,4
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

A WIDOW PLEADING FOR PROTECTION

There was a widow ([chera](#)) in that city - Although one needs to be cautious interpreting details in a parable, it is worth noting that widow does not mean she was old because in Jesus' day many people lived only into their thirties. In ancient Israel widows were in general helpless, defenseless and vulnerable (cf. Ex 22:22-24; Ps. 68:5; Lam. 1:1; James 1:27). She was in a destitute situation, not only because she had somehow been defrauded but because there was no man in her life (father, brother, etc). How can we say that? **John MacArthur** explains we can deduce there was no man because in those days in Israel, the courts did not belong "to women, but belonged exclusively to men." In other words, for a woman to come to court would mean there was no man who could plead her case. Men came to court. Women did not come to court. **MacArthur** sums this widow up as "the destitute, the powerless, the helpless, the deprived, the lowly, the unknown, the unloved, the uncared for, the desperate." Do any of those negative attributes ever describe our situation? I am asking that as a rhetorical question because clearly the answer is "yes" for all of us at one time or another in our life.

Widows were to be cared for and their needs were to be met. The Mosaic Law was clear about how a widow should be treated by a God fearing judge, but of course this judge had no fear of God and did not tremble at His Word...

"You shall not afflict any **widow** or orphan. "If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become **widows** and your children fatherless. (Ex 22:22-24)

'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and **widow**.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' (Dt 27:19)

Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about how widows are to be treated? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about orphans and widows? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some Bible verses about widows? | GotQuestions.org](#)

She kept coming to him, saying (cf "by continually coming" - Lk 18:5) - This widow was like the "[Energizer Bunny](#)" and just kept coming continually pleading her case. **Kept coming** is in the imperfect tense indicating that again and again, over and over she was coming to the judge's chambers. In a word, she was [relentless](#)! She was [implacable](#) and unflinching in her pleading! **Saying** is in the present tense which describes her continually presenting her her case to the ungodly judge.

Give me legal protection ([ekdikeo](#)) from my opponent ([antidikos](#)) - The KJV has "avenge" but that is not the best translation. "Do me justice against," "Vindicate me from." The idea of avenge is retaliate while the idea of vindicate is to maintain, uphold, or defend one's just cause. Vindicate is therefore more accurate for it better conveys her request to justify her complaint, render it a righteous complaint and give her what was legally hers. She is speaking this as a command (which indicates she had a legal right or otherwise she would not have been so demonstrative) using aorist imperative which also can convey a sense of urgency -- "Do this now!" "Do not delay!" The sense of [ekdikeo](#) is to help secure justice or bring about justice, grant a fair verdict. **Ralph Earle** adds "The verb

[ekdikeyo](#) does sometimes mean "avenge." But here the verb is followed in the Greek by *apo*, "from." So the idea is, "Give me legal protection **from** my opponent" or "Grant me justice **against** my adversary" (NIV). **Plummer** says that the meaning is "preserve me against his attacks." (Borrow [Word meanings in the New Testament](#))

MacArthur - This judge is utterly indifferent to her on a sympathetic side, on the side of compassion, but apparently she had the law on her side as well because she is asking for legal protection. She has been defrauded. Property, money which was life to her has been taken from her. ([Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#))

Widow (5503)(**chera** = feminine of **cheros** = bereft of one's spouse) means bereaved as would be a widow whose husband had died. Figuratively **chera** spoke of the city of Babylon stripped of her citizens and her wealth (Rev 18:7). The idea of neediness is often associated with **chera**, and it is also often linked with orphans (Mt 23:14; Mk 12:40, 42-44).

Chera - 27x in 25v - widow(13), widows(11), widows'(3). Notice that Luke mentions widows more than do all the other Gospel writers combined (Luke 2:37-38; 4:25-26; 7:11-17; 18:1-8; 20:45-47; 21:1-4). Matt. 23:14; Mk. 12:40; Mk. 12:42; Mk. 12:43; Lk. 2:37; Lk. 4:25; Lk. 4:26; Lk. 7:12; Lk. 18:3; Lk. 18:5; Lk. 20:47; Lk. 21:2; Lk. 21:3; Acts 6:1; Acts 9:39; Acts 9:41; 1 Co. 7:8; 1 Tim. 5:3; 1 Tim. 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:5; 1 Tim. 5:9; 1 Tim. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:16; Jas. 1:27; Rev. 18:7

Chera - 66v in the Septuagint - Gen. 38:11; Exod. 22:22; Exod. 22:24; Lev. 21:14; Lev. 22:13; Num. 30:9; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 24:17; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 24:20; Deut. 24:21; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 27:19; 2 Sam. 14:5; 2 Sam. 20:3; 1 Ki. 7:14; 1 Ki. 11:26; 1 Ki. 17:9; 1 Ki. 17:10; 1 Ki. 17:20; Job 22:9; Job 24:3; Job 27:15; Job 29:13; Job 31:16; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 78:64; Ps. 94:6; Ps. 109:9; Ps. 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 1:17; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 10:2; Isa. 47:8; Isa. 49:21; Jer. 5:28; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 15:8; Jer. 18:21; Jer. 22:3; Jer. 49:11; Lam. 1:1; Lam. 5:3; Ezek. 22:7; Ezek. 22:25; Ezek. 44:22; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

Gilbrant has a detailed discussion on **widow, chera** - **Classical Greek** - In Greek literature as early as Homer (ca. Eighth Century B.C.), *chēra* has denoted "a widow." In many places it is linked with the word *orphanos*, "orphan," and conveys the idea of being destitute or needy. *Chēra* is the feminine noun form of a related adjective *chēros* which means "deprived" (e.g., the widow is a woman "deprived" of a husband). *Stahlin* reports that in the pagan world the greatest fear among women was that of becoming a widow. Many women preferred to die at their spouse's grave rather than continue life without a husband ("*chēra*," *Kittel*, 9:442). Losing a husband to death meant that a woman often lost her sole sustainer and protector. Also in the Roman Empire, women who remarried lost certain rights and were generally less respected in the community (*ibid.*, 9:443). **Septuagint Usage** - The word *chēra* appears about 60 times in the Septuagint and nearly always translates the Hebrew term *'almānāh*. Occasionally the word describes a woman who was separated from her husband or a woman without a husband (e.g., 2 Samuel 20:3 [LXX 2 Kings 20:3]), but in the majority of its occurrences it simply means "a widow." **In the Old Testament**, widows were grouped together with other disadvantaged classes such as strangers, orphans, and the poor (see Exodus 22:21f.; Isaiah 1:23; 10:2; Jeremiah 5:28). In His mercy, God made special provisions for their protection and preservation (Leviticus 22:13; Deuteronomy 10:18). For example, a portion of tithes taken on the third year were designated for helping the widow (Deuteronomy 14:28f.); field gleanings were to be left for her (Deuteronomy 24:19ff.); and the levirate marriage was to take effect when a widow was also without a male child (see Deuteronomy 25:5-10). In addition, the Lord himself promised to uphold and defend her (Deuteronomy 10:18; Proverbs 15:25). Yet despite God's injunctions that Israel show compassion on the widow and maintain her rights, the Scriptures reveal that the plight of the widow was particularly difficult. The Bible describes how widows were exploited and generally abused (Isaiah 1:23; Ezekiel 22:7). It is not surprising, therefore, that widowhood was seen by many to be a reproach (Isaiah 4:1). As a result, the term "widow" was figuratively applied to the exiled nation of Israel (Isaiah 54:4) and to Jerusalem at the time of her captivity (Lamentations 1:1).

New Testament Usage - In the New Testament the widow remains a picture of neediness, destitution, and poverty. The Gospel of Mark (12:42f.), for example, describes a poor widow who cast all she had, "two mites," into the treasury at the temple. Luke's gospel in particular singles out the plight of widows in the time of Jesus. Luke 7:11-15 relates the story of a grieving widow whose only son had just died. The Lord recognized her desperate situation and out of His great compassion raised the young man from the dead. Chapter 18 tells the parable of a persistent widow seeking justice against an adversary. Luke also described the widow who cast two mites into the collection box (Lk 21:2f.). In addition, all three Synoptic Gospels record one of Jesus' strongest rebukes against the scribes and Pharisees who "devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation" (Luke 20:47; cf. Matthew 23:14; Mark 12:40). God's

concern for widows is recorded outside the Gospels as well. Acts 6:1-6 shows how the Early Church took special care to solve a problem which affected widows. The result was that both Jewish and Greek widows received enough food to meet their needs. Elsewhere, James 1:27 presents a clear definition of what God views as "pure religion": it includes visiting orphans and widows in their affliction. One final section of the New Testament, 1 Timothy 5:3-16, provides significant detail that relates to widows. These passages specify the obligations that the church and family have with respect to their care. Paul differentiates between three categories of widows: (1) those with children or grandchildren (1Ti 5:4,8,16); (2) those who are young and in a position to remarry (1Ti 5:11-15); (3) those who are "widows indeed," i.e., not having a family to support them (1Ti 5:5-7,16). The first group is to be cared for by their own family. In fact, a believer who does not care for a widowed parent (or grandparent) has "denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1Ti 5:8). The second group, young widows, are encouraged to remarry so as not to "cast off their first faith" and become "busybodies" (cf. 1Ti 5:12,13; see also 1 Corinthians 7:8). The third category defines "true" widows whose needs the Church must meet, provided certain conditions exist: they have no family to support them, they are over 60 years old, and they continue in good works (1Ti 5:9,10). While widows throughout history have been a disadvantaged class, the Scriptures show that God has special compassion for them. Both the Old and New Testament reveal His love and concern for them. It was not His intention for the nation of Israel to neglect their needs, and it is not His will for the Church to overlook their plight either. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Related Resources on widow:

- [What does the Bible say about orphans and widows?](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Widow](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Widow and Fatherless Widows](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Widows](#)
- American Tract Society [Widow](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Widows](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Poor, Orphan, Widow](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Widow](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Widow Widows](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Widow](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Widow](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Widow](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Widow](#)
- [What does the Bible say about charity?](#)
- [What is a levirate marriage?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about self-defense?](#)

Give...legal protection (1556) (**ekdikeo** from **ek** = out or from + **dike** = right, justice; see cognates = **ekdikesis** and **ekdikos**) is literally that which proceeds from justice. As discussed above the idea is to vindicate one's right or to do one justice. 1. take vengeance for, punish 2 Cor 10:6; Rev 6:10; 19:2.—2. avenge someone, procure justice for someone Lk 18:5. see to it that I get justice = Lk 18:3. take one's revenge = Ro 12:19.

Ekdikeo - 6v - **avenged(1), avenging(1), give...legal protection(2), legal protection(2), punish(1), take...revenge(1)** - Lk. 18:3; Lk. 18:5; Ro. 12:19; 2 Co. 10:6; Rev. 6:10; Rev. 19:2

Opponent (476) **antidikos** from **anti** = against + **dike** = a cause or suit at law) was used first as a word for an opponent in a lawsuit and then came to mean an adversary or enemy without reference to legal affairs. It describes one who is actively and continuously hostile toward someone. An **adversary** is one that contends with, opposes, or resists.

Antidikos - 5x/4v **adversary(1), opponent(3), opponent at law(1)**. - Mt. 5:25; Lk. 12:58; Lk. 18:3; 1Pe 5:8
"your adversary (devil)..."

Luke 18:4 "For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man,

- **he said:** Lu 12:17 16:3 Heb 4:12,13
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

NAB Luke 18:4 For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being,

NET Luke 18:4 For a while he refused, but later on he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor have regard for people,

NLT Luke 18:4 The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people,

NIV Luke 18:4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men,

JUDGE'S RESISTANCE BREAKING DOWN

For a while he was unwilling - This time phrase **for a while** leaves a "crack" in the door which Jesus goes on to "open" fully. **Unwilling** is the combination not (signifying absolute negation with "ou") + willing ([thelo](#)) which describes one's desire. Thus he was had absolutely no desire to grant a needy widow protection even though she was legally justified in her request. **Unwilling** identifies this judge is true to his character, demonstrating utter disdain for the commandments of God and any sense of justice. His utter disinterest in showing compassion to anyone, even a lowly widow, shows he is the worst kind of human being who is certainly the worst judge imaginable.

Steven Cole on unwilling - The reason for the delay with the widow was that the unjust judge was **unwilling**, but that is never the reason with our loving Father in heaven. The unjust judge was acting out of selfish motives, even when he finally granted her request. But God always acts out of self-sacrificing love, as seen supremely in the Cross of Christ. This judge was only concerned for his own relief, but God acts out of wise concern for the well-being of His people. Four-year-old Caitlin was impatient for a sibling. One morning she told her mother, "Maybe if we both prayed out loud, God would hear us." So they prayed together. As soon as they finished, Caitlin asked, "What did He say?" Her mother explained that it doesn't work that way; sometimes it takes a long time to get an answer. Caitlin was indignant: **"Do you mean we were praying to an answering machine?"** (*Reader's Digest* [12/94], p. 154.) Sometimes it seems like it, doesn't it! God doesn't usually explain in advance why He is delaying the answers to our requests. But we need to cling to the fact that His delays are always for our good, even if we don't understand the reasons why. ([Persevering in Prayer](#))

But afterward - ("but later," "but finally") - Here we see a combination of a [term of contrast](#) and an [expression of time](#). The contrast marks a "change in direction," a "change of mind," while the time phrase "afterward" relates to her relentless efforts to get him to give her legal protection.

He said to himself even though I do not fear ([phobeo](#)) God nor respect ([entrepo](#)) man -The phrase **"to himself"** identifies this as a [soliloquy](#), a speech one makes to himself. He is like another "bad character," the "prodigal son" who also spoke to himself when he had come to his senses. (Lk 15:17-19+). The prodigal was repentant while the judge was just irritated. It is interesting that Luke has several other soliloquies (identified by **"to himself"** - Lk 7:39, Lk 12:17, Lk 16:3) and there are none ("to himself") in all the other Gospels. The judge makes an amazing statement! He's a self-confessed wretch. He doesn't even try to rationalize it or hide it. He has no noble motive. Notice that Lk 18:2 was Jesus' assessment of His character, the man himself readily acknowledges his wicked estate! In other words, he agrees with Jesus in full! He knew he was evil and even in a sense "glories" in it! That is surely one of the basic aspects of what it means to be [totally depraved](#), and reminds us of those unrighteous people in Romans 1:32+ who "although **they know** ([epiginosko](#) = fully know) **the ordinance of God**, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, **they not only do the same**, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."

Luke 18:5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out."

- **yet because this widow bothers me:** Lu 11:8 Jud 16:16 2Sa 13:24-27
- **she will wear me out:** Lu 18:39 Mt 15:23 Mk 10:47,48

- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

Yet because this widow bothers me - She was in his court every day pleading her case and it had become very troublesome to the judge. His change of heart only because of his regard for himself (**bothers me**). He still has no regard for God and no respect for man, as he has just declared (Lk 18:4). He could care less about what pleases God or men. But he certainly did care for what pleased him. And this woman's relentless pursuit of justice did not please him.

Otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out ([hupopiazō](#)) - He explains his change of heart. The word **continually** is *eis telos*, which literally means "to the end," and is used 6 times in the NT (speaking of one who is genuinely saved as he who endures "**to the end**" in Mt. 10:22; Mt. 24:13 and Mk. 13:13; Lk. 18:5; Jn. 13:1 "loved them **to the end**"; 1Th. 2:16 = "to the utmost") The idea of the idiom *eis telos* is "completely, perfectly, fully, or comprehensively, to the uttermost." The uses in Matthew and Mark in context can refer to the end of one's life. Applying that to this widow, the judge is reasoning to himself that she will keep pleading until she dies! (In as sense he is actually inferring that she would be the "death of him" so to speak). **Wear me out** misses the sense of the interesting verb [hupopiazō](#) which is more intense, as it means beating someone or punching them silly (so to speak), giving them a black eye, which figuratively is exactly what she was doing to the judge for a "black eye" would be equivalent of a damaged reputation. In fighting lingo, she had landed enough blows to get a "verdict" from the judges of a "TKO," a technical knockout! Her relentless blows to his body (really his mind) caused him to give up the fight!

Steven Cole - This **widow** had no attorney, no advocate to plead her case, but we have the Holy Spirit to help us pray as we ought (Ro 8:26,27+) and the Lord Jesus Himself interceding at the right hand of the Father on our behalf (Ro 8:34+, Hebrews 7:25+). She had no guarantee of getting what she desired, but we have the Lord's promise that whatever we ask in His name, He will do it (Jn 16:23-24 but see caveat in 1 Jn 5:14, 15+). What made this **widow** persist is that she knew her great need. Sometimes the Lord delays to answer us because we do not see how needy we really are until He keeps us waiting for a while. It is only when we sense our own insufficiency that we begin to pray, as Calvin puts it, with "an earnest—nay, burning—desire to attain it" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* [Westminster], 3:20:6). ([Persevering in Prayer](#))

Wear me out (buffet, batter, beat my body black and blue) ([5299](#))([hupopiazō](#) from **hupo** = under + **ops** = eye) means literally to strike under the eye a description of an "uppercut" to use modern pugilistic parlance. To strike in this manner was generally considered to be a "knockout" punch by the ancient Greek boxers. The idea then is to strike hard and heavy on one's face, rendering it "black and blue." Recall that (apparently not in the first rounds but only in later rounds according to some sources) the boxers wore gloves (the "cestus") made of leather bands and tied into knots in addition to being embedded with metallic objects composed of lead and iron! It is not surprising that these gloves obtained the nickname of "**limb-breakers**!" The only other use (also figurative) is by Paul who writes "I **discipline** ([hupopiazō](#) in present tense - continually) my body and make it my slave ([doulagōgeō](#) - present tense - continually), so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified ([adokimos](#))." (1Cor 9:27+)

John Piper - ANOTHER PARADOX OF PRAYER: "VAIN REPETITIONS" VERSUS "CONTINUAL COMING"

Pondering Matthew 6:7, Luke 11:8, and Luke 18:5

What's the difference between the "vain repetitions" of the Gentiles who want their prayers to be "heard for their many words" (in Matthew 6:7), and the "continual coming" of the widow to wear down the judge and get her legal protection (in Luke 18:5), or the "persistence" of the man at midnight who prevails on his friend to get up and give him bread (in Luke 11:8)?

- In Matthew 6:7–8, Jesus introduces the Lord's Prayer by saying, "And when you are praying, do not use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words" (emphasis added).
- In Luke 11:5–8, Jesus follows the Lord's Prayer with a parable about a persistent friend at midnight: "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs" (verse 8, emphasis added).
- In Luke 18:1–5, Jesus tells a parable about a widow pleading with an unjust judge. He says that the point of the parable is "to show that at all times [we] ought to pray and not to lose heart" (verse 1). The breakthrough comes with these words: "Because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out" (verse 5, emphasis added).

Even though Matthew 6:7 warns against "vain repetitions," all these texts have at least one thing in common: They all encourage praying to God over and over and over again. In Matthew, after the warning about "vain repetitions," Jesus says, "Pray, then, in this

way:... Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt 6:9, 11, emphasis added). Notice the phrase "this day." It means that Jesus expects us to pray like this at least daily. He does not want us to pray on January 1, "Give us this year sufficient bread every day," and then not pray about bread anymore that year. No, he says ask for daily bread "this day." So, even though "vain repetitions" are bad, asking for daily bread at least 365 times a year is not bad.

And if the petition about bread is supposed to be repeated daily, then probably the same applies to the other petitions in the Lord's Prayer. Every day we should pray for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, the heaven-like doing of his will, and the forgiveness of sins. So the teaching in Matthew 6 agrees with the teaching in Luke 11 and 18, to the effect that "continual" or "persistent" praying is a good thing.

The key question, then, is this: What danger does Matthew 6:7-8 warn us against in this continual, persistent kind of praying that does not give up but keeps on asking and seeking and knocking (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9)? There are two clauses that give us the clues in Matthew 6:7-8, "When you are praying, do not use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (emphasis added).

1. "They suppose that they will be heard for their many words."

The warning here seems to be against thinking of our praying as impressive or coercive to God. It is as if Jesus wants to say, "Yes, you could take the parables about the persistent friend or tenacious widow to mean that God is impressed with many words or other human resources. But in fact, that is not what I mean to call attention to. I mean to call attention to the absence of human resources anywhere but in God." Right praying feels destitute, not resourceful. If we find ourselves reaching inside of us for more and better phrases to tell God what we mean, we are in danger of "vain repetitions." If we grasp for more words with a view to showing God we are more worthy than if we had one simple cry, we are in danger of "vain repetitions."

2. "For your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

The warning here is that there is a kind of praying that makes God look unaware and uncaring. Jesus says, "He knows what you need," and so he is not unaware, and "He is your Father," so he is not uncaring. Therefore, don't pray in a way that makes him look ignorant or apathetic. Yes, but why does the persistence and tenacity of continual prayer not make God look this way? It might. And we are being called by Jesus to find the balance. There is a reason why Jesus not only calls us to simplicity and brevity, but also to persistence and tenacity. The demand for prevailing prayer exposes those who pray in a passing way, as if they are just trying to cover all their bases. They are not looking to God as their only hope. They are trying God out alongside other resources. Such praying does not prevail. In other words, there are dangers on both sides; one danger needs the admonition to "always pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1), and the other danger needs the admonition to avoid "vain repetitions" (Matthew 6:7). Let us not be more fearful of persistence than Jesus was, when he prayed all night (Luke 6:12), nor more fearful of repetition than Jesus was, when he prayed three times the same thing: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44). If we pray in the Spirit and feel that God is our only hope, we will find our way. ([Taste and See](#))

Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said;

- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS BEGINS TO EXPLAIN THE INTENTION OF HIS ILLUSTRATION

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said - Jesus gives His disciples (the 12 and us) a command in the aorist imperative which conveys the idea of "Hear this now! Don't miss this!" First they are to focus on what the unrighteous judge had just stated (Lk 18:5). This would prepare them to hear what Jesus is about to say, because He is about to explain the point of the parable. The story is finished and now it is time to apply the lesson of the parable to real life.

Jamieson says Luke's use of **the Lord** is "a name expressive of the authoritative style in which He interprets His own parable."

Lord (master, owner) ([2962](#)) ([kurios](#) from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (used this way of Roman emperors - Act 25:26) and possesses

absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. Kurios is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

MacArthur comments that Jesus is saying in essence "Think about the wicked judge in the story. He was cruelly indifferent to God. He was cruelly indifferent to people. But he finally did what was right for purely selfish reasons. He did what was right for a woman for whom he had no feeling, no emotion, and to whom he had no attachment. That is what we are going to start with as we hear the interpretation of the Lord, for in verse 7 we see the contrast."

Unrighteous (93)(**adikia** from **a** = not + **dikê** = right) is a condition of not being right, whether with God, according to the standard of His holiness and righteousness or with man, according to the standard of what man knows to be right by his conscience. Luke's only other uses of adika are - Lk 13:27, 16:8-9, Acts 1:18, Acts 8:23.

William Barclay's discussion of **adikia** perfectly describes the judge in this parable - **Adikia** is the precise opposite of **dikaosune** (righteousness), which means justice; and the Greeks defined justice as giving to God and to men their due. The evil man is the man who robs both man and God of their rights. He has so erected an altar to himself in the centre of things that he worships himself to the exclusion of God and man." ([Daily Study Bible Online](#))

Bock explains that Jesus' statement **the judge is unrighteous** "plays off this portrait in a lesser-to-greater argument ([gal wahomer](#)): if such an insensitive character responds to repeated pleas from someone he does not know or care about, how much more will a righteous God respond to his children."

ESV Study Bible - The comparison here is between the reluctant action of an unjust judge (the **lesser**) and "how much more" just will be the action of a just God (the **greater**).

J Vernon McGee has an excellent summary of Jesus' parable - If this unjust judge would hear a poor widow because she kept coming continually, then why do you get discouraged going to God who is not an unjust judge, but who actually wants to hear and answer prayer? Why are God's people today so discouraged in their prayer life? Don't you know, my friend, He is not an unjust judge? **You don't have to hang onto His coattail and beg Him and plead with Him. God wants to act in your behalf! If we had that attitude, it would change our prayer life—to come into His presence knowing He wants to hear. We act as if He is an unjust judge, and we have to hold onto Him or He will not hear us at all. God is not an unjust judge.**

Guzik amplifies McGee's thoughts commenting that "Our God is a righteous, wonderful Judge:

- We come to a Judge of perfect, good character.
- We come to a Judge who loves to care for His children.
- We come to a Judge who is kind and gracious.
- We come to a Judge who knows us.
- We come to this Judge with an advocate, a friend who will plead our case before the Judge .
- We come to the Judge with promises to encourage us.
- We come to the Judge with the right of constant access, to a Judge who has a personal interest in our case. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Jon Courson emphasizes the contrasts in this parable - Jesus uses the account of the widow to teach what our attitude should be in prayer. But notice, He gave this parable not so much as a parallel, but as a contrast—for our situation is entirely different. First of all, we appear not before an unjust judge, but before a loving Father. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven," the concept of God as a Father was foreign to the Jews. Paul would go on to address God as "Abba" or "Papa" (Romans 8:15). Thus, far from being our judge, God is our loving Father, our Abba, our Papa. Second, we appear before God not as strangers, but as His children. A photographer captured on film Supreme Court Justice Anton Scalia in his chambers at his massive desk when one of his grandchildren came bursting into the room. The photograph shows Scalia looking up and smiling from ear to ear. It's amazing the access a person has with his parents. No matter how important a man might be, his son or daughter can burst into his presence anytime. That is the privilege we have as children of the God of the universe. Third, this woman was a widow. We are a bride (Revelation 21:2). Big difference. A widow feels all alone, not so a bride. Fourth, the widow went alone, but we have an Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). Jesus stands right beside us. Lastly, to get help the widow went to a court of law. We come to a throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). (Jon Courson's Application Commentary)

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - Hear what the unjust judge saith.

The force of this parable lies in its succession of vivid contrasts, which rise to an irresistible climax.

The judge is unjust. — He neither fears God nor regards man. His one idea is to extort as much money as he can from the prisoners who desire to get out of gaol, and from those that want to keep them in, or put others to share their fate. But God is our

Father, unimpeachable in his integrity, and only eager to promote our welfare.

The judge had no personal interest in the claimant.— She had no personal attraction for him. Had she been possessed of property, he might have cared more. But now he looked on her as a pest that plagued and worried him. But we are God's elect, over whom his tender heart yearns. Did He not choose us before all the worlds unto his glory?

The judge answered the widow's cry just to save himself trouble.— Whenever he went to his seat, there she was. Though he had refused to hear her a score of times, there was her voice again, as clear and penetrating as ever. She had been forcibly hurried from his presence by his officials, and she had been borne screaming and remonstrating into the rear; but she never knew herself defeated. At last he could bear it no longer, and gave orders that her patrimony should be restored.

And will not God do as much, as, generation after generation, He sees his Church, like a widowed soul, oppressed by the great enemy and avenger? As He hears the cries of martyrs and saints; the perpetual prayer, Come, Lord Jesus; the insolent boast of the foe — will He not arise and avenge? Yes, verily, speedily! But it may seem long to us, because one thousand years with Him are as one day.

Luke 18:7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

NET Luke 18:7 Won't God give justice to his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay long to help them?

NET Note - The issue of **delay** has produced a whole host of views for this verse. (1) Does this assume provision to endure in the meantime? Or (2) does it mean God restricts the level of persecution until he comes? Either view is possible.

KJV Luke 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

ESV Luke 18:7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?

NLT Luke 18:7 Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?

CSB Luke 18:7 Will not God grant justice to His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay to help them?

NIV Luke 18:7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?

NAB Luke 18:7 Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them?

NKJ Luke 18:7 "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

NJB Luke 18:7 Now, will not God see justice done to his elect if they keep calling to him day and night even though he still delays to help them?

GWN Luke 18:7 Won't God give his chosen people justice when they cry out to him for help day and night? Is he slow to help them?

NRS Luke 18:7 And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?

YLT Luke 18:7 and shall not God execute the justice to His choice ones, who are crying unto Him day and night -- bearing long in regard to them?

BBE Luke 18:7 And will not God do right in the cause of his saints, whose cries come day and night to his ears, though he is long in doing it?

- **bring about justice for His elect:** 1Sa 24:12-15 26:10,11 Ps 9:8 10:15-18 54:1-7 Jer 20:11-13 2Th 1:6 Rev 6:10 18:20
- **who cry to Him day and night:** Lu 2:37 Ps 88:1 1Th 3:10 1Ti 5:5 2Ti 1:3 Rev 7:15
- **will He delay long over them:** Ps 13:1,2 Hab 2:3 Heb 10:35-37
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

Revelation 6:9-10+ When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and **they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth (see [earth dwellers](#))?"**

TWO RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Dear reader, you need to realize that Luke 18:7 is **avery difficult passage** and there are a number of interpretations in the commentaries. Keep that in mind as you study this verse. And don't let the difficult obscure Jesus' main point of the parable which was to encourage us to pray and not grow discouraged.

Now, will not God bring about justice ([ekdikesis](#)) for His elect ([eklektos](#)) who cry ([boao](#)) to Him day and night - This first rhetorical question expects an affirmative answer -- of course He will bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night. This is discussed in more depth below.

Guzik - Jesus did not give this parable to say that God was like the unjust judge, but unlike him. God loves to answer our prayers, and He even helps us when we pray. God is on your side when you pray, not against you (as the unjust judge was against the widow). The woman had to overcome the judge's reluctance to help. We often feel that we must do the same when we pray—use our persistence to overcome God's reluctance. This misses the point of the parable entirely. Jesus did not say that men always out to pray and not lose heart because God is reluctant, but because He isn't, and that is our encouragement to prayer. Sometimes it does seem to us that God is reluctant to answer our prayers. Yet the delays in prayer are not needed to change God, but to change us. Persistence in prayer brings a transforming element into our lives, building into us the character of God Himself. It is a way that God builds into us a heart that cares about things the same way He does. "Too many prayers are like boy's runaway knocks, given, and then the giver is away before the door can be opened." (Spurgeon) There are several contrasts between this judge and the God who hears prayer. (1) The judge was unfair; God is fair. (2) The judge had no personal interest in the widow; God loves and cares for those who petition Him.(3) The judge answered the widow's cry out of pure self-interest; God loves to bless His people for their good also. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Recall from Lk 18:1 Jesus gave the key to parable in telling them (His disciples - Lk 17:22)**a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.** And what has He been telling them in Luke 17? He has just been giving them about His Second Coming - "**For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.**" (Lk 17:24). In other words the Son of Man is going to come in a way that is visible so that the whole world will see His coming. And His coming will in judgment as it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot when "it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed." (Lk 17:29-30). In sum, Jesus has been speaking about the Second Coming and how it will bring great devastation and judgment to many, and this judgment must precede His establishment of His rule of righteousness and peace on the earth for 1000 years. And so in Luke 17:22 Jesus tells His disciples "**The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.**" Why? Because contrary to their understanding, there must be two comings. They were thinking there was only one coming and that coming would establish the long awaited Kingdom of the Messiah. But they misunderstood His first coming and so He says "**first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.**" (Luke 17:25). Jesus explains to His disciples that He first must come to die and pay the penalty for sin, and then come a second time later to judge all the ungodly and to establish His glorious kingdom. In this context (which is "obscured" by the chapter break from 17 to 18), Jesus tells them "a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." (Lk 18:1)

"ESCHATOLOGICAL PRAYING"

As **John MacArthur** explains "In the time between the first and Second Coming disciples are not to **lose heart** but rather are to

pray. We are living in that period of time now. Yes there is the invisible kingdom the Lord is building through salvation as He comes to take up His royal throne in the hearts of those who put their trust in Christ. But the visible kingdom, the kingdom of righteousness, the destruction of the ungodly, the binding of Satan, the end of the reign of Satan and sin, the establishment of the glorious kingdom of righteousness, joy and peace and finally the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth are all associated with His Second Coming, which will be triggered by the rapture of the church. That's all in the future. And so He is saying you need to view that event with **prayer** and **not to lose heart**. That's the key to unlocking the meaning of the story. The Lord knew then that a long time would go by...and now it has been 2,000 years. And during this time Christ is continually dishonored and denied His rightful place. And the Word of God is unappreciated and assaulted and attacked. And Christians are treated with rejection and persecution and hostility and even martyrdom through these two millennia. We suffer at the hands of Satan and the world and we suffer the persecution of a hostile environment and we long for Christ to come back (cf Lk 17:22 "*The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man*") and destroy the ungodly and sin and the reign of Satan and set up His kingdom. We long for that day, but in the intervening time the message is very clear from our Lord: **Don't lose heart. Keep praying to that end**...at all times, at all times...through all the events and all the seasons and all the eras and all the years that go by, we are to pray and not lose heart. As Matthew 24:13 records, our Lord says "he that endures to the end shall be saved." It's that enduring faith that marks the true believer. So this is not a call to prayer in general like, "Pray without ceasing." That's a call to unceasing prayer in general. This is a call to eschatological prayer, pray that the Lord will come and pray for the strength to endure until He arrives, to endure the flesh, the world, the devil, the hostility against the gospel, persecution, rejection, and even martyrdom. This is **eschatological praying**....We need to pray that Christ will come. We need to pray that we will have the strength to endure to the end; the end of our life or the end when the Lord Himself comes, should we live until we are gathered to Him (in the Rapture). ([Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#))

TDNT says that the verb [lose heart](#) in Luke 18:1 is spoken "just after the apocalyptic discourse in Luke 17, the point is obviously that, with a view to the end, the disciples should not grow slack in prayer. The meaning is the same in 2 Cor. 4:1: Paul will not let any difficulties cause him to fail or grow weary."

Jesus gave a similar admonition in Luke 21:36+

"But **keep on the alert** (present imperative) at all times, **praying** (present tense = continually) that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Comment: Clearly this is a call to remain faithful in looking for the Lord's return. Are you looking for His return? If you are looking for His return, you are far more likely to be living in light of His return, living for the eternal, rather than for the temporal! In short, what you are looking for in life, will determine what you are living for!

JUSTICE IS COMING BECAUSE THE JUDGE IS COMING!

Now, will not God bring about justice ([ekdikesis](#)) for His elect ([eklektos](#)) who cry ([boao](#)) to Him day and night - Keeping in mind what the unrighteous judge did in response to the woman's persistent pleading for justice, Jesus now compares that response with the response of God. This is what is known as a "much more than" kind of comparison, a **lesser-to-greater argument** ([qal wahomer](#)). The point is that if this unfeeling, incredibly wicked, unrighteous judge will do what is right for someone for whom he has no affection, do you think that the perfectly just Judge will not do what is right for those who are His pleading chosen sons and daughters, those who were loved by Him even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4[±], cf 2 Ti 1:9ESV[±])? **Bring about justice** is two words in Greek, first **bring** ([poieo](#) - accomplish) and [ekdikesis](#), thus to accomplish justice, to render a just decision or to vindicate - "to punish the offenders"). In short Jesus' return is going to make all wrongs right! And so His elect who "**long to see one of the days of the Son of Man**" (Lk 17:22) **cry to Him** to return and bring about justice for all the evil that has been committed (including the evil words, thoughts and deeds of evil men against us). So when His elect **cry to Him day and night** pleading for Him to return in glory, do you think He will not hear them and respond? Of course He will. This begs the question - Are you crying out for Jesus to return and make all things right?

Wiersbe - Unless you see that Jesus is pointing out contrasts, you will get the idea that God must be "argued" or "bribed" into answering prayer! God is not like this judge; for God is a loving Father, who is attentive to our every cry, generous in His gifts, concerned about our needs, and ready to answer when we call. The only reason the judge helped the widow was because he was afraid she would "weary" him, which literally means "give me a black eye"—i.e., ruin his reputation. God answers prayer for His glory and for our good, and He is not vexed when we come. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Believers are the **elect** like the **widow** in the parable, helpless in a sense and at the mercy of the Judge, but praise God, in our case

not an unrighteous judge, but One Who is perfectly righteous, always "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Ex 34:6) toward us. Our righteous Judge Jesus will bring about justice, "for the LORD loves justice, and does not forsake His godly ones. (Ps 37:28, cf Question - Job 8:3; Answer - Job 34:12). "The LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice. How blessed are all those who **long** (Heb = chakah = to wait, connotes an attitude of earnest expectation and confident hope) for Him (So when we long for and pray for Messiah's return, what will be our present reward? We will be **blessed!**)." (Isaiah 30:18 - To Israel but applicable to all the elect). He will bring about vindication for His **elect**. Peter said that even in the midst of suffering (this widow was suffering and the elect are suffering - either in a trial, just out of one or standing on the edge of one!) Jesus left "an example for you to follow in His steps. (1 Peter 2:21+). Even the Son "kept entrusting ([paradidomi](#) in the imperfect tense = over and over, again and again - this is OUR Example!) Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23+) He will bring about perfect vindication, even as Paul affirms in Romans 12 exhorting us "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord." (Romans 12:19+)

John the apostle records the testimony of the great multitude in heaven (who have seen much of the "end" of the eschatological story so to speak) writing "After these things (WHAT THINGS?) I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God (WHY?); BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS (Quoting Ps 19:9) for (EXPLAINS THE "WHAT THINGS?") He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting (MAKING "MORALLY ROTTEN") the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED ([ekdikao](#) = the same verb used in Luke 18:3+) THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER." (Rev 19:1-2+) In this passage in the Revelation, it is clear that God has done what He promised He would accomplish for His elect. He is true to His Word.

Wiersbe on the **lesser** (the widow and her rights, etc) and the **greater** (children of God) - Consider the contrasts. To begin with, the woman was a stranger, but we are the children of God, and God cares for His children (Luke 11:13). The widow had no access to the judge, but God's children have an open access into His presence and may come at any time to get the help they need (Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-22). The woman had no friend at court to help get her case on the docket. All she could do was walk around outside the tent and make a nuisance of herself as she shouted at the judge. But when Christian believers pray, they have in heaven a Saviour who is Advocate (1 John 2:1) and High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18), who constantly represents them before the throne of God. When we pray, we can open the Word and claim the many promises of God, but the widow had no promises that she could claim as she tried to convince the judge to hear her case. We not only have God's unfailing promises, but we also have the Holy Spirit, who assists us in our praying (Rom. 8:26-27). Perhaps the greatest contrast is that the widow came to a court of law, but God's children come to a throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16). She pled out of her poverty, but we have all of God's riches available to us to meet our every need (Phil. 4:19). The point is clear: if we fail to pray, our condition spiritually will be just like that of the poor widow. That should encourage us to pray! (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Jamieson on **cry day and night** - Whose every cry enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (James 5:4), and how much more their incessant and persevering cries!

Brian Bell - Does God want us to keep running to him asking for the same thing over & over? [Does that bless you when your kids do that?] Or, is it a blessing that they continue to see they need to be connected to you? [i.e. a continual coming, but not nec for the same thing] I know it's not arm wrestling God in prayer for something, because he said in 12:32, "fear not little flock, it's your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He's liberal, quick, He loves to answer!!! (speedily) Don't ever think you need to "wear him down" until he acts on our behalf. As a Father He is sensitive to our every need and ready to answer our prayers, in His perfect timing. ([Luke:18:1-14 2 Prayerables](#))

MacArthur comments that "We are those like the Thessalonians who "wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who rescues us from the wrath to come." (1Th 1:10+) I don't think you can live your Christian life the way the Lord wants you to live it unless you live it in the light of the Second Coming. You cannot remove the Second Coming out of the daily discourse of the church, out of your vocabulary or out of your life without having significant implications on how you live and view everything in life." ([Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#))

Undoubtedly the motivating thought of the return of Christ is why the Spirit inspired the NT writers to mention the Second Coming of Christ so often! It is estimated that about one in every 20-25 verses in the New Testament speaks directly or indirectly about the Second Coming of Christ. Clearly God wants us to be living our temporal lives with a Spirit enabled future focus!

THOUGHT - When was the last time you heard a sermon on the Second Coming? When was the last time you encouraged another saint with the truth of the Second Coming when God will bring about justice for His children who have been wronged? And to the point of Jesus' parable, when was the last time you prayed for Jesus to return?

Steven Cole - Jesus refers to His people here as His **elect**. This means that you do not follow Jesus because you first chose Him, but rather because He first chose you. He chose you totally apart from anything that He saw in you. He did not choose you because He saw a spark of goodness in you. He did not choose you because He saw that you would choose Him. He chose you unconditionally while you were a rebellious sinner, so that His unmerited favor would shine forth through you. If you do not believe in the doctrine of God's sovereign, unconditional election, you don't believe what Jesus believed and you rob yourself of a source of great comfort. Even when God's answers to your prayers are delayed, you can trust Him knowing that you are one of His elect. ([Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#))

Don't get put off by Jesus' choice of the term **elect**, which often sets off an emotional firestorm in many folks! Think of it as "sons" or "daughters" in the family of God. Leave the mystery of election to God. Enjoy the intimacy of the family relationship because of our justification by faith in Jesus "through Whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand." (Ro 5:2+) We have entree into the Throne Room of the Father through His Son (Heb 4:16+) and we need to **cry out day and night**.

Wiersbe - Jesus did not say that God's people are like this woman; in fact, He said just the opposite. Because we are not like her, we should be encouraged in our praying. He argued from the lesser to the greater: "If a poor widow got what she deserved from a selfish judge, how much more will God's children receive what is right from a loving Heavenly Father!" (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

William MacDonald has an interesting thought - The elect here might refer in a special sense to the Jewish remnant during the Tribulation Period, but it is also true of all oppressed believers in every age. (God's Word Translation has a similar thought "Won't God give his **chosen people** justice when they cry out to him") ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Day and night is a Jewish idiomatic expression that means "constantly," or "all the time". Anna the prophetess "prayed without ceasing"

And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, **serving night and day** with fastings and **prayers**. (Luke 2:36, 37+, cf 1 Ki 8:59, 2 Chr 6:20, Neh 1:6, Ps 1:2, Ps 32:4, Rev 4:8, et al)

Comment: And for what do you think she was praying? Luke gives us a clue that at least a component of her prayers were for Messiah's coming and thus she was engaged in "eschatological prayer" (now she may not have understood the distinction between the first and second comings) for Luke records "At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:38+). She was one of the redeemed remnant of Israel (God always had a portion of Israel which were genuine believers) who was looking for their Redeemer. Ponder this thought - if the first century Jewish believers were looking for the Redeemer, should not twenty-first century saints also be assiduously looking for the Redeemer? That's clearly a rhetorical question which calls for a "Yes!"

Will He delay long ([makrothumeo](#)) over them - This is the second rhetorical question, for regardless of the "**delay**" in terms of years, such a "**delay**" pales in comparison to eternity! And as Peter admonishes "do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness." (2 Peter 3:8-9+) God will **bring about justice for His elect**!

MacArthur says will He delay long over them is better translated "and be patient over them." Yes, "Is not God exercising patience?" is what this means. How do you know that? [Makrothumeo](#) is the word. It means to be patient. Do not we expect a delay because God is being patient over His people? What does that mean? It's really a profoundly important word. The long interval between the first and the Second Coming of Jesus is a period in which God is exercising patience, "patience over **THEM**." **THEM** is goes back to Lk 17:22, so "them" is the disciples, those who are His own. He is being patient over them... But this is [Makrothumeo](#)...from two Greek words. Makros technical meaning is "far distant." It means "long" with regard to space, or "long" with regard to distance, remote. Thumos is anger. The word makrothumeo means to be remote in anger, anger removed far, far away. And our Lord is saying He is coming, He will come, He will vindicate His own, He will glorify Himself, He will judge sinners. But He has removed to a far distance His wrath for a long, long time. This describes what Exodus 34 says about God, that He is slow to anger. God has a right to judge, but He also has a right to be merciful. God will judge in His own time. But Peter tells us the answer to this little dilemma, 2 Peter 3:9, "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." So in 2 Peter 3:15 Peter says this, "The *makrothumia* of God is salvation." What's He waiting for? He's waiting for the salvation of His elect. He's waiting until they're all gathered in. You don't want Him here any sooner than that. And when the last of the elect are gathered in, then the end will come. Yes, He will satisfy his wrath, but not until He has satisfied His grace. This, by the way, is the meaning of *makrothumia* every time it is used with reference to God. It is used with reference to God in Romans 2:4, Romans 9:22, 1 Peter

3:20, 2 Peter 3:9,15, 1 Timothy 1:16. In each of those cases it means that God withholds His wrath at a distance. T.W. Manson told a story that came from the old rabbis and this is the story. There was a king who was a very compassionate king. He wanted to rule his people with compassion and so he determined that his army would be stationed many miles from the city. And when he was asked by the wise men of the city why he would station his army many miles from the city, because they would be so far removed from civil disobedience that people would get away with things and they wouldn't be able to get there in time, he said this, according to the rabbis. That on any occasion of such rebellion in the city, it will take a long time to bring the soldiers here and this will be time for the rebels to come to their senses. And so said the rabbis, it is argued that God keeps His wrath at a distance in order for Israel to have time to repent. And not just Israel, but Gentiles as well. That's again 2 Peter 3:15, "Consider the *makrothumia* of the Lord as salvation." God will send Christ to judge and set up His kingdom and vindicate His elect, but not until His mercy in salvation is satisfied in full and all the elect are in.

Jamieson on **will He delay long over them** - 1.) The verb **makrothumeo** means to be long-suffering, or to endure patiently. Such is its usual rendering in the New Testament. (2.) **Them** (autois) refers not to the persecutors of God's elect, but to the **elect** themselves. (3.) The secondary meaning of restraining or delaying may fairly be deduced from the verb, and explained either (a) of delaying punishment, or (b) of delaying sympathy or help.

Robertson - God delays taking vengeance on behalf of His people, not through indifference, but through patient forbearance.

Leon Morris - More plausible is the view that the words render a Semitic expression meaning *'He postpones His wrath'*, i.e. God's delay in vindicating the **elect** is in order to give people the opportunity to repent. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries [-The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

Expositor's Bible Commentary - The point of the verse is that God patiently listens to his **elect** as they pray in their continuing distress, waiting for the proper time to act on their behalf.

ESV Study Bible says **will He delay long over them** - probably means, "Will God be patient much longer as he sees his elect suffer?" The implied answer is no."

Justice (Vengeance) (1557) ([ekdikesis](#) from **ek** = out, from + **dike** = justice; see also [ekdikos](#)) is literally that which proceeds "out of justice". **Ekdikesis** means to give justice to someone who has been wronged. It means to repay harm with harm on assumption that initial harm was unjustified and that retribution is therefore called for. **W E Vine** says *ekdikesis* describes pay back that is based on justice and "not (as often with **human vengeance**) from a sense of injury, or merely out of indignation. The judgments of God are holy and right, and free from any element of self-gratification... There is thus no element of vindictiveness, of "taking revenge,"... in the judgments of God; they are both holy and right (cp [Rev 16:7+](#)). The word indicates full, complete punishment. **Ekdikesis** was a technical term for administrative justice.

Ekdeke

Elect (chosen) (1588) ([eklektos](#) from verb [eklego](#) which in middle voice [eklegomai] means select or pick out for one's self which is derived from **ek** =out + **lego** =call) means literally the "called out ones" or "chosen out ones". The idea of **eklektos** is the ones who have been chosen for one's self, selected out of a larger number. Luke uses *eklektos* only one other time to describe "the Christ of God, His **Chosen One**." (Lk 23:35). Jesus uses *eklektos* three times in the eschatological section of Matthew, the Olivet Discourse - Mt 24:22, 24, 31+ (cf Mark 13:20, 22, 27).

Eklektos - 22x in 22v - Matt. 22:14; Matt. 24:22; Matt. 24:24; Matt. 24:31; Mk. 13:20; Mk. 13:22; Mk. 13:27; Lk. 18:7; Lk. 23:35; Rom. 8:33; Rom. 16:13; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 1 Pet. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:13; Rev. 17:14

Related Resources on ELECTION:

- [Click here for many resources on election \(this list has many resources NOT listed below\)](#)
- [Who are the elect of God?](#)
- [How can I know if I am one of the elect?](#)
- [What is conditional election?](#)
- [Unconditional election - is it biblical?](#)
- [What does Peter mean when he tells us to make our calling and election sure in 2 Peter 1:10?](#)
- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?](#)
- [Daniel Wallace - My Understanding of the Doctrine of Election](#)
- [List of Multiple Topics on Election, Including Quesitons](#)
- [Wayne Barber's sermon Chosen in Christ](#)

- Making Your Calling and Election Sure - 2 Peter 1:10-11
- [What is the Doctrine of Election](#) - John MacArthur
- [The Doctrine of Election, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [The Doctrine of Election, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [What does the Bible teach about election?](#) - John MacArthur
- [Election and Predestination: The Sovereignty of God in Salvation](#) - A Panel Discussion with John MacArthur
- [Is the Doctrine of Election Biblical](#) - John MacArthur
- [Is the Doctrine of Election Unfair?](#) - John MacArthur
- [Election](#) - Bob Utley
- [Election/Predestination and the Need for A Theological Balance](#) - Bob Utley

Cry out (present tense = as one's lifestyle, only possible by depending on the Spirit)(994)(**boao** from **boé** 995) means raise a cry, call or shout of joy, pain, etc, by using one's voice with unusually high volume. In this context (and many more of the [Septuagint = LXX](#) uses) this verb depicts crying out was for help or assistance. Luke uses this verb 7x more than all other NT writers combined = Lk. 3:4; Lk. 9:38; Lk. 18:7; Lk. 18:38; Acts 8:7; Acts 17:6; Acts 25:24. Matthew has the first NT use of boao describing John the Baptist "THE VOICE OF ONE **CRYING** IN THE WILDERNESS." (Mt 3:3, Mk 1:3, Lk 3:4, Jn 1:23) Can you picture him shouting out with considerable volume. Of course in the context of prayer to God, it is not the level of volume that counts, but the sincerity (faith, submission, brokenness, etc) of the heart that counts (cf Ps 51:16,17). Boao is used of Jesus crying out on the cross (Mk 15:34).

Luke use of **boao** in chapter 9 gives us a sense of the passion with which we should petition God (as if the life of our only child were at stake!) - "And a man from the crowd **shouted**, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy" (Lk. 9:38+) **Luke** uses this same verb again in Luke 18:38+ of the blind man who "**called** (boao - loudly!) saying "Jesus, Son of David (acknowledging Jesus' Messianic claim with this title), have mercy on me!" Sensing His need and nearness of the Savior prompted a loud plea, a good model for every child of God in this present evil age (Gal 1:4+, cf "days are evil" in Eph 5:16+) to practice with persistence and perseverance! What would this mindset do to our praying? We need to see ourselves continually as people just as needy as this blind man saw himself and that will surely motivate passionate pleading!

Delay (3114)(**makrothumeo** from **makros** = long, distant, far off, large + **thumos** = temper, passion, emotion or **thumoomai** = to be furious or burn with intense anger; See related word [makrothumia](#)) literally describes prolonged restraint of **thumos**, of emotion, anger or agitation. It means one's temper is long (as opposed to "short tempered") and does not give way to a short or quick temper toward those who fail. Luke's use in this context conveys more of the simple meaning of delay or as one lexicon says "perhaps be slow to help them or delay to help them." (UBS)

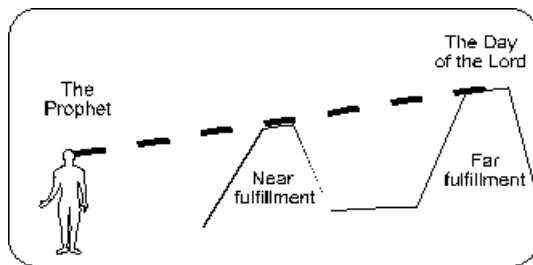
Other passages speak of the truth that God will not **delay**...

Habakkuk 2:3+ "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, **wait** (Lxx = [hupomeno](#) in the aorist imperative = do this now!) for it; For it will certainly come, **it will not delay**.

The Hebrew verb **wait** for is **chakah**. It is used in the following examples of "eschatological waiting." The book of Daniel closes with a blessing for those who would wait for the fulfillment of the prophecies (Dan 12:12+). The Lord declares, "Wait for me" (Zeph 3:8+). The expressions "to wait for the Lord" in Isa 8:17+ and "to wait for him" in Isa 64:4, connote an attitude of earnest expectation and confident hope. In Isaiah 64:4 we read "For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, Neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee, Who acts in behalf of the one who **waits** for Him."

Henry Morris - The fulfillment of God's promises (or warnings) may seem to tarry by our reckoning. But God has an appointed time for their accomplishment, and we can be sure it will come on time (Josh 23:14), for He does not lie (Titus 1:2+, Nu 23:19). In the New Testament, this truth which Habakkuk applied to the coming Chaldean invasion is quoted in reference to the promised return of Christ (Hebrews 10:36,37). To we who long for His return, it may seem that He is "**tarrying**." But we need to be patient, to "occupy till [He] come[s]" (Luke 19:13+), and to be ready. (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

Like a number of OT prophecies that have a dual fulfillment, Habakkuk's words have a near fulfillment with Babylon's invasion but also a far future fulfillment with the King of kings' "invasion," which the prophet did not understand. See the near and far fulfillment schematic below...



Hebrews 10:35-37[±] Therefore, do not throw away your confidence (CONTEXT IS JEWISH BELIEVERS WHO WERE SUFFERING FOR THEIR BELIEF IN MESSIAH), which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance (CF WAITING ON JEHOVAH - PRAYING AT ALL TIMES FOR HIS RETURN!), so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised (AND LUKE 18:7 SAYS PART OF THAT "PROMISE" IS VINDICATION, PERFECT JUSTICE! THIS TRUTH SHOULD HELP RESTRAIN US FROM SEEKING OUR OWN VENGEANCE! cf Ro 12:17-21[±]). 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, **HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.**

Max Lucado - God's Good Timing

God will always give what is right to his people who cry to him night and day, and he will not be slow to answer them. LUKE 18:7

Why does God wait until the money is gone? Why does he wait until the sickness has lingered? Why does he choose to wait until the other side of the grave to answer the prayers for healing? I don't know. I only know his timing is always right. I can only say he will do what is best.... Though you hear nothing, he is speaking. Though you see nothing, he is acting. With God there are no accidents. Every incident is intended to bring us closer to him. (Grace for the Moment)

Luke 18:8 "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

- **He will:** Ps 46:5 143:7-9 2Pe 2:3 3:8,9
- **when the Son of Man comes:** Mt 24:9-13,24 1Th 5:1-3 Heb 10:23-26 Jas 5:1-8
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

James 5:1-8+ Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you. 7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

Daniel 7:13+ "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

SPEEDY JUSTICE FOR THE ELECT

I tell you that He will bring ([poieo](#) - accomplish) about justice ([ekdikesis](#)) for them quickly ([tachos](#)) - He will bring about justice see [comments above](#) on this same phrase in Lk 18:7. Jesus uses the idiom *en tachei* which means quickly, suddenly and so He is promising that when it happens it will happen suddenly. His justice on behalf of the elect will be sudden, sure and complete! But we

are to keep praying and persisting in prayer and not lose heart because He is waiting to gather in all His elect. Quickly does not necessarily immediately, but **quickly** once it begins. Compare "like the lightning" (Lk 17:24+) Christ's justice will be swift and sure, and "our suffering will seem short-lived compared to the glory to follow. In the meantime he protects us." (Bock)

I tell you - note that 2/3's of uses of this demonstrative declaration are by Luke - Matt. 2:13; Matt. 10:27; Matt. 11:9; Matt. 12:36; Matt. 21:27; Matt. 26:64; Mk. 11:33; Lk. 11:8; Lk. 11:51; Lk. 12:5; Lk. 12:27; Lk. 12:51; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 13:27; Lk. 14:24; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 17:34; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 18:14; Lk. 19:26; Lk. 19:40; Lk. 20:8; Lk. 22:37; Lk. 22:67; Jn. 3:12; Jn. 16:7; 1 Co. 15:51

Steven Cole on quickly - What does Jesus mean when He says that justice will come **quickly**? Here we are almost 2,000 years later, and Jesus has not returned to rescue His needy people. We all know stories of faithful saints who have prayed for something all their lives, but their prayers went unanswered. **What does quickly mean?** We must understand it from God's timetable, not ours. With the Lord, a thousand years are like a day or as a watch in the night (2 Pet. 3:8+; Ps 90:4 "*For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night.*"). He told Noah that there would be a flood (cf Luke 17:26-27+), but over 100 years went by without a drop of rain while Noah endured his mocking neighbors (ED: MOST GET THIS TIME OF >100 YEARS FROM Ge 6:3). He promised Abraham a son, but he watched Sarah go through menopause and 25 years elapsed before Isaac was born. He promised Joseph in his teenage years through his dreams that his father and brothers would bow down to him, but he spent his twenties in an Egyptian dungeon. He promised to deliver His people from bondage in Egypt, but 400 long years went by before He raised up Moses, and that only after Moses spent 40 years in the desert after his failure. He promised to send His Messiah, but His people had to wait 400 years after the last prophet before (cf Mal 3:1+), in the fullness of time, God sent His Son (Gal. 4:4). **Quickly** by God's "calendar" is not quickly by ours! One answer to the problem of delayed answers to our prayers is to get a proper view of God. ([Luke 18:1-8 Persevering in Prayer](#))

When the Son of Man comes refers not to the Rapture but His visible Second Coming at the end of this present evil age. And remember that Jesus has just described what it will be like when He returns....

"And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 32 "Remember Lot's wife. (Luke 17:26-32)

So clearly from this passage in Luke 17 Jesus tells us **"It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed"** In other words, the earth will be filled with evil, filled with people who lack faith in Him, just as they did in the days of Noah and Lot, both in describing judgment, which will also be the case when **the Son of Man is revealed**. And so He asks **will He find faith on earth?**

When the Son of Man comes - The specific name **Son of Man** is found 6 times in the concluding [eschatological](#) section of the previous chapter (Lk. 17:22+; Lk. 17:24; Lk. 17:26; Lk. 17:30) which is further evidence that this parable is closely linked with that eschatological section.

All of Luke's uses of **Son of Man** - Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 9:26; Lk. 9:44; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 9:58; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 12:8; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:40; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 17:24; Lk. 17:26; Lk. 17:30; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 21:27; Lk. 21:36; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:48; Lk. 22:69; Lk. 24:7

MacArthur assumes you may be asking "How do you know this is a Second Coming section?" Lk 18:8 is the key for at the end of the verse Jesus asks **"when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"** Will He find this kind of persevering faith? Will He find this kind of persevering prayer? Will He find this kind of enduring confidence? This is definitely **eschatological praying**. We don't know when the events that are the Second Coming will begin. We don't know when the day of the Lord is going to come, but 2,000 years have passed by. Believers have been waiting and suffering at the hand of sinners. And sin escalates while evil men grow worse and worse. We see the pollution inside and outside Christendom. False teachers abound. And followers of Christ continue to endeavor to endure and remain true and faithful, trusting in the Word of God. We have been promised that He will come. We believe that He will come. And here He says, "Keep praying for that event." He will come but part of the means of His coming is our prayer life. Prayer moves God to accomplish His work and therefore having accomplished His work, bringing it to its great culmination in His Second Coming. He will come. He promises He will come. He will be faithful to His elect. He will bring judgment to the ungodly. He will vindicate the saints. He will exalt Himself. He will establish His throne on earth. He will reign in a kingdom on earth and after that He will establish the new heaven and the new earth. And that is what we are to pray for relentlessly.

This takes us back to Matthew 6:10 and Luke 11:2. "When you pray, pray like this: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Thy kingdom come.'" This is kingdom praying. This is praying for the kingdom to come, for the Lord to punish the ungodly, reclaim the earth, mete out righteous judgment, vindicate His elect, establish His glory on the earth, vanquish Satan, take His throne, and establish the glorious fulfillment of all His promises. So again I say: The key to the parable hangs at the front door. We know what this story is about. We are to be living our lives saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." ([Luke 18:1-8 - Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#))

Darrell Bock on **will He find faith** - When Jesus returns, **will He find faith on earth**—that is, will people persevere in looking for His return?

Ryrie on **will He find faith on the earth** - Does not argue for improved spiritual conditions in the world before Christ's return.

MacArthur Study Bible - This suggests that when He returns, the true faith will be comparatively rare—as in the days of Noah (Lk 17:26), when only 8 souls were saved. The period before His return will be marked by persecution, apostasy, and unbelief (Mt 24:9–13, 24).

Constable - Jesus' final question suggests that there will be few on the earth who believe in Him when He returns (Lk 17:22–18:1+). Remember that the Second Coming is in view, not the Rapture....Prayer not only secures God's help during persecution, but it also demonstrates **faith** in God...The parable is an exhortation to persevere in the faith rather than apostatizing (i.e., turning away from it). God will vindicate His elect at the Second Coming (cf. Ps. 25:2–3; Rev. 6:9–11). That will be His ultimate answer to these prayers of His people, but immediate help before that coming is primarily in view in this parable.

Leon Morris - When he asks whether the Son of man will **find faith on earth**, he is not suggesting that there will be no believers. He is saying that the characteristic of the world's people at that time will not be faith. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries –[The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

Wiersbe on **will He find faith** - The question in Luke 18:8 ties in with what Jesus taught in Luke 17:22–37: "Shall He find [that kind of] faith on the earth?" The end times will not be days of great faith. Eight people were saved in Noah's day, and only four out of Sodom (and one of them perished on the way). Passages like 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3 paint a dark picture of the last days. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Criswell - "Will He find faith on the earth?" underscores the concern of Jesus that the disciples not be shaken in their faith and confidence in Him. (Believer's Study Bible)

R Kent Hughes - As we live in the **not yet**, longing for the return of the Son of Man, Jesus' closing question has the same force as it did in A.D. 33: "However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (v. 8b). Jesus' question implies that such faith will not be found on earth unless his disciples learn to "always pray and not give up" (v. 1b). Jesus was saying that continual prayer until he comes is not only the evidence of faith, but the means of building faith until his return. The God to whom we pray is not like the unjust judge who could only be badgered into responding, for our God is loving and gracious. And we are not like the nameless widow, for we are his chosen ones. Because of this, he delights to hear and quickly answer our prayers until he comes. "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Yes, he will, if we have learned to live a life of prayer in the not yet. ([Preaching the Word - Luke](#))

MacArthur observes that Jesus "closes with a question, *'However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'*" What does that mean? Jesus is just asking the question that when He does come, given that it's going to be a long time, will there be anybody left who is persistent like this widow? When He does come **will He find people praying for His return?** I think that if He were to come now He would find many who call themselves Christians seldom praying for His coming....When He comes, will He find His people still crying day and night, eagerly waiting for His return? Will we love His appearing (2 Ti 4:8+)? Will we be crying out "**Maranatha**"? (1 Cor 16:22) which means "**Our Lord, come!**" We live in hope, beloved (cf Titus 2:13+). We are true Christians and have been given a tremendous promise. This is how it is going to end. In the [meantime](#) we suffer and we are rejected and persecuted and alienated and the Gospel is resisted and Christ is dishonored and sometimes we think it is going on too long. But we are to continue to pray and plead for the glory and honor of Christ. And when we live and pray and plead that way, it changes everything about our life. Yes it's been 2,000 years, but our hope burns bright, and our love for Christ is still true and pure and our confidence that He will keep His Word is fast and firm. And so we pray persistently, calling on Him to come, to glorify Himself, to vindicate Himself, to punish sinners, dethrone Satan, establish His righteous kingdom, bring peace on the earth, reign as King of kings and Lord of lords and then to create the eternal new heaven and the new earth. We say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." This word ought to be on our lips day after day, says our Lord. Live in that kind of anticipation until He comes. And watch how it changes your life. ([Persistent Prayer for the Lord's Return](#))

Darrell Bock sums up Luke 18:1-8 - So Jesus urges prayer and perseverance. God will vindicate his saints. Trust him to do so and **keep praying for his return**, which is the vindication of the saints. We should pray because, unlike the judge in the parable, God is not grudging about granting our desires for justice. And we should keep asking for the vindication of the people of God; our patience

and willingness to make this request should never run out. By continuing to make the request, we stay sensitive to the need for justice to come. So like the nagging widow, just keep asking. ([Faithful in Looking for the King, the Kingdom and Its Consummation Luke 17:11-18:8](#))

Quickly (5034)(**tachos**) with speed, haste, swiftness; adverbially as in Lk 18:8 ("*en tachei*") means without delay, at once, speedily. **Tachos** is used in the first and last chapter of the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1+ , Rev 22:6+ after which Jesus says "I am coming **quickly** [related word "tachu"]." Rev 22:7) and in Romans 16:20, all of these uses being in an eschatological setting just as with Luke 18:8 and all refer directly or indirectly to Christ's Second Coming, which makes it clear that **tachos** translated as **quickly** does not mean immediately. The idea of **tachos** is better understood as meaning swiftly. In other words, when God acts it will be swift. So once God begins to act (in presence context **bring about justice**) He will move fast or do it in a short time. See Tony Garland's in depth analysis of the use of tachos in Revelation 1:1+

Tachos - 7x in 7v - quickly(3), shortly(1), soon(3).

Luke 18:8 "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them **quickly**. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Acts 12:7 And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up **quickly**." And his chains fell off his hands.

Acts 22:18 and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem **quickly**, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

Acts 25:4 Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself was about to leave **shortly**.

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will **soon** crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Revelation 1:1+ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must **soon** take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

Revelation 22:6 And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must **soon** take place.

Tachos - 36x in 35v in the Septuagint -

Ex. 32:7 = "Go down **at once**" (cf Dt 9:12); Nu 16:46 = "bring it **quickly** to the congregation and make atonement for them"; Deut. 7:4; Deut. 7:22; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 28:20; Jos. 8:18; Jos. 8:19 = "The men in ambush rose **quickly** from their place"; Jos. 10:6; Jdg. 2:23; Jdg. 7:9; Jdg. 9:54; 1 Sam. 23:22; 1 Ki. 22:9 = "Bring quickly Micaiah son of Imlah."; 1 Chr. 12:8; 2 Chr. 18:8; Est. 8:12; Ps. 2:12; Ps. 6:10; Ps. 147:15 = "His word runs very **swiftly**."; Isa. 5:19; Ezek. 29:5; Dan. 9:21;

R Kent Hughes has some practical points on what do you do when you pray and **God seems to be silent** - But many are still discouraged by God's seeming silence. We need to learn that in the silence our loving God is answering, whether we see his working or not, for he delights to answer his children's prayers. Sometimes the silence means that God's answer is a loving no. Perhaps we asked amiss, or though the request was good, a better way is coming. Far better for Paul than the removal of his thorn was God's sufficient grace, which was perfected in his weakness. This is why he could write, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Also, sometimes the silence means that God has a bigger answer in store than we could ever have dreamed of or asked for. As Oswald Chambers explained, "Some prayers are followed by silence because they are wrong, others because they are bigger than we can understand. It will be a wonderful moment for some of us when we stand before God and find that the prayers we clamoured for in early days and imagined were never answered, have been answered in the most amazing way, and that God's silence has been the sign of the answer." Further, sometimes the silence of God is meant to instill dependence upon him. In the case of Paul he was left with his thorn so that he would lean entirely upon God. We are so prone to independence that the granting of certain of our requests would lead us to self-sufficiency, pride, and independence. There can be no better way to cultivate a sense of dependence upon God than the need for persistent or determined prayer. Sometimes the silence is a delay to allow our prayers to mature. If God had answered our prayers according to our schedule, our prayers would not have been honed by the Spirit for our greater good and his glory. ([Preaching the Word - Luke](#))

Before the Face of God - A Haunting Question

“However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” [Luke 18:8b]

Jesus told of the persistent widow to encourage his disciples to persevere in faith. He knew how dark and bleak would be the days between the ascension and his return. His words were meant to invigorate the disciples for the challenge, to regulate their thinking and actions in accordance with priorities of the kingdom. They were to be consumed with a passion for justice before his throne and to look for him to return to settle all accounts justly.

Jesus then tacked on an unexpected question. He asked his followers if, at his return, he would find anyone on earth with true faith in God.

Imagine a question like that from the lips of Jesus. He is talking to his disciples, but the Pharisees were listening. He asks, “When I come back, will I find a faithful generation that has persevered in prayer, or will I find another generation like these godless Pharisees who have negotiated away their faith?” Is it any wonder that the Pharisees incited the crowds to demand Jesus’ death? Their bowl of wrath was beginning to overflow.

This verse has always haunted me, and sometimes I have prayed, “Lord, if you return in my lifetime, I promise that you will find faith on this planet, because you will find it in me.” But we have to be careful about making glib statements like this, because it is only by the grace of God that we can persevere in any kind of faithfulness.

Jesus hints that when he returns it will not be to a generation marked by great faithfulness, but rather it will be a time when he has to search for real, persevering faith. Many have noted that our day seems to be such a time. Accommodation to the world is all too common.

The parable is relevant, not only to the final coming of Jesus, but also to his comings in history. Who can know when Christ will come? It may be tonight. And who can know when Christ will come to judge a given nation? If our land does not repent, surely her days are numbered. When he comes for you, what will he find?

Will the Son of Man Find Faith on Earth?

This is a hard saying in the sense that no one can be quite sure what it means, especially in relation to its context. When a question is asked in Greek, it is often possible to determine, from the presence of one particle or another, whether the answer expected is yes or no. But no such help is given with this one. Many commentators assume that the answer implied here is no, but in form at least it is a completely open question.

Luke is the only Evangelist who records the question, and he places it at the end of the parable of the persistent widow—the widow who refused to take no for an answer. Jesus told this parable, says Luke, to teach his disciples that “they should always pray and not give up” (Lk 18:1). But what has this purpose to do with the Son of Man finding faith on earth when he comes?

The widow in the parable showed faith of an unusually persevering quality—not personal faith in the unjust judge whom she pestered until he granted her petition to keep her quiet, but faith in the efficacy of persistent “prayer.” The point of the story seems to be this: if even a conscienceless judge, who “neither feared God nor cared about men,” saw to it that a widow got her rights, not for the sake of seeing justice done but to get rest from her importunity, how much more will God, who is no unjust judge but a loving Father, listen to his children’s plea for vindication! It is vindication that they seek, just as the widow insisted on getting her rights, of which someone was trying to deprive her.

Then comes the question: **“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”** It is possible indeed that it is Luke who attaches the question to the parable, and that in Jesus’ teaching it had some other context which is no longer recoverable. T. W. Manson leaned to the view that “the Son of Man” does not bear its special meaning here—that the sense is “Men and women ought to have implicit faith that God will vindicate his elect people, that righteousness will triumph over evil. But when one comes and looks for such faith—when, for example, I come and look for it—is it anywhere to be found?” The answer implied by this interpretation is no—people in general, it is suggested, do not really expect God to vindicate his chosen ones, nor do they at heart desire the triumph of righteousness over evil.

But perhaps we should look at a wider context than this one parable. The coming of the Son of Man is a major theme in the preceding section of Luke’s record, in the discourse of Jesus about “the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (Lk 17:22–37). The lesson impressed by this discourse on the hearers is that they must keep on the alert and be ready for that day when it comes. When it comes, God will vindicate his righteous cause and therewith the cause of his people who trust him. But they must trust him and not lose heart; they must here and now continue faithfully in the work assigned to them. (This is the lesson also of the parable of the pounds in Lk 19:11–27.) The Son of Man, whose revelation will be like the lightning, illuminating “the sky from one end to the other” (Lk 17:24), will be able to survey the earth to see if there is any faith on it, any “faithful and wise steward” whom his master when he comes will find loyally fulfilling his service (Lk 12:42–44 RSV).

So the question "Will he find faith on earth?" remains open in fact as in form: its answer depends on the faithfulness of those who wait to render account of their stewardship when he calls for it. (Scroll down to page 449 [Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))

Luke 18:9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

- **to some people who trusted in themselves:** Lu 10:29 15:29 16:15 Pr 30:12 Isa 65:5 66:5 Joh 9:28,34 Ro 7:9 Ro 9:31,32 10:3 Php 3:4-6
- **viewed others with contempt:** Lu 18:11 7:39 15:2,30 19:7 Joh 7:47-49 8:48 Ac 22:21 Ro 14:10
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

A PARABLE CONTRASTING TWO TYPES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

MacArthur points out that we have to keep in mind the larger context of this section, which is the subject of the **kingdom of God** which became a major focus beginning in Luke 17:20-21 (and extending through Luke 18:30) when He was "questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming," and Jesus answered explaining that "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." He went on to explain that the Kingdom of God had a present spiritual aspect (in the hearts of those who received Christ the King). But that is just one aspect of the kingdom which consists secondly of a coming literal, earthly Millennial Kingdom and thirdly an eternal Kingdom. So naturally, the question arises "Who will get to enter the Kingdom of God?" In other words, who is a part of that spiritual kingdom, and will therefore participate in the earthly kingdom and live forever in the eternal kingdom? Who is qualified? Who is acceptable to God in the kingdom? Jesus answers that question in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

Alfred Edersheim adds that "The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, which follows, is only internally connected with that of 'the Unjust Judge.' It is not of unrighteousness, but of self-righteousness—and this, both in its positive and negative aspects: as trust in one's own state, and as contempt of others. Again, it has also this connection with the previous Parable, that, whereas that of the Unrighteous Judge pointed to continuance, this to humility in prayer. The introductory clause shows that it has no connection in point of time with what had preceded, although the interval between the two may, of course, have been very short. Probably, something had taken place, which is not recorded, to occasion this Parable, which, if not directly addressed to the Pharisees, is to such as are of Pharisaic spirit....On the present occasion the two men, who went together to the entrance of the Temple, represented the two religious extremes in Jewish society. To the entrance of the Temple, but no farther, did the Pharisee and the Publican go together. Within the sacred enclosure—before God, where man should least have made it, began their separation." ([The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah - The Last Three Parables of the Perean Series - The Unrighteous Judge, the Self-Righteous Pharisee and the Publican - The Unmerciful Servant](#))

Robert Stein observes that "The theme of the parable, God's mercy to tax collectors and sinners, has been encountered earlier (Luke 5:29–32; 7:36–50; 15:1–32; 16:19–31) as has the form, a parable in which the behavior of two characters is contrasted (Luke 7:36–50; 15:11–32; 16:19–31; cf. also Matt 20:1–16; 21:28–32)." (New American Commentary)

And He also told this parable - This parable is connected with the parable in Luke 18:1-8 in which Jesus calls for prayer at all times and in this parable describes how we ought to pray. However, the emphasis is not on prayer but on true versus false righteousness. It is about who will get into the Kingdom of God and who will not get into the Kingdom of God.

Kenneth E. Bailey comments on how this parable is frequently misinterpreted, many preachers choosing to focus on prayer aspect (which is there), but missing Jesus' main point about true and false righteousness. **Bailey** writes...

"The more familiar a parable, the more it cries out to be rescued from the barnacles that have attached themselves to it over the centuries. In the popular mind, the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector is a **simple story about prayer**. One man prays an arrogant prayer and is blamed for his attitudes. The other prays humbly and is praised for so doing. Too often the unconscious response becomes, Thank God, we're not like that Pharisee! But such a reaction demonstrates that we are indeed like him! How can this parable best be understood? Is it strictly about styles of prayer? No doubt humility in prayer is at the heart of the story, but in his introduction Luke tells his readers that **the main focus of the parable is righteousness and those**

who believe they can reach that pious goal by means of their own efforts." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#) - see [the reviews](#)).

Parable (3850)(see above for [parabole](#)) is a story, in this case a "story" about **righteousness**, false and true. For context, remember that since Adam's sin entered the world (Romans 5:12+), bringing unrighteousness with it, mankind has sought to attain to a righteousness that God would accept, a righteousness that [would assure entrance to heaven](#) (or it's equivalent) when one dies. In short, there are only two alternatives to attaining righteousness, man's way (false) or God's way (true).

In the book of **Job**, which most authorities consider the oldest book in the Bible, Bildad asked Job **"How then can man be justified with God?"** (Job 25:4KJV).

In Ps 143:2 **David** answers asking God "do not enter into judgment with Your servant, **for in Your sight no man living is righteous.**"

David's son **Solomon** added "Indeed, **there is not a righteous** (Hebrew = [saddiq](#); Lxx = [dikaioo](#)) man on earth who continually does good and who never sins." (Eccl 7:20)

Solomon adds "there is no man who does not sin." (1 Ki 8:46)

Isaiah describes man's (SELF) **righteousness** writing that "all of us have become like one who is unclean, and **all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment** (filthy rags - Hebrew phrase = *"and like a garment of menstruation [are] all our righteous acts"*). (Isaiah 64:6)

From these passages (and many others could have been added), it is clear that in God's eyes

**"THERE IS NONE (absolutely none!) RIGHTEOUS,
(absolutely) NOT EVEN ONE!"**
(Ro 3:10+)

Man's way to attain righteousness describes fallen sinners seeking to be good enough or do enough "good" deeds to merit spending eternity with God in Heaven. Proverbs 14:12 addresses man's attempts to achieve righteousness declaring "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."

God's way of righteousness describes the merciful provision of His perfect righteousness to sinners by grace through faith (Eph 2:8+) in the death, burial and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. Paul summarizes God's way writing that "He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus Christ) Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we (those who believe the Gospel) might become the righteousness ([dikaioisune](#)) of God in Him." (2 Cor 5:21+).

Jesus alluded to **Man's way** versus **God's way** comparing these two ways using the metaphor of a physician writing "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the **righteous** (THE "SELF-RIGHTEOUS"), but **sinners** to repentance (AND JUSTIFICATION = DECLARATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS)." (Lk 5:31,32+).

Related Discussion - Commentary on "works of the law" versus faith Galatians 3:1-5

Righteousness ([dikaioisune](#)) is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. The righteousness of God can be succinctly summarized as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He approves, and all that He provides through Christ ([Click](#) for Ray Pritchard's analysis of **righteousness**). **Righteousness** is attitude and action which conforms to a standard and can be either man's imperfect standard (as exemplified by the self-righteous Pharisee in this parable) or God's standard of perfect holiness (as reckoned to the tax collector in this parable). Righteous acts initiated and carried out in our own fleshly energy and calculated to impress others, do not impress God! **Righteousness** before men to be noticed by them is **self righteousness**. **Righteousness** that God the Father accepts is the character of His Son reproduced in and through us by His Holy Spirit and for His good pleasure.

Jesus Thy Blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head. ([Play](#))

In summary, there are two ways **Savior-righteousness** or **Self-righteousness**. The former way leads to Heaven and eternal life, while the latter leads to Hell and Eternal Death. Self-righteousness is the great lie that has deceived mankind since the fall when the Serpent beguiled Eve with the lie "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (cf Ge 3:4-5+) All human attempts to achieve self-righteousness are futile and will

end in eternal separation from God. EVERY religion in the world (other than Christianity) attempts to be right with God by human efforts of one form or another. [These false religions may have many variations](#), but they all distill down to belief in the deadly deception that man can work his way to God. They all in some way ask what can I do to be good enough to get to [Heaven](#) (or Paradise or Nirvana, etc)? And so while there are thousands of false religions, they all converge at this one point - human attempts to attain self-righteousness. Jesus described this as the wide gate and the broad way "that leads to destruction" and added that this way leads to destruction and "there are many who enter through it." (Mt 7:13+) (Watch this 2 minute video in which men and women on the street were asked "[How does a person get to heaven?](#)")

Related Resource:

- [Why Are there so many religions? Do all religions lead to God?](#)
- [How to Get to Heaven - What are the ideas from the different religions?](#) (Nice summary)

Here is an [illustration](#) of these two basic approaches to **righteousness** -

An Englishman by the name of Ebenezer Wooten had just concluded a preaching service in the village square. The crowd had dispersed, and he was busily engaged in loading the equipment. A young man approached him and asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I **DO** to be saved?" Sensing that the fellow was trusting his own righteousness, Wooten answered in a rather unconcerned way, "It's too late!" The inquirer was startled. "Oh don't say that, sir!" But the evangelist insisted, "It's too late!" Then, looking the young man in the eye, he continued, "You want to know what you must **DO** to be saved. I tell you it's too late now or any other time. The work of salvation is done, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross." (See "It is finished! Paid in full!") Then he explained that our part is simply to acknowledge our sin, repent and receive by faith the gift of God's forgiveness.

Here is another more [spectacular example](#) of man's vain attempt to achieve **righteousness**...

It seems that men have some innate knowledge of their great need for righteousness and they attempt many ways to attain it as the following [Global Prayer Digest report from December 24, 2000](#) emphasizes: "What was the largest gathering of humanity in history?...According to the Guinness Book of World Records, it was the 1989 Kumbh Mela event in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. About 15 million people attended!...The [Maha Kumbh Mela](#) is so important to Hindus that millions will attend this festival that happens once every 12 years. According to Hindu myths, when the stars come together on a certain line, a person may gain salvation ([moksha](#)) by taking a holy dip. Sadhus and other Hindu VIPs get the first chance to take the holy dip. From January 9 to February 21, 2001 they will do it again in Allahabad. This time, Indian officials expect to have 45 million attending, a record-breaking number!" They know they need righteousness and believe the lie that they can bathe in a so-called "holy river" and receive that righteousness!

Wayne Grudem writes that

A right understanding of **justification** is absolutely crucial to the whole Christian faith. Once Martin Luther realized the truth of justification by faith alone, he became a Christian and overflowed with the new-found joy of the gospel. The primary issue in the Protestant Reformation was a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church over justification ([+](#)). If we are to safeguard the truth of the Gospel for future generations, we must understand the truth of justification. Even today, a true view of justification is the dividing line between the biblical Gospel of salvation by faith alone and all false gospels of salvation based on good works. ([Systematic Theology](#)) (Bolding added)

Justification is God's declaration that all the demands of His righteous and holy law are fulfilled on behalf of the believing sinner through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Justification is a forensic or legal transaction. It is an one time act or declaration occurring at the moment one places their faith in Christ. At that moment, the believing sinner is fully (100%) justified before God. Nothing can be added or subtracted from that declaration of justification. And so in justification, God imputes, reckons or places on the sinner's "account" the perfect righteousness of Christ and God declares this individual fully and forever righteous in His sight. Justification is distinguished from sanctification, in which God's Spirit imparts Christ's righteousness to the sinner, progressively, day by day, for the remainder of a saved sinner's life on earth.

- **Chart depicting relationship of justification and sanctification** - [Three Tenses of Salvation](#) (Justification, Sanctification, Glorification)
- **Related word study** on [dikaioo](#) = Justify, justified, Acquitted, Vindicated, Freed ([1344](#))

John MacArthur adds the following observations on the two types of **righteousness** - There have always been but two systems of religion in the world. One is God's system of divine accomplishment, and the other is man's system of human achievement. One is the religion of God's grace, the other the religion of men's works. One is the religion of faith, the other the religion of the flesh. One is the religion of the sincere heart and the internal, the other the religion of hypocrisy and the external. Within man's system are thousands of religious forms and names, but they are all built on the achievements of man and the inspiration of Satan. Christianity, on the other hand, is the religion of divine accomplishment, and it stands alone...Jesus repeatedly pointed out two things: the necessity of choosing whether to follow God or not, and the fact that the choices are two and only two. There are two gates, the narrow and the wide; two ways, the narrow and the broad; two destinations, life and destruction ; two groups, the few and the many; two kinds of trees, the good and the bad, which produce two kinds of fruit, the good and the bad; two kinds of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ, the sincere and false; two kinds of builders, the wise and the foolish; two foundations, the rock and the sand, and two houses, the secure and the insecure (cf Mt 7:13-14+, Mt 7:24-27+). ([Matthew 1-7, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

In his book [The Gospel According to Jesus](#) **MacArthur** writes that "Salvation is impossible for sinful humanity. We have no redeeming resources of our own. We cannot atone for our sins. We cannot even believe without God's sovereign enablement (John 6:44, 65); we cannot conjure up faith out of the human will. And we certainly cannot live up to God's standard of perfect righteousness. In the sixteenth century, a German monk named [Martin Luther](#) sat in the tower of the [Black Cloister \(Lutherhaus\)](#) (named that because the monks dressed in black) in Wittenberg, meditating on the perfect righteousness of God. Although he was the most scrupulous of monks, attending confession for hours each day, seeking forgiveness for the minutest of sins, he realized that the standard of perfect righteousness was absolutely unattainable. He thought of divine righteousness as an unrelenting, unforgiving, avenging wrath and believed his state was hopeless. Recounting the experience that transformed his life, he later said:

That expression "righteousness of God" was like [a thunderbolt in my heart](#)....I hated Paul with all my heart when I read that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel [Romans 1:16-17+]. Only afterward, when I saw the words that follow—namely, that it's written that the righteous shall live through faith [Romans 1:17]—and in addition consulted Augustine, I was cheered. When I learned that the righteousness of God is his mercy, and that he makes us righteous through it, a remedy was offered to me in my affliction.

The remedy Luther found was the doctrine of justification by faith. His discovery launched the Reformation and put an end to the Dark Ages. What Luther came to realize is that God's righteousness, revealed in the gospel, is reckoned in full to the account of everyone who turns to Christ in repentant faith. God's own righteousness thus becomes the ground on which believers stand before him. This doctrine of justification is most fully expounded by the apostle Paul. The book of Romans in particular includes a lengthy treatise on justification, in which Paul demonstrates that as far back as Genesis, God graciously saved people by reckoning his righteousness to them because of their faith. No one has ever been saved through the merit system—salvation has been available only by grace through faith ever since our first parents fell. Abraham is the prime example of this: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Romans 4:3+). ([The Gospel According to Jesus](#))

Luther's zeal for God did not save him, nor does it save anyone for Paul writes "I testify about them (THE JEWS) that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge (ESPECIALLY KNOWLEDGE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, GOD'S DECLARATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS)." (Ro 10:2+) Religion is a dangerous thing, a deadly deception, for many a zealous religious person will take their last breath and be shocked to find themselves in the place of eternal punishment despite all of their religiosity, unless they come to their senses as did Martin Luther. Jesus warned His Jewish audience (and all men) "that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5:20+) The Pharisees were so scrupulous in their keeping of the law that they would even tithe from the small spices obtained from their herb gardens (Matthew 23:23). Jesus is saying you cannot surpass the Pharisees in man made righteousness, unless you surpass it by believing in Jesus' Who offers perfect righteousness. The heart of this zealous devotion to God is illustrated by a group of modern day Orthodox Jews (early, 1992), who let three apartments in an Orthodox neighborhood in Israel burn to the ground while they asked a rabbi whether a telephone call to the fire department on the Sabbath violated Jewish law. Observant Jews are forbidden to use the phone on the Sabbath, because doing so would break an electrical current, which is considered a form of work. In the half-hour it took the rabbi to decide "yes," the fire spread to two neighboring apartments. The Gospel allows us to exceed their righteousness because our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees in *kind*, not *degree*!

Many people ask how could a sinner obtain Christ's righteousness (as in 2 Cor 5:21+) before Jesus' incarnation, crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection? In other words how were Old Testament saints like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, etc saved? That is a fair question and one about which many people are confused. A very common answer I hear from Bible believing Christians is that the Old Testament saints were saved by keeping the law, carrying out the prescribed sacrifices, etc. Clearly, this is a works based mode of obtaining righteousness and is not the correct answer. The simple answer is that the Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith in the Messiah (what they knew about Him, cf the [protoevangelium](#),

the first "Good News" in Ge 3:15+) and not by works of the law by which no man is justified (Romans 3:20+). Paul went on to explain "that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Romans 3:28+). In Romans 4 Paul gives us an example of an Old Testament saint who was justified by faith and not by works, asking "what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Romans 4:3+). Paul is quoting Genesis 15:6+ which says that Abraham "believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." What did Abraham believe? In Genesis 15:5 God took Abraham outside and told him "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." **Descendants** translates the Hebrew word for **seed** (the Hebrew is not *seeds* plural but *seed*, masculine singular). This same word **Seed** is used to refer to the coming Messiah as Paul explains in Galatians 3:16+ writing "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his **Seed**. He does not say, "And to **seeds**," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your **Seed**," that is, Christ." Earlier Paul had explained "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." (Gal 3:8+). So what did Abraham believe? He believed the Gospel, the good news about the **Seed** Who would come from his line, the **Messiah**. As to how much he knew about the substitutionary atonement, etc, we simply do not know as the Scripture is silent. Suffice it to say, he knew enough about the coming Christ to be saved by His substitutionary death, burial and resurrection.

Related Resources:

- [What was the Old Testament way of salvation?](#);
- [How were people saved before Jesus died for our sins?](#)

With this background on this critically important topic of righteousness/justification, let's launch into the verse by verse exposition.

THE SIN OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

To some people - Whereas the preceding parable in Luke 18:1-8 was spoken to the disciples, Jesus now speaks to **"some people"**. Jesus could just as well have said "to all people" because outside of God's gift of righteousness by grace through faith in Christ, **ALL people** fall into this group, because we are all self-righteous to one degree or another. In a word, this parable applies to everyone ever born in Adam's likeness (cf Ro 5:12+).

Matthew Henry - The scope of this parable likewise is prefixed to it, and we are told (Lk 18:9) who they were whom it was leveled at, and for whom it was calculated. He designed it for the conviction of some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.

Henry is right to emphasize that this parable which is often taken as primarily about prayer, is in fact primarily about righteousness, false and true. To miss that is to miss Jesus' intent of this parable.

Who trusted in themselves that they were righteous - This is the ancient version of the self-esteem movement and all of its variations! In context, Jesus is speaking especially to the leaders of the "self righteousness" movement, the Pharisees (Lk 18:10). Earlier Luke had recording Jesus had addressing their self-trust...

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and [were scoffing](#) at Him. And He said to them, "**You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men** but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed ([hupselos](#)) among men is [detestable](#) (the literal idea of the root word is that which emits a foul, disgusting odor! External religion without heart change is a stench before God!) in the sight of God. (Lk 16:14-15+)

Comment: Jesus is contrasting their external righteousness, their righteousness before men with their lack of internal righteousness before God. He then proceeds to demolish their high esteem and internal righteousness, calling it "**detestable in the sight of God**." Jesus is saying that God is not fooled by their external acts, for He Alone can judge the motives, thoughts and intentions of a man's heart (see 1 Cor 4:5, Heb 4:12+).

Guzik adds that "God judges our hearts with a different set of values. Men may honor someone because of their wealth or their public display of spirituality; but God sees who they really are." Are you as convicted as I am? ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Jesus gave a similar assessment of the righteousness of the Pharisees in Matthew declaring "So you, too, **outwardly appear righteous to men**, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (Mt 23:28)

Illustration of the Deception of external righteousness - Have you checked the labels on your grocery items lately? You may be getting less than you thought. According to U.S. News & World Report, some manufacturers are selling us the same size packages we are accustomed to, but they are putting less of the product in the box. For example, a box of well-known detergent that once held 61 ounces now contains only 55. Same size box, less soap. How something is wrapped doesn't always show us what's on the inside. That's true with people as well. We can wrap ourselves up in the same packaging every day—nice clothes, big smile, friendly demeanor—yet still be less than what we appear to be in the sight of God Who sees who we really are in our heart!

Trusted (3982)(**peitho**) is a strong verb, carrying the components of confidence, reliance, and hope. Jesus is addressing this parable to those who placed their confidence, reliance and hope in themselves. The perfect tense expresses persistence in their deluded state of confidence in their own righteousness.

John Calvin comments that "Every man that is puffed up with self-confidence carries on open war with God, to Whom we cannot be reconciled in any other way than by denial of ourselves; that is, by laying aside all confidence in our own virtue and righteousness, and relying on His mercy alone."

MacArthur on **those who trusted in themselves** as especially pointing to the Pharisees - They had the greatest influence on a populace because they had power in the local synagogues everywhere which were basically ruled by their theology and even local Pharisees. And so the people believed that trusting in yourself to become righteous was the way that you gained a place in the kingdom of God and the way you would eventually get to heaven. The benchmark of their system: self-confidence in one's ability to achieve righteousness by their own power and works....One of the leading victims of this big lie is none other than the apostle Paul who gives his own testimony in Philippians chapter 3. He says, "If anybody has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more." You want to talk about fleshly achievement? You want to talk about how good a man can be in himself? Listen to this. "Circumcised the eighth day," I followed that Old Testament prescription, "of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin," one of the nobler of the tribes. "A Hebrew of Hebrews," meaning I kept all the traditions. "As to the law, a Pharisee," the most fastidious and zealous of all law keepers; "as to zeal," so passionate about his religion that he "persecuted the church." and then the pinnacle, "As to the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." There wasn't anybody who knew me on the outside who could point to anything in my life that was a violation of the law visible to them. I walked the walk. I toed the mark. He lived that life, trusting in yourself that you can be righteous. They fasted all the time. We'll see that. They prayed. They abstained. They tithed. They memorized Scripture. They invented laws just to keep them, anything and everything to create an appearance of holiness. ([Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#))

J C Ryle on those who celebrate that they are "self" **righteous** - We are **ALL** naturally self-righteous. It is the family-disease of all the children of Adam (Ro 5:12+, cf 1 Cor 15:22). From the highest to the lowest we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to do (cf Ro 12:3+). We secretly flatter ourselves that we are not so bad as some, and that we have something to recommend us to the favor of God. "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness." (Pr 20:6) We forget the plain testimony of Scripture, "In many things we offend all."—"There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not."—"What is man that he should be clean, or he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous?" (James 3:2. Eccl. 7:10. Job 15:14) The true cure for SELF-righteousness is SELF-knowledge. **Once let the eyes of our understanding be opened by the Spirit, and we shall talk no more of our own goodness.** Once let us see what there is in our own hearts, and what the holy law of God requires, and self-conceit will die. We shall lay our hand on our mouths, and cry with the leper, "Unclean, unclean." (Lev 13:45.)

THE SIN OF CONTEMPT

Bailey comments that "Their "self-righteousness" naturally leads them to despise others who do not put forth such efforts. The real focus of the parable, therefore, is not humility in prayer but how we are justified/made righteous before God." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

And viewed others with contempt - They saw others the considered less righteous as worthless and of no value! Self is elevated so high that all others seem far below to the person with this warped mindset. Have you ever been around someone like this? They give off a "stench" so to speak! They clearly do not understand that the ground is level at the foot of the Cross of Christ! Note the "great" facial expression of contempt above! A picture really is worth a thousand words! You can just imagine the Pharisee's facial expression in Lk 18:11 as he makes mention of the tax collector! And then imagine this same facial expression on [King Herod Antipas](#) and his soldiers who treated Jesus with **contempt** (Lk 23:11+)

Robert Stein - Those who like the publican understand their sinful condition and know that they can only be saved by grace, find it difficult to despise others, for there is nothing of which they can boast. Only those who possess a false confidence in their own righteousness look down at others. (See [Luke - Page 449](#))

Steven Cole - I read of a guy who said that his greatest fear is that he would be standing in line at the Pearly Gates behind Mother Teresa, and hear Saint Peter say to her, "Well, you didn't quite make it." But the fact is, if Mother Teresa is in heaven, it isn't because of her good deeds. Line up the very best humans who have ever lived and they all have sinned and fall hopelessly short of the glory of God. He cannot and will not tolerate any sin in heaven. So it is useless to compare ourselves with one another. God's perfect righteousness is the only standard. ([The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#))

David Guzik - The connection between those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and those who despised others is almost inevitable. If I credit myself for a supposed great and spiritual walk with God, then it is an easy thing to despise another for their supposed low and carnal walk with God. If I credit myself for a supposed great and spiritual walk with God, then it is an easy thing to despise another for their supposed low and carnal walk with God. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Our English word **contempt** is an "ugly" word which describes a manner that is generally disrespectful and contemptuous, demonstrating an open disrespect for another human being. **Contempt** describes the feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, that they are worthless, or that they are deserving scorn. **Contempt** is the lowest form and the most biting form of derision. The word **contempt** originated in 1393, from the Latin word *contemptus* meaning "scorn". One writer places "**contempt**" on the same continuum as resentment and anger, and he argues that the differences between the three are that resentment is anger directed toward a higher-status individual; anger is directed toward an equal-status individual; and contempt is anger directed toward a lower-status individual" ([Wikipedia](#)). Synonyms of contempt include lack of respect, scorn, disregard, disdain. It is interesting that the **antonym** of contempt is **esteem**, which perfectly describes the self-righteous individual who on one hand is filled with pretentious esteem for self and on the other hand is filled with pernicious contempt for others!

Viewed others with contempt (present tense = continually despised others)([1848](#))(**exoutheneo** from **ek** = intensifies meaning or out + **outheneo** = bring to naught) is a strong verb which means to despise someone because they are felt to be worthless or of no value. To treat someone contemptuously as if completely worthless or despicable. In other words to view others with contempt is to treat them as of no account or value, just as the Pharisee treats the tax collector in Lk 18:11a and as Herod and his soldiers did to Jesus in Luke 23...

And [Herod \(Antipas\)](#) with his soldiers, after **treating Him with contempt** (PLACED FIRST IN THE GREEK SENTENCE FOR EMPHASIS) and [mocking](#) Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. (Lk 23:11+).

Comment: The evil irony of this wicked king showing contempt for and mocking the King of kings! Just imagine Herod's "payday" someday!!!

And in Peter's sermon in Acts, he [castigated](#) the Jewish audience for their [contemptuous](#) rejection of their Messiah declaring...

"He (MESSIAH) is the STONE WHICH **WAS REJECTED** by you (ISRAEL AS A NATION, NOT ALL BUT MOST REJECTED MESSIAH), THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone.(Acts 4:11)

So we see that the Jewish leaders and the nation as a whole treated Jesus **as if He were nothing, as if He were worthless!** This is hard to believe, but it is what the Bible teaches!

Exoutheneo is used only 11 times in the NT with the only 2 Gospel uses by Luke (Lk. 18:9; 23:11; Acts 4:11; Ro 14:3; 14:10; 1 Co. 1:28; 6:4; 16:11; 2 Co. 10:10; Gal. 4:14; 1 Th. 5:20)

Matthew Henry - They were such as had, 1. A great conceit of themselves, and of their own goodness; they thought themselves as holy as they needed to be, and holier than all their neighbors, and such as might serve for examples to them all. But that was not all; 2. They had a confidence in themselves before God, and not only had a high opinion of their own righteousness, but depended upon the merit of it, whenever they addressed God, as their plea: They trusted in themselves as being righteous; they thought they had made God their debtor, and might demand any thing from him; and, 3. They despised others, and looked upon them with contempt, as not worthy to be compared with them.

There is an interesting principle here - The person who is self-righteousness tends to view others as lacking what the "self-righteous" person *thinks* he has (but he is deceived of course). This begs the question, do you (I) frequently/occasionally view others as contemptible or less esteemed (in God's eyes) than ourselves because they are not as "spiritual" (Woe!)?

Steven Cole - Some years ago, a researcher surveyed 7,000 Protestant youths from many denominations, asking whether they agreed with the following statements:

"The way to be accepted by God is to try sincerely to live a good life." More than 60 percent agreed.

"God is satisfied if a person lives the best life he can." Almost 70 percent agreed.

"The main emphasis of the gospel is on God's rules for right living." More than half agreed. (Morton Strommen, *Five Cries of Youth* [Harper and Row], 1974, p. 76.) (ED: [Most Americans Believe in Heaven](#)).
([The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#))

My own experience in talking with people about how to be right with God bears out these findings. When I have asked, "If you were to die and stand before God and He asked, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' what would you say?" the most frequent answer I hear is, "I am a basically good person." Or, "I've always tried to do the best that I can." Or, "I've never intentionally hurt anyone."
Most people, including those who would call themselves "Christian," think that the right way to approach God is to present their good works at the gate of heaven.

All of the world's religions (except biblical Christianity) teach that we approach God through our good works. This was the main issue that split the Reformers from the Roman Catholic Church. Rome taught (and still teaches) that a person is saved by grace through faith in Christ, but not by grace through faith *alone*. Rather, in addition to believing in Christ, a person must add his own good works both to preserve and increase his right standing before God. The Roman Catholic Church spells out these official doctrines in the Canons and Decrees of Trent, which The Second Vatican Council in the 1960's declared to be "irreformable." Here are some statements from the [Canons and Decrees of Trent \(scroll down to read these Canons\)](#):

If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, ... let him be [anathema](#). (Canon 9)

If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be [anathema](#). (Canon 12)

If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof: let him be [anathema](#). (Canon 24)

(ED COMMENT: Compare Paul's words in Ephesians 2:8-10+ "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 **not as a result of works**, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.")

...Since the salvation of a person's soul depends on believing the gospel as revealed in God's Word, it is of vital importance that we all understand what Scripture teaches. It is important to you personally, so that you are clear about the basis of your own salvation. And it is important so that you can explain it to others **who mistakenly think that we are saved by our good works** If you witness to a Roman Catholic, this is the issue you must endeavor to make clear, so that he can be saved. ([Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#))

Sugar-Pill Beliefs

Read: Luke 18:9-14

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men.. —Luke 18:11

Studies show that sugar pills, or placebos, can actually alleviate symptoms if a sick person believes they are an effective medication. Some research showed that many people found them helpful even after being told the pills were placebos.

This illustrates that a belief may be temporarily effective even when it is founded on something that isn't true. Think of the startling implications this has for religious faith. Just as sugar pills can bring temporary relief, wrong beliefs about God can result in false feelings of peace and happiness. When this occurs, an individual may feel no need to trust Christ as his Savior from sin.

The Pharisee in Luke 18 is an example of one who swallowed ideas about himself that made him feel close to God. Convinced that they were true, he had a false sense of well-being, confidence, and happiness. Yet, his actual spiritual condition remained terminal. He congratulated himself before God, but the only one cured that day was the repentant sinner who saw the truth about himself and called upon the Lord for mercy.

Sugar-pill beliefs about God and sin may seem to work, but don't depend on them. The only cure for sin is found in knowing Christ. He gives permanent relief.

True faith in Christ will never fail,
It's fixed upon a solid base;
Nor does it set aside the mind
But rests on God's unchanging grace. —DJD

Feelings are no substitute for facts and faith.

By Mart DeHaan([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 18:10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector."

- **Two men went up into the temple to pray.** Lu 1:9,10 19:46 1Ki 8:30 Ac 3:1
- **a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.** Lu 7:29,30 Mt 21:31,32 Ac 23:6-8 26:5 Php 3:5
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Stairs up to Southern Wall of Temple

Two men went up into the temple to pray ([proseuchomai](#) cf Lk 18:1) , **one a Pharisee** ([pharisaïos](#)) **and the other a tax collector** ([telones](#)) - At the outset both are identical. The temple is on a hill (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem, so both men would go up to gain entrance. Of course this is a parable and not an actual event but it is reasonable to assume that Jews coming to pray at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices would utilize the the [southern stairs which would allow them to enter the Temple](#) grounds (cf Peter and John "going up to the Temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer." Acts 3:1). Those stairs can still be seen ([another picture](#)) if one visits the Temple Mount area in Jerusalem.

Southern Wall Stairs - An enormous flight of steps leads to the Southern Wall from the south. They were excavated after 1967 by archaeologist [Benjamin Mazar](#) and are the northernmost extension of the [Jerusalem pilgrim road](#) leading from the [Pool of Siloam](#) to the [Temple Mount](#) via the [Double Gate](#) and the [Triple Gate](#). These are the steps that Jesus of Nazareth^{[2][3]} and other Jews of his era walked up to approach the Temple, especially on the great pilgrimage festivals of [Passover](#), [Shavuot](#) and [Sukkot](#).^[2] The stairs that lead to the double gate are intact and "well-preserved."^[4] The steps that lead to the triple gate were mostly destroyed^[4] / The risers are low, a mere 7 to 10 inches high, and each step is 12 to 35 inches deep, forcing the ascending pilgrims to walk with a stately, deliberate tread.^[2] **The pilgrims entered the temple precincts through the double and triple gates still visible in the Southern Wall.**^{[5][2]} Together, the double and triple gates are known as the [Hulda Gates](#), after the prophetess [Huldah](#).^[2]

In chapter 1 Luke had alluded to some aspects of the Morning and Evening Sacrifices in the Temple...

Now it happened that while he (the priest Zacharias) was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. (Lk 1:8-10+).

If you are interested in more background, **Alfred Edersheim** has a detailed discussion of the various aspects of the Temple service in his chapter [The Morning and Evening Sacrifice](#). **Bailey** comments that on reading Edershiem "one can almost smell the pungent incense, hear the loud clash of cymbals, and see the great cloud of dense smoke rising from the burnt offering." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

Kenneth Bailey adds that "In English, we commonly use the word pray to refer to private devotion and the word worship to refer to what a community does together. In Semitic speech, whether Aramaic, Hebrew, Syriac or Arabic, "to pray" is used for both. On Sundays, the Christian in the Arab world says to his friend, "I'm going to the church to pray," and the friend knows the speaker is on

his way to attend public worship." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

MacArthur comments that both "want the benefits of the atonement (from morning and/or evening sacrificial lambs) to fall upon them. They also want to go up there so that they can join with the symbolic incense and having experienced the sacrifice, the incense comes afterward. That is to say once sin is atoned for then prayer can be offered to God." ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 2](#))

Bailey asks "What type of worship service is assumed by such language? The only daily service in the temple area was **the atonement offerings** that took place **at dawn** and again at **three o'clock** in the afternoon ([Here is a depiction of what the altar may have looked like](#)). Each service began outside the sanctuary at the great high altar with the sacrifice for the sins of Israel of a lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the altar, following a precise ritual. In the middle of the prayers there would be the sound of silver trumpets, the clanging of cymbals and the reading of a psalm. The officiating priest would then enter the outer part of the sanctuary where he would offer incense and trim the lamps. At that point, when the officiating priest disappeared into the building, those worshipers in attendance could offer their private prayers to God. An example of this precise ritual appears in Luke 1:8+, where Zechariah had the privilege of offering up the incense in the sanctuary. Lk 1:10+ states, "**At the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside**" (my translation). Many pious Jews who were not at the temple would offer their private prayers at the time of day when they knew the incense offering was being made in the Temple. In this way they could participate even when they were not able to be present. This particular service afforded the opportunity for what we today would call both public worship and private prayer. It is for this service that the **Pharisee** and the **tax collector "went up"** to the temple. The language of the text and what is known of the twice daily atonement sacrifice in the second temple assume such a setting. (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)). (Bolding added)

Comment: It is fascinating and more than mere coincidence that **at 3 PM (ninth hour** by Jewish time), the time when the lamb was offered on the [great altar](#) as **the atonement offering**, was also the same time when the veil of the Temple split in two from top to bottom (see explanation in Heb 10:19-20+) and the Messiah, **the Lamb of God** [cf John 1:29] cried out in a loud voice "Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." And having said this, He breathed His last." - Luke 23:44-46+. (See parallel descriptions in Mt 27:46-53, 54, Mark 15:34-38, 39, cf "It is finished" in John 19:30+) Note that the **ninth hour** in Lk 23:44 is about 3 PM. If you have time, compare what the writer of Hebrews says about the lamb offered at 3 PM (Hebrews 10:1-3, 4+) and the Lamb of God offered at 3 PM on the "altar" of the Cross on Calvary (Hebrews 10:5-9, 10+)

Excursus on the [Altar in Herod's Temple \(see picture\)](#) - During Herod the Great's extensive building activity on the Temple Mount, it was likely refurbished. Talmudic scholars give a very precise description of the altar during the Second Temple period. The altar was built as a perfect square and was quite large: it reached a height of 10 cubits (app. 5 meters ~16 feet high) and its width was 32 cubits (app. 16 meters = 52.5 feet wide). It was constructed of two main parts: the altar itself, and the ascent ramp. Both were constructed of stones and earth. On top of the altar at its four corners, there were hollow boxes which made small protrusions or "horns." These horns measured one cubit square and 5 handbreadths high, each (or, app. 18" x 18" x 15"). [3] In this form, the altar remained in its place until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. ([Wikipedia](#))

MacArthur on went up to the Temple to pray - This happened twice a day, every day at 9 A.M. (cf Acts 2:15) and 3 P.M. (cf Acts 3:1), at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices prescribed for the burnt offering which was laid out in the Leviticus 1:2-17+ (and Nu 28:2-4+). They were to go up and make an animal sacrifice, a blood sacrifice as a symbol of [atonement](#). The Jews, and especially the Pharisees, were very fastidious and made sure they showed up at 9 A.M. and at 3 P.M. every day. They would [go up the steps](#) at the prescribed time. The sacrifices would be [offered on the altar](#). Following the sacrifices which would symbolically open the way to God because [atonement had been made](#), incense would be burned symbolizing prayer. Now because [atonement](#) has been made, prayers could be offered. There would be a priestly benediction on the people who were faithful to be there. When it says they **went up to the Temple to pray**, "**pray**" would embody all the worship activities that went on. The Temple, according to Jesus in Matthew 21:13 "SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER" (quoting from Isaiah 56:7) adding "but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN." "Prayer" synonymous with worship, a house where you go to offer yourself (cf Ro 12:1+) and your petitions and your praises to God. It was that time and the crowd [ascended the long, steep steps](#) up to the Temple Mount. They went up, *anabainō*. They ascended to worship. They are going up because an [atonement](#) is going to be made for sin. Some are going up there feeling they need the benefits of that [atonement](#). Some are going up there to display themselves and they are just looking for a crowd to gather so that they could be seen by men (Mt 6:5+). ([Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#))

Warren Wiersbe - Throughout His public ministry, Jesus exposed the self-righteousness and unbelief of the Pharisees (see Luke 11:39-54). He pictured them as debtors too bankrupt to pay what they owed God (Luke 7:40-50), guests fighting for the best seats (Luke 14:7-14), and sons proud of their obedience but unconcerned about the needs of others (Luke 15:25-32). The sad thing is

that the Pharisees were completely deluded and thought they were right and Jesus was wrong. This is illustrated in this parable. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Pharisee (5330)([pharisaio](#)s is transliterated from the Hebrew **parash** (06567 - to separate) from Aramaic word **peras** (06537) ("Peres" in Da 5:28+), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. The Pharisees were the most influential of the three major Jewish sects (the other two being the [Sadducees](#) and the [Essenes](#)). The Pharisees emphasized meticulous observance of God's law (as understood both from the OT laws and from their accumulated extra-biblical traditions) and it was their zeal for the law that caused the Pharisees to become focused on rituals and externally keeping the law. They abandoned true religion of the heart for mere outward behavior modification and ritual (cf. Mt. 15:3–6), leading Jesus to scathingly denounce their pseudo-spirituality - "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others" (Mt. 23:23; cf. 6:1–5; 9:14; 12:2; Luke 11:38–39).

Tax collector (publican) (5057)([telones](#) from [telos](#) = tax + [onéomai](#) = to buy) means a reaper of the taxes or customs, a tax-collector, one who pays the government money for the privilege of collecting the taxes and customs of a district. The public revenues of the Greeks and Romans were usually farmed out. Among the latter, the purchasers were chiefly of the equestrian order and were distinguished as being of a higher class because they rode horses, or they were at least persons of wealth and rank like Zacchaeus who is called the chief tax collector (architelones in Lu 19:2). The tax collectors were the objects of hatred and detestation by the general populace so that no one but those of worthless character were likely to be found in this employment. It is notable that **tax collector** is often used in combination with "**sinners**" (Luke 5:30; 7:34; 15:1; cf. Matt 9:10–11; 11:19; Mark 2:15–16) and even "**prostitutes**" (Matt 21:31–32).

Luke 18:11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

- **The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself:** Ps 134:1 135:2 Mt 6:5 Mk 11:25
- **God, I thank You:** Isa 1:15 58:2 Jer 2:28,35 Eze 33:31 Mic 3:11 1Co 4:7,8 15:9,10 1Ti 1:12-16 Rev 3:17
- **that I am not like other people:** Lu 20:47 Isa 65:5 Mt 3:7-10 19:18-20 Ga 3:10 Php 3:6 Jas 2:9-12
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Pharisee and Tax-Collector by Tissot

THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER: A SOLILOQUY TO SELF

Soliloquy - a speech one makes to oneself. A speech in a play in which a character who is alone talks about their thoughts or feelings. Soliloquy is from Latin soliloquium "a talking to oneself," from Latin solus "alone" + loqui "to speak." In this case in essence he is praising himself for his self-righteousness. He was not speaking to God but to self. Ps 66:18 affirms that he would not have had the ear of Jehovah for "If I regard (Lxx - theoreo = regard with interest and attention!!!) wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear."

The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself (NET and NIV have "The Pharisee stood and **prayed about himself** like this...") - If this translation is correct (see below) What a picture! His prayers are to self and not through the Savior to the Father (1 Ti 2:5)! SELF-righteousness is SELF-deceit! It is one of the most deadly of sins because when a person is deceived, by definition they do not enough know they are deceived (see Deceitfulness of sin).

There is another way one could interpret **praying...to himself** and that is that he is simply speaking in a very low tone, essentially inaudible to others, and audible only to himself. There is still no doubt about who was on the altar of his deceitful heart - it was self not God (and certainly not the Savior). We can discern his self-focus even in the repetition of the first person pronoun "I" five times in two sentences. This pseudo-pious Pharisee was praying in essence a "self-eulogy," a tribute to self, for "self" was on the throne of his heart, not God!

Rod Mattoon on stood...praying - The Greek scholar, Dr. Vincent stated that this word "**stood**" implied that the Pharisee took up a showy position where he could be seen. He would endeavor to look as reverent as possible. His goal was to be seen and enjoy the

admiration of the people who saw him. Praying is good, but the motive for this man's prayers was wrong, because he was looking for the praise of men, not the praise of God or to praise God. This was a classic case of "How NOT to Pray!" On the whole, Pharisees were men who desperately wanted the attention and praise of people. Let's stop here for a second. Are you like this? Are you desperate for attention and will you do anything, even something that is sinful, to gain attention? ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

Stood and was praying - Standing was an acceptable and in fact normal posture for prayer (Mark 11:25, 1 Ki 8:14-15, Neh 9:2-3ff, "they love to stand and pray" = Mt 6:5+). If you have visited the "wailing wall" in Jerusalem, you likely have seen Jewish men standing before the wall rocking back and forth and praying ([like this](#)). It's not the "*standing*" that is wrong, but the "*seeing*" (to be seen by men)!

Paul writes "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension." (1 Ti 2:8) So they would stand and pray with uplifted hands. One is open-faced before God because of a right relationship to God. And so one comes into His presence with arms uplifted, ready to receive that which God provides for you, as well as to offer up praise. And the Pharisee took a posture then that was a legitimate one (externally but internally his heart was wicked). Beware that one's external posturing in prayer does not always correspond to the true condition of their heart. Do you lift up hands just because everyone else does, or is it truly the attitude of your tender, repentant heart?

MacArthur - Very likely the Pharisee would take his place in a most visible location and nearest to the holy place that he could get to show his proximity to God. He wants to be wherever God is believed or deemed to be, to give the unwashed around him a good look at a truly righteous man....My guess is the intent of our Lord is to say that he prayed in the direction of himself in a self-congratulatory prayer probably audibly since typically Jewish people did pray audibly. The only prohibition the rabbis give is that you are to pray audibly but not to yell. There are some interesting passages in Jewish history that talk about how the rabbis rebuke people who tried to out-shout others in their praying. But he is really putting on a demonstration. And so everybody gets the message and so God can truly appreciate his achievement, he gets specific (in listing out what he is NOT).

Wiersbe - The Pharisees used prayer as a means of getting public recognition and not as a spiritual exercise to glorify God. He was deluded about himself, for he thought he was accepted by God because of what he did or what he did not do. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Jesus warned "**Beware** of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who is in heaven...." "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. (Mt 6:1+, Mt 6:5+)

The alternative way of translating this verse is exemplified by the **NRSV** (ESV is similar but has a marginal note giving the alternative translation as "*standing, prayed to himself*") has "The Pharisee, **standing by himself**," which would give a slightly different interpretation to the passage. If the Pharisee were **standing by himself** it would indicate he is standing apart from other people at the Temple service. This would certainly be a reasonable interpretation, as a fastidious Pharisee, fixated on the externals of religion, would not want to take a chance of being defiled by accidentally touching someone ceremonially unclean ([See note below](#)). And recall that the term "Pharisee" meant "Separated One," so that they were separate in their deceived minds from the common folk, the unclean, those they thought were beneath them.

Kenneth Bailey (taking the NRSV rendering as more accurate) comments that "because he stands by himself (not praying to himself) he may well be praying aloud, as was common Jewish custom (**ED**: AS LONG AS THEY DID NOT YELL). Such a voiced prayer would provide a golden opportunity to offer some unsolicited ethical advice to the "**unrighteous**" around him who might not have another opportunity to observe a man of his stratospheric piety! Most of us in our spiritual journeys have, at some time or other, listened to a sermon hidden in a prayer. (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)). (**Ed**: And sadly some of us have even prayed a *hidden sermon* in our prayer when praying with a group!)

THE PHARISEE'S SELF EULOGY

CAUTION! - "It is entirely possible to address your words to God, but actually be praying to yourself, because your focus is on yourself, not on God. Your **passion** is for your agenda, not God's. Your **attitude** is *my will be done* and not *Thy will be done*. The man was full of **praise**, but he rejoiced "not for who God was but rather for who he was!" (Pate)" (from [David Guzik](#))

Brian Bell - He had an **intellectual conviction** to come pray, but yet **doesn't make contact** with God. [Hell is full of *intellectual conviction*!]

God - He finally gets to "God," but this is his last mention in his pride filled prayer. The middle letter of "pride" is "I" and this man clearly placed his emphasis on the sinful "I" and not on the great "I Am!"

J C Ryle says this prayer has "no confession and no petition,—no acknowledgment of guilt and emptiness,—no supplication for mercy and grace. It is a mere boasting recital of fancied merits, accompanied by an uncharitable reflection on a brother sinner. It is a proud, high-minded profession, destitute alike of penitence, humility, and charity. In short, it hardly deserves to be called a prayer at all. No state of soul can be conceived so dangerous as that of the Pharisee. Never are men's bodies in such desperate plight, as when mortification and insensibility set in. Never are men's hearts in such a hopeless condition, as when they are not sensible of their own sins. He that would not make shipwreck on this rock, must beware of measuring himself by his neighbors. What does it signify that we are more moral than "other men?" We are all vile and imperfect in the sight of God.—"If we contend with Him, we cannot answer him one in a thousand." (Job 9:3.) Let us remember this. In all our self-examination let us not try ourselves by comparison with the standard of men. Let us look at nothing but the requirements of God. He that acts on this principle will never be a Pharisee." ([Luke 18](#))

I thank ([eucharisteo](#)) You that I am not like other people: swindlers([harpax](#)), unjust ([adikos](#)), adulterers ([moichos](#)), or even like this tax collector ([telones](#)) - What pretentious gratitude! A self focused praise service! It was customary to begin a prayer w. a note of thanksgiving. In this case it turned out to be an expression of self-admiration! "Look how good I am!" "The Pharisee cleverly couched praise for himself in the form of thanks to God." (Swindoll) **Even like this tax collector** expresses his dismissive, denigrating glance in the direction of the **tax collector** and nod towards him thus conveying the message "That one, right there!"

MacArthur on I thank You that I am not like other people- Wow. Well what's there to thank God for? You've done this on your own. This is sheer hypocrisy. This is an unequivocal confession to God of his worthiness, of his righteousness. Thanking God for what you are on your own? This is where self-righteousness leads you. I'm good enough. God, I thank You that I'm good enough. I'm good enough to have a relationship with You. I'm good enough to be here in Your temple. I'm good enough to be standing by this holy place. I'm good enough to be the paragon of religious righteousness and virtue. I'm good enough to stand here so all the low-lives can see what a really godly man looks like.

Edersheim on I thank You - Never, perhaps, were words of thanksgiving spoken in less thankfulness than these. For, thankfulness implies the acknowledgment of a gift; hence, a sense of not having had ourselves what we have received; in other words, then, a sense of our personal need, or humility. But the very first act of this Pharisee had been to separate himself from all the other worshippers, and notably from the Publican, whom, as his words show, he had noticed, and looked down upon. His thanksgiving referred not to what he had received, but to the sins of others by which they were separated from him, and to his own meritorious deeds by which he was separated from them. Thus, his words expressed what his attitude indicated; and both were the expression, not of thankfulness, but of **boastfulness**. It was the same as their bearing at feasts and in public places; the same as their contempt and condemnation of 'the rest of men,' and especially 'the publicans;' the same that even their designation—"Pharisees," 'Separated ones,' implied. The 'rest of men' might be either the Gentiles, or, more probably, the common unlearned people, the am-haaretz, whom they accused or suspected of every possible sin, according to their fundamental principle: 'The unlearned cannot be pious.' And, in their sense of that term, they were right—and in this lies the condemnation of their righteousness. And, most painful though it be, remembering the downright earnestness and zeal of these men, it must be added that, as we read the Liturgy of the Synagogue, we come ever and again upon such and similar thanksgiving—that they are 'not as the rest of men.' -- Of this spirit are even such Eulogies as these in the ordinary morning-prayer: '**Blessed art Thou, Lord, our God, King of the world, that Thou hast not made me a stranger (a Gentile) ... a servant ... a woman.**' ([The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah - The Last Three Parables of the Perean Series - The Unrighteous Judge, the Self-Righteous Pharisee and the Publican - The Unmerciful Servant](#))

Here is a prayer R Nehunya prayed as recorded in the Jewish Talmud...

I give thanks before You, Lord my God, that You have placed my lot among those who sit in the study hall, and that you have not given me my portion among those who sit idly on street corners. I rise early, and they rise early. I rise early to pursue matters of Torah, and they rise early to pursue frivolous matters. I toil and they toil. I toil and receive a reward, and they toil and do not receive a reward. I run and they run. I run to the life of the World-to-Come and they run to the pit of destruction. ([Talmud, Berakhoth 28b](#) - scroll down)

Here is a sample of another prayer which is so incredible that it is difficult to imagine a man daring to utter such pretentious, self-righteous, even blasphemous words...

And Hizkiya said that Rabbi Yirmeya said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: I am able to absolve the entire world from judgment for sins committed from the day I was created until now. **The merit that he accrued through his righteousness and the suffering that he endured atone for the sins of the entire world. And were the merit accrued by Eliezer, my son, calculated along with my own, we would absolve the world from judgment for sins committed from the day that the world was created until now.** And were the merit accrued by the righteous king, Jotham ben Uziah, calculated with our own, we would absolve the world from judgment for sins committed from the day that the world was created until its end. The

righteousness of these three serves as a counterbalance to all the evil deeds committed throughout the generations, and it validates the ongoing existence of the world. ([Sukkah 45b:4](#) - scroll to about middle of page) (Bolding added)

John Gill gives this example - "It is a tradition of Rabbi Juda saying three things a man ought to say every day,—Blessed be thou that thou hast not made me a Gentile.—Blessed be thou that thou hast not made me an unlearned man.—Blessed be thou that thou hast not made me a woman."

Edersheim records an actual prayer from rabbinic literature - *I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast put my part with those who sit in the Academy, and not with those who sit at the corners [money-changers and traders]. For, I rise early and they rise early: I rise early to the words of the Law, and they to vain things. I labour and they labour: I labour and receive a reward, they labour and receive no reward. I run and they run: I run to the life of the world to come, and they to the pit of destruction.'*

W Griffith Thomas writes "Isn't it interesting that one could feel glad that he doesn't sin in one way, while he is sinning in another and perhaps worse way!" (Woe - the deceitfulness of sin!)

Bailey notes that "Prayer, according to the piety of first-century Judaism, was of three types: confession of sin, thanks for bounty received, petitions for oneself and for others. The Pharisee's prayer does not fall into any of these categories. He is neither confessing his sins nor thanking God for God's gifts, and he does not make any requests for help. His public remarks are an attack on others clothed in self-advertisement. He tells God that he despises extortioners, the unjust, adulterers and tax collectors. Rather than comparing himself to God's expectations of him, he compares himself to others. Having given God a short list of his views of the unrighteous, he proceeds to enumerate his ethical accomplishments and announces proudly, "I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I possess." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

The self-righteousness of the Pharisees mixed with their pride created in their wicked hearts a deep contempt for anybody beneath them, to the point that they assiduously avoiding even touching the clothes of one who they considered "unclean." MacArthur adds that the Pharisees, "the *law keepers* were called the **Hakhamim** ("Men of wisdom" or *Haverim*) and the *lawbreakers* were called the **Am Ha-Aretz**. (Ed Note: Literally "the people of the land" - The ancient Jewish concept of the "common people" as opposed to the religiously pious, who practiced the rituals and tithing laws.- from [Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church](#) - Ron Moseley). These were the "low-lives." And in the eyes of the Pharisee, he could not get near to anybody who was an **Am Ha-Aretz** for that was an absolutely unthinkable. Kenneth Bailey writes, "In the eyes of a strict Pharisee, the most obvious candidate for the classification of **Am Ha-Aretz** would be a tax collector. But there was a particular kind of uncleanness that was contracted by sitting, riding, or even leaning against something unclean. This uncleanness was called **midras uncleanness** ([see another note](#)). And for Pharisees, he writes, "The clothes of an **Am Ha-Aretz** count as suffering *midras* uncleanness." They didn't get near any of the low-lives and the riff-rafs that they disdained...not even so much as to teach them the law of God! ([Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#))

John MacArthur on **even like this tax collector** - That would be an easy jump because **tax collectors** were the most despised and despicable people in the culture, having purchased tax franchises from the occupying Roman idolaters. They then paid the Romans what they wanted each year and anything kept the rest. They extorted money from the people any way they could even using thugs and strong armed petty criminals. They were surrounded therefore by society's sinners and prostitutes and the riff-raff of the culture. They couldn't go to a synagogue. They were the most hated and despised of people in the society. And so the Pharisee says, "I'm not anything like that bottom rung of society. So by negative illustration, he shows what he's not like. ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 2](#))

Brian Bell writes that "Pride is so subtle that if we aren't careful we'll be proud of our humility! ☺ When this happens our goodness becomes badness. Our virtues become vices. We can easily become like the Sunday School teacher who, having told the story of the Pharisee and the publican, said, "Children, let's bow our heads and thank God we are not like the Pharisee!" The Pharisee's prayer showed he was self-centered; showed he was conceited; showed his morality was based on negatives; showed his worship was based on externals. ([Sermon](#))

MacArthur adds that "According to the [Mishnah](#), the Jewish law, at the time of the incense prayers were made and when the prayers began there was a delegation of Jews responsible at beginning of the prayer to find the unclean people in the crowd and clear them away to the eastern gate!"

I thank (2168) ([eucharisteo](#) from **eú** = well + **charízomai** = to grant, give.; English - Eucharist) means to show that one is under obligation by being thankful. To show oneself as grateful (most often to God in the NT). **Thanksgiving** expresses what ought never to be absent from any of our devotions. We should always be ready to express our grateful acknowledgement of past mercies as distinguished from the earnest seeking of future mercies. In the present case of course gratitude to God for past mercies was not on the heart of this self-righteous Pharisee.

Swindlers (727) (**harpax** from **harpazo** - to seize, catch away, word for the "rapture") means grasping, violently greedy, robber, swindler. One who uses force and violence in stealing. In some context it means [rapacious](#) or [ravenous](#) (Mt 7:15+, Lxx Gen 49:27). **Swindlers** were prohibited in the 10 Commandments (Ex 20:15) Robbers did this to people and so did the tax collectors, but the Pharisees did this, too. They would pressure those who were weak or widows to surrender their possessions through ruthless, scheming tactics (see Mt 23:14).

Harpax - ravenous(1), swindler(1), swindlers(3) - Matt. 7:15; Lk. 18:11; 1 Co. 5:10; 1 Co. 5:11; 1 Co. 6:10

Unjust (94) (**adikos** from **a** = without + **dike** = justice) is an adjective which in general describes that which is characterized by violation of divine law, in contrast to his mention of the specific sins of swindling and adultery which were mentioned in the 10 Commandments (Ex 20:14-15). It means acting in a way that is contrary to what is right (unjust, crooked). **Adikos** is what God is NOT (Heb 6:10+, Ro 3:5+). As in the Old Testament, the "unrighteous" (**adikos**) are a class of people who stand over against the "righteous," or the people of God, in the present context a one who thought he was righteous but in fact was not!

Adulterers (3432) (**moichos** cp study of related word **moichalis** = adulteress) describes one who is unfaithful to a spouse. Figuratively, **moichos** describes one who is faithless toward God, which would actually be a good description of the self-righteous Pharisee! The very one he detests, is actually who he is in his heart! Not only that Jesus raised the bar so that while he may not have committed overt, literal adultery, he almost certainly had in his heart! (Mt 5:27-30+) See the deceitfulness of sin! **Adulterers** were prohibited in the 10 Commandments (Ex 20:14).

David Jeremiah - THE PERIL OF RELIGION LUKE 18:11 - One of the terrible possibilities suggested by the Pharisee's attitude in prayer is this: A person can be religious and not be right. This man's religion became the cause of his ruin. He did everything right from a religious perspective—in fact, more than right! His problem was that he had totally excluded God from the picture of his life. His religion was all about him.

Every Sunday, people attend houses of worship with other worshipers. They sing hymns, recite liturgies, pray prayers, listen to sermons. And they will leave feeling better about themselves than when they went in. Unfortunately, they will still be deeply rooted in their sins. If our religion does nothing more than make us feel better about our sin, then that religion has doomed us, not saved us.

The Pharisee was a religious man who was lost in his religion. Along with everything else we learn in this story, we learn about the dangers of religious pride. And that doesn't mean we are to go to a church where we leave feeling bad. It means we are to leave feeling good about the Savior whose mercy has saved us from our sins. We leave feeling good about God's justification, not our own. (See [Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#) or borrow [Sanctuary : finding moments of refuge in the presence of God](#))

Luke 18:12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

- **fast:** Lu 17:10 Nu 23:4 1Sa 15:13 2Ki 10:16 Isa 1:15 58:2,3 Zec 7:5,6 Mt 6:1,5,16 9:14 15:7-9 Ro 3:27 10:1-3 1Co 1:29 Ga 1:14 Eph 2:9 1Ti 4:8
- **I pay tithes of all that I get:** Lu 11:42 Lev 27:30-33 Nu 18:24 Mal 3:8 Mt 23:23,24
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE PHARISEE PRAISES HIS SUPEROGATORY PIETY IN PUBLIC

I fast twice a week ([sabbaton](#)) - He celebrates his self-righteousness, taking great pride in his self-initiated efforts, as indicated by three uses of the personal pronoun "I" in this short verse. In the previous verse the Pharisee "prayed" (note prayer is in quotes for this is hardly a God honoring prayer!) what he was **NOT** (lawless, immoral), and now switches to "pray" what he **IS** (superbly, supremely religious)! Note that he asks God for nothing because in his eyes there is nothing he thinks he needs from God, certainly nothing in regard to his personal (self) righteousness (cf Mt 5:20+). Fasting consisted of abstinence from food to express dependence on God and submission to His will, although this clearly was not the intent of the fasting of this man or of any of the Pharisees! They fasted to attain "merit" with God, to add to their self-righteousness "C.V." so to speak! As **MacArthur** says "He has no lack. He is like the rich young ruler we'll meet in a few passages, who did an inventory on his life and could not think of anything

that he lacked. Here the Pharisee is a similar kind of man. His thanks is really not thanks to God, for why would he thank God for what he himself had achieved?"

Stein writes " A "fast" would generally involve going without food or drink from sunrise to sunset. This is the earliest reference to the Jewish practice of fasting twice a week (cf. Did. 8:1). The two days of fasting mentioned in the Talmud are Monday and Thursday (Ta'an. 1:2a)." (NAC)

Note that the NT has no required fasts. But remember at the time of this parable, the only Bible the Jews had access to was the Old Testament. And so the question arises as to what did the Old Testament prescribe about fast requirements? You may be surprised that the OT actually prescribes only one fast day, the [Day of Atonement](#), Leviticus 16:29, 31+

"This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, **you shall humble ('anah) your souls** and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; 31 "It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute.

NET Note - Heb "**you shall humble your souls.**" (Hebrew = '[anah](#)) The verb "to humble" here refers to various forms of self-denial, including but not limited to fasting (cf. Ps 35:13 and Isa 58:3, 10). The Mishnah (m. Yoma 8:1) lists abstentions from food and drink, bathing, using oil as an unguent to moisten the skin, wearing leather sandals, and sexual intercourse (cf. 2 Sa12:16–17, 20; see the remarks in J. Milgrom, Leviticus [AB], 1:1054; B. A. Levine, Leviticus [JPSTC], 109; and J. E. Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 242).

Hartley (WBC) - ('[anah](#))- עָנָה means "humble, afflict, weaken." A person is to humble himself or constrain himself **by denying himself food and other daily joys** Such self-denial accords with the solemn, mournful attitude of repentance. עָנָה נֶפֶשׁ occurs in Isa 58:3, where it stand parallel to צוֹם, "to fast." This passage (Isa 58:3) indicates that עָנָה נֶפֶשׁ is a strict fast, i.e., no food or water and the wearing of sackcloth and ashes (cf. Ps 35:13).

Ken Bailey on **I fast twice a week** - The Pharisees thought of the law as a garden of flowers. To protect the garden and the flowers, they opted to build a fence around the law. That is, they felt obliged to go beyond the requirements of the law in order to insure that no part of it was violated. Without a fence around the garden, someone just might step on one of the flowers. The written law only required fasting on the annual [Day of Atonement](#). The Pharisees, however, chose to fast two days before and two days after each of the three major feasts. That meant twelve days a year. But this pious man announces to God (and others) that he puts a fence around the fence! He fasts two days every week. (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

MacArthur - these self-styled, self-righteous, external legalists like to invent rituals and ceremonies as all false religions do. And they get more and more complicated and more symbolic and more symbolic in direct proportion to the absence of truth and reality. And so they had developed a scheme of fasting on Monday and Thursday. Why Monday and Thursday? Because those were the market days and the crowds were bigger, so you could go into the big crowd and throw a bunch of ashes on your head and look sad, and fast, and make a spiritual impression. Some other writers say that according to some rabbi Moses went up to Sinai and forty days later he came down on a Thursday. So they fasted on Monday and Thursday. Some other rabbi says fasts were on Monday and Thursday because "Monday and Thursday are equal distant from the Sabbath while being as far from each other as possible." ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 1](#))

The Pharisees were like those Jews described by Paul "who desire to make a good showing in the flesh (and so) try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ." (Gal 6:12)

Jesus condemned **fasting for show** warning

"Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full." (Mt 6:16+)

Courson - Not only would a traditional Jew pray three times a day, but he would fast twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays. Not accidentally, Monday and Thursday were market days in Jerusalem, which meant that everyone could see the piety of those who came with the mussed hair and wrinkled clothes of those who fasted. With long faces they made their way into the temple to pray so everyone could see their spirituality.

According to **William Coleman**, Jesus condemned the Pharisaical concept of fasting on three counts. First, he taught that those who are fasting should be cheerful and not sad (see Matthew 6:16–17). Second, he taught that those who fasted were not to have a self-righteous attitude (see Luke 18). And third, Jesus rejected the Pharisees' attempts to impose their rules on everyone else (see Mark 2:18–20). Jesus didn't object to the Pharisees fasting as much as they wanted, but when they began to teach that God

expected everyone to do it just like them, the Lord challenged them (see Luke 18:12). (William Coleman, *Those Pharisees* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1977))

Leon Morris - What the Pharisee said about himself was true. His trouble was not that he was not far enough along the road, but that he was on the wrong road altogether....The Pharisee also went beyond the Law's requirements in tithing. The Law prescribed that certain crops be tithed (Deut. 14:22+), but it was a Pharisaic practice to tithe even garden herbs (Lk 11:42+). What this Pharisee said about himself was strictly true, but the spirit of the prayer was all wrong. There is no sense of sin nor of need nor of humble dependence on God. The Pharisee came short of congratulating God on the excellence of his servant, but only just. 'He glances at God, but contemplates himself' (Plummer). After his opening word he does not refer to God again, but he himself is never out of the picture. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries - [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

I pay tithes (give one tenth) **of all that I get** ([ktaomai](#)) - Not some of what I get but **ALL**, even to the ridiculous extreme of tithing seeds (Lk 11:42+)!

Stein writes that "The Pharisee did more than the law demanded in that he tithed everything that came into his possession, not simply what he earned. He may have done this in case the person who sold this to him had not tithed it. By these two acts the Pharisee boasted of his works of supererogation, i.e., he thought he did more than God required of him." (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

MacArthur on tithes - The Old Testament laid down prescription for tithing, 10% to fund the national theocratic government, 10% to fund the national festivals and feasts, and 10% every third year for the poor. So it was equivalent annually to about a 23.3% tax. There was a half-shekel temple tax and that was all the Lord required. But the Pharisees invented laws to make them appear more righteous even tithing [mint](#) and [Dill](#) and [cumin](#)....They went way beyond the law. A Pharisaic prayer dating from about the time of Jesus goes like this, "I thank Thee, Jehovah, my God, that Thou hast assigned my lot with those who sit in the house of learning and not with those who sit in the street corners. I rise early and they rise early. I rise early to study the words of the Torah and they rise early to attend to things of no importance. I weary myself and they weary themselves. I weary myself and gain thereby while they weary themselves without gaining anything. I run and they run. I run toward the life of the age to come. And they run toward the pit of destruction." That was the self-righteousness in the Pharisaic mind. ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 1](#))

Jesus [castigated](#) the Pharisees for their fastidious foolishness declaring...

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and **have neglected the weightier provisions of the law**: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! (Mt 23:23,24-see [Mt 23:16-33 Condemnation of False Spiritual Leaders](#))

Bailey - The Mishnah tractate [Ma'aserot](#) (tithes) spells out all the possible exceptions that make such a blanket ruling easier to fulfill. The discussion continues for pages. But this Pharisee makes no exceptions, claiming simply, "I tithe all that I possess." Surely those listening to his "ad" would be impressed by such a high standard of righteousness. (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

John MacArthur: The Old Testament prescribed only one fast, the one on **Yom Kippur**, the [Day of Atonement](#) (see Lev. 16:29, 31, where the phrase "humble your souls" [from the Heb. *āna*, "to afflict or humble"] commonly included the idea of refraining from food). But Jewish tradition had come to require fasting twice a week (see Luke 18:12), and these disciples were careful to follow that practice. Along with alms giving and certain prescribed prayers, twice-weekly fasting was one of the three major expressions of orthodox Judaism during Jesus' day. The scribes and Pharisees looked on these practices with great seriousness and were careful not only to follow them faithfully but to do so as publicly and ostentatiously as possible-ostensibly as a testimony to true godliness but in reality as a testimony to their own self-styled piety. When they gave alms, they blew trumpets "in the synagogues and in the streets" in order to "be honored by men" (Matt. 6:2). When they prayed "in the synagogues and on the street corners," they did so "to be seen by men" (Mt 6:5). And when they fasted, they "put on a gloomy face" and neglected their "appearance in order to be seen fasting by men" (Mt 6:16). They did not see religion as a matter of humility, repentance, or forgiveness, but as a matter of ceremony and proud display. And therefore the external rituals which they paraded as badges of godly righteousness actually marked them as ungodly hypocrites, as Jesus declared in each of the three verses just cited (cf. Mt 5:20). Religious ritual and routine have always been dangers to true godliness. Many ceremonies, such as praying to saints and lighting a candle for a deceased relative are actually heretical. But even if it is not wrong in itself, when a form of praying, worshiping, or serving becomes the focus of attention, it becomes a barrier to true righteousness. It can keep an unbeliever from trusting in God and a believer from faithfully obeying Him. Even going to church, reading the Bible, saying grace at meals, and singing hymns can become lifeless routines in which true worship of God has no part...The days will come, Jesus explained, when the bridegroom is taken away. Taken away is from *apairō*, which can carry the idea of sudden removal, of being snatched away

violently. Jesus was obviously referring to His crucifixion, which would abruptly and violently take Him away from His followers, His faithful attendants. That will be the time for mourning, and then they will fast. But for the present time, He was saying, fasting was inappropriate. When there is no reason to mourn there is no reason to fast. Fasting springs naturally from a broken and grieving heart, but fasting as a shallow spiritual ritual apart from such brokenness is an affront to God. (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Fast (3522)([nesteuo](#) from **ne-** = not + **esthío** = to eat) means to abstain from food for a certain length of time.

Nesteuo - 20x in 15v - fast(14), fasted(2), fasting(4). Matt. 4:2; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 6:17; Matt. 6:18; Matt. 9:14; Matt. 9:15; Mk. 2:18; Mk. 2:19; Mk. 2:20; Lk. 5:33; Lk. 5:34; Lk. 5:35; Lk. 18:12; Acts 13:2; Acts 13:3

I get (2932)([ktaomai](#)) means to procure for oneself, to acquire, to obtain (Mt 10:9; Lk 18:12; 21:19; Ac 1:18; 8:20; 22:28; 1 Th 4:4). As an idiom "skeuos ktaomai" which is literally to possess a container or vessel and means to control one's sexual life (as skeuos is viewed as either one's body or one's wife in 1 Th 4:14). Another idiomatic use (*ktaomai ten psuche*) meant literally to *acquire one's soul*, or to save oneself or protect one's life (Lk 21:19+).

Ma'aserot (Hebrew: מעשרות, lit. "**Tithes**") is the seventh tractate of [Seder Zeraim](#) ("Order of Seeds") of the [Mishnah](#), [Tosefta](#), and the [Jerusalem Talmud](#). It discusses the types of produce liable for [tithing](#) as well as the circumstances and timing under which produce becomes obligated for tithing. In Biblical times, during each of the six years of the cycle, "[Maaser Rishon](#)" was given to [Levites](#) as 10% of an individual's crop. "[Maaser Sheni](#)" was separated in the first, second, fourth and fifth year and is 10% of the crop remaining after "[Maaser Rishon](#)". It was brought to [Jerusalem](#) to be eaten there or was redeemed upon coins which were deconsecrated upon food in Jerusalem. The final category is "[Maaser Ani](#)" that is given to the poor in the third and sixth years. ([Wikipedia](#))

Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'"

- **standing some distance away:** Lu 5:8 7:6,7 17:12 Ezr 9:6 Job 42:6 Ps 40:12 Isa 6:5 Eze 16:63 Da 9:7-9 Ac 2:37
- **but was beating his breast:** Lu 23:48 Jer 31:18,19 2Co 7:11
- **God, be merciful to me:** Ps 25:7,11 41:4 51:1-3 86:15,16 119:41 130:3,4,7 Da 9:5,9-11 Da 9:18,19 Heb 4:16 8:12
- **the sinner:** Lu 15:18-21 23:40-43 2Ch 33:12,13,19,23 Ps 106:6 Isa 1:18 64:5,6 Mt 9:13 Ro 5:8,20,21 1Ti 1:15 1Jn 1:8-10
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Pharisee and Tax-Collector by Tissot

A PRAYER FROM A PENITENT FOR PARDON

But the tax collector ([telones](#)), **standing some distance away** ([makrothen](#)), **was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating** ([tupto/typto](#)) **his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful** ([hilaskomai](#)) **to me, the sinner!'** With the [term of contrast](#) but Jesus turns the corner with his description of a despised tax collector, presenting a 180 degree contrast with the respected Pharisee. **Standing some distance** away reflect the fact that the tax collector was an unclean "low life" and the Pharisee would have stood as great a **distance** from him as possible to avoid becoming ceremonially defiled.

Luke has mentioned tax collectors (tax gatherers) several times previously in his Gospel (Lk 3:12-13, Lk 5:27-32, Lk 7:29-30, Lk 7:34, Lk 15:1-2) and in several of the uses Luke presents a **clear contrast** between the **tax gatherers** and the **Pharisees**...

Luke 5:29+ And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of **tax collectors** and other people who were reclining at the table with them. 30 The **Pharisees** and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the **tax collectors and sinners**?"

Luke 7:29-30+ When all the people and the **tax collectors** heard this (Lk 7:24-28), they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30 **But the Pharisees** and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

Luke 15:1-2+ Now all the **tax collectors and the sinners** were coming near Him to listen to Him. 2 Both the **Pharisees** and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

So in these previous contrasting pictures we see the tax collectors as those who are open to the message of Jesus, but the Pharisees as those who are repeatedly rejecting and grumbling over Jesus' message and actions. Can you imagine the shock and dismay of the Jewish audience listening to this parable as Jesus says that God accepts the despicable tax collector and rejects the self-righteous Pharisee?!

The **tax collector** was viewed as one of the **Am Ha-Aretz**, literally "the people of the land," a common person as opposed to the religiously pious Pharisee, who was a **Hakhamim**. These two men were literally polar opposites in the Jewish culture of the day - the **tax collector** being the most despised, most defiled and most unrighteous and the Pharisee being the most respected, most pious and most righteous.

Moody Bible Commentary - Tax-collectors were typically Jews who served the Romans by collecting taxes for them. They were viewed as collaborators and were ostracized. Often they were unscrupulous and greedy and took advantage of their fellow Jews by overtaxing them and keeping the takings. Roman authorities typically contracted with individuals to collect taxes. As long as the Roman quota was met, the Romans were happy. For a tax collector to make a profit, however, required systematic overcharging of those who were taxed, as the Romans did not share a percentage of the fees with the tax collectors. The people looked at the tax collectors both as traitors and as thieves. For Jesus to use such a person as the "hero" of a parable would have been a surprising twist indeed.

MacArthur adds that the **tax collector** is "way off on the fringe, on the outer edge. Why? Because he knows he doesn't deserve to be in the presence of God or even the presence of those who are righteous. He is rejected. He is a traitor. But more than that, he is a sinner. He is a pariah not only to the society, but he is a pariah to God. He is a pariah in his own mind and his own heart. He has no right to draw near to God and he knows that. This is humility. This is a sense of alienation and it's revealed in his location.

Was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven - Here we have another (implied) contrast, he is unwilling to even look toward God, while the Pharisee has no such reservation, being fully convinced of his piety and righteousness before God. We see this man's humility in keeping his distance from others (see above) and now by his posture reflecting his being overwhelmed with a sense of guilt and shame.

For lifting one's **eyes to heaven** in prayer see Mark 6:41; 7:34; John 11:41; 17:1; Ps 123:1.

MacArthur adds that "He knows he is unworthy. He is a swindler. He is unjust, dishonest, a cheat, corrupt, immoral, irreligious, he is a law breaker. He knows it, he feels it, he believes it, and he confesses it. And there's not even a hint of the attitude that might say, *"Well, I know I'm a sinner, but at least I'm here at the temple so I'm better than most tax collectors I know"* He feels the full weight of his alienation from God. It's not just about being alienated from the society because of his profession, it's about being alienated from God because of his sin and disobedience and lawlessness. He has that sense of alienation. He feels that weight of sin and brokenness, that accompanying conviction and remorse. He experiences pain and fear and dread of deserved punishment and judgment. His location says it and so does his posture."

To find salvation you must admit you one is spiritually lost, which is Paul's primary goal in the first major segment division of Romans (Ro 1:18-3:20) where he clearly shows sinful man his desperate need for salvation, summing up that there is none righteous, not even one (Ro 3:10). The tax collector's unwillingness to lift his eyes (to heaven, to God) clearly reflects understanding of his desperate spiritual condition. It is this poverty of spirit which made him open to the message describing who enters the Kingdom of God. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks of the spirit needed in the person who desires to enter the Kingdom of God, declaring

"Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**." (Mt 5:3+)

Comment: Remember that entrance into the **Kingdom of Heaven** (or its synonym, the **Kingdom of God**) is divine "short hand" for gaining salvation, because only those souls saved by grace through faith will enter into the **Kingdom of Heaven** (in this present age only a spiritual Kingdom with Christ as King in our hearts, but one day a Millennial Kingdom, which is followed by an eternal Kingdom.)

Bailey comments - Sensing his defiled ceremonial status, the tax collector chooses to stand apart from other worshipers attending the magnificent [atonement](#) sacrifice for the sins of Israel. The accepted posture for prayer in the temple was to look down and keep one's arms crossed over the chest, like a servant before his master. But the tax collector is so distraught over his sins that he beats his chest where his heart is located. (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

But was beating ([tupto/typto](#)) his breast - This is a unique description and further reflects his humility and deep distress over his

sinful state! The **breast** or heart was regarded as the seat of sin (Mt 15:19-20, Mk 7:21-23, cf Jer 17:9) and hence the act is one of grief or contrition, but as noted below was an unusual act for a man to carry out. Instead his hands raised upward (like the Pharisee may have done), the tax collector makes his hands into fists to enable him to pound on his chest! Have you ever felt such disgust with your sins and sinful state that you beat on your chest in brokenness and contrition? Although I am not necessarily advocating this practice, what if the next time we sinned presumptively against God, we would take our fist and begin to beat on our chest?! It might "get our attention!" Of course, the only way to truly kill sin is not by our efforts on our own, but our efforts motivated and empowered by the Spirit, Who enables us to put to "death the deeds of the body," so that we will really live. (Ro 8:13+) remembering that "all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Ro 8:14+)

Beating ([tupto/typto](#) from root "tup--" = a blow) from root "tup--" = a blow --- striking, hitting) (imperfect tense = again and again - what a scene he must have created!) means literally to smite, strike with a fist, staff or whip. To beat or otherwise inflict a blow as when Paul was beaten in Acts (Acts 21:32, 23:2). In Lk 18:13 the tax collector was beating his chest mourning over his sinful state, in stark contrast to the self-righteous Pharisee (Lk 18:10-12). Figuratively **tupto** spoke of wounding one's conscience (1 Cor 8:12+).

J C Ryle - He smote upon his breast, like one who felt more than he could express. Such prayers are the prayers which are God's delight. A broken and a contrite heart He will not despise. (Psalm 51:17.)

MacArthur on beating - This is a gesture that is used to express the most extreme sorrow, the most extreme anguish. We find it in Jewish history. We do not find an illustration of it in the Old Testament. We find references to it in Jewish commentaries, ancient Jewish commentaries, but not in the Old Testament. There is only one other place in the New Testament where it happens...

And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened (the crucifixion of Christ), began to return, **beating** their breasts. (Lk 23:48)

Comment - There has never been a more horrible event than the Cross and thus there could never be a place where there would be more profound anguish and where men and women who were there reacted in this dramatic way. This use in Luke 23:48 helps put the significance of the tax collector's beating of his breast because of his sinfulness!

One writer says ""Women customarily beat on their chests at funerals but men do not. For men it is a gesture of extreme sorrow and anguish, almost never used. It is little wonder that in all biblical literature we find this particular gesture mentioned only in the account of this parable and at the cross....It takes something of the magnitude of Golgotha to evoke this gesture from Middle Eastern men."

Bailey adds that "In the Middle East, generally speaking, women beat their chests, men do not. Occasionally, women at particularly tragic funerals beat their chests. In the Bible, the only other case of people beating their chests is at the cross when the crowds, deeply disturbed at what had taken place, beat their chests at the end of the day just after Jesus died (Lk 23:48). Presumably, on that occasion both men and women were involved. If it requires a scene as distressing as the crucifixion of Jesus to cause men and women to beat their chests, then clearly the tax collector of this parable is deeply distraught! The only time I have seen or known of Middle Eastern men beating their chests is at the Shiite Muslim yearly commemoration of the murder of Hussain, the founder of their community." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

Bailey in another work asks a question about **breast** - Why the chest? The reason for this is given in an early Jewish commentary on Ecclesiastes 7:2: R. Mana said: And the Living will lay it to his heart: these are the righteous who set their death over against their heart; and why do they beat upon their heart? as though to say, "All is there," (note: ... the righteous beat their heart as the source of evil longing.) (Midrash Rabbah, Eccl. 7:2, 5, Sonc., 177). The same underlying rationale is affirmed by Ibn al-Ṣalībī in his eleventh-century commentary where he writes regarding the tax collector, "his heart in his chest was the source of all his evil thoughts so he was beating it as evidence of his pain as some people do in their remorse, for they beat upon their chests." (Ibn al-Ṣalībī, II, 182). Thus this classical Middle Eastern gesture is a profound recognition of the truth of the fact that "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder ... theft, false witness, slander" (Matt. 15:19). This kind of background gives us a picture of the depth of the tax collector's remorse. What then is his specific prayer? (Borrow [POET & PEASANT and THROUGH PEASANT EYES A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke](#)- Kenneth Bailey)

"GOD, APPLY THE ATONEMENT TO ME"

God be merciful ([hilaskomai](#)) **to me the sinner** ([hamartolos](#)) - What a contrasting picture -- on one hand the tax collector makes only one allusion to himself ("me") addressed to God, while the Pharisee makes 5 mentions of "I" addressed to self! And note the brevity. This is all the tax collector prayed, just 6 words in the Greek, compared to 29 words from the Pharisee. If ever we have an illustration that powerful prayers do not need to be prolonged prayers, it is the example of the two prayers in this parable! (Are you

as convicted as I am?)

God be merciful ([hilaskomai](#) in [aorist imperative](#), divine passive) **to me** - The CSB is closer to the real meaning of the Greek text reading "God, turn Your wrath from me." It is surprising that most English versions translate this as **'be merciful'**, given that this is not the usual Greek word for "have mercy" (which is the verb [eleeo](#)), the very verb which Luke uses a few passages later (Lk 18:38) describing the blind man who "called out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy ([eleeo](#)) on me'". Here, Luke uses the verb [hilaskomai](#), which conveys more of a sense of to be favorably inclined or to propitiate. [Propitiate](#) describes the act of appeasing or making well disposed. **BDAG** says [hilaskomai](#) means "to eliminate impediments that alienate the deity." Clearly, Luke knew that there was a distinction between the two verbs, [eleeo](#) and [hilaskomai](#), even though they were both translated essentially the same way in most English Bible versions.

Steven Cole comments on the little phrase **to me** - He doesn't lump himself with others: "We all have done wrong." He didn't assume that he would get into heaven on the group plan, because he was a Jew or because his parents had been faithful synagogue members. He was dealing with God on a personal basis. That's the only way into heaven. You must come to God personally, just you and Him. ([The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#))

Guzik writes that [hilaskomai](#) is "the word for an atoning sacrifice. The fullest sense of what the tax collector said was, **'God, be merciful to me through Your atoning sacrifice for sins, because I am a sinner.'**" ([Luke 18 Commentary](#)) Humility is not thinking meanly of oneself, but rather it means not thinking of oneself at all. Van Havern

Hilaskomai is used 13 times in the Septuagint compared to only twice in the NT. Notice these uses which speak not so much of mercy, but of the action or act which is based on mercy, that is forgiveness of sin or pardon of iniquity. This is closer to what the tax collector was saying in this passage.

For example, in Ps 25:11 David prays "For Your name's sake, O LORD, **pardon** (Hebrew = [salach](#); Lxx = [hilaskomai](#)) my iniquity, for it is great."

In Ps 65:3 **David** declares "Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You **forgive** (Hebrew = [kaphar](#) - make atonement; Lxx = [hilaskomai](#)) them." **Asaph** writes that God "being compassionate, **forgave** (Hebrew = [kaphar](#); Lxx = [hilaskomai](#)) their iniquity

But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger And did not arouse all His wrath. " (Ps 78:38)

Asaph prays " Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; And deliver us and **forgive** (Hebrew = [kaphar](#); Lxx = [hilaskomai](#)) our sins for Your name's sake." (Ps 79:9)

Jeremiah writes "We have transgressed and rebelled, You have not **pardoned** (Hebrew = [salach](#); Lxx = [hilaskomai](#))." (Lam 3:42)

The only other NT use of [hilaskomai](#) is in Hebrews 2:17+....

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to **make propitiation** for the sins of the people.

Wuest says that "In its Biblical usage, the verb ([hilaskomai](#)) refers to the act of our Lord offering Himself on the Cross to satisfy the righteous demands of God's justice, so that His government might be maintained, and that mercy might be shown on the basis of justice satisfied. The words "reconciliation" and "propitiation" are to be understood in this light."

Given this background on **hilaskomai**, one might translate the tax collector's request as asking that God **'be propitiated to me, the sinner.'** The related word [hilasterion](#) is used by Paul and another related word [hilasmos](#) by John...

"Whom (Christ Jesus - Ro 3:24b) God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** ([hilasterion](#) is also translated **"mercy seat"** in Heb 9:5+ the place where the blood of the sacrificial animal was placed to satisfy the wrath of God) in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed (BY OT SAINTS WHO PLACED THEIR FAITH IN THE COMING MESSIAH AS ABRAHAM DID IN Ge 15:6+) (Ro 3:25+) "and He Himself (Christ Jesus) is the **propitiation** ([hilasterion](#)) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (including those who lived before the Cross)." (1 John 2:2+)

Comment: [Propitiation](#) refers to the satisfaction of God's righteous anger, so that He can now be JUST (His law says sin demands death) and can deal with men graciously and benevolently (JUSTIFIER - see Ro 3:26+). The concepts of "redemption" and "propitiation" are used to demonstrate and draw our

attention to the justice of God. God has set the sinner free through Christ, but He has not done so by setting aside the rules. He has set the sinner free in Christ by satisfying the demands of God's justice in Christ (propitiation). Due to sin, a penalty had to be meted out and a price had to be paid. Christ paid that price and suffered that penalty to set the captives free (redeem/redemption). God's divine wrath had to be appeased, due to man's sin. Christ has appeased God's righteous wrath (propitiation), making Christ's fully atoning sacrifice available to all who accept it by grace through faith.

In essence, the **tax collector** was confessing his sin and thus his need for God's forgiveness, and was trusting in the blood for [atonement](#), the blood of a spotless lamb (shed at 9 AM [cf Acts 2:15] and 3 PM [cf Acts 3:1] every day in the Temple) which foreshadowed the precious blood of the unblemished, spotless Lamb of God (Jn 1:29-see chart summary on redemption by the Lamb, see 1 Peter 1:18-19+). His repentance and faith resulted in his being **justified** or "declared righteous" before God. Stated another way, when the tax collector asked God to "**be merciful**," he was in essence asking Him to offer the sacrifice for his sin which would put his sin away and allow the holy and a righteous God to bless him with salvation. In effect, he was looking ahead to the accomplishment of the work of salvation at the Cross. Christ Alone is the propitiation or satisfaction for our sins (1Jn 2:2+). Jesus is saying that the tax collector's faith stretched out to that [crux](#) event and he laid hold of it by faith and as a result had Christ's righteousness [imputed](#), reckoned, charged to or placed upon his "spiritual bank account."

Bailey adds that "There is no apparent reason to deny the word [hilaskomai](#) its full weight and translate the tax collector's request as, "*O Lord, **make an atonement for me.***" Both the Pharisee and the tax collector are standing in front of the [great high altar](#) on which a lamb, without blemish, has just been sacrificed for the sins of Israel. The **tax collector** stands far off, apart from the worshipers gathered around the altar, and watches the sacrifice of the lamb. He listens to the blowing of the silver trumpets and the great clash of the cymbals, hears the reading of the psalm and watches the blood splashed on the sides of the altar. He sees the priest disappear inside the temple to offer incense before God. Shortly afterward, the priest reappears announcing that the sacrifice has been accepted and Israel's sins washed away by the atoning sacrifice of the lamb. The trumpets blow again, and the incense wafts to heaven. The great choir sings, and the **tax collector**, distraught and **beating** his chest, stands far off and cries out, "**O Lord, make an atonement for me, a sinner!**" (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

MacArthur explains that the **tax collector** is saying in essence "*God, please apply the atonement to me.*" He understood the theology of atonement. He understood the wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23), the soul that sins it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). He understood the wonderful story of Abraham and Isaac that God would provide a sacrifice that would satisfy Himself and would satisfy His justice, a substitute (Genesis 22:8, 10, 11, 12, 13 = [Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide](#)). He understood that the millions of animals that had been offered throughout all of Jewish history were symbolic of the fact that God could be appeased by a sacrifice, though none of those sacrifices ever gave the final appeasement to God (Heb 10:1-4+). Otherwise they would have ceased. The tax collector is speaking in the language of atonement. He is not simply making a general plea for mercy. This needs to be expressed clearly because sometimes when we present the Gospel, all we want to do is say God loves you and has this wonderful plan for your life...and if you just ask Him, He will be merciful to you. That is not what this man is saying. He is saying, "*I am a wretched sinner. I am unworthy to stand near you. I am unworthy to look up toward you. I am in profound agony and anguish over my wretchedness. I need an atonement for my sins to be applied to me.*"....The verb [hilaskomai](#) is only used two times in the New Testament, one here and the second use in Hebrews 2:17 where it says, concerning Jesus Christ, that He is "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to **make propitiation** for the sins of the people," to **make satisfaction**, to **satisfy the wrath of God**, to **satisfy the justice and holiness and vengeance of God**. And that is what the tax collector is crying for. "*Oh God, please apply the atonement to me, make atonement for me!*" That very day a sacrifice had been made on that altar (at 9 AM and 3 PM). He pleads that it would apply to him. He understood the theology of substitution, imputation and atonement. The Jews knew that One would come as a Son of David (Mt 1:1), a root out of Jesse (Isa 11:10, Ro 15:12) and that in Isaiah 53 He would bear our iniquities and He would die in our place (cf Isaiah 53:11b). Isaiah 53:5 says, "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed (THIS IS "[SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT](#)")." And so the **tax collector** says "*Please, oh God, please make the atonement apply to me. May Your anger with me over.*" That's the plea of a penitent sinner. "*Oh God, cease being justifiably, righteously angry with me. May Your justice be satisfied through atonement* (Ed: looking toward that accomplished by Jesus)." (Bolding and Italics added).

The **Pharisee**, on the other hand, fails to see his need for an atoning sacrifice by the perfect Lamb of God and prayed "to himself," (Lu 18:11) rather than to God, merely congratulating himself on his own self-righteousness and thus receiving no forgiveness (Lu 18:14).

Spurgeon gives an excellent summation on the words **be merciful to me the sinner** - "In the original Greek the words are even fewer than in the English. Oh, that men would learn to pray with less of language and more of meaning! **What great things are packed away in this short petition! God, mercy, sin, the propitiation, and forgiveness.**" ([Luke 18](#) - exposition)

J C Ryle - The Publican confessed plainly that he was a sinner. This is the very A B C of saving Christianity. We never begin to be

good till we can feel and say that we are bad....Let these things sink down into our hearts. He that has learned to feel his sins has great reason to be thankful. We are never in the way of salvation until we know that we are lost, ruined, guilty, and helpless. Happy indeed is he who is not ashamed to sit by the side of the publican! When our experience tallies with his, we may hope that we have found a place in the school of God.

The sinner - Not "**A** sinner" but "**THE** sinner." He knows his heart and so he places himself as a sinner in a class of its own (THE sinner)! The tax collector views himself not just as any sinner but as the worst of all sinners. He was like Paul who (even though he had been saved for many years) declared in 1 Timothy 1:15 "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, among whom I am foremost of all." Paul called himself the **chief** of **sinners** (1Ti 1:15KJV). **MacArthur** explains why Paul calls himself the **foremost** or **chief** of sinners...

This is an unequivocal confession of his extreme and supreme sinfulness and there is no comparing him with others. He is the worst sinner. And that is a legitimate response because of all the sinners in the world he knows himself to be the worst because no sinner knows so much about himself as the individual himself. He knows about other sinners, **but he knows his own heart better than he knows anybody else**. "Who knows the spirit of a man but the spirit of the man that is within him?" says the Scripture (1 Cor 2:11). And so he concludes that he is the worst sinner in the world, as far as his personal knowledge is concerned.

Charles Simeon observed that "Never are you higher in God's esteem than when you are lowest in your own!"

John MacArthur makes an interesting comment that might surprise you at first but read on - The Pharisee had faith in God. He believed in God. He believed in the true and living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He believed in the God who was the Savior God. He believed in the sacrificial system. He believed in atonement for sin. He believed in God's forgiveness..... But the Pharisee just thought he had **earned forgiveness**. He thought that his sins were covered by the atoning sacrifices and that he was going to receive the full forgiveness of God and thus was part of the kingdom of God. So he believed in the true God, he believed in the Scripture, he believed in the sacrifice, the atonement that God was gracious to him and God was kind to him and God would forgive him (WHY? AND THIS IS THE KEY!) **because he earned it**. That is the way religious people think. It isn't that the world is full of people who don't think they have never done anything wrong. It is just that they think they have not done as much wrong as they have done right. And so they have tipped the scales in their favor and God is going to forgive the bad they have done because they have earned His forgiveness. ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 2](#))

Brian Bell - The publican's prayer showed he was humble before God and man; showed he was more aware of his own sins than those of others; showed he was not concerned about obtaining material wealth; showed he was conscious of his standing before God. ([Luke:18:1-14 2 Prayerables](#))

Distance ([3113](#)) (**makrothen** from **makros** = far, long) is an adverb which speaks of location means from far away, from a distance. At a distance (Lk 18:13). Far away from (Mk 8:3). Used with apo (from) in Mt 26:58; 27:55; Mk 11:13; 14:54; Lk 18:13; 22:54; Rv 18:10, 15, 17.

Makrothen - 15x in 14v - away*(1), distance(11), far(1), great distance(1), some distance away(1). Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55; Mk. 5:6; Mk. 8:3; Mk. 11:13; Mk. 14:54; Mk. 15:40; Lk. 16:23; Lk. 18:13; Lk. 22:54; Lk. 23:49; Rev. 18:10; Rev. 18:15; Rev. 18:17

Makrothen - 37x in 37v in the Septuagint - Ge 21:16; Gen. 22:4 = "On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a **distance**"; Gen. 37:18; Ex 2:4; Ex 20:18; Ex 20:21; Ex. 24:1; Dt. 28:49; Dt. 29:22; Jos. 9:6; Jos. 9:9; 1 Sa 26:13; 2 Ki. 2:7; 2 Chr. 6:32; Ezr. 3:13; Neh. 12:43; Ps. 10:1 = "Why do You stand **afar off**, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?"; Ps. 38:11; Ps. 138:6; Ps. 139:2 = "You understand my thought from **afar**"; Pr. 25:25; Pr. 31:14; Isa. 60:4; Isa. 60:9; Jer. 4:16; Jer. 6:20; Jer. 8:19; Jer. 46:27; Jer. 51:50; Ezek. 23:40; Hab. 1:8

One of the uses in Psalm 138:6 is apropos to our current parable declaring...

"For though the LORD is exalted, Yet **He regards the lowly** (TAX COLLECTOR), But **the haughty** (SELF RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE) **He knows from afar**."

Comment: So the irony is that while the Pharisee kept his distance from the unsavory tax collector, God keeps His distance from all who are like the self-righteous Pharisee! Woe!

Be merciful (make propitiation) ([2433](#)) (**hilaskomai** from **hileos** = speaks of being favorably disposed with implication of overcoming obstacles that are unfavorable to a relationship; see also [hilasterion](#)) means to cause to be favorably inclined toward or favorably disposed toward another (as here in Lk 18:13). **Hilaskomai** means to be merciful, make reconciliation for, be propitious, gracious. In short, it means to **make an atonement**. And so the Armenian translation made in the Middle East in the fourth century renders Lk

18:13 "O God, **make an atonement** for me."

The Sinner (268)([hamartolos](#) from [hamartáno](#) = deviate, miss the mark) is an adjective (e.g., "*that through the commandment sin might become utterly **sinful***" - see Ro 7:13+) that is often used as a noun (as in this verse and Ro 5:19[[note](#)]) to describe those who are continually erring from the way, constantly missing God's mark, living in opposition to His good and acceptable and perfect will. Thus a sinner is one who lives in opposition to the divine will. In Luke 7:34+, the Pharisees called Jesus "a friend of tax-gatherers and **sinners** ([hamartolos](#))." Of course, they were using the term **sinners** in a derogatory sense, but in fact they were correct - Jesus is the best Friend any sinner could have and in this parable the tax gatherer recognized his desperate need for an atoning sacrifice which was ultimately provided by the Lamb of God, the Friend of sinners!

Illustration I'm Guilty -- The story is told that one day Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, visited a prison and talked with each of the inmates. There were endless tales of innocence, of misunderstood motives, and of exploitation. Finally the king stopped at the cell of a convict who remained silent. "Well," remarked Frederick, "I suppose you are an innocent victim too?" "No, sir, I'm not," replied the man. "I'm guilty and deserve my punishment." Turning to the warden, the king said, "Here, release this rascal before he corrupts all these fine innocent people in here!"

Illustration from [William Wilberforce](#) - The Quaker reformer Joseph John Gurney, a friend of many years, recalled the last conversation he had with Wilberforce—just a few weeks before his death. 'How admirable are the harmony and variety of St Paul's smaller Epistles!' he told Gurney. 'You might well have given an argument upon it in your little work on evidence [Essays on the Evidences, Doctrines and Practical Operations of Christianity]. The Epistle to the Galatians contains a noble exhibition of doctrine. That to the Colossians is a union of doctrine and precept, showing their mutual connection and dependence; that to the Ephesians, is seraphic; that to the Philippians, is all love.' Gurney long remembered Wilberforce's closing words. ' "With regard to myself," he added, "**I have nothing whatsoever to urge, but the poor publican's plea, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'**" These words were expressed with peculiar feeling and emphasis, and have since called to my remembrance his own definition of the word mercy—"kindness to those that deserve punishment." '

Illustration Robert Morgan tells the story of **A Boy's Prayer** - In the 1898 book *Yates the Missionary*, Matthew Yates described how the Lord used both light and lightning to bring him to Christ as a boy. The light was supplied by a kindly evangelist named John Purefoy, who often stayed in the Yates' home.

I remember well Father Purefoy's putting his hand on my head and saying, "May the Lord make a preacher of him!" This blessing made an impression on my young heart, for his manner was kind and his tone serious.

Later he asked me if I ever prayed. I replied I did not know how to pray. He looked kindly at me as I held his horse for him to mount, and said, "I will tell you, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.'" This was the first intimation I ever had that I was a sinner.

At a subsequent interview, Purefoy asked me when no one else was present if I had ever prayed as he taught me. I replied I did not know where to pray. He said, "Go into the woods where none but God can hear you."

The house where I was attending school stood under a magnificent white oak. During recess while we played under its spreading limbs, it was struck by lightning twice in as many seconds. We were pressed to the ground as if by a great weight, and each boy had a deep red spot on some part of his body caused by the electricity. The heavens had been overcast that day, but there had been neither rain nor thunder.

This incident, so sudden and unexpected, made me feel that I was a sinner and must pray. I went into a dense forest and found a large oak that was much inclined toward the south. There I erected my altar of prayer, and there I prayed, "**God be merciful to me a sinner.**"

Matthew Yates went on to become a prominent Christian and a missionary mightily used in China. (From *This Verse*)

Paul W. Powell once observed, "Pride is so subtle that if we aren't careful we'll be proud of our humility. When this happens our goodness becomes badness. Our virtues become vices. We can easily become like the Sunday School teacher who, having told the story of the Pharisee and the publican, said, 'Children, let's bow our heads and thank God we are not like the Pharisee!'"

Spurgeon - "But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!'" It was the fault of the Pharisee that, though he entered the temple to pray, he did not pray; there is no prayer in all that he said. It is one excellence of the tax collector that he went up to the temple to pray and did pray; there is nothing but prayer in all that he said. "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" is a pure, unadulterated prayer throughout. It was the fault

of the Pharisee that when he went up to the temple to pray he forgot an essential part of prayer, which is confession of sin; he spoke as if he had no sins to confess but many virtues to parade. It was a chief excellence in the devotion of the tax collector that he did confess his sin and that his utterance was full of confession of sin; from beginning to end it was an acknowledgment of his guilt and an appeal for grace to the merciful God. The prayer of the tax collector is admirable for its fullness of meaning. One expositor calls it a holy telegram, and certainly it is so compact and so condensed, so free from superfluous words, that it is worthy to be called by that name. I do not see how he could have expressed his meaning more fully or more briefly. What great things are packed away in this short petition! God, mercy, sin, the propitiation, and forgiveness. The prayer so pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, who heard it, that he condescended to become a portrait painter and took a sketch of the petitioner. Luke, who, according to tradition, was somewhat of an artist as well as a physician, takes great care to place this picture in the national portrait gallery of men saved by sovereign grace. Here we have the portrait of a man who called himself a sinner, who may yet be held up as a pattern to saints. ([Luke 18:13 A Sermon for the Worst Man on Earth](#))

'Guilty!'

Read: Luke 18:9-14

God, be merciful to me a sinner! —Luke 18:13

The great “prince of preachers” Charles Haddon Spurgeon used to tell the story of a duke who boarded a galley ship and went below to talk with the criminals manning the oars. He asked several of them what their offenses were. Almost every man claimed he was innocent, blaming someone else or accusing the judge of taking a bribe.

One young fellow, however, replied, “Sir, I deserve to be here. I stole some money. No one is at fault but me. I’m guilty.” Upon hearing this, the duke shouted, “You scoundrel, you! What are you doing here with all these honest men? Get out of their company at once!” The duke ordered that this prisoner be released. He was set free, while the rest were left to tug at the oars. The key to this prisoner’s freedom was his admission of guilt.

That’s also true in salvation. Until a person is willing to admit, “I am a sinner in need of salvation,” he cannot experience freedom from guilt and condemnation.

Have you ever said, “I plead guilty”? If not, do so right now. You can never save yourself, so receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior by placing your trust in Him. Then, once you are set free from sin’s guilt and power, you will know the joy of forgiveness and freedom. Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Admitting that we're guilty,
Acknowledging our sin,
Then trusting in Christ's sacrifice
Will make us clean within.
—Sper

Sin brings fear; confession brings freedom.

For Sinners Only

Read: Luke 18:9-14

The tax collector . . . beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” —Luke 18:13

An article in The Grand Rapids Press described a woman who overcame her drinking habit—but only after she admitted she had a problem. She said the “emotional moment” came when she brought herself to say, “I’m Betty and I’m an alcoholic.”

She had been saying that her slurred speech, drowsiness, and other problems were due to the medication she was taking for a chronic ailment. But the family knew the real cause and confronted her. As a result, she finally faced up to her problem. Before that, she was a hopeless case. But when she said, “I’m an alcoholic,” there was hope.

It’s much the same way with salvation. As long as a person makes excuses for his sinful behavior, he’ll never experience deliverance. It’s only when he admits, “I am a sinner and cannot save myself,” that the Lord will rescue him from sin and its awful consequences. The proud and boastful Pharisee in Luke 18 was lost. The tax collector, however, acknowledged his sinfulness and “went down to his house justified” (v.14).

If you have never done so before, admit your guilt and receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior. Remember, salvation is for sinners

only. Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Naught have I gotten but what I received,
Grace has bestowed it since I have believed;
Boasting excluded, pride I abase—
I'm only a sinner saved by grace!
—Gray

Jesus can change the foulest sinner into the finest saint.

Lost And Found

Read: Luke 18:9-14

The tax collector . . . beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!. —Luke 18:13

Evangelist D. L. Moody once visited a prison called "The Tombs" to preach to the inmates. After he had finished speaking, Moody talked with a number of men in their cells. He asked each prisoner this question, "What brought you here?" Again and again he received replies like this: "I don't deserve to be here." "I was framed." "I was falsely accused." "I was not given a fair trial." Not one inmate would admit he was guilty.

Moody finally found a man with his face buried in his hands, weeping. "What's wrong, my friend?" he inquired. The prisoner responded, "My sins are more than I can bear." Relieved to find at least one man who would recognize his guilt and need of forgiveness, the evangelist exclaimed, "Thank God for that!" Moody then joyfully led him to a saving knowledge of Christ—a knowledge that released him from the shackles of his sin.

What an accurate picture of the two contrasting attitudes spoken of in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican! (Luke 18:9-14). As long as the sinner claims innocence and denies his sin before the Lord, he cannot receive the blessings of redemption. But when he pleads guilty and cries out, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," he is forgiven. In order to be found, you must first recognize that you are lost. Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To find salvation you must admit you are lost.

Looking Down

Read: Luke 18:9-14

I say . . . to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly. —Romans 12:3

After I had minor eye surgery, the nurse told me, "Don't look down for the next 2 weeks. No cooking or cleaning." The last part of those instructions was a little easier to take than the first part! The incisions needed to heal, and she didn't want me to put any unnecessary pressure on them by looking down.

C. S. Lewis wrote about another kind of looking down that we may have a problem with: "In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. . . . As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you" (Mere Christianity).

Jesus told a parable about a Pharisee who felt superior to others. In a prideful prayer, he thanked God that he was not like other men (Luke 18:11). He looked down on extortioners, the unjust, adulterers, and the tax collector who was also praying in the temple. By contrast, the tax collector knew he was a sinner before God and asked for His mercy (v.13).

Pride can be an issue for all of us. May we not look down on others but instead see the God who is far above us all. Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

—Watts

Spiritual pride is the most arrogant of all kinds of pride.

Expect and Extend Mercy

Read: Luke 18:9–14

God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Luke 18:13

When I complained that a friend's choices were leading her deeper into sin and how her actions affected me, the woman I prayed with weekly placed her hand over mine. "Let's pray for all of us."

I frowned. "All of us?"

When we realize the depth of our need for mercy, we can more readily offer mercy to others.

"Yes," she said. "Aren't you the one who always says Jesus sets our standard of holiness, so we shouldn't compare our sins to the sins of others?"

"That truth hurts a little," I said, "but you're right. My judgmental attitude and spiritual pride are no better or worse than her sins."

"And by talking about your friend, we're gossiping. So—"

"We're sinning." I lowered my head. "Please, pray for us."

In Luke 18, Jesus shared a parable about two men approaching the temple to pray in very different ways (vv. 9–14). Like the Pharisee, we can become trapped in a circle of comparing ourselves to other people. We can boast about ourselves (vv. 11–12) and live as though we have the right to judge and the responsibility or the power to change others.

But when we look to Jesus as our example of holy living and encounter His goodness firsthand, like the tax collector, our desperate need for God's grace is magnified (v. 13). As we experience the Lord's loving compassion and forgiveness personally, we'll be forever changed and empowered to expect and extend mercy, not condemnation, to others.

Lord, please keep us from falling into the trap of comparing ourselves to others. Mold us and make us more like You. Xochitl Dixon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we realize the depth of our need for mercy, we can more readily offer mercy to others.

Luke 18:14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

- **I tell you, this man went to his house:** Lu 5:24,25 7:47-50 1Sa 1:18 Ec 9:7
- **justified rather than the other:** Lu 10:29 16:15 Job 9:20 25:4 Ps 143:2 Isa 45:25 53:11 Ro 3:20 Ro 4:5 5:1 8:33 Ga 2:16 Jas 2:21-25
- **for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled:** Lu 1:52 14:11 Ex 18:11 Job 22:29 40:9-13 Ps 138:6 Pr 3:34 15:33 Pr 16:18,19 18:12 29:23 Isa 2:11-17 57:15 Da 4:37 Hab 2:4 Mt 5:3 23:12 Jas 4:6,10 1Pe 5:5,6
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:9-14 The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:9-14 Who Can Be Right with God? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE SHOCKING REVERSAL

I tell you - What is Jesus saying by using this introduction? He is telling the hearers truth that comes with His authority. He is telling them truth that they would not hear from their religious leaders. There was no rabbinical teaching which He could quote. This reminds us of the reaction of His Jewish audience who was "amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority." In the present case the reaction of the hearers is not recorded but undoubtedly they were stunned by Jesus' words that a tax collector was justified before God and a Pharisee was not justified. Jesus was telling them, "It is not the man who is "good" who is justified, but the

man who knows he is wicked that is justified." This is not what the rabbis taught. This is not what the Pharisees and Scribes taught. But this is the truth that Jesus taught and it was shocking to Jewish ears!

Stein on Jesus' words **I tell you** - Note the Christological claim in these words. Jesus claimed to know the mind of God. (NAC)

And so the Pharisee is as good as it gets, but not good enough (Mt 5:20). The self-confessed sinner, on the other hand, is as bad as it gets, the most despised of all outcasts, and yet he is the one of whom Jesus said, "He went down justified," or just, or right, or righteous with God, acceptable and approved by God. That idea to religious people in the religions of human achievement, that idea to a Jew in the Judaism of that day and particularly that idea to a Pharisee would constitute a kind of outrage.

This man went to his house justified rather than the other - The Sacrificial Service is over, and now the tax collector is mentioned before the Pharisee, reversing the order at the beginning of the parable. The humble tax collector is justified or declared righteous before God, while the prideful, self-righteous Pharisee is not declared righteous. Scripture consistently teaches that sinners are **justified** when God's perfect righteousness is imputed to their account (cf. Ge 15:6; Ro 4:4, 5; 2Co 5:21; Php 3:4-9)—and it was only on that basis that this tax collector (or anyone else) could be saved.

Went - This is more literally "**went down**" and presents an interesting wordplay. Both men went up the Temple stairs. Both men came down the Temple stairs. The one who went up exalting self, **went down** downgraded and dismissively described as "that one," rather than "the Pharisee!" The one who went up in humility, went down exalted by God as described in the proverbial statement in this verse.

Bailey has an interesting note - For centuries the Church debated whether [the sacraments](#) have an automatic effect on the believer irrespective of his spiritual state. Here in this simple parable we already have an answer, and the answer is **NO!** The Pharisee was wasting his time. The self-righteous returns home unjustified....The sacrifice of the lamb for the sins of the people is made—but the broken of heart, who come in unworthiness trusting in God's atonement, they alone are made right with God. (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

Justified (1344) ([dikaioo](#) from **dike** = right, expected behavior or conformity,) primarily means to deem to be right, and describes the act by which a man is brought into a right state of relationship to God. **Dikaioo** is a legal term having to do with the law and the courtroom, where it represented the legally binding verdict of the judge. This is the sense in which Paul uses **dikaioo** in the great section in Romans in which he unfolds the doctrine of justification. (Ro 3:21-5:11) It is important to note that **dikaioo** is in the **perfect tense** which describes a past completed action (in this context the moment the tax collector believed in the substitutionary atonement of the Messiah) with an ongoing, permanent effect ([eternal security](#) = once truly saved, then truly saved for eternity!). In short, the tax collector is declared permanently in right standing before God!

Steven Cole - To justify means that God bangs the gavel at His judgment bench and declares, "Not guilty!" Not only does He remove the guilt of our sins, He also credits to our account the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, the substitute who suffered the penalty of God's wrath. This man walked into the temple as a guilty, despicable tax collector, who ripped off people because of his own greed. He walked out of the temple righteous before God. How could this be? The answer is, he received a righteousness not his own, imputed to him. Was that perfect righteousness imputed to him because of his works or his promise to be different? No, it was imputed to him by God's grace through faith. ([The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#))

MacArthur - This would draw gasps from the legalists. Think of it, Jesus, God in human flesh, the holy one, the perfect sinless one says that in one moment an extreme sinner can be pronounced instantly righteous without any works, without any merit, without any worthiness, without any law-keeping, without any moral achievement, religious achievement, spiritual accomplishment or ritual. No time lapse, no penance, no works, no ceremony, no sacrament, no meritorious activity whatsoever, nothing to do, instant declaration of justification on the spot, permanent. Wow! How can that be? Because the only righteousness that God will accept is perfect righteousness and since you can't earn it, He gives it as a gift to the penitent who put their trust in Him. That's the gospel. All the sinner ever does is receive the gift, coming in penitent trust, pleading for atonement to be made to satisfy the wrath of God against his sin. Here is the broken-hearted, self-confessed sinner, humble, unworthy, trusting only in God's atonement, pleading that God would apply it to him, who is instantaneously made perfect before God, as perfect as God, for the righteousness of God is credited to him. He's the one who enters the spiritual and will be in the earthly and will live forever in the eternal kingdom, rather than the other. The self-righteous pride of the Pharisee and everybody like him only intensifies the alienation. His soliloquy up there just solidified his self-confidence and he went down even more wretched than when he went up. Atonement is worthless to the self-righteous. So the listening crowd who heard Jesus say this and anybody who reads it is forced to reassess how a person enters the kingdom of God. It's not by human morality, goodness, or religion, but by repentance and conviction of sin and a plea for an atoning sacrifice. ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 2](#))

Bailey - Again and again in his teaching Jesus presents the theme of the "righteous," who do not sense their need for God's grace, and the "sinners" who yearn for that same grace. This parable is an important part of that larger collection of teachings on this

subject. Sin for Jesus is not primarily a broken law but a broken relationship. The tax collector yearns to accept the gift of God's justification, while the Pharisee feels he has already earned it. As **Joachim Jeremias** has written regarding this parable, "Our passage shows ... that the Pauline doctrine of justification has its roots in the teaching of Jesus." (Borrow - [Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels](#)).

JUSTIFICATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

MacArthur expands upon Jeremias' point adding that this parable is an illustration of the way of salvation in the Old Testament - Doesn't it strike you interesting that **there is no Christology** here? There is no cross...no resurrection....no sacrifice of Christ that atoned for sin...**this is an Old Testament conversion**...this is pre-Cross. But you are probably thinking that the only sacrifice that pleases God is the sacrifice of Christ, right? Therefore it wasn't the sacrifice of the animal that would be applied to this man's spiritual account, but it was the sacrifice of Christ pictured in the sacrifice of the animal. There is no righteousness apart from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God is satisfied only with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ because it was God who made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21+). It was Christ who bore the curse for us ("for us" = in our place = substitution - Gal 3:13+). Christ is not in this story because this is an Old Testament salvation story. This is the classic of all the Old Testament conversion accounts. **The work of our Lord is not mentioned because it had not yet occurred.** But what is clear is that righteousness and justification is a gift from God apart from works that is only made possible through the application of an atoning sacrifice. We leave it to Paul after the Cross to teach the rich meaning of the atonement of Jesus Christ being the One and only sacrifice that satisfies God. But isn't it interesting that the starting point for Paul, the starting point for the New Testament understanding of righteousness through atonement is traceable back to this story in Luke 18:9-14? When I wrote the book *The Gospel According to Jesus* and I rewrote a newer edition, I wanted to include the **doctrine of justification** and this is the only place in the teaching of Jesus where you have this explicit instruction. **It is here that one finds the foundation for the teachings of Paul.** Christ becomes that sacrifice and it is His death which is applied to all who have ever believed in the past and it covers all their sins. However, know this, that there is no salvation on this side of the cross apart from recognizing Christ and His work on the cross, for "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other Name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 2](#)) (Bolding added)

MacArthur - The Lord ends this amazing story with what I'll call the central axiom. The audience, the analogy, the answer, the central axiom in verse 14, this is a truism, a proverb, "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted." "Exalted" here is a synonym for salvation, a synonym for righteousness. It's used in an Old Testament sense. In the Old Testament, only God is truly exalted and only God can exalt men. Men can't exalt themselves successfully to His level. So this refers to spiritual salvation, reconciliation, righteousness, justification, being in the kingdom. All efforts to doing that on your own are going to leave you humiliated. Everyone who exalts himself — that is, tries to save himself or make himself righteous — shall be humbled in the severest sense of the word, crushed in eternal loss and punishment. The path of self-exaltation ends up in eternal judgment. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. On the other hand, all who humble themselves, confessing they cannot do anything to save themselves, will be lifted high into eternal glory. The damned think they're good. The saved know they're wicked. The damned believe the kingdom of God is for those worthy of it. The saved know the kingdom of God is for those who know they're unworthy of it. The damned believe eternal life is earned. The saved know it's a gift. The damned seek God's commendation. The saved seek His forgiveness. ([Who Can Be Right With God? Part 2](#))

Steven Cole - Years ago, a man was about to make a purchase in a drug store when a detective laid his hand on the man's shoulder and said, "You're under arrest. Come with me." Stunned, the man said, "What did I do?" The detective calmly replied, "You know what you did. You escaped from the Albany penitentiary several years ago. You went west, got married, and then came back here to live. We've been watching you since you returned." Quietly, the man admitted, "That's true, but I was sure you'd never find me. Before you take me in, could we stop by my house so I can talk to my family?" The officer agreed. When they got to his home, the man looked at his wife and asked, "Haven't I been a kind husband and a good father? Haven't I worked hard to make a living?" His wife answered, "Of course you have, but why are you asking me these questions?" He then proceeded to explain what had happened and that he was now under arrest. He apparently had hoped that his record as an exemplary husband and father would impress the officer. But the fact was, he was an escaped criminal and he had to return to prison. You may be a good person, a faithful churchgoer, and a decent citizen of this community. But God knows the many sins of your heart. All the good deeds in the world cannot pay for the many times you have broken His holy law. If you come into God's court on judgment day and present your good works, you will be condemned. But if you come as an unworthy sinner who has pleaded for mercy on the basis of Jesus Christ who shed His blood to pay the penalty you deserve, God will declare, "Not guilty!" Make sure first that you understand and apply this personally; then, share with others the wrong and the right way to come to God. Nothing less than yours and their eternal destiny is at stake! ([The Wrong and Right Way to Approach God](#))

The Tombs -- In his book *Great Themes of the Bible*, Louis Albert Banks told of the time D.L. Moody visited a prison called "The

Tombs” to preach to the inmates. After he had finished speaking, Moody talked with a number of men in their cells. He asked each prisoner this question, “What brought you here?” Again and again he received replies like this: “I don’t deserve to be here.” “I was framed.” “I was falsely accused.” “I was given an unfair trial.” Not one inmate would admit he was guilty. Finally, Moody found a man with his face buried in his hands, weeping. “And what’s wrong, my friend?” he inquired. The prisoner responded, “My sins are more than I can bear.” Relieved to find at least one man who would recognize his guilt and his need of forgiveness, the evangelist exclaimed, “Thank God for that!” Moody then had the joy of pointing him to a saving knowledge of Christ—a knowledge that released him from his shackles of sin. What an accurate picture of the two contrasting attitudes spoken of in Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the publican! **As long as the sinner claims innocence and refuses to acknowledge his transgressions before the Lord, he does not receive the blessings of redemption. But when he pleads guilty and cries out, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,” he is forgiven. God’s pardon is available to everyone, but it is experienced only by those who admit guilt and trust Christ. To be “found,” a person must first recognize that he is “lost.”**



Click to enlarge

TWO HEART ATTITUDES TWO DESTINATIONS

For everyone who exalts ([hupsoo](#) - present tense = habitually exalts) **himself will be humbled** ([tapeinoo](#)) - **For** is a [term of explanation](#) which begs the question what is Jesus explaining? ([See my youtube video on this "hinge word" FOR](#)) In this context clearly He is explaining the rationale of why one unworthy man was justified and one self-righteous man was not justified. Note that this truism or proverbial like statement is all inclusive. **EVERYONE!** There are no exception clauses in the "fine print." ALL men during their short lives will choose to walk down one of two roads leading to one of two eternal destinations from which there is no return. This is the first of what are in effect two conditional statements linked to two definitive promises. This is the path that leads to eternal destruction, the path tread by all who depend on their self-righteousness to merit entry into the Kingdom of God. This person will be humbled by being sentenced to eternal confinement in hell, the place of eternal loss and eternal punishment! Self-exaltation will end in self being eternally judged!

Jesus' declaration of the fate of these two heart attitudes parallels His clear warning given in the Sermon on the Mount **Enter** (aorist imperative - speaks of urgency! Do this now! Do not delay! Clearly this requires the supernatural work of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) through the narrow gate; (WHY?) for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For (explaining why many enter onto the broad way) the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Mt 7:13-14+)

James reiterates this basic divine principle declaring that “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” (James 4:6+) **Peter H Davids** comments that in James 4:10+ "The picture is that of someone prostrate before an oriental monarch, begging mercy. The monarch leans down from the throne and **lifts** the petitioner's face from the dust. The person **raises** with grateful joy, knowing he or she is forgiven. This metaphor occurs in the Old Testament for God's action in restoring the fortunes of the poor: “The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety” (Job 5:11). God also will not reject these Christians, if they repent and reject their sin” ([Understanding the Bible Commentary 8 ratings](#)).

One of my favorite pictures of the generous, beneficent hand of the LORD God is in the beautiful words of Isaiah, words each of us have experienced if we are believers in Jesus Christ, and words that should encourage us when we fail and fall and find ourselves in need of His gracious reviving...

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

The Septuagint version is also beautiful - Thus saith the Most High, Who dwells on high for ever, Holy in the holies, is His Name, the Most High resting in the holies, and giving patience ([makrothumia](#)) to the faint-hearted ([oligopsuchos](#)), and giving life ([zoe](#)) to the brokenhearted ([suntribo](#)):

Luke has actually recorded this proverbial principle several times...

(Mary's proclamation of praise to God) "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted ([hupsoo](#)) those who were humble. HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed. " (Lk 1:52-53+)

"And you, Capernaum, **will not be exalted** ([hupsoo](#)) to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! (Lk 10:15+)

"For everyone who **exalts** ([hupsoo](#)) himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted ([hupsoo](#))." (Lk 14:11+)

In the context of church leaders Peter reiterates this principle that the way up is down and the way down is up...

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore **humble** (aorist imperative - speaks of urgency! Do this now! The passive voice speaks of allowing yourself to be humbled) yourselves under the mighty hand of God, (WHY?) so that He may exalt you at the proper time, (1 Peter 5:5-6+)

Exalts ([5312](#))([hupsoo](#) from **hupsos** = height, elevation) means to lift up, to raise high and here is used figuratively to describe lifting oneself up to a place of honor, fame, power, or position as exemplified by the Pharisee. This same verb [hupsoo](#) is used to describe the "lifting up" of Jesus on the Cross in John 3:14. What a tragic paradox, that all who lift themselves up in their own heart and mind cannot recognize their need for acknowledging Christ's being lifted up to die as their substitutionary, sacrificial atonement! The lifting high of one's self impedes one's ability to lift high the Savior!

Hupsoo - 16v - exalt(2), exalted(9), exalts(3), lift(1), lifted(4), made...great(1). - Matt. 11:23; Matt. 23:12; Lk. 1:52; Lk. 10:15; Lk. 14:11; Lk. 18:14; Jn. 3:14; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 12:32; Jn. 12:34; Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31; Acts 13:17; 2 Co. 11:7; Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6

Will be humbled ([5013](#))([tapeinoo](#) from **tapeinos** = low, not high, figuratively of one's attitude/social position) literally means to level, to cause something to be lower or to make low (eg, to level off a mountain in Lk 3:5 from Lxx of Is 40:4). **Tapeinoo** means to bow down, to make low, to humble. Most NT uses of **tapeinoo** are figurative and include the following meanings: To cause someone to lose prestige, to reduce to a meaner condition or lower rank, to abase. To be ranked below others.

Tapeinoo - 11v - brought low(1), get along(1), humble(2), humble means(1), humbled(4), humbles(4), humbling(1), humiliate(1) Matt. 18:4; Matt. 23:12; Lk. 3:5; Lk. 14:11; Lk. 18:14; 2 Co. 11:7; 2 Co. 12:21; Phil. 2:8; Phil. 4:12; Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6

J C Ryle - The truth of this great principle admits of illustration at every step of Bible history. Pharaoh, Goliath, Haman, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, are all cases in point.

But he who humbles himself will be exalted -Once again we praise God for this [term of contrast](#) which gives every man at least potentially the way of escape from eternal punishment! This person is poor in spirit (Mt 5:3+). The humble person is the one who is the candidate for God's grace (James 4:6+). This person recognizes his sinful, rebellious heart and his inability to attain to a level of righteousness acceptable to God. This is the one who God exalts and justifies or declares righteous (or "saved" which is the way justification is commonly described in the NT).

He who humbles himself - Here [tapeinoo](#) is in the present tense which speaks of this individual's lifestyle as one of humility.

Vance Havner - Humility is not thinking meanly of oneself, but rather it means not thinking of oneself at all.

MacArthur explains that in this context **exalted** "is a synonym for salvation, a synonym for righteousness. It is used in an Old Testament sense because in the Old Testament only God is truly exalted and only God can exalt men. Men cannot exalt themselves to His level. So **will be exalted** refers to spiritual salvation, reconciliation, righteousness, justification, being in the kingdom.

In Isaiah 57:15 we read God's declaration that relates to Lk 18:14...

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

Summary of Luke 18:9-14

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN	
SPIRITUAL PRIDE	GODLY HUMILITY
confident of own self-righteousness Lk 18:9	presumes no self-righteousness Lk 18:13
looks down on others Lk 18:9	recognizes unworthiness before God Lk 18:13
does not admit personal sin Lk 18:11	admits personal sin Lk 18:13
sees faults of others Lk 18:11	sees own faults and need for forgiveness Lk 18:13
performs religious deeds before others Lk 18:12	prays for mercy before God Lk 18:13
refuses salvation and exalts self Lk 18:14	receives salvation & is exalted by God Lk 18:14

Tests of True Humility - this is "tricky"

1. Do you feel joy when others are honored?
2. Do you honestly and openly admit sin?
3. Do you seek truth from others regarding your weaknesses?
4. Do you accept criticism graciously?
5. Do you turn all worry, anxiety and concern over to the Lord?
6. Do you respond with humility when you have been replaced?
7. Do you pursue godliness in all that you do?
8. Do you feel you can answer **yes** to most of these questions?

If most of your answers are **yes**—take a look at yourself—you may have failed the test of **True Humility**!

Two Approaches to God

I. The Prideful Approach

- A. The Pharisee's prayer showed he was self-centered
- B. The Pharisee's prayer showed he was conceited.
- C. The Pharisee's prayer showed his morality was based on negatives.
- D. The Pharisee's prayer showed his worship was based on externals.

II. The Penitent Approach

- A. The publican's prayer showed he was humble before God and man.
- B. The publican's prayer showed he was more aware of his own sins than those of others.
- C. The publican's prayer showed he was not concerned about obtaining material wealth.
- D. The publican's prayer showed he was conscious of his standing before God.

Paradox

Read: Luke 18:9-14

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. —Luke 18:14

Luke 18 contains a startling paradox. The man who admitted he was wrong was declared right, while the one who claimed to be right was condemned as wrong (vv.9-14).

Jesus told this parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee to teach the true way of salvation to those “who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (v.9). He wanted them to see that they had a false righteousness like the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was “not like other men” (v.11).

What they needed was the attitude of the tax collector, who saw himself as a sinner. He realized that he had to rely solely on God’s mercy and grace. Jesus said of him, “This man went down to his house justified rather than the other” (v.14).

Perhaps you’ve never considered this seeming paradox—how you as a sinner can be justified through faith. If you are still trying to save yourself, you stand condemned. But as soon as you admit that you are hopelessly lost and you place your trust in Christ, God will forgive you and declare you righteous (Rom. 10:13). It is through faith alone that anyone can be justified in the sight of God (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8-10).

Think about the parable Jesus told. Are you like the Pharisee or the tax collector? Richard DeHaan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!
—Elliott

We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit.

Listening With Love

Read: Luke 18:9-14

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. —Luke 18:14

One August evening in Vermont, a young missionary spoke at our small church. The country where he and his wife served was in religious turmoil, and it was considered too dangerous for children. In one of his stories, he told us about a heart-wrenching episode when his daughter pleaded with him not to leave her behind at a boarding school.

I was a new dad at that time, having recently been blessed with a daughter, and the story upset me. How could loving parents leave their daughter alone like that? I muttered to myself. By the time the talk was finished, I was so worked up that I ignored the offer to visit with the missionary. I charged out of the church, saying out loud as I left: “I’m sure glad I’m not like . . .”

In that instant, the Holy Spirit stopped me cold. I couldn’t even finish the sentence. Here I was, saying almost word for word what the Pharisee said to God: “I thank You that I am not like other men” (Luke 18:11). How disappointed I was in myself! How disappointed God must have been! Since that evening, I’ve asked God to help me listen to others with humility and restraint as they pour their hearts out in confession, profession, or pain.

Lord, may we be quick to listen and slow to speak and to judge. A proud attitude so easily infects our lives. Give us instead a humility that reflects Your heart and love. By Randy Kilgore [\(Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved\)](#)

We don’t get closer to God by passing judgment on others.

Prayer Circles

Read: Luke 18:9-14

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled. —Luke 18:14

Around the circle the 6th-grade girls went, taking turns praying for each other in the Bible-study group. “Father in heaven,” Anna prayed, “please help Tonya not to be so boy-crazy.” Tonya added with a giggle, “And help Anna to stop acting so horrible in school and bothering other kids.” Then Talia prayed, “Lord, help Tonya to listen to her mother instead of always talking back.”

Although the requests were real, the girls seemed to enjoy teasing their friends by pointing out their flaws in front of the others instead of caring about their need for God's help. Their group leader reminded them about the seriousness of talking to almighty God and the importance of evaluating their own hearts.

If we use prayer to point out the faults of others while ignoring our own, we're like the Pharisee in Jesus' parable. He prayed, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector" (Luke 18:11). Instead, we're to be like the man who asked God to be merciful to him, "a sinner" (v.13).

Let's be careful not to let our prayers become a listing of others' flaws. The kind of prayer God desires flows out of a humble evaluation of our own sinful hearts. Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, teach us how to pray aright,
Oh, lead us in Your way;
Humbly we bow in Your pure light;
Lord, teach us how to pray.
—Anon.

The highest form of prayer comes from the depths of a humble heart.

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - True Humility Rewarded

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Luke 18:14

IT ought not to be difficult for us to humble ourselves, for what have we to be proud of? We ought to take the lowest place without being told to do so. If we are sensible and honest we shall be little in our own eyes. Especially before the Lord in prayer, we shall shrink to nothing. There we cannot speak of merit, for we have none. Our one and only appeal must be to mercy: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Here is a cheering word from the throne. We shall be exalted by the Lord if we humble ourselves. For us the way upward is downhill. When we are stripped of self, we are clothed with humility, and this is the best of wear. The Lord will exalt us in peace and happiness of mind; He will exalt us into knowledge of His Word and fellowship with Himself; He will exalt us in the enjoyment of sure pardon and justification. The Lord puts His honors upon those who can wear them to the honor of the Giver. He gives usefulness, acceptance, and influence to those who will not be puffed up by them, but will be abased by a sense of greater responsibility. Neither God nor man will care to lift up a man who lifts up himself; but both God and good men unite to honor modest worth.

O Lord, sink me in self that I may rise in thee.

Luke 18:15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them.

NLT Luke 18:15 One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But when the disciples saw this, they scolded the parents for bothering him.

- **And they were bringing even their babies to Him** 1 Sa 1:24 Mt 19:13-15 Mk 10:13-16
- **when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them** Lu 9:49,50,54
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:15-17 Bringing Children to Jesus](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:15-17 Children and the Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:15-17 Children and the Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Matthew 19:13-15+ Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

Mark 10:13-16+ And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples

rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." 16 And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

JESUS' BLESSES THE LITTLE CHILDREN

A somewhat technical note is that the material in Luke 9:51 to Luke 18:14 has no direct parallel with the material in the other Synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Mark. But in Luke 18:15-17 we find a definite parallel with the Gospel of Mark 10:13-16 and Mt 19:13-15. Luke has more duplication of the other Synoptic Gospels in the chapters that follow than we have seen in Luke 9:51-18:14.

Walter Liefeld helps set the context - Jesus' words about little children provide Luke's second example of the attitude essential for receiving God's grace. In its placement in this gospel, this passage not only further explores the theme of reversal (cf. Lk 18:13-14), but it also introduces the stories that follow, in which various characters are portrayed as either having or lacking this childlike faith. S. Fowl ("Receiving the Kingdom of God as a Child," NTS 39 [1993]: 153-58) has included as exemplary characters the rich ruler (Lk 18:18-25), the disciples (Lk 18:26-30), the blind man (Lk 18:35-43), and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

POSB asks "What is it that makes a man acceptable to God? The answer had just been given by Jesus in the story of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14). Now Jesus gives a living demonstration. He took a few small children into His arms and sat them upon His lap, and He told everyone exactly what they must do to be acceptable to God. (The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Luke)

J C Ryle comments that "The connection between this passage and the parable preceding it should not be overlooked. Our Lord had just been speaking of humility. He now gives a practical illustration of His delight in humility, by His treatment of little children."

Play this wonderful old tune (also includes 2 other children's tunes you may know)

[Jesus loves the little children](#)

All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Mark's parallel account of Jesus' blessing the children is longer than Luke's account (words/phrases in **yellow highlight and bold font** are found in Mark but not in Luke)

Mk 10:13+ And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them.

14 But when Jesus saw this, **He was indignant** ([aganakteo](#) = a strong word of deep emotion - Jesus was greatly grieved akin to a "holy furor") and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

15 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not (double negative = [see below](#)) enter it at all."

16 And **He took them in His arms** ([enagkalizomai](#) = He embraced, enfolded them in His arms as one would a baby) and **began blessing** ([kateulogeo](#) = not a perfunctory blessing but a fervent blessing calling down blessings on) them, laying His hands on them. (Mark 10:13-16)

And they were bringing ([prosphero](#) - imperfect tense - again and again) **even their babies** ([brephos](#)) **to Him** - Mark's parallel (Mk 10:16) indicates that the touch was associated with Jesus blessing the babies. In Mark 10:16 the verb "began blessing" in Greek is [kateulogeo](#) which means to "ask God to bestow divine favor on, with the implication that the verbal act itself constitutes a significant benefit." (Louw-Nida).

David Guzik - Children loved to come to Jesus, and it says something about our Savior that children loved Him and that He loved children. Jesus was not a mean, sour man because children don't love mean, sour people. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Ray Pritchard - Jesus is the little child's best friend. His blessing has brought its benediction wherever his name has been heard. Christianity has always been the religion that safeguarded the rights of children. Wherever the gospel goes . . . it honors families . . .

it ennobles motherhood . . . it protects and preserves the place of children. Where Christ is known and trusted and followed, and where his example is the model, there infancy is sacred and children are safe. (See [Suffer the Little Children](#))

William Barclay - It was the custom for mothers to bring their children to some distinguished Rabbi on their first birthday that he might bless them. That is what the mothers wanted for their children from Jesus....It is one of the loveliest things in all the gospel story that Jesus had time for the children even when He was on the way to Jerusalem to die!

Leon Morris - It is a fact that few of the world's great religious teachers have been greatly concerned with children. Jesus is different. The Master **called** (Lk 18:16) the children and made them welcome. ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

So that (purpose clause) **He would touch** ([hapto](#) in present tense = laying His hands on them, one after another) **them** - The purpose of bringing the children was to receive a touch from Jesus and as Mark 10:16 adds to receive a **blessing**. Matthew 19:13 adds "so that He might lay His hands on them and **pray**." There was nothing "magical" in Jesus' touching them. Touching or laying on of hands is used in Scripture as a way to bestow blessing on another (Acts 6:6, Acts 8:17, Acts 9:17, 1 Ti 5:22, 2 Ti 1:6)

Acts 6:6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they **laid their hands** on them.

Acts 8:17 Then they **began laying their hands** on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after **laying his hands on** him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

1 Timothy 5:22 Do not **lay hands upon** anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

2 Timothy For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the **laying on of my hands**.

Related Resource: [Laying on of hands - what does the Bible say?](#)

Spurgeon says "He did not baptize them, but he did bless them." ([Luke 18](#) - exposition)

J C Ryle on **touch them** - There is reference here in all probability to the Jewish habit of laying hands on a child and blessing it. We have an instance in the case of Jacob blessing Joseph's children. (Ge 48:14.)

POSB - The scene is warm, full of genuine care and truth that we often overlook. It is not so much that we come and touch God as it is that He comes and touches us. It is not so much that we apprehend God as it is that we are apprehended by Him (Php 3:12-13). (Borrow [The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#))

Swete says "The custom of laying on of hands with prayer upon children for the purpose of benediction, finds its archetype in Genesis 48:14, 15. Such benedictions, it seems, were commonly obtained by parents for their children from the ruler of the synagogue; and here was One greater than any local synagogue-ruler."

But when the disciples ([mathetes](#)) **saw it** - The disciples were guarding entree to Jesus and presumably did not want their Master bothered by what they considered to be such unimportant matters as touching and blessing infants!

Hendriksen on the disciples **rebuking them** - For somewhat similar manifestations of unkindness on the part of the disciples see Luke 9:49, 50; Matt. 15:23. But this certainly was not Christ's attitude, or God's. See Mt. 5:43-48; 11:25-30; Luke 6:27-38; John 3:16. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Kenneth Wuest - The rebuke of the disciples was both unwarranted and without result. They kept on rebuking those who brought the children as fast as they came to Jesus. The disciples, Swete says, "discouraged the attempt as idle or, more probably, as derogatory to the Master's dignity." (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader - page 198](#))

Warren Wiersbe - It was customary for the Jews to bring little children to the rabbis to receive their special blessing, so it is strange that the disciples would stand in the way...However, this was not the first time the disciples had attempted to "get rid of" people. They wanted to send the crowd away hungry, but Jesus fed them (Mt 14:15ff); and they tried to stop the Canaanite woman from asking Jesus to heal her daughter (Mt 15:21ff), but Jesus answered her prayer. The Twelve did not yet have the compassion of their Master, but it would come in due time. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24 or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

R Kent Hughes comments that "The disciples' motivations are not entirely clear. At best they were protecting Jesus from what they deemed as interruptions or pressure. At worst they saw the situation as a waste of time. But whatever their motivation, Jesus used

their intervention to give some of his most penetrating teaching and most often quoted words." (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

They began rebuking (epitimao) them - Rebuking is in the imperfect tense picturing them repeatedly rebuking -- someone would bring a baby (prosphero is also in the imperfect tense) and they would rebuke them, then another would come and they would rebuke them, etc. This must have been quite a scene!

J C Ryle - LET us observe, for one thing, in this passage, how ignorantly people are apt to treat children, in the matter of their souls. We read that there were some who "brought infants to Jesus that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them." They thought most probably that it was mere waste of their Master's time, and that infants could derive no benefit from being brought to Christ. They drew from our Lord a solemn rebuke.

A T Robertson - No doubt people did often crowd around Jesus for a touch of his hand and his blessing. The disciples probably felt that they were doing Jesus a kindness. How little they understood children and Jesus. It is a tragedy to make children feel that they are in the way at home and at church. These men were the twelve apostles and yet had no vision of Christ's love for little children. The new child world of today is due directly to Jesus.

Ray Pritchard - How typical this is, how very modern. We get so task-oriented and so busy saving the world that we don't want the children to bother the Savior. How strange, how sad, and yet how often this happens. The disciples were like the president's bodyguards, keeping well-wishers at a distance. To the disciples, the children were just a bother, one more interruption in an already-busy day. (See [Suffer the Little Children](#))

A T Robertson - There are parents who will have to give answer to God for keeping their children away from Jesus.

There is a simple but important lesson here for all of us - No one should ever be stopped or discouraged from coming or from being brought to Jesus.

Bringing (imperfect tense - kept on bringing them, again and again, as in Mk 10:13) (4374)([prosphero](#) from **prós** = to, toward, denotes motion toward a place + **phéro** = bring) means to carry or bring something into the presence of someone usually implying a transfer of something to that person. **Prosphero** refers to the presentation of an offering, as if one is "offering" these children to Jesus (cf our [modern practice of dedication](#) of children). Expositors agrees writing "The word (prosphero) is commonly used of sacrifices, and suggests here the idea of [dedication](#)." **Prosphero** is the verb used in the three synoptic Gospels to describe bringing children to Jesus (Mt 19:13, Mk 10:13, Lk 18:15). Of course the greatest offering/sacrifice in eternity is Christ's offering of Himself as the sacrifice (Heb 9:14, 25, 28, Heb 10:12)

Babies (1025)([brephos](#)) is used most often in the NT of a literal baby whether unborn or born or newly born. Some contexts signify a young child or what we might call a [toddler](#) (usually a child between 1-3 years of age). The parallel accounts by Matthew and Mark use a different word for children (paidion) but Luke initially (Lk 18:15) uses this word **brephos** in this verse as it seems to stress the dependent condition of the children. Luke then switches to paidion in the next two verses, Luke 18:16,17.

Ryle on brephos - Let this word be carefully noted. The Greek word admits of only one sense. It is children of the youngest and tenderest age.

Brephos - 8x most often by Luke - Lk. 1:41; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:16; Lk. 18:15; Acts 7:19; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:2

Would touch (present tense = He was laying His hands on them, one after another)(681)([hapto/haptomai](#) where **haptomai** is the [middle voice](#) which constitutes the majority of uses) means to grasp, to lay hold of with the basic meaning of touching to exert a modifying influence upon them, in this case to bless them as we learn in Mk 10:16. It is notable that the majority of the 39 uses of this verb are in the Gospels associated with Jesus touching someone usually with a beneficial effect (Mt 8:3, 8:15, 9:29; 17:7; 20:34 Mk. 1:41, 7:33, 8:22, 10:13; Lk 5:13, 7:14; 22:51) or of someone touching Jesus (Mt 9:20, 21 Mk. 3:10, 5:27, 28, 31, 6:56, Lk 6:18, 8:44, 46, 47). Jesus' touching to bestow benefit is in stark contrast to Satan seeking to "touch" for evil, John writing "We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and **the evil one does not touch him.**" (1 John 5:18)

Disciples (3101) ([mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. Clearly these "*learners*" had much to learn and Jesus would use their need for an "attitude correction" to teach a profound spiritual truth about salvation.

Rebuking ("began to [scold](#)" - NET)(2008)([epitimao](#) from **epi** = upon + **timao** = to honor) means literally to put honor upon and then

to mete out due measure and so then to find fault with, unjustly check or express strong disapproval. The disciples were sternly charging those who were bringing their babies. This is the same verb that Matthew uses to describe Peter's **rebuke** of the Lord Jesus! Woe! In Mk 1:25 (cf Mk 9:25, Lk 4:35) epitimao describes Jesus rebuke (and exorcism) of the demon. The thief on the cross who was saved rebuked the other thief (Lk 23:40). Good preaching should have an element of rebuke (or warning) in the message (2 Ti 4:2).

Steven Cole ([Illustration](#)) - Evangelist Luis Palau tells of an incident during a crusade in Bolivia years ago when his day started with a breakfast where he shared Christ with a number of top government officials. He was looking forward to a luncheon with the Bolivian President. At mid-morning, he was in the middle of a press conference in his hotel room when there was a knock on the door. A team member walked in with a small Bolivian girl, about eleven, who had seen Palau on TV and was anxious to talk to him. Palau felt a bit irritated with the team member for bringing her into his room at a time like that, but he greeted the girl, picked up a book, signed it, and gave it to her. "Lord bless you, sweetheart," he said, as he began leading her to the door. She took two steps, looked back, and said confidently, "But Mr. Palau, I really wanted to receive Christ into my heart." Luis was caught up short. He dismissed the newsmen, sat down, and led that little girl to Jesus. Later that day he led the president of Bolivia to Christ. Both appointments were significant. ([Bringing Children to Jesus](#))

The Kingdom Is For Kids

Read: Mark 10:13-16

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them. —Mark 10:14

"No children please!" These words are seldom voiced, but they're often assumed when we are invited to hear a prominent speaker, teacher, or leader. The assumption is that children wouldn't know what's going on and they might annoy the speaker.

In Mark 10:13-16, the Lord's disciples made a similar assumption about children and Jesus. But He was displeased when His disciples rebuked parents who brought their little ones to be blessed. Jesus knew that children, with their receptive hearts, were closest to His kingdom.

Many years ago, missionary Robert Moffat learned the importance of not overlooking children. Only a few people had come to one of his meetings because of bad weather. Although disheartened, he preached his message, not noticing a small boy who was operating the bellows of the organ. Before Moffat was finished, that boy had decided to become a missionary. His name was David Livingstone, who grew up to become God's pioneering servant in Africa.

We as parents, school teachers, church workers, and neighbors must never overlook the children whom God puts into our lives. Remember, the kingdom of God is for children too.

You took the children on Your knee,
And Lord, You blessed them all;
No wayward child too bad could be,
No infant was too small.

—Stratton

Invest in the future—lead a child to Christ.

By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Michael's Baptism

Read: Mark 10:13-16

Let the little children come to Me. —Mark 10:14

Michael wanted to be baptized. At first his father had reservations about this because Michael is autistic. Autism is a developmental disability that affects a person's social interaction and communication skills.

There was no question that 35-year-old Michael had trusted Jesus for salvation, and the church leadership enthusiastically approved his baptism. But he would have to stand in front of the entire congregation.

Knowing that Michael didn't like surprises, his dad reviewed all that would happen. But during the baptism, when the pastor said, "Michael, I baptize you in the name of the Father," Michael interrupted as if to remind him, "and the Son!" The congregation smiled

with joy. And Michael was baptized in obedience to Christ's command.

Each of us comes to Jesus at a different level of spiritual understanding, and Jesus extends His welcome to all who respond. When little children approached the Savior, His disciples tried to send them away. But Christ rebuked them and said, "Let the little children come to Me" (Mark 10:14). And that also applies to the developmentally disabled.

The gospel is simple. The Savior is approachable. And His invitation is open to everyone.

If you'd like to know the love of God the Father,
Come to Him through Jesus Christ, His loving Son;
He'll forgive your sins and save your soul forever,
And you'll love forevermore this faithful One.
—Felten

God accepts anyone who accepts His Son.

By Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A Coat In His Name

Read: Mark 10:13-16

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. —Mark 9:37

It was a bitterly cold morning at the inner-city church. Among the 130 or so worshipers, the pastor took special notice of Ken, a young boy who arrived for Sunday school wearing just a sleeveless T-shirt, jeans, and tennis shoes with no socks.

After the worship service and a special luncheon, the pastor's wife took the 6-year-old to the church's clothing closet to pick out a coat. Then the pastor and his wife drove him and his older brother John home. As they got out, John said, "Thank you for giving my brother a coat." The two boys became Sunday school regulars, and the pastor had a chance to visit with their mom and explain the gospel.

Are there any children in our world who need help with some basic necessities—a coat, a meal, a ride home? We might be tempted to say the problem is too big—that we can't help everyone, but that misses the point. Jesus placed great value on the life of a child. He said to His disciples, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mk. 10:14). He also told them, "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me" (Mk 9:37).

A coat, a cup, a kind word. Given in Jesus' name, these are the tools of true ministry. Are we using them?

Help us, Lord, while we are living,
To be faithful, kind, and true;
Jesus, bless our humble giving
So that others may find You. |—Johnson

We show our love for Christ by what we do with what we have.

By Dave Branon | ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Hug Of The Heart

Read: Mark 10:13-16

He took [little children] up in His arms . . . and blessed them. —Mark 10:16

A friend told me about a touching conversation between her two grandchildren, 5-year-old Matthew and 3-year-old Sarah. The boy said, "I talk to Jesus in my head!" The girl responded, "I don't—I just cuddle with Him!"

While Jesus lived on earth, He took little children in His arms and blessed them (Mark 10:16). And He is still in the child-embracing ministry today.

Many of God's children, much older ones, have experienced His unseen everlasting arms around them and beneath them. Brother Lawrence, the 17th-century monk known for sensing the presence of God even amid the pots and pans of the monastery kitchen, spoke of being "known of God and extremely caressed by Him." And Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to China, scrawled this note as he neared the end of his life: "I am so weak that I cannot work; I cannot read my Bible; I cannot even pray. I can only lie still

in God's arms like a child, and trust."

Whether we're young or old, strong or weak, God wants us to cuddle close to Him in childlike trust. He will respond through His indwelling Spirit by drawing us to Himself to comfort and to bless.

Have you and God had a "hug of the heart" today? —JEY

The Lord took children in His arms
To bless them and to show
That if we come in childlike faith
His presence we will know. —Sper

Jesus longs for our fellowship even more than we long for His.

By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For The Children

Read: Psalm 68:5; Mark 10:13-16

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them. —Mark 10:14

As the teenagers left Robin's Nest orphanage near Montego Bay, Jamaica, many of them were in tears.

"It's just not fair," one girl said after their too-brief visit. "We have so much, and they don't have anything." In the 2 hours we visited, handing out stuffed animals and playing with the kids, she had been holding a sad little girl who never smiled. We learned that before she was rescued she had been abused by her parents.

Multiply this little girl's plight by the millions, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. My teenage friends were right. It's not fair. Abuse, poverty, and neglect have turned the lives of millions of little ones into a nightmare.

How this must grieve God's heart! Jesus, who said, "Let the little children come to Me" (Mark 10:14), is surely saddened by the way these children are treated.

What can we do? In Jesus' name, we can give monetary support to good orphanages. When possible, we can offer physical help. If we feel led, we can seek to provide homes for these precious children. And all of us can pray—beseeching God to help those for whom life is so unfair.

Let's show children the love of God through our hearts and our hands.

Reaching out to needy children,
Showing them our love and care,
Is one way that God can use us
To bring hope in their despair. —Sper

Be Jesus to a child today.

By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Help The Children

Read: Psalm 82:1-8

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. —Mark 9:37

Eat your beans! There are children in this world who'd give anything to have those!" What child hasn't heard that kind of speech coming from parents who love them enough to encourage good nutrition?

Actually, millions of children have never heard that line—children who wouldn't recognize a good meal if they saw one, who live on the streets instead of in a house, who'll never see the inside of a school.

According to one estimate, 100 million children worldwide have no mom or dad to give them a meal and a place to call home. These kids are outcasts and treated as trash to be discarded.

This sobering fact should cause us to take a different approach. If we have the comforts that a good job and a modern society offer through God's graciousness, we should not cite examples of starving children as a way to get our kids to eat. We should try to help the starving children instead.

The hurting children of the world need two things: First, the gospel of Jesus, who told us that in helping them we would be doing His work (Mk. 9:37). And second, they need the hope that comes from someone who cares enough to feed, clothe, and shelter them.

What can your family do to help the children?

Reaching out to needy children,
Showing them our love and care,
Is one way that God can use us
To bring hope to their despair.
—Sper

Give hope to a child—share the love of Christ.

By Dave Branon | ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Value Of A Child

Read: Mark 9:33-37

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. —Mark 9:37

The young girl lived halfway around the world in war-ravaged Cambodia. She had been abandoned to the streets, destined to a life of much poverty and little love.

That was before Paul and Linda Zwart heard about her and sought to adopt her. "We did a lot of praying," Paul told a newspaper reporter.

For more than 2 years, the Zwarts dedicated themselves to bringing this girl, whom they named Caitlin, to their home in Holland, Michigan. They filled out mountains of paperwork. They even took one hopeful trip to Cambodia in 1996, only to come back empty. But they kept praying.

In late 1997, Paul took another trip, spending several frustrating weeks trying to gain custody of Caitlin. Finally, Linda got a phone call from Paul. He asked, "Guess who I have with me?" and his family erupted in cheers. Dad and daughter arrived home on Christmas Eve.

What a reminder of the pricelessness of a child! Each one is worth whatever it takes to care for him or her properly. Whether the child is a member of our family or a child we don't know—each is precious to God. Each needs love. Each needs to learn about Jesus, the One who by words and example taught us the value of a child (Mark 9:36-37).

Reaching out to needy children,
Showing them our love and care,
Is one way that God can use us
To bring hope in their despair.
—Sper

Your biggest investment may be helping a little child.

(SEE BELOW)

By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Here's a way all of us can
"be Jesus to a child today"...**

- [Compassion International - Sponsor a Child Today](#)

Luke 18:16 But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom

- **Permit the children to come to Me:** Ge 47:10-14 21:4 De 29:11 31:12 2Ch 20:13 Jer 32:39 Ac 2:39 1Co 7:14
- **for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these:** Mt 18:3,4 1Co 14:20 1Pe 2:2
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:15-17 Bringing Children to Jesus](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:15-17 Children and the Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:15-17 Children and the Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

LET THE CHILDREN COME TO JESUS

But (Term of contrast) - Luke contrasts Jesus' welcoming attitude with His disciples' hindering attitude.

Jesus called for them - He called (summoned, invited) them to Himself. "Jesus' attitude toward children contrasted significantly with that of other religious leaders in Judaism. In most ancient cultures children were regarded as a burden until they were physically strong enough to contribute to the family." (ESV Study Bible)

Robert Stein - Jesus' attitude toward children contrasts significantly with that of his day...In the first century a child was an insignificant, weak member of society and so exemplified one who is "least." (Lk 9:48+) (New American Commentary - Luke)

Permit the children to come to Me - The idea of the verb [aphiemi](#) in this context is "Leave them alone!"

Permit (aorist active imperative)(863)([aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. This is the word used to forgive sins but in this context means to permit (Mk 5:19, Acts 5:38, Rev 2:20, Rev 11:9), meaning to allow (an activity - the bringing of children) without opposing or prohibiting.

Give me a heart sympathetic and tender;
Jesus, like Thine, Jesus, like Thine,
Touched by the needs that are surging around me,
And filled with compassion divine.
-Anon.

Children (3813)([paidion](#) diminutive of **pais** = child, youth) is a little child of either sex, ranging from an infant (Mt 19:13, 14; Mk 10:13-15; Lk 18:16, 17, etc) to children who are older (Mt 11:16; Mt 14:21; 15:38; 18:2-5, etc) **Paidion** is used here in Luke 18:16-17 and also in Matthew 18:2-5 (see comments below, cf use of **paidion** in Mark 10:13-15) as a term of comparison, Jesus making the point that we are to become like a little child (Mk 10:15 Lk 18:17),

Luke's uses of paidion -

Lk. 1:59; Lk. 1:66; Lk. 1:76; Lk. 1:80; Lk. 2:17; Lk. 2:27; Lk. 2:40; Lk. 7:32; Lk. 9:47; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 11:7; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17;

Do not hinder (present imperative with negative = stop an act in progress)((2967)([koluo](#)) means to hinder, forbid, prevent, restrain.

Luke's uses of koluo -

Lk. 6:29; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 9:50; Lk. 11:52; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 23:2; Acts 8:36; Acts 10:47; Acts 11:17; Acts 16:6; Acts 24:23; Acts 27:43;

When Jesus said to let the children come,
He gave a clear example for us all:
That we should open hearts and arms to them
And tell them of the Savior's loving call.
—Hess

For (gar) is an important term of explanation. What is Jesus explaining? In context He is explaining how to enter the **Kingdom of God**. Recall that Jesus had explained to Nicodemus that "unless one is born again he cannot see the **kingdom of God**" (John 3:3) adding that "You must (necessity) be born again." (John 3:7). Therefore in this context the phrase **Kingdom of God** is referring to the "sphere of salvation" (MacArthur).

THE CHILDLIKE ARE THOSE WHO ENTER THE KINGDOM

Leon Morris - Jesus went on to point out that it is the childlike to whom *the kingdom of God* belongs (not those proud of their virtues like the Pharisee, 11f.) What matters is whole-hearted trust like that of a child. The negative is also true. Unless one receives the kingdom *like a child* one will never enter it. Children show us the way in their utter dependence, their unworldliness, their openness, the completeness of their trust. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries –[The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

D A Carson says "childlike qualities such as trust, openness, and the absence of holier-than-thou attitudes"

POSB - A child is usually humble and forgiving. He is not interested in prominence, fame, power, wealth, or position. He does not push himself forward."

Wuest - Our Lord here holds up a little child as a model of trusting, simple, and loving obedience, for adults to emulate as the way to appropriate the salvation God offers the believing sinner."

ESV Study Bible - Only those who humble themselves like children shall enter the kingdom.

MacArthur - No one better illustrates the reality that only the lowly who have achieved nothing of merit enter the kingdom than infants. No one has achieved less morally and religiously than them; no one has less knowledge of or obedience to the law, or less devotion to God. Thus, infants perfectly illustrate the principle that God saves sinners apart from their achievements. While the proud and self-righteous are excluded from the kingdom, infants—and those who approach the kingdom like infants—are included.

D. L. Moody once returned from a meeting and reported two and a half conversions. "Two adults and a child, I suppose?" asked his host. "No," said Moody, "two children and an adult. The children gave their whole lives. The adult had only half of his left to give." (from Kent Hughes in [Preaching the Word - Luke](#))

Wiersbe - Jesus wants us to be childlike but not childish. An unspoiled child illustrates humility, faith, and dependence. A child has a sense of wonder that makes life exciting. The only way to enter God's kingdom is to become like a child and be born again (John 3:3-7). (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

David Gooding - A little child takes its food, its parents' love and protection, because they are given, without beginning to think of whether it deserves them or whether it is important enough to merit such attention. So must we all receive God's kingdom and enter into it (Lk 18:17). ([According to Luke](#))

Bruce Larson - The third quality Jesus recommends here is childlikeness. This does not mean childishness, or even innocence. Children are not more virtuous than adults. They're as selfish and self-centered as the rest of us. But they are usually guileless and uncomplicated. (Preacher's Commentary)

Kent Hughes makes the point that "He did not say that the kingdom belongs to the children he was holding, but to "such as these"—those who are like the little ones. What is the quality of being of children, and especially those characterized as "babies" in the opening line of this passage? What is the ontological distinctive of a newborn? **Helplessness!** Jesus has in mind here the objective state that every child who has ever lived (regardless of race, culture, or background) has experienced—namely, **helpless dependence**.....Every child born into the world is absolutely, completely, totally, actually **helpless**. And so it is with every child who is born into the kingdom of God. Children of the kingdom enter it **helpless**. If Billy Graham enters the kingdom, it will not be because he has personally preached to more people than any man in history....When Billy Graham enters the kingdom, it will be because he came to Christ as a **helpless** child. ([Preaching the Word - Luke](#))

[Rock of Ages](#)

Nothing in my hand I bring,

Simply to the cross I cling;

Naked, come to Thee for dress;

Helpless look to Thee for grace;

Foul, I to the fountain fly;

Wash me, Savior, or I die.

(Play related song - [To the Cross I Cling](#))

The kingdom of God belongs to such as these - Imagine the shock of the disciples who had just tried to discourage the coming of children to Jesus! Jesus has a way of turning our "adult thinking," our worldly thinking, upside down! He goes on in the next verse to explain the basis for this statement telling them **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at**

all. One point this makes that many believers have never heard is that a child is more likely to express faith than a skeptical adult. Jesus is saying we (including skeptical adults) are to follow their pattern and trust in the promises of God, in this context, the promise of entrance into the Kingdom of God, the entrance into eternal life now, in the Millennium and forever after in the New Heaven and New Earth. Jesus' taking the children into His arms and blessing them was a "metaphor" if you will, showing His acceptance of a childlike attitude toward Him. **Have you entered the Kingdom of God like a little child or are you still resisting the Holy Spirit's wooing as you debate the supposed discrepancies of the Bible, etc? You must become like a little child. Is your adult "logic" hindering you from coming to Jesus that He might lay His hands on you and bless you with eternal life in the Kingdom of God?**

Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there. (Mt 19:13-15)

The kingdom of God belongs to such as these - This is actually a statement of comparison but this translation makes it difficult to recognize as such. Now read the excellent paraphrase in the **New Living Translation** to see if this helps see the comparison. The **NLT** says "the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children." The key phrase is **those who are like these children.** So Jesus is comparing the children to those who gain entrance into the Kingdom of God. As noted above, Jesus is not speaking primarily of the external, earthly, physical **Kingdom of God**, but of the internal, heavenly, spiritual Kingdom of God (as discussed more below). He is telling the disciples how one can enter to and possess the **Kingdom of God**, and more specifically how they can be saved and receive eternal life.

Robert Stein sums this up commenting that "Jesus did not say that God's kingdom belongs 'to these' but **'to such as these.'**" Jesus was not saying that all children, simply because they are children, have received God's kingdom (Luke 18:17). Jesus was not attributing to children an innate goodness. Rather, he appealed to some quality possessed by little children that is essential for entering God's kingdom. Unfortunately neither Jesus nor the Gospel writers elucidated exactly what this quality is. Some suggestions are (1) the humility little children possess because they lack anything to boast of and can make no claim on God (cf. Lk 18:9-14; Matt 18:4), (2) a simple faith free from doubt (Luke 17:5-6), and (3) a lack of attachment to possessions (Lk 18:18-30). In light of the preceding passage (Lk 18:9-14) and Matthew's specific application of "childlikeness" to humility (Matt 18:4), the first suggestion seems best." (New American Commentary)

NET Note on Kingdom of God - The kingdom of God is a major theme of Jesus. It is a realm in which Jesus rules and to which those who trust him belong. See Luke 6:20+; Lk 11:20+; Lk 17:20-21+.

NET Note on belongs to such as these - Children are a picture of those whose simple trust illustrates what faith is all about. The remark illustrates how everyone is important to God, even those whom others regard as insignificant.

The Kingdom of God - This is a major theme of Luke's Gospel (see 32 uses below in 31 verses). The disciples were having a difficult time comprehending what Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom of God with Israel as the lead nation. They were still expecting Him to bring in the earthly Kingdom of God. In fact, even after His resurrection and their "40 day seminar" with Jesus in which He spoke of **"the things concerning the kingdom of God"** (Acts 1:3+), they still did not completely understand the nature of the Kingdom as shown by their question in Acts 1:6+ **"Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"** They were still thinking primarily in terms of an earthly kingdom, a hope that all Jews held dear, and it is notable that Jesus did not correct their belief that indeed one day there would be a literal earthly Kingdom of God and that Israel would be the head of the nations (e.g., Zechariah 8:23). Jesus had been teaching them not so much about the future external aspect of the Kingdom of God, but about the present, internal aspect of the Kingdom of God, the presence of the Kingdom in a heart that had received and believed in Him as the Messiah and Redeemer. And it is this internal, spiritual Kingdom which Jesus is illustrating by using the comparison with a child. In the next verse (Lk 18:17), Jesus explains the comparison between a child and entrance into the Kingdom of God. We will also look at Jesus' use of a child in Matthew 18:1-5 to help understand what Jesus is trying to teach His disciples.

Uses of **Kingdom of God** by **Luke** - 32x in 31v (out of a total of 66x in 65v in the entire NT):

Lk. 4:43; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:28; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 9:62; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:18; Lk. 13:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:29; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 22:18; Lk. 23:51; Acts 1:3; Acts 8:12; Acts 14:22; Acts 19:8; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:31;

Kent Hughes comments on the parallel passage in Mark 10:13-15 - In saying, **"for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these,"** He affirms their full spirituality. They are the hearts He takes to himself! ...Christ affirms and proclaims the spiritual capacity of children. If there ever was a text relevant to child evangelism, this is it. Children can authentically come to Christ early on!...Dr. Jim Slack, head of demographics for the Southern Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, recently shared the results of a Gallup Survey:

nineteen out of twenty people who became Christians did so before the age of twenty-five. At age twenty-five, one in 10,000 will become believers; at thirty-five, one in 50,000; at forty-five, one in 200,000; at fifty-five, one in 300,000; at seventy-five, one in 700,000....How are we to understand and apply this? For starters, coming as a “little child” does not infer innocence. Any two-year-old dispels such a notion! Neither does “like a little child” suggest the wondrous subjective states we often find in children such as trustfulness, receptivity, simplicity, or wonder, beautiful as these are. What Jesus has in mind here is an objective state which every child who has ever lived, regardless of race, culture, or background, has experienced—helpless dependence. Every single child in the world is absolutely, completely, totally, objectively, subjectively, existentially helpless! And so it is with every child who is born into the Kingdom of God. Children of the Kingdom enter it helpless, ones for whom everything must be done.....There is no other fundamental meaning for Mk 10:15. Have you come to Christ like this? Is it his grace plus your nothingness?...No one will receive the Kingdom of God without this helpless dependence and humility. ([Preaching the Word - Mark](#))

Take The Time

Read: Matthew 9:18-26

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. —Mark 9:37

A legend is told about a rabbi from a small Jewish town. The people had gathered in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), but when the time came for the most important service of the Jewish year to begin, the rabbi was nowhere to be found. During the delay, a young mother went home to check on her little daughter, whom she had left sleeping. To her surprise, she saw the rabbi sitting quietly in a chair, holding the child in his arms. He had been walking by her home on the way to the synagogue when he heard the infant crying and stopped to help. He held the little one until she fell asleep.

There's a lesson for us in this rabbi's example and in Jesus' love for people (Mt. 9:18-26). In our hectic and busy lives, we tend to get so caught up with our own concerns that we lose our sense of compassion for others. We must take time to observe and respond to individuals—whether they are little children, parents, or older believers.

Somewhere amid all the demands on you as a servant of Jesus Christ, take the time to hold the hand of an aging believer, to comfort a tired mother, or to cradle a child until she sleeps.

How good to be an instrument
Of grace that He can use
At any time, in any place,
However He may choose! —Guirey

Great occasions for service come seldom—
little ones surround us daily.

By David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Like a Little Child

Read: Mark 10:13–16

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them. Mark 10:14

The little girl moved joyfully and gracefully to the music of praise. She was the only one in the aisle but that didn't keep her from spinning and waving her arms and lifting her feet to the music. Her mother, a smile on her lips, didn't try to stop her.

My heart lifted as I watched, and I longed to join her—but didn't. I'd long ago lost the unselfconscious expression of joy and wonder of my childhood. Even though we are meant to grow and mature and put childish ways behind us, we were never meant to lose the joy and wonder, especially in our relationship with God.

When Jesus lived on Earth, He welcomed little children to Him and often referred to them in His teaching (Matthew 11:25; 18:3; 21:16). On one occasion, He rebuked His disciples for attempting to keep parents from bringing their children to Him for a blessing, saying, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mark 10:14). Jesus was referring to the childlike characteristics that ready us to receive Christ—joy and wonder, but also simplicity, dependence, trust, and humility.

Childlike wonder and joy (and more) open our hearts to be more receptive to Him. He is waiting for us to run into His arms.

Abba (Daddy), Father, help us to be more childlike in our relationship with You. We long to be filled with wonder at all You have

done.

Faith shines brightest in a childlike heart.

By Alyson Kieda

INSIGHT The wonder of what we see in Mark 10:13–16 becomes more stunning when we understand the connection with what follows in Mark’s gospel. One phrase that links the two sections is “the kingdom of God”—the rule of God in our hearts (see Mark 10:14–15). God’s kingdom (which includes eternal life) is the possession of those who are childlike in their dependence on God. They are the ones who are welcomed by Jesus (v. 16).

On the other hand, we see a full-grown man running unhindered to Jesus, but he ends up leaving Him “because he had great wealth” (v. 22). Three times the phrase “the kingdom of God” is used in verses 17–27. “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” (v. 23); “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (vv. 24–25, emphasis added). Simple, childlike trust in Jesus is better than “adultlike” independence and trust in lesser things.

How can you be more like a child in the presence of Jesus? Arthur Jackson [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Hugs Of The Heart

Read: Mark 10:13-16

He took them up in His arms . . . and blessed them. —Mark 10:16

While Jesus lived on this earth, He took little children in His arms and blessed them (Mk. 10:16). And He is still in the child-embracing ministry today.

My friend told me about a touching conversation between her two grandchildren. Five-year-old Matthew said to Sarah, age 3, “I talk to Jesus in my head!” She responded, “I don’t—I just cuddle with Him!”

Many other children of God, much older ones, have experienced His unseen everlasting arms around them and beneath them. Brother Lawrence, the 17th-century monk known for sensing the presence of God amid the pots and pans of the monastery’s kitchen, spoke of being “known of God and extremely caressed by Him.” And Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to China, scrawled this note as he neared the end of his life: “I am so weak that I cannot work; I cannot read my Bible; I cannot even pray. I can only lie still in God’s arms like a child, and trust.”

God wants us to nestle close to Him in childlike trust, whether young or old, strong or weak. In response, through His indwelling Spirit, He draws us to Himself to comfort and to bless. Have you and God had a hug of the heart today?

The Lord took children in His arms
To bless them and to show
That if we come in childlike faith
His presence we will know. —Sper

Don't wrestle—just nestle. —Corrie ten Boom

By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Gentle Jesus

Read: Matthew 18:1-10

Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 18:3

[Charles Wesley](#) (1707–1788) was a Methodist evangelist who wrote more than 9,000 hymns and sacred poems. Some, like “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” are great, soaring hymns of praise. But his poem “Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild,” first published in 1742, is a child’s quiet prayer that captures the essence of how all of us should seek the Lord in sincere, simple faith.

[Loving Jesus, gentle Lamb,](#)
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Savior, what Thou art,

Live Thyself within my heart.

When some followers of Jesus were jockeying for position in His kingdom, the Lord "called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven'" (Matt. 18:2-3).

Not many children seek position or power. Instead, they want acceptance and security. They cling to the adults who love and care for them. Jesus never turned children away.

The last stanza of Wesley's poem shows a childlike desire to be just like Jesus: "I shall then show forth Thy praise / Serve Thee all my happy days; / Then the world shall always see / Christ, the holy Child, in me."

Father, give me the faith of a little child. I want
to know Your love and care, and to rest in Your
embrace. Grant my desire to be like You in all
my ways that I might live for Your honor.

Faith shines brightest in a childlike heart.

By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 18:17 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

Wuest - Assuredly, I am saying to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God in the same manner as a little child does, shall **absolutely** not enter it.

- Ps 131:1,2 Mk 10:15 1Pe 1:14
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:15-17 Bringing Children to Jesus](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:15-17 Children and the Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:15-17 Children and the Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ENTERED LIKE A CHILD

Truly I say (I solemnly declare) (In Greek two words - amen lego) - As discussed below, this phrase is used repeatedly by Jesus to introduce a solemn teaching. In this case it is "solemn" because it has to do with how one is saved.

Truly (281)([amen](#) - OT = [0543](#) - [amen](#)) when used with lego (**I say**) as in this passage emphasizes that what is being said is a solemn declaration of what is true. This phrase "**truly I say**" is used only by Jesus and always conveys the sense of "I assure you" or "I solemnly tell you."

This combination of **truly I say** (sometimes "truly, truly I say") is in fact a KEY PHRASE in the Gospels where it is used about 70 times and as noted is always spoken by Jesus. The point is that Jesus made many "solemn statements." Of course, in one sense **everything** Jesus said was "**solemn**," (characterized or marked by seriousness or sincerity) but some statements were more "solemn" than others, such as in the present context that deals with the crucial topic of salvation.

Robert Stein adds "This expression is found singularly or doubly over seventy times in the Gospels and only on Jesus' lips. It was used **traditionally in Judaism at the end of a statement** in order to confirm what had been said, but Jesus used it to introduce and stress what follows." (NAC-Luke)

Matt. 5:26; Matt. 6:2; Matt. 6:5; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 10:15; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 11:11; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 18:3; Matt. 18:13; Matt. 18:18; Matt. 18:19; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 21:21; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 23:36; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:34; Matt. 24:47; Matt. 25:12; Matt. 25:40; Matt. 25:45; Matt. 26:13; Matt. 26:21; Matt. 26:34; Mk. 3:28; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 12:43; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 14:30; Lk. 4:24; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 21:32; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 13:38; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 21:18

Steven Cole - When Jesus speaks here about receiving **the kingdom of God like a child**, He is not referring to the innocence of children. Children were not born in innocence and they are not without sin, even in their early years. Besides, innocence is not the qualification for entering God's kingdom. If it were, none of us could qualify. Children are born in sin and they need Christ as their Savior as much as any adult does.

A A Trites on like a child - In their openness, simplicity, and faith, children are veritable pictures of what it means to become children of God. They served, in fact, as a paradigm of faith and receptivity to God. The tragedy is when one refuses to come to God on such humble terms: "Anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it" (Lk 18:17). (Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

Play this powerful hymn (adds a refrain to Bonar's original).

Added Refrain:

These guilty hands are raised
Filthy rags are all I bring
And I have to hide beneath Thy wing.
These holy hands are raised
Washed in the fountain of Your grace
And now I wear Your righteousness.

[Not what these hands have done](#)

—HORATIUS BONAR, 1861

([Another vocal version](#))

Not what these hands have done
Can save this guilty soul;
Not what this toiling flesh has borne
Can make my spirit whole.

Not what I feel or do
Can give me peace with God;
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears
Can bear my awe-full load.

Thy work alone, O Christ,
Can ease this weight of sin;
Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God,
Can give me peace within.

Thy love to me, O God,
Not mine, O Lord to Thee,
Can rid me of this dark unrest
And set my spirit free.

No other work save Thine,
No meaner blood will do;
No strength save that which is divine,
Can bear me safely through.

Thy grace alone, O God,
To me can pardon speak;
Thy power alone, O Son of God,
Can this sore bondage break.

I bless the Christ of God,
I rest on love divine,
And with unfaltering lip and heart
I call this Savior mine.

Spurgeon said "The kingdom of God consists of child-like spirits, persons like these children. Instead of needing to grow bigger in order to be fit to be Christians, we need to grow smaller. It is not the supposed wisdom of manhood, but the simplicity of childhood,

that will fit us for the reception of divine truth. Alas! we are often too much like men, if we were more like children, we should receive the kingdom of God far more readily." ([Luke 18](#) - exposition) In other words Spurgeon is saying we must not think a child cannot come to God until he is like a man, but a man cannot come until he is like a child. We must grow down until we become like a child.

RECEIVING THE KINGDOM OF GOD EQUATES WITH ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

NET Note on **like a child** - The point of the comparison **receive the kingdom of God like a child** has more to do with a child's trusting spirit and willingness to be dependent and receive from others than any inherent humility the child might possess.

Whoever does not receive ([dechomai](#)) **the kingdom of God like** (in the same manner as) **a child will not enter it at all** - In other words, such a person does not believe in Jesus and is not born again. As Jesus explains in John 3:3+ **"Truly, truly, I say** ([Amen](#), [Amen](#), [Lego](#)) **to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God"**. John 1:12+ helps us see the relationship between **receiving** and **believing**, John writing that "as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** in His name." So clearly receiving Jesus equates with belief in Jesus and is described as entering the Kingdom of God here and in the parallel passages in Mt 18:3 and Mark 10:15+.

It is interesting that Luke and Mark (Mk 10:15) use the less common phrase **receive the Kingdom of God**. More often the expression is to **enter the Kingdom of God**. Both phrases refer to salvation by grace through faith. Below are the passages that use the more common word **"enter"** (including Matthew's uses with "Kingdom of Heaven" which is synonymous with "Kingdom of God")...

Matthew 5:20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not **enter** the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will **enter** the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

Matthew 18:3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not **enter** the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:23-24 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to **enter** the kingdom of heaven. 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to **enter** the kingdom of God."

Matthew 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not **enter** in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are **entering** to go in.

Mark 9:47 "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to **enter** the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,

Mark 10:23-25 And Jesus, looking around, *said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to **enter** the kingdom of God!" 24 The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to **enter** the kingdom of God! 25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to **enter** the kingdom of God."

Luke 18:24-25 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to **enter** the kingdom of God."

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must **enter** the kingdom of God."

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot **enter** into the kingdom of God.

Compare Luke 13:24 "Strive to **enter** through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE = EMPHATIC NEGATION!

It is important to note that the verb **"enter"** in the phrase **"will not enter"** is preceded by not one, but **two negative particles**, this

double negative (**ou me** - it makes me think "Oh My!") is the strongest way in Greek to [negate](#) (nullify, make void) the word or phrase that follows, in this case the word "**enter**." So one might paraphrase Jesus' words by saying '**unless** one receives the Kingdom of God like a child they **absolutely** will not enter into the Kingdom of God.' This is a clear and strong statement by Jesus. In a sense it is a conditional statement, the condition being that one must be like a child ([as discussed above](#)) and the result being entrance into the Kingdom of God. Therefore, it behooves the wise reader to seek to understand what Jesus means when He says one must be "**like a child**." We will discuss what this means below, comparing Scripture with Scripture (specifically Matthew 18) to help illuminate Jesus' sobering, solemn declaration.

Make me, O Lord, a child again,
So tender, frail, and small,
In self possessing nothing, and
In Thee possessing all.

O Savior, make me small once more,
That downward I may grow,
And in this heart of mine restore
The faith of long ago.

With Thee may I be crucified—
No longer I that lives—
O Savior, crush my sinful pride
By grace which pardon gives.

Make me, O Lord, a child again,
Obedient to Thy call,
In self possessing nothing, and
In Thee possessing all.

Hendriksen - The meaning (of **will not enter**) is the only possible way to enter the kingdom is by receiving it readily and trustfully as a child accepts a gift. A child is not too proud to accept a gift! ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Pritchard - That must have shocked those big-shot disciples. Ironically, at that moment the little children were closer to Jesus than the disciples who tried to keep them away.

Steven Cole - I must disagree with Calvin (and many other usually fine expositors) who use this text to argue for [infant baptism](#). There is not a drop of water in the passage. As **Spurgeon** puts it, "I might as well prove vaccination from the text" as infant baptism ("[Children Brought to Christ, Not to the Font](#)," Spurgeon's Sermons [Baker], 8:40-41). According to the New Testament, baptism follows saving faith in Christ as a public testimony of that faith. I believe that infant baptism is potentially damaging, because it gives a **false sense of assurance** to people who need to repent and believe in Christ. They think that since they were baptized, they will go to heaven, which is patently false. **Personal faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing that saves** ([Bringing Children to Jesus](#))

Robert Stein echoes Cole writing "Although this passage later became a proof-text for [infant baptism](#) (Jesus' blessing the children has even been called a "baptism without water"), in the context of Jesus' ministry these words do not deal with the issue of infant baptism. It is furthermore difficult to believe that Luke understood this passage as a reference to children's baptism because for him baptism was intimately associated with repentance (cf. Lk 3:8; Acts 2:38) and faith (Acts 8:12–13; 16:31–33)." (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#)).

THOUGHT Have you ever "sung" the hymn [Gentle Jesus by Charles Wesley](#)? I mean have you sung it as a child and come to Him as a little child to receive by faith His precious gift of eternal life? If not, may the Spirit of Jesus enable you today to sing this song from your heart, a heart filled with childlike faith and trust. Amen....

[Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,](#)

Look upon a little child.

Pity my simplicity.

Suffer me to come to Thee.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee.

Thou shalt my example be.

Thou art gentle, meek and mild;

Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art;
Give me Thine obedient heart.
Thou art pitiful and kind.
Let me have Thy loving mind.

Loving Jesus, gentle Lamb,
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Savior, what Thou art,
Live Thyself within my heart.

MATTHEW 18 AND LITTLE CHILDREN

In a similar declaration in Matthew 18 Jesus used a **child** to illustrate how one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven (God). Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18 helps us understand Jesus' use of a **child** to illustrate how one is saved.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (**PRIDE**) 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, **Truly I say** ("[AMEN LEGO](#)" - INTRODUCING A SOLEMN DECLARATION OF TRUTH) to you, **unless you are converted** (strepho = turn, to be changed inwardly) and become like children, you **will not** ([Strong double negative](#) = *ou me* = absolutely will not) enter the **kingdom of heaven**. 4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the **kingdom of heaven** (GOD). 5 "And whoever **receives** ([dechomai](#)) one such child in My name **receives** ([dechomai](#)) Me. 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me (believers who are "children of God" - 1 Jn 3:1) to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.(Matthew 18:1-6)

Let's analyze Jesus' words in Matthew 18 -- Why would the disciples ask about who is greatest in the Kingdom? Clearly, although Jesus had taught extensively about the Kingdom, the disciples were still expecting Him to set up His Messianic Kingdom. And they expected (or were hoping) He would name one of them as greatest in the Kingdom. Similarly, Jesus had taught repeatedly on the need for humility but they did not "get it." Their question about who is greatest clearly reflected their pride. So Jesus proceeds to illustrate the principles about the Kingdom and about pride by setting a child before them and opening His remarks with the solemn phrase **Truly I say**. This must have gotten their attention! Don't you imagine they were a little embarrassed. And so Jesus uses the child to illustrate to the disciples how one is "converted" (cf His use of the phrase "born again" with Nicodemus Jn 3:3).

MacArthur writes that **unless you are converted and become like children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven** "is an absolute and far-reaching requirement of ultimate importance. **Entrance into Christ's kingdom demands childlikeness**. There is no other way to receive the grace of salvation than as a child....Our Lord is talking directly about entering God's kingdom by faith, through salvation that will result in future millennial blessing and eternal glory. The phrase "**enter the kingdom of heaven**" is used three times in the book of Matthew (see also Mt 7:21; Mt 19:23-24) and in each case refers to personal salvation. It is the same experience as entering into life (Mt 18:8) and entering into the joy of the Lord (Mt 25:21)....The purpose of the gospel is to show men how they may **enter the kingdom** and become its citizens, moving from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13+)....The phrase **are converted** translates an aorist passive of [strepho](#), which elsewhere in the New Testament is always translated with an idea of "turning" or "turning around." It means to make an about face and go in the opposite direction....**To be converted requires people to become like children, Jesus explained**. A little child is simple, dependent, helpless, unaffected, unpretentious, unambitious. Children are not sinless or naturally unselfish, and they display their fallen nature from the earliest age. But they are nevertheless naive and unassuming, trusting of others and without ambition for grandeur and greatness. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

In Mark 9 below (a parallel to Matthew 18) Jesus uses this same verb ([dechomai](#)) four times in one verse again using a child to illustrate in essence how one is saved. When one receives Jesus, God the Son, He also receives God the Father. And as John 1:12 above teaches, receiving Jesus and His Father is synonymous with believing in Him, in His Name. As Peter said (see context Acts 4:10-11) "there is salvation in no one else (OTHER THAN JESUS = John 14:6); for there is no other **name** (BUT JESUS) under heaven that has been given among men by which we must (SPEAKS OF NECESSITY) be saved." (Acts 4:12+)

They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. (**PRIDE AS IN Mt 18:1 ABOVE**) 35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." 36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 "Whoever **receives** ([dechomai](#) - welcomes) one child

like this in My name **receives** ([dechomai](#) - welcomes) Me; and whoever **receives** ([dechomai](#)) Me does not **receive** ([dechomai](#)) Me, but Him who sent Me.” (Mk 9:33-37+)

Receive (1209) ([dechomai](#) = [middle voice](#) = reflexive sense = "receive to oneself") means to to receive something offered or transmitted by another (Luke 2:28). To take something into one's hand and so to grasp (Luke 2:28, 22:17). To be receptive to someone (Mt 10:14, 40). To take a favorable attitude toward something (Mt 11:14). The idea of this word is akin to our modern phrase "put the welcome mat out" so it speaks of a "welcome" reception. In the present passage Jesus uses **dechomai** to describe the way a humble believer with childlike trust enters into the Kingdom of God.

Dechomai - 45v - **accept(2), accepted(3), receive(16), received(12), receives(15), take(3), taken(1), took(1), welcome(2), welcomed(1).** Matt. 10:14; Matt. 10:40; Matt. 10:41; Matt. 11:14; Matt. 18:5; Mk. 6:11; Mk. 9:37; Mk. 10:15; Lk. 2:28; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 9:5; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 9:53; Lk. 10:8; Lk. 10:10; Lk. 16:4; Lk. 16:6; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 22:17; Jn. 4:45; Acts 3:21; Acts 7:38; Acts 7:59; Acts 8:14; Acts 11:1; Acts 17:11; Acts 22:5; Acts 28:21; 1 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 7:15; 2 Co. 8:17; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:16; Gal. 4:14; Eph. 6:17; Phil. 4:18; Col. 4:10; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:10; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 1:21

ILLUSTRATION - **Steven Cole** - I read about a missionary to Africa back in the 1950's who was appalled when she saw the native children at recess not run and play, but rather hunt mice and grasshoppers. They would impale them on a stick and roast and eat them. When she inquired as to why the children were so hungry, she found out that in that culture, the men ate their fill first, followed by the women. If anything was left, the children could eat. The children were considered the least important in that society. How unlike Jesus! He considered children important enough to give them His time and individual blessing. He wants us to learn from children what it means to believe in Him. He wants us to lead children to faith in Him. I pray that if you have never done so, you will come in simple faith to Jesus as your Savior. I pray that many of you will commit yourselves to the important task of leading children to Christ. You will be doing a work that our Savior Himself counted important. ([Bringing Children to Jesus](#))

Bring Them To Jesus

Read: Luke 18:15-17

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. —Mark 10:14

The Scripture reading from Luke 18 about children seemed unusual at the memorial service for David Holquist. After all, he was 77 when he died.

Yet the pastor said the verses fit David, a long-time college professor, perfectly. Part of his legacy was that he took time for children—his own and others'. He made balloon animals and puppets, and helped in a puppet ministry at church. When planning worship services with others, he frequently asked, "What about the children?" He was concerned about what would help the children—not just the adults—to worship God.

Luke 18 shows us the concern Jesus had for children. When people brought little ones to Him, the disciples wanted to protect Jesus, a busy man, from the bothersome children. But it seems that Jesus was not at all bothered by them. Just the opposite. The Bible says that Jesus was "greatly displeased" at the disciples, and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them" (v.16). Mark adds that Jesus took them in His arms and blessed them (10:14-16).

Let's examine our own attitude about children and then follow the example of David Holquist. Find some ways to help them come to Jesus. Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To those who are teaching the gospel,
With love in their hearts for its truth,
Comes the gentle reminder from heaven,
"Forget not the children and youth."
—Anon.

God has great concern for little children.

Like a Little Child

Read: Matthew 18:1–5; 19:13–14

Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3

One evening many years ago, after saying a goodnight prayer with our two-year-old daughter, my wife was surprised by a question. "Mommy, where is Jesus?"

Luann replied, "Jesus is in heaven and He's everywhere, right here with us. And He can be in your heart if you ask Him to come in."

Our faith in Jesus is to be like that of a trusting child.

"I want Jesus to be in my heart."

"One of these days you can ask Him."

"I want to ask Him to be in my heart now."

So our little girl said, "Jesus, please come into my heart and be with me." And that started her faith journey with Him.

When Jesus's disciples asked Him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He called a little child to come and join them (Matthew 18:1–2). "Unless you change and become like little children," Jesus said, "you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (vv. 3–5).

Through the eyes of Jesus we can see a trusting child as our example of faith. And we are told to welcome all who open their hearts to Him. "Let the little children come to me," Jesus said, "and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (19:14). David C. McCasland | ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling us to follow You with the confident faith of a child.

Help the children in your life come to know Jesus. Introduce them to Our Daily Bread for Kids at ourdailybreadforkids.org.

Our faith in Jesus is to be like that of a trusting child.

Faith Of A Child

Read: Matthew 18:1-5

Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 18:3

One Sunday I heard Mike talk about his relationship with his two fathers—the one who raised him as a child, and his Father in heaven.

First he described his childhood trust toward his earthly father as "simple and uncomplicated." He expected his dad to fix broken things and to give advice. He dreaded displeasing him, however, because he often forgot that his father's love and forgiveness always followed.

Mike continued, "Some years ago I made a mess of things and hurt a lot of people. Because of my guilt, I ended a happy, simple relationship with my heavenly Father. I forgot that I could ask Him to fix what I had broken and seek His advice."

Years passed. Eventually Mike became desperate for God, yet he wondered what to do. His pastor said simply, "Say you're sorry to God, and mean it!"

Instead, Mike asked complicated questions, like: "How does this work?" and "What if . . .?"

Finally his pastor prayed, "Please, God, give Mike the faith of a child!" Mike later testified joyfully, "The Lord did!"

Mike found closeness with his heavenly Father. The key for him and for us is to practice the simple and uncomplicated faith of a child. Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have you noticed that the childlike faith

Of a little girl or boy

Has so often shown to older folks

How to know salvation's joy?

—Branon

Faith shines brightest in a childlike heart.

Childlike Humility

Read: Matthew 18:1-14

Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 18:4

In the mid-70s, my husband Bill and I befriended a drug addict named Derek on the London subway. Days later we invited him to come and live with our family. He soon received Christ and His forgiveness.

Until then, the world had been shouting to Derek, “Why don’t you grow up?” That day Jesus tenderly said to him, “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 18:3). Derek became a child of God! We expected this young man to learn a lot through us about God, but little did we expect to learn about God through him.

For example, one afternoon we discussed the possibility of someday opening a Christian rehabilitation center for addicts. None of us knew when, where, how, or if it would ever happen. I said, “Well, we know God won’t let us down.” Derek, however, added, “God won’t let Himself down.” His words echoed Psalm 23:3, “He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

Twenty eventful years ago He brought that rehabilitation center into being “for His name’s sake,” and I’ve been learning and relearning childlike humility ever since. How about you? Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There's so much wisdom to be learned,
So many ways for me to grow,
Lord, I would listen like a child,
And learn what You would have me know.
—K. De Haan

If you're filled with pride, you won't have room for wisdom.

Leaping With Joy

Read: Matthew 18:1-5

Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 18:4

One nice thing about having a young daughter is the frequent reminders she gives me about joyful trust. Debbie still jumps into my arms from the stairs, the porch, or the picnic table with a shout and a great big smile. We never have a long discussion ahead of time about whether or not I’ll catch her. She just looks at me and leaps.

As adults, we tend to become more cautious with age. That may be all right in driving a car or spending money, but it is stifling in our relationship with God.

When the disciples of Jesus wanted to know who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven, the Lord pointed to a child as He spoke of conversion and humility: “Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 18:4).

How I long to become more childlike each year with my heavenly Father instead of more hesitant, more calculating, more insistent that He guarantee the results before I’ll take a step of faith. Rather than becoming more cautious as I age, I want to become more daring in my walk with God. Instead of being obsessed with landing safely and looking good, I want to leap with humble, joyful abandon toward my heavenly Father’s arms. David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I take my Father's hand in faith,
Though where He leads I may not see;
My hand is given into His—
I trust Him as my child trusts me.
—Shoemaker

Childlike faith focuses on our heavenly Father, not on our fears.

Child's Play

Read: Matthew 18:1-11

Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 18:3

After a surprise storm blanketed the Middle East with snow, a newspaper photo showed four armed men smiling as they built a snowman outside the battered walls of a military headquarters. The wintry weather also caused a protest to be canceled and delayed a debate over parliamentary matters of pressing importance. Men wearing long robes and women in traditional black dresses and headscarves were seen playing in the snow. There's something about snow that brings out the child in all of us.

And there's something about the gospel that beckons us to abandon our deep hostilities and feelings of self-importance in favor of a childlike humility and faith. When Jesus was asked, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matthew 18:1), He called a little child to come to Him and said, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (v.3).

It has been said that age diminishes our imagination, hopes, and possibilities. The older we get, the more easily we say, "That could never happen." But in a child's mind, God can do anything. A childlike faith filled with wonder and confidence in God unlocks the door to the kingdom of heaven. David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God, give me the faith of a little child!
A faith that will look to Thee—
That never will falter and never fail,
But follow Thee trustingly. —Showerman

Faith shines brightest in a childlike heart.

The Children's Friend

Read: Matthew 19:13-15

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." —Matthew 19:14

Today, people around the globe will observe the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great storyteller Hans Christian Andersen. The lessons and encouragement contained in his tales of The Ugly Duckling, The Little Mermaid, and The Emperor's New Clothes are still considered a great gift to children everywhere.

I'm reminded, however, that Jesus Christ is the greatest friend of children the world has ever known. No one has done more for them than Jesus.

When Jesus' disciples reprimanded people for bringing little ones to Him, the Lord said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

Jesus valued children as persons of worth. After His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Lord accepted the praise of children and reminded those who criticized them that God has ordained praise even "out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants" (Matthew 21:16; Psalm 8:2).

Companionship with the Savior is the privilege of everyone who trusts Him with the simple faith of a child. His loving arms and tender heart are ready to embrace every child who accepts Him. He willingly receives all who open their hearts to Him. He is the children's Friend. David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Jesus, You who once did say
To little children at their play,
"Come to Me, you will be blessed,"
So come to us and be our Guest.
—Anon

The Creator hides secrets from sages,
yet He can be known by children.

Luke 18:18 A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

- **A ruler questioned Him:** Mt 19:16-30 Mk 10:17-31
- **Good Teacher:** Lu 6:46 Ezek 33:31 Mal 1:6 Jn 13:13-15
- **what shall I do to inherit eternal life:** Lu 10:25 Acts 2:37 16:30
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Jesus and Rich Young Ruler - Cartoon for Children](#)

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Parallel Passages In Matthew (Mt 19:16-30) and Mark (Mk 10:17-31) -- See page 333 of the [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) for Gleason Archer's discussion of the question "How can we resolve the discrepancies in Synoptic accounts of the rich-young-ruler episode?"

Note: **Yellow Highlight** = words/phrases not in Luke's version. **Green Highlight** = words/phrases unique to either Matthew or Mark.

- **Matthew 19:16-30** And (NAS does not translate the important Greek word *idou* = **Behold** a word used to grab the reader's attention - "Listen up!" is the idea. So literally it reads "**And behold...**") **someone** came to Him and said, "Teacher, **what good thing** shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" (MacArthur - "**Behold** suggests how unusual and unexpected it was that he would admit he lacked eternal life and come to Jesus to find it.") 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about **what is good**? There is only One who is good; **but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments**" 18 **Then he said to Him, "Which ones?"** And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; 19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and **YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**" (QUOTING Lev 19:18 WHICH SUMMARIZES THE SECOND HALF OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS) 20 The **young** man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; **what am I still lacking?**" 21 Jesus said to him, "**If you wish to be complete** (TELEIOS = "perfect" in Mt 5:48) go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But when the **young** man heard this statement, **he went away grieving**; for he was one who **owned much property.** 23 And Jesus said **to His disciples**, "**Truly I say to you**, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 **When the disciples** heard this, **they were very astonished** and said, "Then who can be saved?" 26 And **looking at them** Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." 27 Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; **what then will there be for us?**" 28 And Jesus said to them, "**Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**" 29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will **inherit** eternal life. 30 **But many who are first will be last; and the last, first**
- **Mark 10:17-31** As He was setting out on a journey, **a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him**, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, **Do not defraud**, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" 20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." 21 **Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him** and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But at these words he was saddened, and **he went away grieving**, for he was one who **owned much property.** 23 And Jesus, **looking around, said to His disciples**, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 The disciples were **amazed** at His words. But Jesus **answered again** and said to them, "**Children**, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 **They were even more astonished** and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" (NOTE JESUS CLEARLY ASSOCIATES ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH BEING SAVED) 27 **Looking at them**, Jesus said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." 28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he will receive **a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions**; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 **But many who are first will be last, and the last, first**"

Robert Stein reminds us of the context writing that "In the three accounts found in Luke 18:9–30, Luke was dealing with the theme of salvation, even though **three different metaphors** were used to describe this: **justification** (Lk 18:14), **entrance into the kingdom of God** (Lk 18:17, 24)(**ED**: cf Lk 4:43+ where Jesus said "'I must preach the kingdom of God'"), and **inheriting eternal life** (Lk 18:18). (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

J C Ryle - THE story we have now read is three times reported in the Gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke were all moved by the Holy Ghost to record the history of the rich man who came to Christ. This fact should be noticed. It shows us that there are lessons before us which demand special attention. When God would impress on Peter his duty towards the Gentiles, He sent him a vision which was repeated "three times." (Acts 10:16.)

*(Jesus) consistently made clear the difficulty
those seeking to enter the kingdom faced*

John MacArthur introduces this section noting that "The heart of the lesson is that the sinner must be led to understand the cost required to receive eternal life. Obviously, no one was more concerned about the danger of superficiality than the Lord Jesus was (cf. John 2:23-25; 6:66), and a careful study of the Gospels shows that, in light of that concern, He consistently made clear the difficulty those seeking to enter the kingdom faced (cf. Luke 13:24; Matt. 7:13-14; 10:38; 11:12; Luke 16:24-25). The Lord's encounter with this wealthy, influential young man is a classic account of Him addressing the issue of the true cost of discipleship....It is placed in the context of the discussion of the **kingdom of God** that began in Luke 17:20 to illustrate who enters the **kingdom** and who does not. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

John MacArthur tells this story - During a flight I took some time ago, a young man sitting next to me introduced himself and said, "Sir, you wouldn't know how I could have a relationship with Jesus Christ, would you?" Now that sort of incident doesn't happen often! I was reading my Bible, which prompted him to ask the question. He seemed ready and eager to be saved. I said, "You simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Savior." He said, "I'd like to do that." So we prayed together. I was excited about what happened but was later unsuccessful in my attempts to follow up his commitment. I have since discovered that he has no continuing interest in the things of Christ, as far as I can tell. Some of you who have shared the gospel of Christ with others have experienced those occasions where someone you led to Christ never shows change in their life. If you've been struggling with why that happens, then I think you'll find the answer in this lesson (on the Rich Young Ruler). (Full sermon [Matthew 19:16-22: How to Obtain Eternal Life](#))

Adrian Rogers sees this well-known story of the **rich young ruler** as tragically applicable to many who are in the church in America - they've joined a local church, but they've never truly "joined Jesus," the Head of the Church! They have religion but lack relationship! They have head knowledge without heart change! As Rogers puts it "There is a problem—a real problem—and that is that people attend church; they listen to sermons; they join churches; but they are never radically, dramatically, eternally changed. They have religion, but they've never met God. Many churches today are filled with baptized pagans—baptized pagans! They have been vaccinated—are you listening?—vaccinated with a mild form of Christianity, and they've never caught the real disease. And so the church may be full, but the people are often empty. They come; they go through the motions; they try to live, outwardly, a *good life*; but they have never really, truly found *a new life*. They've never been converted." (From his sermon ["Three Strikes and You're Out"](#) or read the full sermon [on page 206 of his sermons on the Gospel of Mark](#))

Mark's version has "**As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'**" (Mk 10:17) So clearly if Jesus was setting out on a journey, there were undoubtedly many people coming along with Him, not just the 12 apostles. Here is the point - Using your sanctified imagination, picture Jesus beginning to walk along this dusty road with this trailing crowd and a rich man suddenly runs in front of Him and kneels at His feet. Can you imagine the "Ooh's and Ah's" from the disciples (who tried to shoo away parents bringing their children!) and the mixed multitude! And what does this say about this rich young ruler? Clearly, he had laid aside at least some element of his pride (not all as we shall see in the rest of the story) and was willing to unashamedly humble himself at the feet of Jesus, not fearing the remarks of the crowd. Ponder this true event for a moment. At the feet of the Lord of Creation, the Lord of glory, the coming King of kings! How close the rich young ruler was to the Kingdom of God as he knelt down before the King (although as the story goes on, he does not appear to understand that Jesus is the long expected and hoped for King of the Jews = Mt 2:2, 27:11, 29, 37) Do you know any folks who have come this close to the Kingdom of God and yet did not enter it? O the tragedy of tragedies to have a "Judas-like" heart and ostensibly seek to enter the Kingdom of God!

William Lane on Mark 10:17 - The eager approach of a man while Jesus was setting out on his way, his kneeling posture, the formal address together with the weighty character of his question—all suggest deep respect for Jesus and genuine earnestness on the part of the man himself. He came to consult Jesus as a distinguished rabbi and showed him the deference reserved for revered teachers of the Law. (See [The Gospel of Mark](#))

A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" First keep in mind that this is not described as a parable, but is presented as an actual, historical event that occurred in the life and ministry of Jesus. So let's begin by painting a picture of this ruler's character, piecing together facts from all three synoptic Gospels.

Note that only Luke states this man was a **ruler**, whereas in NAS Matthew 19:16 has "someone" and Mark 10:17 has "a man". He is probably a civic leader of some kind, but we can't say any more.

Guzik has a balanced comment on **ruler** - We don't know if his authority was in the world of politics or in the world of religion. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Leon Morris on **ruler** - The term is a very general one and 'denotes Roman and Jewish officials of all kinds' (Gerhard Delling, who sees the rulers in this Gospel as a group of people distinguished from the elders, scribes and high priests). We cannot be specific about his office and suggest for example that he was a ruler of the synagogue (in any case, as Matthew tells us that he was young, this is unlikely). But at least he was among the ruling classes. ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

Mark adds two important details not recorded by Luke, recording that this **man ran up to Him and knelt before Him**. What does this show about this **ruler**? Running up to Jesus speaks of his eagerness, earnestness and sense of urgency. Ostensibly he had a vibrant enthusiasm for the things of God. And secondly, the fact that **he knelt** (Greek = [gonupeteo](#) = literally fell on his knees; kneel down before someone in petition, cf. Tacitus, Annals, cf. action of Jairus in Lk 8:41 but a different verb) before Jesus depicts a degree of humility. Note that there is no indication he came at night like Nicodemus (Jn 3:2), but in broad daylight, publicly and without embarrassment. He was not worried about his reputation. Consider the context -- Jesus is a poor peasant prophet and this young man is a ruler and is rich and yet he was willing to bow down, in spite of his position, possessions, power and prestige! This young ruler reminds me of another young Jewish man, Mark Zuckerberg, who began Facebook, and at a young age attained all of advantages of this rich young ruler! How wonderful would it be if he read this story, saw himself depicted and was gloriously saved! Let it be so Lord. Amen. Another thing about this rich young ruler was that he expresses discernment because he clearly recognized there was something different about Jesus, calling Him **good Teacher**. He recognized something **good** about Jesus. As **Adrian Rogers** said "we have a lot of people who cannot even discern goodness—even in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are cynics who know the price of everything and the value of nothing." And he was spiritually minded, clearly having a concern for spiritual things, asking Jesus what he could do to attain **eternal life**. He didn't ask Jesus about worldly matters, but eternal matters. Too many people are interested in mundane, temporal things, but not this rich young ruler. Note also that this young man had a degree of moral cleanliness as shown by his answer in Lk 18:21. How would you have answered Jesus? And so outwardly this rich young ruler is morally clean. In addition, he was financially successful, Matthew 19:22 and Mark 10:22 recording that he owned **much property** and Luke 18:18 describing him as **rich**. What is fascinating about this ruler, is that he is the sort of young man any church in America would love to have in their congregation. He "had it all" as we might say today. He was a "good person" and was surely well on his way to heaven! Or so it seemed. Read on.

As an aside an early edition of Webster's Dictionary defined a **Christian** as "a decent, civilized, or presentable person." The rich young ruler would certainly have qualified under that easy but deficient definition.

A. Plummer writes, "There is no instance in the whole Talmud of a rabbi being addressed as 'Good Master'; the title was absolutely unknown among the Jews".

Leon Morris adds that "**Good Teacher**, was not in use among the rabbis because it ascribed to man an attribute possessed only by God (according to Plummer there is not one example in the whole Talmud of a rabbi being addressed in this way; Fitzmyer finds one example, but it is dated in the fourth century)." ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

R Kent Hughes - in Jesus' day it was a breach in religious decorum to call Jesus **'good teacher.'** There is not one example in the Talmud of a rabbi being addressed as "good." So was the ruler's use of "good" casual, thoughtless flattery? Or was it simply "the poverty of his moral perception"? Or was the ruler breaking decorum to voice what he sensed in his heart? (See [Luke That You May Know the Truth](#))

Barclay - The Rabbis always said "there is nothing that is good but the law."

Good Teacher - Although the rich young ruler calls Jesus "**Good**," he seems to have recognized something different about Jesus', something that caused other Jews to be "amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Mk 1:22+, cf. Mt 7:28-29+, Mt 13:54+, Lk 4:32+, Lk 19:48+, John 7:15, 46+).

William Lane on **good** and **good Teacher** - In the OT and subsequent Judaism only God is characteristically called "**good**," although it was possible to speak in a derived sense of "the good man" (e.g. Prov. 12:2; 14:14; Eccl. 9:2; Mt. 12:35). The designation of Jesus as "**good teacher**," however, is virtually without parallel in Jewish sources and should be regarded as a sincere tribute to

the impression he had made upon the man, whether **"good"** be understood to signify "kind," "generous," or some other quality of goodness. (See [The Gospel of Mark](#))

[See comments below on "good"](#) an adjective which has stirred up considerable debate among theologians, especially the two uses of **"good"** in Jesus' reply in Luke 18:19.

Matthew 19:16+ does not have **good Teacher** but describes the **good thing** which he could do to inherit eternal life - "Teacher, what **good** thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

Eternal life - Note that this subject is the **main theme** in this story of the rich young ruler in Luke 18:18-30, because the phrase **"eternal life"** is found at the beginning (Luke 18:18) and at the end of the story (Luke 18:30).

William Lane on inherit **eternal life** - To inherit **eternal life** becomes a fixed expression in Judaism, as in Psalms of Solomon 14:6 (APOCRYPHAL WRITING), which speaks of inheriting life, the life assigned by God to the righteous (cf. Ps. Sol. 3:16; 14:10; I Enoch 38:4; 40:9; 48:3; 2 Macc. 7:9; 4 Macc. 15:3). (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 365](#))

Jesus gives us one of the best definitions of **eternal life** declaring in His prayer to His Father

"This is **eternal life**, that they may know ([ginosko](#) = intimately, personally, not head knowledge, but heart knowledge!) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3+).

What shall I do to inherit eternal life - What is he asking? As noted above his question expresses the "Jewish way to asked about being saved by gaining life in the world to come." (Bock) In the context of Luke 18:15-17, we would answer that He is asking how he can gain entrance into the Kingdom of God (Matthew's version has "Kingdom of Heaven" a more Jewish terminology), which was synonymous with the Philippian jailer's question "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30+). We saw a similar question in Luke 10:25+ where "a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test (NOTE HIS INTENT IS QUITE DIFFERENT THAN THE YOUNG RULER WHO WAS NOT "TESTING" JESUS), saying, **"Teacher, what shall I DO to inherit eternal life?"** This prompted Jesus' answer in His famous Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:26-37+).

There is one more point to observe regarding what is wrong regarding the young man's question - Perhaps we have had a rich relative pass away and they leave us an inheritance. Now what do we have to DO to inherit the inheritance? Nothing. A person does not do anything to inherit an [inheritance](#)! An inheritance is something that we receive as a [bequest](#) from someone else. Of course, since salvation is a gift, we still must receive it (by faith) (Jn 1:12+). Even an earthly inheritance will not be forced on the one to whom the inheritance has been [bequeathed](#). One God-Man died that we might inherit His eternal life and His perfect righteousness, but these gifts must be received by faith. Have you received this inheritance which God graciously makes available for all who will call upon His Name (cf Ro 10:13)?

The dictionary defines **"DO"** as to carry out or perform an action. **"DO"** marks the crucial essence of the young man's question.

The dictionary defines **"RECEIVE"** as to take something offered into one's hand or possession.

His question should have been - "How can I **RECEIVE** eternal life?"

Jesus made it clear that **eternal life** is something God **GIVES**, unrelated to something man **DOES**, clearly teaching "the narrow way" (Mt 7:14+) into eternal life and the Kingdom of God in Luke 18:17...

"Truly I say to you, whoever does not **RECEIVE** the Kingdom of God (~"eternal life") like a child will not enter it at all."

In sum, the young man was in a sense only "one verb" away from eternal life! Instead of coming to Jesus helpless, dependent, and trusting, like a small child, the rich ruler comes as a young man, a rich man, a "good" man. But Jesus will show him that he is still far too big to walk through the minute eye of a needle, figuratively speaking of course (Lk 18:25)!

Sean O'Donnell - This question, despite its obvious flaws, displays his fear of God, his recognition of Jesus' authority, his genuine concern for his own soul, and his belief in life after death-the "attainment of the resurrected state. I think if most of us were honest we would admit that we think very little about life after death. It is simply not our everyday preoccupation. It is not what makes us restless. It is not what worries us. Our biggest concerns usually revolve around missing out on the benefits of this life. Most of the so-called important questions we ask have something or other to do with the here and now. They are earthbound questions. But this man appears to be genuinely concerned about life after death, not simply and superficially about this life. So this man's question, though he himself will prove to be full of love for the present world, is the right question in that it asks "the essential question."" (See [Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth - Page 546](#))

So looking at the positive side of this encounter, the young man came with the right attitude (contrast the lawyer's attitude in Luke

10:25+) and the right question (cf Philippian jailer - Acts 16:30+). On the negative side, **William Lane** says the form of his "question ("What must I DO to inherit eternal life?") implies a **piety of achievement** which stands in contrast to Jesus' teaching that a man **must receive** ([dechomai](#) - welcome) the Kingdom (or life) **as a gift from God in his helplessness** (Mark 10:15, Lk 18:17+ = "like a little child"). In the light of (Lk 18:21), the man evidently thought that there were conditions to be fulfilled beyond those set forth in the Law." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 365](#))

John MacArthur on **what shall I DO** - In keeping with his legalistic system of self-righteousness, he sought that one elusive good work that would push him over the top to obtain eternal life for himself. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

I agree with **Constable** that

"The young man's idea of how one obtains eternal life was far from what Jesus had been preaching and even recently illustrating (cf Luke 18:15-17+). He demonstrated the [antithesis](#) of childlike faith and humility (**ED: AND HELPLESSNESS**). He thought one had to perform some particular act of righteousness in addition to keeping the Mosaic Law ("What am I still lacking" - Mt 19:20, cf Lk 18:21). He wanted Jesus to tell him what that act was. He was a performance oriented person."

In commenting on what one must **"DO"** to inherit eternal life, most of us would say **just believe** (repent and believe). But notice Jesus' interesting response to the question in John 6 when asked "What shall we **DO**, so that we may work the **works** (PLURAL) of God?" (They wanted to know what works God required of them that they might qualify for the gift of the food that lasts forever.) Jesus answered and said to them, **"This is the work** (SINGULAR-ONLY ONE "WORK" IS NECESSARY!) **of God**, that you **BELIEVE** in Him Whom He has sent." (Jn 6:28-29+) In simple terms, Jesus told these disciples that the only **'work'** (SINGULAR) God required was to **believe**, specifically to **believe in Jesus**. And this is a "work" they were not ready to perform (As shown by their hearts in John 6:41-42+ they were actually "pseudo-disciples") and as a result of Jesus' "hard sayings" these so-called "disciples" walked away and, if they never repented and believed, they walked away into eternity unsaved and bound for eternal punishment! (John 6:66+)

John said essentially the same thing in his first epistle "This is His commandment, that we **believe** in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ (FAITH), and love one another (WORKS - WORKS THAT DEMONSTRATE ONE'S FAITH IS GENUINE, SAVING FAITH), just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23+). In sum, the Jews in general and the Pharisees in particular thought of salvation in terms of **"WORKS"** (PLURAL), the things they could **DO** to merit eternal life (entrance into the Kingdom of God).

Norman Crawford on **What shall I do to inherit eternal life** - He imagined that eternal life could be earned by his own effort. In his question there is a paradox, for he spoke of an inheritance and yet wanted to know how to work for it. An inheritance is normally obtained without working to receive it, although there may be exceptions to the norm. When the inheritance was eternal life he was totally wrong. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Guzik - This question demonstrates that this man, like all people by nature, had an orientation towards earning eternal life. He wanted to know what good work or noble deed he should do to inherit eternal life. (**ED: EVERY world religion is a religion of 'DO'** [What works must I do?] and ONLY Christianity is a relationship of "DONE" [Aka Jesus' cry "It is Finished! Paid in Full! Tetelestai! The WORK is DONE! HALLELUJAH!]) ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Constable on **inherit** - He was talking about getting something that he as a Jew thought that he had a good chance of obtaining because of his ethnic relationship to Abraham. (**ED: But as noted above "What must I do to inherit eternal life" was a typical Jewish question.**)

Eternal life always refers primarily to a **QUALITY** of life and not so much a **QUANTITY** of life. The phrase is not found in the Old Testament although the equivalent "everlasting life" is found in Daniel 12:2+ (which is an excellent verse to substantiate the tragic truth that spiritual death like spiritual life is everlasting, as the same Hebrew verb *olam* modifies both conditions. Eternal punishment is forever beloved [cf Mt 25:46].

THOUGHT - [Eternal punishment](#) is forever beloved [cf Mt 25:46+]. Dear fellow believer, we must believe that truth, not to shock others so much as to shock ourselves into this absolute reality, one that the Spirit of God will/can use to motivate us deeply to boldly share the Gospel (cf Acts 4:31+) with those who are only one heartbeat away from everlasting punishment! May our Father stir our hearts with this truth and grant us the gift of Spirit enabled boldness and spiritual vision to recognize the opportunities (Col 4:5-6+) He gives us to share the Gospel with those who will be otherwise forever lost. Amen.

THOUGHT - Another side thought is that **eternal life** for believers is NOW. Too many believers are living their lives for the temporal rather than the eternal, in part because they do not fully grasp that they are living in "eternity" today, right NOW. If we come to fully grasp all that "the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2), this reality has

the potential to radically transform our approach to our temporal existence. It is the difference between what I like to call "**vertical vision**" (eternal perspective) versus "**horizontal vision**" (temporal perspective). If you are living for eternity (*vertically* so to speak), it will affect every decision you make in time (*horizontally*, so to speak). See discussion of "Vertical Vision."

Adrian Rogers once said "The Bible is a window in this prison-world through which we may look into eternity. Life is too short, eternity is too long, souls are too precious, the Gospel is too wonderful — for us to sleep through it all! There are only two places where there's no hope. One is in Hell because when you go to Hell, you've lost hope. The other is in Heaven because when you're in Heaven, you don't need hope. People say that the church is full of hypocrites. I'd rather spend some of the time here on earth with some of the hypocrites — than eternity in Hell with all of them!"

In his commentary on Matthew, **John MacArthur** explains that "Although **eternal life** obviously carries the idea of being an everlasting reality it does not refer simply to unending existence (**Ed**: Although of course that is also wonderfully true). Even ancient pagans knew that mere unending existence would not necessarily be desirable. According to Greek mythology, Aurora, goddess of the dawn, fell in love with a young mortal named Tithonus. When Zeus offered to provide anything she wished for her human lover, she asked that he might never die. The wish was granted, but because she had not asked that Tithonus remain forever young, he continued to grow older and more decrepit. Instead of being blessed, he was cursed to perpetual degeneration. If, as William Hendriksen insightfully observes, "'life' means active response to one's environment," then eternal life must mean active response to that which is eternal, namely God's heavenly realm. Just as physical life is the ability to live and move and respond in the physical world, eternal life is the ability to live and move and respond in the heavenly world. Eternal life is first of all a quality of existence, the divinely-endowed ability to be alive to God and the things of God. The Jews saw it as that which fills the heart with hope of life after death. The unsaved person is spiritually alive only to sin (**Ed**: That's a mind boggling thought!). But when he receives Christ as Lord and Savior, he becomes alive to God and to righteousness (Ro 6:1-10, 11-13). That is the essence of eternal life, the life of God's own Son dwelling within." (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

While this may sound simplistic or self-evident, the very fact that the rich young ruler sought **eternal life** indicates that he recognized he had a need for **eternal life**. Something was missing in his life. In the world's eyes, he had it all, but in God's eyes he didn't have anything of eternal value. He is like so many in Europe, Japan and America who are relatively wealthy and so feel no need for eternal life. After all "*Life is Good*" is the mantra of our day -- look at the bumper stickers, social media posts, advertisements, etc. The tragedy is the lost world thinks that life is good because they have "things," but the truth is their life is tragically empty. They know they are not alive to God but could care less. But God in His grace and mercy has set eternity in the hearts of all men (Eccl 3:11), but most pridefully refuse to follow this divinely implanted instinct. As Daniel Estes put it "humans are bound by time, but they are wired for eternity. They intuitively know that there must be meaning somewhere, and that they were made for more than vain toil." The rich young ruler was willing to acknowledge that he was made for something more than "chasing after the wind." And so he seems to be off to such a promising start.

Ruler (magistrate, official) (758) ([archon](#) from present participle of **archo** = to rule) describes one who has eminence in a ruling capacity. In John 3:1 **archon** refers to Nicodemus being a member of the Sanhedrin. In Luke 8:41 **archon** refers to "a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue." (cf Lk 23:13, 35; 24:20, cf Mt 9:18, 23, Acts 23:5). **Archon** could also refer to one who had administrative authority (Acts 16:19 Ro 13:3).

Questioned (1905) ([eperotao](#) from **epí** = an intens. + **erōtāō** = to ask, inquire of, beg of) in the NT means "to interrogate, inquire." (Zodhiates). **Friberg** says **eperotao** means (1) of inquiry in general ask, put a question, inquire (Mk 9:32, 33); (2) as a legal technical term interrogate, examine, question (Acts 5:27); (3) as seeking to know God - ask after, desire to know (Ro 10:20); (4) as making a request for something ask for, demand (Mt 16:1) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Good (18) ([agathos](#)) ([click](#) discussion of **good deeds**) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). **Agathos** is one whose goodness and works of goodness are transferred to others. Good and doing good is the idea. **Agathos** describes that which is beneficial in addition to being good. **Agathos** is that which is good in its character, beneficial in its effects and/or useful in its action. **Agathos** is used in the New Testament primarily of spiritual and moral excellence. Paul uses **agathos** to describe the gospel as the "glad tidings of **good** things" (Ro 10:15+).

Teacher (1320) ([didaskalos](#) from **didasko** = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp **didaskalia**) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth. The **teacher** teaches in such a way as to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught. Someone has said that "The great teacher is the one who turns our ears into eyes so that we can see the truth." Henry Brooks added that "A (Bible) teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." And so the rich young ruler recognized Jesus as a Teacher or Rabbi Who was an authority on the Old Testament. Note the fact that the young man addressed Jesus as **Teacher**, implies that he did not grasp Jesus' identity (cf. others who were clearly not accepting Jesus as the

Messiah and thus called Him "Teacher" - Mt 8:19 = a scribe; Mt 12:38 = scribes and Pharisees).

Inherit (2816) (**kleronomeo** from **kleros** = first a pebble, piece of wood used in casting lots as in Acts 1:26+ then the allotted portion or inheritance, and so a lot, heritage, inheritance + **nemomai** = to possess; see **Kleronomos**) means to receive a lot or share of an inheritance, inherit a portion of property or receive a possession as gift from someone who has died. An **inheritance** is that which passes by to the heir on the death of the owner.

Eternal life - This phrase occurs 41x in 41v in the NAS (43x in the ESV and only 26x in the KJV)...Matt. 19:16; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 25:46; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; Acts 13:46; Acts 13:48; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:12; Tit. 1:2; Tit. 3:7; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jude 1:21

Eternal (166) (**aionios** from **aion**) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26 - God's attribute). **Aionios** (eternal) is the exact antithesis of **proskairos** (temporal). [Gotquestions](#) comments that **aionios** "carries the idea of *quality* as well as *quantity*. In fact, eternal life is not really associated with "years" at all, as it is independent of time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time, as well as within time." Ponder that thought beloved!

Life (2222) (**zoe**) in Scripture is used (1) to refer to **physical life** (Ro 8:38+, 1Co 3:22, Php 1:20+, Jas 4:14, etc) but more often to (2) to **supernatural life** in contrast to a life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36, see all 43 uses of "eternal life" below). This quality of life speaks of fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now (Ro 6:4+, Ep 4:18+) as well as in eternity future (Mk 10:30, Titus 1:2+ on Eternal Life).

Richards writes that "Zoe in classical Greek refers to natural life--the principle that enables living things to move and to grow. In the NT, zoe focuses on the theological meaning rather than on the biological. From the perspective of the NT, in every respect life is the counterpart of death. Each book of the NT speaks of zoe. In each, the principle of life lifts our vision beyond our earthly existence to reveal a unique quality of life that spans time and eternity and that has its roots in God. It is the biblical use and meaning of zoe that most concerns us as we examine what the NT says about life. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

Kenneth Wuest (in comments on 2Pe 1:3) writes that **zoe** "speaks of life in the sense of one who is possessed of vitality and animation. It is used of the absolute fulness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God. It is used to designate the life which God gives to the believing sinner, a vital, animating, spiritual, ethical dynamic which transforms his inner being and as a result, his behavior. (In comments on 1John 1:2 Wuest adds that the) life that God is, is not to be defined as merely animation, but as definitely ethical in its content. God is not the mere reason for the universe, as the Greeks thought, but a Person with the characteristics and qualities of a divine Person. The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian life. The message of (the epistle of) John is that since the believer is a partaker of this life, it is an absolute necessity that he show the ethical and spiritual qualities that are part of the essential nature of God, in his own life. If these are entirely absent, John says, that person is devoid of the life of God, and is unsaved. The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life were exhibited to the human race in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. His life thus becomes the pattern of what our lives should be in holiness, self-sacrifice, humility and love. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

Related Resources: All of the following are from [Gotquestions.org](#)

- [What is eternal life?](#)
- [Got Eternal Life? Do you know for sure that you will have eternal life in Heaven with God?](#)
- [What things in this world have a true eternal value?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He promised an abundant life?](#) (John 10:10)
- [Is there life after death?](#)
- [What does John 3:16 mean?](#)
- [Do you have eternal life?](#)
- [How can it be said that we have everlasting life when we still die?](#)
- [What is eternal death?](#) (cf Eternal Punishment)

- [What does it mean that Jesus saves?](#)
 - [What is the plan of salvation / way of salvation?](#)
-

Ray Stedman has an interesting take on the identity of the rich young ruler, which I admit is speculative. I won't say he is correct, but neither would I write it off as possibility. Clearly we will have to wait until we are in Jesus' presence to know if Stedman was correct - As you know, I do not believe this is the end of the story. I pointed this out in the initial message in these studies on Mark. I believe, from various indications in Scripture, that this young man was Mark himself. It is only Mark who tells us that when Jesus looked at this young man, he loved him. How could Mark know that, if Jesus had not told him? And Mark was indeed a rich young man, a member of the aristocratic ruling class in Israel. He fits this picture in many ways. And only Mark tells us of the young man who flees from the scene of the arrest of Jesus, leaving his garment in the hands of the soldiers, and runs off naked into the night. If this was indeed Mark, then there must have come a time when this young man, weighing what Jesus had said, understanding that he was putting all his present comfort and material wealth in the balance against eternal life, against the importance and value of his soul both now and in eternity, understanding that he was giving up the satisfaction of all the deep things of his manhood in exchange for these paltry riches, decided to put it all away and obey Jesus. He gave everything away, and had nothing left but a robe, and came and followed Jesus. And that is why he writes this Gospel. Now, this is my own speculation. It is not what the Scripture teaches. It is the Stedmaniac view. You may not agree, and that is fine.

Ray Pritchard - It has been almost ten years since I last preached on the story of the Rich Young Ruler. That fact wouldn't matter except that in 1991 I started my sermon with the story of a man named Lee Atwater. In the estimation of many people, he was the man most responsible for electing George Bush president in 1988. Back then he was 39 years old and on top of the world. Then out of nowhere he developed a massive brain tumor. He was treated and instead of getting better, he got worse. Shortly before he died, Life magazine published an article in which he evaluated his life in light of his terminal illness:

The '80s were about acquiring—acquiring wealth, power, prestige. I know. I acquired more wealth, power and prestige than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty. What power wouldn't I trade for a little more time with my family? What price wouldn't I pay for an evening with a friend? It took a deadly illness to put me eye to eye with that truth, but it is a truth that the country, caught up in its ruthless ambitions and moral decay, can learn on my dime. I don't know who will lead us through the '90s, but they must be made to speak to this spiritual vacuum at the heart of American society, this tumor of the soul (Life magazine, February 1991, p. 67).

Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) MATTHEW 19:16–30 (cf. Mark 10:17–31; Luke 18:18–30)—If Jesus was God, why did He seem to rebuke the rich young ruler for calling Him good?

PROBLEM: The rich young ruler called Jesus “Good Teacher,” and Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” Yet on other occasions Jesus not only claimed to be God (Mark 2:8–10; John 8:58; 10:30), but He accepted the claim of others that He was God (John 20:28–29). Why did Jesus appear to deny that He was God to the young ruler?

SOLUTION: Jesus did not deny He was God to the young ruler. He simply asked him to examine the implications of what he was saying. In effect, Jesus was saying to him, “Do you realize what you are saying when you call Me Good? Are you saying I am God?” The young man did not realize the implications of what he was saying. Thus Jesus was forcing him to a very uncomfortable dilemma. Either Jesus was good and God, or else He was bad and man. A good God or a bad man, but not merely a good man. Those are the real alternatives with regard to Christ. For no good man would claim to be God when he was not. The liberal Christ, who was only a good moral teacher but not God, is a figment of human imagination.

Norman Geisler - See [When Cultists Ask](#) - MATTHEW 19:16–30 (cf. Mark 10:17–31; Luke 18:18–30)—If Jesus was God, why did he seem to rebuke the rich young ruler for calling him good?

MISINTERPRETATION: The rich young ruler called Jesus “Good Teacher,” and Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” Was Jesus denying that he was God to the young ruler? Jehovah's Witnesses think so. “Jesus was saying that no one is as good as God is, not even Jesus himself. God is good in a way that separates him from Jesus” (Should You Believe in the Trinity? 1989, 17).

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: Jesus did not deny he was God to the young ruler. He simply asked him to examine the implications of what he was saying. In effect, Jesus was saying to him, “Do you realize what you are saying when you call me good? Do you realize that this is something you should attribute only to God? Are you saying I am God?”

The young man did not realize the implications of what he was saying. Thus Jesus was forcing him to a very uncomfortable dilemma. Either Jesus was good and God, or else he was bad and man. A good God or a bad man, but not merely a good man.

Those are the real alternatives with regard to Christ. For no good man would claim to be God when he was not.

Steven Cole entitles his sermon [How Good People Get Saved](#). It is an excellent message because it bypasses some of the theological interpretative difficulties of several details in this story. It is included almost in toto, because it would be tragic to get bogged down on the details of the story and miss the most important point. The following is taken from Pastor Cole's sermon -

If Jesus had taken an evangelism training course, He would have dealt differently with the rich young ruler. From an evangelist's point of view, this guy was a piece of cake. His eagerness is evident from the fact that (Mark 10:17 reports) he ran, not walked, up to Jesus. He even knelt down before Jesus, right in front of others, and asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus didn't even have to figure out how to turn the conversation to spiritual things! What an opportunity! Shouldn't be too hard to get a decision! ...It shouldn't take much to lead this man to Christ. But Jesus seemed to take the wrong approach! Anyone with a little bit of training knows that when a person asks, "**What must I do to inherit eternal life?**" the right answer is, "You don't have to do anything. Eternal life is completely free! Just believe in Jesus and receive God's free gift!" Then you lead him in prayer to receive Christ, give him assurance of salvation, and rejoice that another name has been added to the Book of Life! The one thing you would never do with such an evangelistic prospect is to tell him to keep the Ten Commandments as the way to gain eternal life. We all know that obeying the commandments won't get anyone into heaven. And yet that is precisely what Jesus did! When the guy replies that he has done that, Jesus then brings up the subject of money and tells him to give away everything—not a tenth, but the whole works—and then he will have eternal life. We won't even bring up the subject of money in the first ten follow-up appointments, but here Jesus brings it up with an evangelistic contact and tells him that if he gave it all away, he would go to heaven! Jesus really could have used some training in how to share His faith!

In particular, He teaches us how to share the gospel with good people—those who believe in God and have lived decent lives. There are three main lessons:

1. Even good people need salvation.

This man believed in God and was zealous for spiritual things. He was a sincere, moral young man who was trying his best to please God. But he was lacking eternal life. He was good, but he was lost. I encounter people like this all the time—decent, moral people. Often they have been raised in the church. Their parents have taught them right from wrong. They hold responsible jobs, pay their taxes, obey the law, are faithful to their marriages, attend church, and even give to the church. They give their time to service clubs and to wholesome youth activities, like Scouts and coaching sports teams. They're good people, the kind that you would want for neighbors. But even though they are good, they do not have eternal life. They lack treasure in heaven (Lk 18:22). They have not entered the kingdom of God (Lk 18:24, 25). They are not saved (Lk 18:26). All of these terms in the text point to the same thing, namely, being rightly related to God in the present so as to spend eternity with Him in heaven after death. As this story makes evident, it is not enough to be a very good person. Even good people need salvation because they are not good enough. It raises the important question, "What must a good person do to be saved?"

When I say "good person," I am referring not only to those whom others would label as good, but also to those who view themselves as good. Most people flatter themselves by thinking that they are on the upward side of the goodness curve. Satan has blinded us to the enormity of our sin in God's sight. And, we all compare ourselves with those who are worse sinners than we are, not with those who are better. I read about a portly fellow who put his beer, wine, cigars, and an "adult" magazine on the counter. As the checker rang up the total, the man suddenly dropped a candy bar in front of her. "I almost forgot," he said guiltily. "My one vice." (Reader's Digest [7/88], p. 36).

So if you are inclined to think of yourself as a basically good person, this message is for you. The first thing it shows you is that you need the salvation that the Bible talks about because you are not good enough for heaven. No one is. God's Word states, "There is none righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10). Even the best people need salvation. So, how are good people saved?

2. Good people are saved by abandoning trust in their own goodness, because salvation by human goodness is impossible.

Jesus shocked the disciples (Mark 10:24, 26) by saying as this young man walked away (Luke 18:24), "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples and most Jews thought that wealth was a sign of God's blessing. But Jesus says that it is a definite spiritual hindrance or danger. He continues, "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Contrary to popular belief, He was not referring to a low gate in the wall of Jerusalem where a camel had to get down on its knees to enter. He was referring to a camel going through the eye of a needle. In other words, He is saying that salvation for a rich man is not just difficult; it's impossible. The stunned disciples ask, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus confirms what they're thinking: "It is impossible with men." No one can be good enough to be saved.

The story brings out three reasons why salvation by human goodness is impossible:

A. SALVATION BY HUMAN GOODNESS IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE HUMAN GOODNESS CAN NEVER COMPARE WITH GOD'S GOODNESS.

The young man addressed Jesus as "Good Teacher." This was an unusual way to address a Jewish teacher and it bordered on flattery. Jesus challenged him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone" (Lk 18:19). Cultists and critics jump on this statement to say that Jesus was denying His own deity. But they miss the point. If Jesus were not God in human flesh, to tell this man to sell everything and follow Him would be on the par of a Jim Jones type of cult leader! But Jesus' point was not to make a statement about Himself, but rather to challenge the young man's superficial use of the word "good." He was using "good" like we use the word "love." We say, "I love pizza" or "I love my dog" in the same breath as "I love my wife," and then "I love Jesus." In so doing, we cheapen the meaning of the word, especially when applied to Jesus. That's why Jesus took him to task.

The man would have agreed that God is good, in fact, better than any human being. He also called Jesus good, and he probably would have said that Jesus was an exceptionally good man. But if you had asked, he also would have called himself a **good man**. He kept the commandments. He wasn't a sinner, like the publicans and prostitutes. He was a good man seeking to learn from another good man what else he could do to inherit eternal life.

Many commentators say that Jesus was telling the young man that he ought not call Jesus good unless he was prepared to affirm that He is God. But that is probably too subtle a refinement. Rather, Jesus was pointing out the fact that God and His absolute goodness were much higher than he realized. As B. B. Warfield sums it up, "Jesus' concern here is not to glorify Himself, but God: it is not to give any instruction concerning His own person whatever, but to indicate the published will of God as the sole and the perfect prescription for the pleasing of God" (The Person and Work of Christ [Presbyterian and Reformed], p. 185).

Thus the man needed to see that God in His awesome holiness and absolute perfection is the minimum level of goodness necessary to inherit eternal life. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Or, as Isaiah pointed out (Isaiah 64:6, NIV), "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" in God's sight. The young man's flippant use of the word "**good**" showed that he did not grasp the absolute goodness of God that is necessary to be in His presence in heaven for all eternity. Salvation by human goodness is impossible because it can never compare to God's goodness.

B. SALVATION BY HUMAN GOODNESS IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE HUMAN GOODNESS ALWAYS FALLS SHORT OF GOD'S HOLY LAW.

The difference between this point and the previous one is that there the focus was on God's nature as holy, whereas here the focus is on God's Law as the expression of His holiness toward the human race. The young man asks what he can do to gain eternal life and so Jesus responds, "Keep the Ten Commandments." Jesus mentions the second table, which contains commandments that focus on our duty to our fellow man, because these commands are somewhat outward and observable. If a person could keep all of God's commandments for all of his life, not only outwardly but on the thought level (as Jesus explains in the Sermon on the Mount), then he would merit eternal life (Lev. 18:5).

The man claims to have done all these things from his youth up. Jesus easily could have challenged him on this answer. As J. C. Ryle exclaims, "An answer more full of darkness and self-ignorance it is impossible to conceive! He who made it could have known nothing rightly, either about himself, or God, or God's law" (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels [Baker], 3:271). But Jesus let his answer go by and pressed on to the man's chief problem: "**One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me**" (Lk 18:22).

Why did Jesus lay this requirement on this man? If it were a universal requirement for salvation, Jesus would have put the same demand on Zaccheus, but He did not (Lk 19:1-10). There are several views, but I believe that Jesus was using the Law as a tutor to convict the man of his sin (Gal. 3:24). The man claimed to keep all of the commandments, but Jesus is saying, in effect, "You don't keep the first half of the commandments, to love God with all your heart, because your money is your god. You're an idolater. And, you don't keep the second half, to love your neighbor as yourself (Lev 19:18+), because you are unwilling to give generously to the poor." If he had looked beneath the surface of his good deeds, the man would have been terrified of the requirement of God's holy Law, in that he was violating it all! Leon Morris observes, "**When a man takes seriously the requirements of the law he is on the way to coming to Christ**" (Luke[IVP/Eerdmans], p. 267).

In our attempts to share the gospel, we are often too quick to share the good news before people feel the awful weight of the bad news. When we are talking with a person who trusts in his own goodness to get him into heaven, we need to emphasize the holy Law of God which the person has violated, even though he is blind to that fact. The Bible says that to keep the whole law, but to violate it in one point, is to be guilty of it all (James 2:10). You can live a perfect life, but if you sin just once, you are disqualified from heaven, because God will not allow any unpardoned sinner into heaven. He must punish all sin in order to be just.

If you were driving too fast and got a ticket, you could tell the judge, "But I've never murdered anyone," and it would not get you off.

You could say, "I've never robbed a bank. I've always paid my taxes. I go to church." It wouldn't matter. You broke the law and the judge will impose the penalty.

Or, suppose that you went to buy a new mirror and the clerk tried to sell you one with a crack in it. He says, "It's just a small crack. The rest of the mirror is just fine." Sorry! One crack makes a broken mirror. One sin makes a sinner and law-breaker. And we all have sinned, not just once, but repeatedly all of our lives.

People who think that they're good enough to qualify for heaven need to hold their behavior, including their thoughts, up to the standard of God's holy Law. They need to feel, as Spurgeon put it, the rope around their necks, that they stand guilty and condemned before God. **One reason that we see so many superficial professions of faith in our day is that we do not use the Law as Jesus did, to convict people of how far short they have fallen from God's perfect standard.**

Thus salvation by human goodness is impossible because it can never compare with God's goodness and it always falls short of God's holy Law.

C. SALVATION BY HUMAN GOODNESS IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE HUMAN GOODNESS DECEIVES US ABOUT OUR TRUE HEART CONDITION.

This man was sincere in thinking that he had kept the commandments, but he was sincerely wrong! He was deceiving himself because he was not looking at things on the heart level as God does. You can sincerely believe that you are well, but if you have some internal disease that is killing you, your sincerity does not matter. You must deal with your true condition or you will die. Sincerity is not enough; we must believe God's diagnosis about the wickedness of the human heart.

This man thought that he had it pretty well together. He just needed to do another thing or two to nail down eternal life. But Jesus sought to show him that in his heart, he was an idolater. He worshipped his money more than God.

The Bible repeatedly warns us about the danger of money. In the parable of the sower, the thorns that choked out the word represent "worries and riches and the pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14). In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus described a man who had plenty of goods stored up, but he had neglected his soul (Lk 12:16-21). Paul warned that "those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction" (1 Tim. 6:9). Money is like a loaded gun. It can be a useful thing if you're careful with it. But, at all times it is a dangerous thing that you must treat with caution. Like guns, money can only be handled by sinners. It can lull us into thinking that all is well because we live comfortably, but we forget that eternity is a heartbeat away. If you protest that money is no problem for you, I would say that you do not see your heart as God sees it. Even those who are generous with their money may deceive themselves into thinking that because they give away so much, God will overlook their sin.

But no one can get into heaven by his own goodness. Good people must abandon trusting in their own goodness if they want to get right with God. Salvation by human goodness is impossible.

3. Good people are saved by turning from their sin and trusting in God alone to save them.

This man lacked one thing (Lk 18:22), but in lacking that one thing, he lacked everything. What was that one thing? He needed to sell everything, give the money away, and come follow Jesus. **What? Did Jesus mean that he could earn salvation by doing this one thing?** If so, this would be the first and only man in history of whom that was true. Scripture is uniformly clear that salvation is by grace through faith apart from works (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

So why did Jesus lay this heavy requirement on this man? He did it because a man cannot cling to his idols and genuinely trust in Christ for salvation at the same time. Saving faith is inseparable from repentance, which means, turning from our sins. Mark 1:15 sums up Jesus' message: "Repent and believe in the gospel." Repentance loosens our grasp on our sin; faith lays hold of God for deliverance. Repentance and saving faith always go together.

Jesus was telling this rich young ruler what He taught elsewhere, that if your hand or foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. If you don't, you will go to hell (see Matt. 5:29-30; Mark 9:43-50). In other words, sin condemns us. We must repent of it or it will drag us down to hell. **You can't cling to your sin with one hand and to the cross of Christ with the other.**

Picture a man in an upper story of a burning high-rise apartment. This has been his home and he loves it. But the building is on fire and if he wants to save his life, he must give it up. If he clings to his things, he will die in the smoke and flames. Repentance is his turning from those things to the open window. Faith is his jumping out the window into the safety net which the firemen have spread below. Both are necessary for him to be saved.

As Jesus makes plain here, no man can save himself; but, "the things impossible with men are possible with God" (Lk 18:27). This

means that we dare not trust in our repentance to save us. We dare not trust in our trust to save us. We can only trust in God to save us. Salvation is totally God's doing, not at all our doing. We must cast ourselves totally on Him, not trusting at all in ourselves. Thus, Good people are saved by abandoning trust in their own goodness, by turning from their sin and trusting in God alone to save them.

Conclusion

In 1882, C. H. Spurgeon wrote something that precisely fits our times as well (exact source unknown): (ED: HOW INTERESTING TO READ SPURGEON'S WORDS COMPARED WITH ADRIAN ROGERS' [SIMILAR WORDS ABOVE!](#))

A very great portion of modern revivalism has been more a curse than a blessing, because it has led thousands to a kind of peace before they have known their misery; restoring the prodigal to the Father's house, and never making him say, 'Father, I have sinned.' How can he be healed who is not sick, or he be satisfied with the bread of life who is not hungry? The old-fashioned sense of sin is despised.... Everything in this age is shallow.... The consequence is that men leap into religion, and then leap out again. Unhumbled they came to the church, unhumbled they remained in it, and unhumbled they go from it.

Perhaps I am speaking to some good people today. You've assumed that your good deeds will get you into heaven. But you must see that your own goodness can never save you. You must further see the awful sins of your heart as God sees them. Perhaps there is one sin that you refuse to let go. The Lord is saying, "Let it go! Sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Turn from your sin and trust in Christ alone who can save. Even though this rich young ruler went away sorrowful and unsaved, Jesus knew what He was doing as an evangelist. I pray your response will not be like that of this young man.

([Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#))

Luke 18:19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

- Lu 1:35 11:13 Job 14:4 15:14-16 25:4 1Ti 3:16 Heb 7:26 Jas 1:17
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

ONLY GOD IS GOOD

Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone (Mt 19:17, Mk 10:18) - There are differences of opinion as to the significance of Jesus' question.

Here is one thought on the meaning of Jesus' question - Is He saying He is not **good**? That's not what He says. He says that only **God** is **good**. He is directing the young ruler's attention to God Who alone is good. Jesus is not saying that He Himself is not good, although we know He is because He is God. What Jesus seems to be doing is teaching the young ruler about what true goodness is, what the standard of goodness is, and thus He emphasizes that the standard of what is really good is **God alone**. Imagine the shock of this young man who had so many "good qualities" (eagerness, humility, discernment, spiritual mindedness, moral cleanliness, worldly success). What Jesus is saying to the young man is that he was not **good**. There is none **good** but God. Paul makes a similar statement in the section of Romans where he indicts all humanity as falling short of the glory of God, declaring "there is none who does **good**, there is (absolutely) not even one." (Ro 3:12, from Ps 14:3 and Ps 53:3) Solomon is even more direct writing "there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does **good** and who never sins." (Eccl 7:20)

Some writers have twisted Jesus' words to such a degree that they say this statement by Jesus amounts to a confession of sin. Of course this is preposterous speculation for such an interpretation would counter so many other passages that describe Jesus as without sin () I will not discuss this further but will refer you to an article by the esteemed Princeton theologian **Benjamin B Warfield** - [Jesus' Alleged Confession of Sin - The Princeton Theological Review, pp 177-228 \(1914\)](#). (Note you can download the Pdf to facilitate reading this excellent article, which also functions as a good commentary on the story of the Rich Young Ruler.)

Joel Williams has a well reasoned comment on "**good**" in the present context - The rich man and Jesus have different ideas about the meaning of the word "**good**." The rich man apparently defines goodness in terms of personal piety attained through human

achievement (Lane, 365). Since he felt that he had fulfilled God's commandments from his youth (Mk 10:30, Lk 18:21, Mt 19:20), he probably also believed himself to be **good**. Now he was asking another **good** man ("**good Teacher**" - Mk 10:17, Lk 18:18) what else he should do to guarantee eternal life (Mk 10:17, Mt 19:16 "What **GOOD** thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life", Lk 18:18). Jesus' question in Mark 10:28 (Lk 18:19, Mt 19:17) is not a confession of His Own sinfulness but rather a challenge to the rich man's notion of goodness. Jesus points the man to the goodness of God. God is **good** in an unlimited and perfect way, not by achievement but by His eternal character. This perfect standard of God's righteousness complicates the rich man's quest for **eternal life**. Instead of taking the opportunity to rethink his views, the rich man simply drops the offending word and addresses Jesus as "**Teacher**" (Mk 10:20 = only in Mark's version) rather than as "**good Teacher**" (Mk 10:17, Lk 18:18). ([The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study - The Gospels](#) - comments on Gospel of Mark, page 147-148)

Leon Morris has a similar thought regarding Jesus' question **why do you call Me good** - Jesus proceeds to show the shortcomings in the young man's position. *No one is good but God alone* is not to be understood as a repudiation of the epithet *good* as applied to himself. If that was his meaning, Jesus would surely have said plainly that he was a sinner. Rather he was inviting the ruler to reflect on the meaning of his own words. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

Criswell on **no one good** - Jesus is not denying His goodness or His deity here, but is making an effort to cause the man to identify the source of His goodness, the very goodness of God. In fact, the obvious purpose of Jesus' reply is to force the ruler to the realization that Jesus is good because He is God. (Believer's Study Bible)

Ray Pritchard on **good** - Jesus understands that all true goodness comes from God. He's saying, "When you call me good, do you really know what you're saying? If I am good in the ultimate sense, it's because I am not merely a good person, it's because I am God in human flesh." And so, when Jesus says, "Why do you call me good?" he's asking the question, "Do you really know who you are talking to? And do you really know what you are saying?"

William Lane on **good** - Jesus responded by directing attention away from himself to God, who alone is the source and norm of essential goodness. The apparent repudiation of the epithet "good" only serves to radicalize the issue posed by the question of verse 17. The inquirer's idea of goodness was defined by human achievement. He undoubtedly regarded himself as "good" in the sense that he was confident that he had fulfilled the commandments from the time he first assumed their yoke as a very young man; now he hopes to discover from another "good" man what he can do to assure eternal life. Jesus' answer forces him to recognize that his only hope is an utter reliance upon God, who alone can bestow eternal life. The referral of the question to God, bowing before the Father and giving him the glory, places Jesus' response within the context of the lordship of God. In calling in question the man's use of "**good**," Jesus' intention is not to pose the question of His own sinlessness or oneness with the Father, but to set in correct perspective the honor of God. He took seriously the concept of the envoy which stands behind the formulation of Mark 9:37 (Lk 9:48+), and desires to be known only in terms of his mission and the one who sent him. (NICNT-Mark)

Norman Crawford notes that "The Lord Jesus did not deny the goodness that the young ruler had attributed to Him, and now gave him opportunity to consider the full implications of his form of address, that the One who is "good" is God. We do not conclude from this that he grasped the truth of the identity of the Lord Jesus, but the implications are clear. There is, however, another truth that is in the Lord's words. Only God is good in the absolute sense, therefore the young ruler is sinful. The greatest of all soul winners is showing a sinner how far short he has come of the standard demanded by divine holiness (Rom 3:9-23). The acknowledgment of his guilt as a sinner is the necessary requirement to receive eternal life, not as a reward for personal goodness but as a gift. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Kent Hughes - Jesus used the occasion to do some metaphysical probing so the man would reflect upon his own soul. **Why do you call me good? No one is good—except God alone** is a challenge to reflect on Jesus' ministry as it related to God as the only truly good person in existence. If the ruler could see this level of goodness in Jesus' ministry, he would realize that the kingdom of God was present. "Think, man! If I am good, and if only God is good, then who am I, and what am I doing? Think!" Having pushed the goodness question, Jesus then focused upon the insufficient goodness of the ruler. Jesus did so by calling him to keep the second half of the Ten Commandments, the commandments that have to do with our social ethics, our duty to other people. (Preaching the Word - Luke)

John Martin - Apparently the man thought Jesus had gained a measure of status with God by His good works. Jesus was implying that if He were truly good, then it would be because He is God. This, then, is another of Jesus' claims of deity. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Spurgeon explains **good** this way - It was as if Jesus said, "You come to Me asking about what good thing you can do to inherit eternal life; but what do you really know about goodness?" "The argument is clear: either Jesus was good, or He ought not to have called Him good; but as there is none good but God, Jesus Who is good must be God." ([Luke 18](#) - exposition)

Guzik - In this, Jesus did not deny His own goodness. Instead, He asked the man, "Do you understand what you are saying when you call Me good? Because no one is good but One, that is, God." ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Constable - Jesus' question accomplished two things. It set the standard for goodness, namely God (cf. Lk 18:11). It also confronted the man with the logical implication of his question (Lk 18:18), namely that Jesus was God. That the man did not believe that Jesus was God seems clear from his response to Him (Lk 18:23).

Cornerstone Bible Commentary explains Jesus question about **good** this way - This puzzling question may imply that the man should focus not on his own good deeds, but on the goodness of the one true God (perhaps an allusion to Deut 6:4). Or it may mean that since God is good, his commandments provide a detailed definition of goodness.

Good (18) (**agathos**) ([see](#) good deeds) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality, with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). **Agathos** is one whose goodness and works of goodness are transferred to others. Good and doing good is the idea. **Agathos** describes that which is beneficial in addition to being good. **Agathos** is that which is good in its character, beneficial in its effects and/or useful in its action. **Agathos** is used in the New Testament primarily of spiritual and moral excellence. Paul uses agathos to describe the Gospel as the "glad tidings of **good** things" (Ro 10:15⁺). The writer of Hebrews uses it in the same way, of "the **good** things to come" of which "Christ appeared as a high priest" (Heb 9:11⁺) and of which the law was "only a shadow" (Heb 10:1⁺).

Adrian Rogers - Jesus didn't come to make you a nicer person. He came to radically, dramatically, and eternally transform you!....Now Jesus is teaching the rich young ruler, in this one sentence, two things. 1. He Himself Is Not Good - Number one: Jesus is teaching this man that he himself is not good. Jesus is teaching this young man that he himself—the young man—is not good. This young man thought he was a quite a good boy. And Jesus said, "Look, there is none good but God." 2. Jesus Himself Is God The second thing Jesus was teaching this young man is that Jesus Himself is God. Now those of you who just want to tip the hat to Jesus and not bow the knee to Jesus—let me tell you this about Jesus: Jesus is God. And if Jesus is not God, Jesus is not good. How do I know? Jesus Christ Himself said so. Jesus said, "There is none good but One—that's God" (Mark 10:18). Put it down big, plain, and straight. Don't just flatter Jesus. Don't just tip the hat to Jesus and say, "Jesus is a nice fellow." You don't tip the hat; you bow the knee. Because, Jesus said, "There is none good but One, and that is God" (Mark 10:18). And what Jesus was saying in this one sentence: "I am God, and you're a sinner. I am God, and you are a sinner. There is none good but One, and that is God." And by the way, you might want to put in your margin, Romans 3:10-12....You know, there are people who join churches today like they are doing God a wild favor. They come down the aisle and join churches. They are religious, but they have never seen the holiness of God, and their own sinfulness, and the wrath of God against sin....And so what is Jesus teaching this young man? Jesus is teaching this young man that proud men at their best are really sinners at their worst. You know, there are people writing books today with titles like this: Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People? Come up close. I want to tell you something: **There are no good people**. You say, "Who do you think you are?" Just a preacher preaching what Jesus said—"There's none good but One, and that's God" (Mark 10:18)....The worst sin, the sin of all sins, the worst form of badness—is human goodness, when human goodness becomes a substitute for the new birth. The worst form of badness is human goodness. Jesus said that prostitutes and crooked tax collectors were going to Heaven before the Pharisees, because they had their self-righteousness as a substitute for God's mercy....the worst form of badness is human goodness, when human goodness becomes the substitute for the new birth. (From his sermon Three Strikes and You're Out)

Luke 18:20 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'"

- **You know the commandments:** Lu 10:26-28 Isa 8:20 Mt 19:17-19 Mk 10:18,19 Ro 3:20 7:7-11
- **DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,:** Ex 20:12-17 De 5:16-21 Ro 13:9 Ga 3:10-13 Eph 6:2 Col 3:20 Jas 2:8-11
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMANDMENTS

You know the commandments - He absolutely knew the commandments. And he thought he had kept them. So why is Jesus bringing up the commandments? Recall what the young man had just asked in Lk 18:18⁺ - "**Good Teacher, what shall I DO to**

inherit eternal life?" Luke's version does not have Jesus' response "if you wish to enter into life, **keep the commandments.**" (Mt 19:17). In Matthew's account, the young man still hopeful, still intent on doing something to procure eternal life responds with a question "Which ones?" (Mt 19:18). At this point it would seem Jesus replies "You know" them and He lists the commands (commands 5-9) in the second table of the 10 Commandments. The young man is "painting himself into a corner," for after he answers "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" (Mt 19:20), Jesus "lowered the boom" on him in Luke 18:22. He was still lacking enough "doing" to inherit eternal life and Jesus said he must sell all of his possessions (Lk 18:22). We will discuss this more fully below.

Know (1492)([eido, oida](#) - eido is used only in the [perfect tense](#) = oida) means in general to know by perception. This verb speaks of the fact that any good Jewish boy would have had the Commandments drilled into the heart and mind. So without a shadow of doubt the young man would know them. But knowing and keeping are two different things.

Matthew's version has a slight twist regarding **the commandments**, Jesus declaring to the young ruler "if you wish to enter into life, **keep** (heed, observe = [tereo](#) in aorist imperative) **the commandments.**" (Mt 19:17) As an aside, it is notable that Jesus did not say "eternal" here but only "life," substantiating that "life" refers more to a quality than a quantity of life. Of course there are differences in the way believers experience this "life" for Jesus Himself said "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly ([perissos](#) = that which goes far beyond what is necessary)." (Jn 10:10). Now back to the passage, the most startling aspect of Mt 19:17 is Jesus' command to **keep the commandments**. On the surface what does this sound like? It sounds like Jesus is teaching salvation by works. You could just imagine some of the Pharisees in the crowd shouting "Amen, brother. Preach it!" Martin Luther's eyes must have rolled back in his head on reading Matthew 19:17! But is Jesus really teaching salvation by works? This is what Jews were taught all their life - that by keeping or obeying the commandments they could attain eternal life. In fact, Leviticus 18:5+ taught 'So you shall **keep** My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he **DOES** them; I am the LORD." And so Jesus' command in Matthew to **keep the commandments** if you wish to gain eternal life (I am paraphrasing) is saying the same thing as Leviticus 18:5. Of course the problem is that no man could keep them perfectly. James 2:10 makes it clear that "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." Jesus' point in giving this impossible to keep commandment is to shock the young man (and all of us) into realizing there is NO WAY we can possibly keep the Law perfectly!

As Paul would teach later, the Law while not saving, did play a vital part in one's salvation because it served as 'bur tutor to lead us to Christ so that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24+).

And again Paul reiterates this truth writing, summarizing the purpose of the Law "By the works of the Law no (Gk = "ou" = absolutely no) flesh will be justified in His sight; for ([term of explanation](#)) through the Law comes the knowledge of sin" (Ro 3:20+) ([See another discussion](#) of the function of the law below in Romans 7:7-11+).

This young man has missed (or misunderstood or is self-deceived concerning) the true purpose of God's Law (See [Related Resources](#) below) which was given to teach him that he is a rank sinner (like all of us)! **Leon Morris** was absolutely spot on when he said that "When anyone takes seriously the requirements of the law, he is on the way to coming to Christ." You may be asking "When is my child ready to be saved?" The answer is when they come to the full understanding that they are "little sinners" for then they come to see their need for a Great Savior! The rich young ruler had yet to come to the understanding that before a Holy God, he was a great sinner and in a wretched state.

This is Paul's pattern in his explanation of the Gospel in Romans - Romans 1:18-3:20 = the **NEED** for salvation; Romans 3:21-5:21 = the **WAY** of salvation; Romans 6:1-8:39 = the **LIFE** of salvation; Romans 9:1-11:36 = the **SCOPE** of salvation; Romans 12:1-16:27 = the Spirit enabled **SERVICE** of salvation (For much more detail see this chart which clearly shows the Pauline pattern of presenting the Gospel).

Note that in Matthew 19:19b Jesus sums up commandments 5-10 by quoting the "Second Great Commandment" declaring "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**" (Quoted from Leviticus 19:8+ - most quoted OT verse in the NT = Mt. 22:39; Lk 10:27b, Ro 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8). Have you truly loved your neighbor as much as you love yourself?" **The commandments** - Jesus proceeds to quote from Exodus 20:12-16 (cf Dt 5:16-20), enumerating five of the "Ten Commandments," (**#5-9**), but Luke records this list out of order when compared to Exodus 20, whereas the parallel lists in Matthew 19:18-19 and Mark 10:19 record the commandments in the same order as in Exodus 20. Note that all 5 of these commandments deal very directly with one's relationships, one's treatment of his fellow man, all external behaviors that could generally be assessed as to whether they had been broken.

Notice that Jesus leaves out Commandment #10 - "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (Exodus 20:17). Why? Well, one reason might be that this commandment does not deal with external, observable actions. One could go through a "checklist" of Commandments 5-9 and determine whether one has "kept" them or not (of course with the caveat of Jesus' teaching

on one's internal, heart attitudes, not just one's external behavior).

DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY - Commandment #7 (Exodus 20:14).

DO NOT MURDER - Commandment #6 (Exodus 20:13).

DO NOT STEAL - - Commandment #8 (Exodus 20:12).

DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS - Commandment #9 (Exodus 20:16).

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER - Commandment #5 (Exodus 20:12).

Adrian Rogers - Jesus is not—underscore that—is not teaching salvation by commandment keeping. He is teaching just the opposite, but you have to pay attention to see what Jesus is teaching. You see, the Bible teaches that you're not saved by keeping the commandments. But yet, this young man said, "How do I have eternal life?" And Jesus begins to refer him to the commandments. Now what Jesus is teaching this young man is he is not keeping the commandments like he may think that he is keeping the commandments. Now commandment keeping has never saved anybody. Put in your margin, Galatians 2, verse 16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16+). The law—the Ten Commandments—cannot save anybody. While the Ten Commandments do not save you, they are an essential element in evangelism and salvation. (From "Three Strikes and You're Out")

Related Resources:

- Purpose of the Law
- [What was the purpose of the Levitical Law?](#)
- [What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?](#)
- [The Purpose of the Law](#) - John MacArthur
- [Four Functions of the Law, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Four Functions of the Law, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Luke 18:21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

- Lu 18:11,12 15:7,29 Mt 19:20,21 Mk 10:20,21 Ro 10:2,3 Php 3:6
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE YOUNG RULER'S IMPULSIVE, CONFIDENT REPLY

And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth" - The rich young ruler is being sincere. As regards the external keeping of Commandments 5-9 he would honestly say that he had kept them since his youth. Although he did not go so far as to say he was sinless, his statement still reminds me of John's teaching that "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8+)

So **"yes and no"** he had kept the commandments - **Yes** in the sense that externally he may have kept them, but internally in his heart, **No**, he had not kept them. He was woefully ignorant of the deeper spiritual meaning of the commandments. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus took the "letter of the Law" and applied it to one's heart. For example, Jesus equated anger with murder (Mt 5:21-22+) and surely the young man had been angry with someone since his youth. And Jesus equated looking at a woman with lust as an act of adultery (Mt 5:27-30+), and for a young man with hormones raging it would be a stretch for him to say he had never looked at a woman with lust! The rich young ruler was like Paul who thought he was blameless regarding the righteousness which is in the Law (cf Php 3:6).

The rich young ruler clearly had some sense of self-righteousness, but knew that he was still missing something. He needed to see himself as not a partially righteous person but as an entirely sinful soul! Jesus had alluded to this need in Luke 5 declaring "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Lk 5:32+)

*Before our heart can be prepared to see its need of Jesus' perfect righteousness,
we need to first see our perfect sinfulness.*

I have kept (5442)([phulasso](#)) means to watch or guard much like a military guard or sentry keeps watch over his post (cp Acts 23:35, 28:16) which gives us a good sense of this young man's mindset regarding the commandments - like a [sentry](#) at his post he kept watch to make sure he did not let one of the commandments escape his attention! The NT uses phulasso of guarding truth (eg, 1Ti 5:21, 6:20, 2Ti 1:14+). The NET Note writes that "The implication of this verb (phulasso) is that the man has obeyed the commandments without fail throughout his life, so the adverb "wholeheartedly" has been added to the translation to bring out this nuance - cf Lk 18:21NET).

MacArthur writes that this declaration by the rich young ruler evidenced "the self-deception of a hypocrite. The Lord's reminder pressed home the point that if salvation comes through keeping the law, and this man had kept the law as he professed, why did he know he had not obtained eternal life? Why was he not satisfied? The truth is that his self-deception was shallow and his heart full of fear over his lack of true spiritual life and love for God. (See [Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set](#))

William Lane has the following quote (from H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck) that relates to the young man's reply - "That man possesses the ability to fulfill the commandments of God perfectly was so firmly believed by the rabbis that they spoke in all seriousness of people who had kept the whole Law from A to Z." It is necessary only to refer to Paul's affirmation in Phil. 3:6+, "as to righteousness under the Law, blameless." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 366](#))

Guzik on **all these things I have kept** - It is fair to ask if this man really had kept these commandments. It is likely that he actually did keep them in a way that made him righteous in the eyes of men, in the sense that Paul could say concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless in Philippians 3:6. But he certainly did not keep them in the full and perfect sense in which Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Pate on **from my youth** - The time span involved in the ruler's mind may have begun with his [bar mitzvah](#) ('son of the Law'), the time when a youth became an adult at the age of thirteen, and therefore obligated to fulfill the Mosaic Law.

Walter Kaiser on **from my youth** - The man answered that he had kept all these from early days—presumably ever since the age of thirteen, when he became [bar mitzvah](#), personally responsible to keep the commandments.

William Lane on **from my youth** - "From a youth" has reference to a boy's twelfth year when he assumed the yoke of the commandments and was held responsible for their performance (cf. M. Berachoth II. 2; Lk. 2:42+). From that time forth he had observed "all these." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 366](#))

Leon Morris adds "The rabbis held that the law could be kept in its entirety, and for example R. Eliezer could ask, 'Akiba, have I neglected anything of the whole Torah?' (*Sanhedrin* 101a). The young man's claim was thus not outlandish, even if superficial. It showed that he had not thought deeply enough about what keeping the commandments meant. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries –[The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

In Mt 19:20 he adds "**what am I still lacking?**" His question tells us that he knew something was missing. He knew that despite his good behavior, his heart was restless. Deep down, he was asking "I've kept the rules — but why do I still feel empty? Is there more to eternal life than obedience?"

Constable comments that "He wanted Jesus to tell him what that act was. He was a performance oriented person."

Criswell - The law is truly a way of salvation only if it can be kept. The difficulty is that man cannot keep the law. Jesus probably quotes these commandments because they are the easiest to measure. Although the young man has a sense of security in his conduct, he still has a void in his life. (Believer's Study Bible)

Luke 18:22 When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; **sell** all that you possess and **distribute** it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

- **One thing you still lack:** Lu 10:42 Ps 27:4 Php 3:13 2Pe 3:8
- **sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor;** Lu 12:33 16:9 Mt 6:19,20 Ac 2:44,45 4:34-37 1Ti 6:18,19
- **and come, follow Me:** Lu 9:23,57-62 Mt 19:21,27,28
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

**JESUS' TEST -
THE KINGDOM OR YOUR CASH?
THE ANSWER - ABANDON EVERYTHING!**

When Jesus heard this, He said to him (Mt 19:21, Mk 10:21) - Here we see the other two Gospels have some significant additions when compared to Luke's version. Mark's version (Mk 10:21) adds the unforgettable phrase "**Looking** ([emblepo](#) = fixing His gaze upon him, fixing His eyes intently upon him, looking intently at him - imagine those eyes gazing into yours!) **at him, Jesus felt a love** ([agapao](#)) **for him and said to him....**" (only place in Mark where he directly states Jesus loved someone, although of course love naturally flowed from Jesus at all times). **Looking** ([emblepo](#)) means to know something or someone by inspection. Jesus *read* this young man's heart. He saw the turmoil that His next words would bring. His own great heart of love went out to him. So while the commands to **sell** and **distribute** are radical, they are delivered with a "radical love" of Jesus for this young man and his eternal destiny!

As **John Trapp** said "Think not, therefore, as many do, that there is no other hell but poverty, no better heaven than abundance."

Matthew's version (Mt 19:21) adds the phrase "**Jesus said to him 'If you wish to be complete** (or perfect)..." where **complete** is *teleios* which means having attained the end or the goal. **Teleios** is translated **perfect** in Mt 5:48+ where Jesus says "you are to be **perfect**, as your heavenly Father is **perfect**."

One thing you still lack (Mk 10:21) - You can just picture the rich young ruler's countenance fall at these words! He had it all except one thing! What did he still lack? **Eternal life**, the very thing that had prompted his running to and kneeling at the feet of Jesus! Clearly this young ruler had underestimated and/or failed to understand God's goodness and that it was perfect, setting a standard that no human being could possibly achieve by human effort! And he failed to understand the essence of the commandments, which were never meant to save him, but were given to show him his great need for forgiveness.

Ray Pritchard on **one thing** - Jesus drops the bombshell: "You still lack one thing" (Luke 18:22). That must have floored him. It's like saying to a boxer, "You're the greatest 14-round boxer in the world." Unfortunately, boxing matches go 15 rounds. And you keep getting knocked out in the 15th round." It's like saying to an artist, "You're real good at what you do except you're not real good with the color blue. In fact, your blue stinks." ([The Miserable Millionaire](#))

One thing - This little phrase is used in several other interesting contexts - Mt 21:24, Lu 10:42+, John 9:25, Ps 27:4, Php 3:13+. I love Rich Mullins' convicting and inspiring vocal "[My One Thing](#)."

Guzik quips "One might say that this man had climbed to the top of the ladder of success, only to find his ladder leaned against the wrong building." ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

William Lane writes that "The **one thing** he lacks is the self-sacrificing devotion which characterizes every true follower of Jesus. For this reason Jesus invites him to follow him now and to experience the demands of life and the Kingdom with the Twelve. Keeping the individual commandments is no substitute for the readiness for self-surrender to the absolute claim of God imposed through the call of the gospel. Jesus' summons in this context means that true obedience to the Law is rendered ultimately in discipleship. This man will achieve the perfect observance of the Law when he surrenders himself and follows Jesus. Self-surrender implies a renunciation of his own achievement and the reception of messianic forgiveness through which a man is released to stand under the Law and to offer the obedience of love." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 367](#))

Lack ([3007](#)) ([leipo](#)) means to fall short, be destitute or be in need. It pictures one not possessing something which is necessary. It means to be deficient in something that ought to be present for whatever reason. The parallel saying in Mark 10:21 uses a different verb for "one thing you lack ([hustereo](#) = to fail in something, come short of, miss, not to reach)."

William Barclay - His real god was comfort, and what he really worshiped were his own possessions and his wealth. That is why Jesus told him to give it all away.

Recall that Jesus summed up the whole of the 10 commandments in simple, easy remember passages the essence of which teach "Love God. Love your neighbor." In Matthew we read...

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is **the great and foremost commandment**. "The **second** is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (Mt 22:36-39, cf Mk 12:28-31, Lk 10:27+)

Notice that in calling the young ruler to **sell** and **distribute** he was in effect challenging his obedience to the **two great**

commandments. In other words, the young man was not willing to **sell** all he possessed. So he loved his possessions more than he loved God, which is the first great commandment (a summary of the first 4 commandments = Godward). Secondly, he was not willing to **distribute** his possessions to the poor, and so he was not willing to demonstrate love to his neighbor, thus breaking the second great commandment (Commandments 6-10 = Manward). Do you see it? Notice that in reality the spirit of this young man had broken **ALL** Ten Commandments by refusing to do these two things. Don't misunderstand, as explained elsewhere, Jesus is not teaching one can "buy" their way to heaven. Jesus is simply using commandment number 10 (Do not covet) to expose the young man's heart and show him that in fact he was guilty of breaking all 10 Commandments, despite his claim that he had kept #'s 5-9 since his youth. He was deceived and Jesus took the mirror of the Word of God (in this case the Law) and held it up to the young man's face so he could see what kind of person he really was inside! That's what the Law does beloved! As James wrote...

If anyone is a **hearer** of the word and not a **doer**, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a **MIRROR**; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten **what kind of person he was**. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it (THIS IS ONLY POSSIBLE FOR ONE WHO HAS THE INDWELLING, ENABLING SPIRIT), not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does (HIS "DOING" FLOWS OUT OF HIS "BEING," SPECIFICALLY HIS BEING BORN AGAIN BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS). (Read about the "mirror" effect of the Word in James 1:23-25+)

Sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor - Jesus is NOT giving a general prescription to be applied to all people. This command was appropriate for this young man. It was like a divine "laser" pointed directly at the young man's heart, a heart in which Jesus could discern an idol that was keeping him from the eternal life he so desired. It is also notable that if he sold everything and gave the proceeds to the poor, he himself would be poor and helpless, much like a little child, much more in the position Jesus had just taught in Luke 18:15-17!

Sell...distribute - Both are commands in the aorist imperative calling for the young man "**Do** this now!" (Recall he had been asking for what he could "**DO**?") Don't go home and think about it (or "pray" about it!). Just Do It. So Jesus finally tells him what he can **DO** to inherit eternal life. But don't be confused. Jesus is not saying the **DOING** would earn the young man eternal life, but his willingness to **DO** would be a reflection of a miraculously, supernaturally changed heart, the new heart every believer receives by grace through faith in Christ. And after Pentecost there was also the promise of a new power accompanying the new heart. In Ezekiel 36:26-27+ Yahweh promised Israel "Moreover, I will give you a **new heart** (THIS WAS THE RICH YOUNG RULER'S GREAT NEED) and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes (GOD'S PROVISION OF DESIRE AND POWER), and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DAILY YIELD TO THE SPIRIT AND OBEY IN HIS POWER)." As an aside see the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)" (100/100).

NET Note comments on **sell all you possess...** that "The call for sacrifice comes with a promise of eternal reward: *..you will have treasure in heaven*. Jesus' call is a test to see how responsive the man is to God's direction through him. Will he walk the path God's agent calls him to walk? For a rich person who got it right, see Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10+."

Distribute (1239) (**diadidomi** from **dia** = transition, dispersion + **didomi** = to give) literally is to deliver through and means to give out, assign, distribute, dispense, allot, give out especially hand to hand in succession, "apportion among various parties" (BDAG).

MacArthur - Jesus was not setting forth terms for salvation, but rather exposing the young man's true heart. His refusal to obey here revealed two things: 1) he was not blameless as far as the law was concerned, because he was guilty of loving himself and his possessions more than his neighbors (cf. Mt 19:19); and 2) he lacked true faith, which involves a willingness to surrender all at Christ's bidding (Mt 16:24). Jesus was not teaching salvation by philanthropy; but He was demanding that this young man give Him first place. The young man failed the test. (The MacArthur Study Bible)

Oswald Chambers on **sell all you possess** - There is a **general principle** here and a **particular reference**. We are always in danger of taking the particular reference for the general principle and evading the general principle. The **particular reference** here is to selling material goods. The rich young ruler had deliberately to be destitute, deliberately to distribute, deliberately to discern where his treasure was, and devote himself to Jesus Christ. The **principle** underlying it is that I must detach myself from everything I possess. Many of us suppress our sense of property, we don't starve it, we suppress it. Undress yourself morally before God of everything that might be a possession until you are a mere conscious human being, and then give God that. That is where the battle is fought—in the domain of the will before God, it is not fought in external things at all. Is He sovereign Lord or is He not? Am I more devoted to my notion of what Jesus Christ wants than to Himself? If so, I am likely to hear one of His hard sayings that will produce sorrow in me. What Jesus says is hard, it is only easy when it comes to those who really are His disciples. **Beware of allowing anything to soften a hard word of Jesus.** (God's Workmanship)

Guzik has an interesting comment - We may make two mistakes here. The one is to believe this applies to everyone, when Jesus never made this a general command to all who would follow Him, but especially to this one rich man whose riches were clearly an obstacle to his discipleship. Instead, many rich people can do more good in the world by continuing to make money and using those resources for the glory of God and the good of others. The second mistake is to believe this applies to no one, when there are clearly those today for whom the best thing they could do for themselves spiritually is to radically forsake the materialism that is ruining them. Francis of Assisi was a notable one who heard Jesus speak these words to him, and gave away all he had to follow Jesus. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Lane quotes some Jewish sources that help understand how selling and giving everything went against the Jewish thinking of the day - M. Arakhin VIII. 4; TB Kethubim 50a limits the amount to be distributed in almsgiving to one-fifth of one's property. Cf. TB Baba Bathra 116a: "poverty is worse than all the plagues of Egypt." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 367](#))

Constable - Having passed the first test to his satisfaction, Jesus now presented him with the higher hurdle of not coveting, the tenth commandment (cf. Rom. 7:7–8). Jesus' command exposed the man's greed, which is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Thus this man had really violated the first and the tenth commandments. If he would have been willing to give away his possessions, he would have shown that he was repudiating his greed. By following Jesus, he would have shown that he was repudiating his own self-righteousness. These would have been the appropriate fruits of his repentance.

Poor ([4434](#))(**ptochos** from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe, cower down or hide oneself for fear) is an adjective which describes one who crouches and cowers and is used as a noun to mean **beggar**. These poor were unable to meet their basic needs and so were forced to depend on others or on society. The irony of this story is that if the rich young ruler had obeyed Jesus, he would have become on earth a ptochos, albeit he would be rich with "treasure in heaven."

TREASURES ON EARTH OR TREASURE IN HEAVEN

You shall have treasure in heaven - So while it looks like Jesus is talking about losing everything, what He is really talking about is finding everything, everything that really counts. He is talking about having **treasure in Heaven**. He is talking about possessing this **treasure** FOREVER! Luke used this same phrase earlier recording Jesus' promise

Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing **treasure in heaven**, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Lk 12:33-34+)

And again Jesus spoke on acquiring **treasures in heaven** in His Sermon on the Mount...

Do not store up (present imperative with negative = stop doing this!) for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But store up (present imperative = Not a suggestion but a command to make this your life's goal, daily pursuing treasuring treasure in Heaven, a goal only possible as you rely on and are enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit - Php 2:13NLT+) for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your **treasure** is, there your heart will be also. (Mt 6:19-21+)

THOUGHT - Jesus' negative and positive commandments beg a searching question that only you can answer - Where is your treasure? Where is your heart? Here or there! Corollary - Show me your treasure and I will tell you who you truly worship!

Lane on treasure in heaven - The assurance of "**treasure in heaven**" reflects an idiom that was current in Judaism {S-BK I (1922), pp. 429–431; F. Hauck, TWNT III (Eng. Tr. 1965), pp. 136–138. When the Jewish proselyte, King Monobazus of Adiabene, was chided for bestowing so much of his wealth upon the poor and afflicted, he replied, "I need to accumulate an imperishable treasure for the age to come" (Tos. Peah IV. 18).}, which allowed Jesus to enter the thought-world of his contemporaries. Here, however, it is stripped of its customary associations of merit (as if selling one's property and giving the money received to the poor will earn a significant reward), since the promised treasure signifies the gift of eternal life or salvation at the revelation of the Kingdom of God. (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 367](#))

Come, follow Me - Two staccato like commands that should have pierced the young man's heart, but did not as his subsequent response demonstrates. The command to **follow Me** echoes repeatedly throughout the Gospels (Matt. 4:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:21; Mk. 1:17; Mk. 2:14; Mk. 8:34; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 9:23; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 18:22; Jn. 1:43; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 12:26; Jn. 13:36; Jn. 21:19; Jn. 21:22)

Follow ([190](#))(**akoloutho** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means follow

closely (used of soldiers, servants, pupils), to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I walking the road with Jesus? Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally the picture is to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple.

Follow is a command in the present imperative which calls for following the footsteps of Jesus to be our lifestyle, the habit of our life. How are you doing dear follower of Christ? Some days, off on other days?

Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akoloutheo**. **Akoloutheo** is a technical term in Hebrew and Greek for the reactions and relationships of a disciple to his teacher. The essence of Christianity in fact lies in the words "to follow Jesus." When we walk with Him, He promised we would never walk in darkness! (Jn 8:12). He is our Lamp wherever we walk, always walking with us, His Spirit within us enabling us to "Walk by the Spirit." (Gal 5:16) Paul expressed walking after Jesus as being His imitator (1 Cor 11:1) When He say's go, I go. When He says stop, I stop. His sheep know His voice and follow Him (Jn 10:27) Sadly , some declined to follow (Mt 19:21-23).

Akoloutheo in Luke's writings - Lk. 5:11; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 5:28; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:23; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 9:57; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 9:61; Lk. 18:22; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 22:10; Lk. 22:39; Lk. 22:54; Lk. 23:27; Acts 12:8; Acts 12:9; Acts 13:43; Acts 21:36

William Lane has an interesting comment - Jesus separated persons from their normal historical existence (cf. Mk 1:16–20; Mk 2:14; Mk 3:13f. - **Ed:** see [NT uses of "Follow Me"](#) above) in order to introduce them to a new quality of existence based upon fellowship with himself. This means that the command to follow Jesus is an invitation to lay hold of authentic life offered as a gift in his own person. Jesus' demand is radical in character. He claims the man utterly and completely, and orders the removal of every other support which could interfere with an unconditional obedience. The terms defined by Jesus clarify what following signifies (cf. Ch. 10:28), and indicate that Jesus himself is the one answer to the man's quest for life. (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 368](#))

Kent Hughes - Jesus always demands that those who come to him put away their gods, whether they be possessions, position, power, a person, or a passion! (See [Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior](#))

Leon Morris - There is an implied call to faith, for the man could not do what Jesus asked without trusting him wholeheartedly. The call to give everything away was more than simply a dramatic challenge: it showed that the man had not understood the commandments he professed to have kept. The first of them enjoins the worship of one God. But when he was faced with the choice he found that he could not serve God if it meant parting with his money. It was not really God that had first place in his heart. ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

W A Criswell on **sell all that you possess** - Jesus does not teach that salvation is ever achieved by divesting oneself of all possessions, even for charitable purposes. However, this youthful inquirer had one concern that was far greater than his desire to have life eternal. His possessions occupied the position of primary devotion in his life. (**ED:** HE HAD AN "IDOL")Until he could persuade himself to be willing to seek God regardless of the cost (cf. Mt 6:33), he could never discover eternal life. Therefore, Jesus suggested the selling of his possessions.

Adrian Rogers says that "Whatever a man trusts is his god. Say amen. Whatever a man trusts is his god. **Anything you love more, serve more, trust more, fear more than Almighty God is an idol.** Do you see that? This man had an idol. This man had a false god. **No man can serve two masters**, but he must serve one. And what this man needed to do in order to have eternal life was to repent. Repent of what? Idolatry. First Thessalonians speaks of "how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Now this turning to God from idols, whatever the idol is in your heart and in your life—and, it may not be money—but, I'm telling you, one God is enough for everybody....Now this turning is called **repentance** ([metanoia](#)). **And here is where many people miss salvation.** They hear a preacher preach, and they want to go to Heaven, so they just think that they can hold on to their gods and just add Jesus in as one more god. But you must repent. (cf Jesus' first words when He began to preach - Mt 4:17, Mark 1:15 is about as plain as it could be stated = "The kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** and **believe** in the Gospel.", The doctrine of repentance has "fallen on hard times" in American evangelicalism but see Jesus' emphasis in Lk 5:32+, Lk 13:3,5+, Lk 15:7, 10+, Lk 24:47+) You cannot hold your god of greed with one hand and your God of grace with the other hand. You have to turn from idols to serve the living God. And there is the problem in so many churches: that people have joined churches, and they have never really repented of their sin....Now this rich young ruler would have been happy to accept the message that is preached in the average church today—the feel-good religion. And give him a little religiosity; baptize him; take him into the church. Now Jesus is not teaching works righteousness. But He is teaching that no man can serve two masters, but he must serve one. Jesus is saying, "You come and follow Me."

Guzik writes that "The principle remains: God may challenge and require an individual to give something up for the sake of His kingdom that He still allows to someone else. There are many who perish because they will not forsake what God tells them to."

([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

In the Sermon on the Mount and in Luke's Gospel, Jesus speaks to this young man's basic problem. He thinks he can serve God and gold! Jesus exposes this lie from the pit of Hell!...

No one (ABSOLUTE NEGATION! ABSOLUTELY NO ONE) can serve ([douleuo](#)) two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve ([douleuo](#)) God and wealth. (Mt 6:24+)

No servant can serve ([douleuo](#)) two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve ([douleuo](#)) God and wealth. (Lk 16:13+)

Comment: Jesus says one cannot have divided loyalties. You are either a bond servant of God or a bond servant of money! No middle ground allowed! Bob Dylan's song said it well (Play) "[You Gotta Serve Somebody!](#)"

Luke's story of the rich young ruler is a good illustration of an earlier passage

"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (Luke 14:33-)

William Lane (comments of parallel passage in Mark - NICNT Series) writes that "The call to self-denial in order to follow Jesus, sounded earlier in Mark 8:34-38 (cf Lk 9:23-25) and Mark 9:33-37, is repeated in Mark 10:21. The demand imposed upon the man who wishes to enter the Kingdom (cf. Mark 9:42-50) is heightened, and the utter impossibility of attaining the Kingdom through human achievement is underscored in Mk 10:27. The incident of the wealthy man who sought out Jesus in order to learn the requirements for securing eternal life provides the setting for a startling proclamation of the demands and the nature of the Kingdom.

Related Resources:

- In Depth Verse by Verse Commentary on James 5:1-6 The Peril of Riches
- [Why is the love of money the root of all kinds of evil?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about greed?](#)
- [What is mammon?](#)
- [How should a Christian view materialism?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about being poor?](#)

I like **John Phillips'** paraphrase of Jesus' reply to the rich young ruler - In effect, Jesus said to him, "You lack reality, young man. I quoted to you the seventh, sixth, eighth, ninth, and fifth commandments. These commandments have to do essentially with your behavior toward your fellowmen, with your professed safeguarding of the well-being of others. You want to do something to inherit eternal life. This is what you have to do: love poor people as God loves them, as I love them. You say that you have always kept these commandments. Prove it. Invest everything you have in the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. **"Oh, and there is one thing more. I am on the way to a place called Calvary, there to die on a cross. I invite you to come too** 'Take up the cross, and follow me.'" It was very strong medicine indeed. It was more than the young man had bargained for. It is more than all of those who are committed to doing something bargain for. He came running; he went away broken. Instead of owning Jesus as Lord and investing his all in eternal treasure and eternal life, he turned his back on Jesus and went away. What happened to him? Did he eventually become the **rich man** of Luke 12:15-21+ and finally the rich man of Luke 16:19-31+? The possibility certainly exists. (Exploring the Gospel of Luke)

James Earley - Jesus said, "**Follow Me.**" Jesus did not say, "Follow a set of rules" or "Follow a series of rituals." He said, "Follow Me." Discipleship is an intensely personal pursuit. Make no mistake about it. Being a disciple of Jesus is more than adding a new set of activities to your already busy life. Being a disciple of Jesus is first and foremost a response to His call to pursue Him passionately. The call "**Follow Me**" is the essence, heartbeat, challenge, and adventure of discipleship. It is a formal challenge to live with, learn from, and study under Rabbi Jesus. It is a call to be close to Him, obey His teachings, take the same path He takes, and walk the same road He walked. It involves daily growth and development **at the expense of personal comfort. It demands absolute abandonment** (Ed: see Oswald Chambers' comments below) **of all else in order to pursue Jesus fully.** This chapter (In his book [Disciple Making Is...](#)) will go deeper into stage two of the discipleship process (development), exploring what it means to follow Jesus. The common command in Jesus' initial encounter with His disciples was "**Follow Me..**" In chapter 6, we discussed how Jesus opened His relationship with His future disciples with the challenge "Follow Me" (John 1:43). In chapter 7, when Jesus formally invited Simon, Andrew, James, and John into a rabbi/disciple relationship, He did so with the words "Follow Me, ... and I will make you fish for people!" (Mt 4:19). Jesus issued the same call again, tying it with the proclamation that the Father was leading Him to the cross. He said, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke

9:23+)...The point is to be certain that you follow Jesus, no matter the cost. I agree with Oswald Chambers, who said, **Be reckless for Jesus!"** ([Disciple Making Is...](#))

Oswald Chambers - Are you discouraged in devotion?

Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast ... and come, follow Me. Luke 18:22.

"And when he heard this ..." Have you ever heard the Master say a hard word? If you have not, I question whether you have heard Him say anything. Jesus Christ says a great deal that we listen to, but do not hear; when we do hear, His words are amazingly hard.

Jesus did not seem in the least solicitous that this man should do what He told him, He made no attempt to keep him with Him. He simply said—"Sell all you have, and come, follow Me." Our Lord never pleaded, He never cajoled, He never entrapped; He simply spoke the sternest words mortal ears ever listened to, and then left it alone.

Have I ever heard Jesus say a hard word? Has He said something personally to me to which I have deliberately listened? Not something I can expound or say this and that about, but something I have heard Him say to me? This man did understand what Jesus said, he heard it and he sized up what it meant, and it broke his heart. He did not go away defiant; he went away sorrowful, thoroughly discouraged. He had come to Jesus full of the fire of earnest desire, and the word of Jesus simply froze him; instead of producing an enthusiastic devotion, it produced a heart-breaking discouragement. And Jesus did not go after him, He let him go. Our Lord knows perfectly that when once His word is heard, it will bear fruit sooner or later. The terrible thing is that some of us prevent it bearing fruit in actual life. I wonder what we will say when we do make up our minds to be devoted to Him on that particular point? One thing is certain, He will never cast anything up at us.

Oswald Chambers - A number of his sayings related to abandoning one's self to Jesus.

ALL: ABANDONED TO GOD:

The "Go" Of Unconditional Identification

"One thing thou lackest ... come, take up the cross and follow Me."

Mk 10:21. The rich young ruler had the master passion to be perfect. When he saw Jesus Christ, he wanted to be perfect like Him. Our Lord never puts personal holiness to the fore when He calls a disciple; He puts ABSOLUTE ANNIHILATION of my right to myself and IDENTIFICATION with Himself—a relationship with Himself in which there is no other relationship.

Lu 14:26 = UNCONDITIONAL IDENTIFICATION with Jesus Christ. Very few of us know the absolute "go" of ABANDONMENT to Jesus.

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him." The look of Jesus will mean a heart broken forever from allegiance to any other person or thing. Has Jesus ever looked at you? The look of Jesus transforms and transfixes. Where you are "soft" with God is where the Lord has looked at you. If you are hard and vindictive, insistent on your own way, certain that the other person is more likely to be in wrong than you are, it is an indication that there whole tracts of your nature that have never been transformed by His gaze.

"One thing thou lackest ..." The only "GOOD THING" from Jesus Christ's point of view is UNION WITH HIMSELF and nothing in between.

"Sell whatsoever thou hast . . ." I must reduce myself until I am a mere conscious man, I must fundamentally renounce possessions of all kinds, not save my soul (only one thing saves a man—absolute reliance upon Jesus Christ)—but in order to follow Jesus. "Come, and follow Me." And the road is the way He went.

Abandonment "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever LOSES HIS LIFE for My sake and the gospel's shall save it."

Beware of any hesitation to ABANDON to God. It is the meanest characteristics of our personality that are at work whenever we hesitate, there is some element of self-interest that won't submit to God. The great aim of the Holy Spirit is to get us ABANDONED TO GOD. When God's voice will come you do not know, but whenever the realization of God comes affair in the faintest way imaginable, RECKLESSLY ABANDON. It is only by ABANDON that you find HIM. Jesus Christ always brings us back to one thing—"Stand in right relationship to Me first, then the marvelous doing will be performed in you." It is a question of ABANDONING all the time, not of DOING. Vacillation in a crisis is the sign of an UNABANDONED nature. An ABANDONED

nature never can vacillate because there is nothing to weigh; such a nature is completely ABANDONED to another. ABANDON to God is of more value than personal holiness. When we are ABANDONED to God, He works through us all the time. We are in danger of getting the barter spirit when we come to God, we want the witness before we have done what God tells us to do."Why does not God reveal Himself to me?" He CANNOT, it is not that He will not, but He cannot, because you are in the road as long as you won't ABANDON ABSOLUTELY to Him. Immediately you do, God witnesses to Himself, He cannot witness to you, but He witnesses instantly to His own nature in you. If you had the witness before the reality, it would end in sentimental emotion. Immediately you transact on the Redemption, and stop the impertinence of debate, God gives on the witness. As soon as you ABANDON reasoning and argument, God witnesses to what He has done, and we are amazed at our impertinence in having kept Him waiting.

God nowhere tells us TO GIVE UP THINGS for the sake of giving them up; He tells us to give them up for the sake of the only thing worth having, viz. LIFE WITH HIMSELF. If you are ABANDONED to God and do the duty that lies nearest, God will not ABANDON you; but if you trust in your wits and bring in the amateur providence idea, He will have to ABANDON you, and there will be heartbreaks and distresses that He is not in at all. Present the whole thing where it ought to be presented--in ABANDONMENT TO GOD, and He will engineer everything in His own way.

The note of the Christian life is ABANDONMENT TO JESUS CHRIST.

To SURRENDER TO GOD is not surrender to the fact that we have surrendered. That is not coming at all. To come means that we come to God in COMPLETE ABANDONMENT and give ourselves right over to Him and leave ourselves in His hands.

We must ABANDON TO GOD at all costs. ABANDON is of infinitely more value than self-scrutiny.

The tendency is strong to say--"O God won't be so stern as to expect me to give up that!" but He will; "He won't expect me to walk in the light so that I have nothing to hide," but He will; "He won't expect me to draw on His grace for everything" but He will.

Whenever the call is given for ABANDON TO JESUS CHRIST, people say it is offensive and out of taste. The counterfeit of ABANDON is that misleading phrase 'Christian service.' I will spend myself for God, I will do anything and everything but the one thing He asks me to do, viz., GIVE UP MY RIGHT TO MYSELF TO HIM.

God can do what He likes with the man who is ABANDONED TO HIM.

Many of us are subtly serving our own ends, and Jesus Christ cannot help Himself to our lives; if I am ABANDONED TO JESUS, I have no ends of my own to serve.

None of us know the absolute 'go' of ABANDON TO JESUS until we are in UNCONDITIONAL IDENTIFICATION WITH HIM.

Luke 18:23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.

- **he became very sad:** Lu 8:14 12:15 19:8 21:34 Jud 18:23,24 Job 31:24,25 Eze 33:31 Mt 19:22 Mk 10:22 Eph 5:5 Php 3:8 Col 3:5 1Jn 2:15
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Mark 10:22+ But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

Matthew 19:22+ But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

CRESTFALLEN BUT NOT CONVICTED AND REPENTANT

But when he had heard these things (Mt 19:22, Mk 10:22) - Heard what? The "hard saying" of Jesus in Lk 18:22. Mark 10:22 has **"But at these words he was saddened** (NLT has "at this the man's face fell" - verb is [stugnazo](#) = he became [somber](#), gloomy, same verb describes sky covered with clouds which were "threatening" or darkening in anticipation of a storm [the young ruler's "storm" had just hit! His face manifested a progressive darkening] = Mt 16:3) **and he went away grieving** ([lupeo](#) - present tense = continually sad, sorrowful and distressed), **for he was one who owned much property** (he had many possessions [ktema](#) is often used for lands or estates as a possession)."

*Whatever master a man chooses
will master that man.*

It is fascinating that none of the Synoptic Gospels record any verbal reply from the young ruler upon hearing Jesus' hard teaching. Luke does not record that he went away but just that he became very sad. Matthew and Mark both tell us **"he went away grieving."** (Mt 19:22, Mk 10:22) The fact that this young man made the tragic [volitional](#) choice to turn away from the "offer of a lifetime" reflects the fact that he had a greater love for his riches rather than for the Righteous One! Mark 4:19 (Mt 13:22) explains that "the worries of the world, and the **deceitfulness of riches** (READ THAT AGAIN! RICHES ARE LIKE SIN - THEY DECEIVE WITH PROMISES OF GRATIFICATION, BUT FAIL DISCLOSE THE ULTIMATE COST! cf Heb 3:13+, see Deceitfulness of Sin), and the desires for other things enter in and choke ([sumpnigo](#)) the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." Luke 8:14+ is similar stating that "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way **they are choked** ([sumpnigo](#)) **with worries and riches and pleasures of this life**, and bring no fruit to maturity." Recall this story actually happened and this man came with a sense of urgency and earnestness seeking eternal life, but one moral of the story is that if one becomes attached to wealth or a desire for wealth (which is easy to do), this attachment will erode one's sense of urgency and earnestness, so that over time even an earnest person forgets what is truly priceless - eternal life! Beware of riches!

Ray Pritchard has some pithy points - When it comes to going to heaven, it's not what you've got that counts, it's what you lack (Lk 18:22)....It's true, isn't it, that money can choke out the things of God? There are a great many Christians who love Jesus when they make \$15,000 a year. There are fewer who love him when they make \$30,000. Fewer still who love him when they make \$50,000. Fewer still who love him when they make \$150,000. Fewer yet who love him when they make half a million dollars a year. There are a great many Christians who would become deeply committed to Jesus Christ again, if only they would go broke. Go home and think about that. I'm not saying we have to do literally what Jesus said here. But the principle is entirely true. You cannot love money and be his disciple. You cannot. He set the rules down 2000 years ago. That's just the way it is. ([When Having It All Is Not Enough](#))

ILLUSTRATION - Of the danger of riches - In Teaching a Stone to Talk, Annie Dillard (Borrow [Teaching a stone to talk : expeditions and encounters](#)) recalls the tragic story of the [Franklin expedition to the North Pole](#). In 1845 a group of English explorers died because they were ill prepared for the challenges they would face. Instead of providing room on board their two ships for storing additional coal for the steam engines, these careless adventurers used the space for a large library, a barrel organ, china place settings, and cut-glass wine goblets. Needless to say, when they ran out of coal, as they did, their books and tea cups and ornate musical instruments were not enough to warm their freezing bodies. Every member of that expedition died. Sadly, 128 men lost their lives. Years later when the search party found the remains of the men who had set off to walk for help, they discovered one skeleton dressed in a fine blue cloth uniform edged with silk braid, sadly grasping in his hand a place setting of sterling silver flatware. What a picture of their deadly foolishness. This rich young ruler acted as foolishly as that dead British explorer. But instead of trying to carry sterling silver through the frozen Arctic, this man was trying to carry all his possessions through the tiny entrance into the kingdom of God (cf Mt 7:13+). And just as all those explorers had to do was make sure their ships had more coal and fewer luxuries, so too all this rich man needed to do was unhinge this huge weight from his back and walk as a small man, a poor man, a humble man, a childlike man ... walk in faith uprightly through the small and narrow way. (What a picture of the deceitfulness of riches!)(O'Connell)

Criswell - The young man falls before the commandment **"You shall not covet"** (Ex. 20:17). All that the law succeeds in doing is revealing man's sin (Ro 7). His wealth was his security and his god. (Believer's Study Bible)

What was the rich young ruler guilty of? He was guilty of overtly breaking the last commandment, the very one Jesus had left off the list earlier. Exodus 20:17 commands us "You **shall not covet** your neighbor's house; you **shall not covet** your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Woe! This is a hard one in our materialistic, keep up with the Jones society in America! Which one of us has not been jealous of someone else's new Tesla and coveted it for ourselves? (Guilty as written!) But this is exactly the purpose of the Law as Paul explained

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, **I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU**

SHALL NOT COVET." (SOMEHOW THE YOUNG RULER HAD READ THIS LAW, PROBABLY EVEN MEMORIZED IT AND YET WAS NOT [FILLETTED](#) SO TO SPEAK BY IT!) 8 But sin, taking opportunity ([aphorme](#) = set up a base camp for warfare!) through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind (DON'T MISS THE DYNAMIC - LAW SAYS "DON'T DO IT" - FLESH STIMULATED TO DESIRE TO DO IT! ONLY ONE WAY TO DEFEAT SIN - Ro 8:13+, Gal 3:3+) ; for apart from the Law sin is dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, **sin became alive** (THE LAW INVIGORATES SIN! cf Ro 7:5+) and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity ([aphorme](#)) through the commandment, deceived ([exapatao](#) = beguile thoroughly, deceive completely or seduce wholly; cf Heb 3:13+) me and through it killed me. (Romans 7:7-11+)

Barclay titles the chapter on the rich young ruler "The Man Who Would Not Pay the Price."

Guzik - The man failed this challenge. Essentially, this man was an **idolater**: he loved money and material things more than God. This shows that both tables of the law will test men...the laws (Commandments 1-4 - Ex 20:3-11) having to do with our relationship with God (and with men - Commandments 5-10 = Ex 20:12-17). Jesus challenged him to put God first; to fulfill the law to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:5). ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Ryrie - The man was being asked to prove his claim to have kept the commandments, especially the one that says "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 19:19, Lev 19:18). His unwillingness to do so belied his claim (Mt 19:20, Lk 18:21) and showed him as a sinner in need of salvation.

So Ryrie interprets Jesus as saying to the young man "Okay, you have made the claim to keep the commandments dealing with your behavior toward people. Now, be willing to prove your claim by selling everything and giving it to the poor." Jesus of course was not saying being charitable saves anyone (the reverse is true - that is, being saved results in a new heart, one that is charitable). What he was doing was "testing" the young man's declaration of "goodness" toward other people. He exposes the young man's pride (middle letter of pride = the big "I") and idolatry.

He became very sad (See also [previous note](#) on Mark's addition of verb *stugnazo*) - He departed [crestfallen](#) (brought low in spirit, brokenhearted, dejected, depressed, or disheartened)! He departed disappointed and sad because of having failed unexpectedly in something.

Lane writes "The response to Jesus' call is vividly described: the man's face fell, etched with disappointment and sorrow because he possessed great estates....The refusal of the call only serves to accentuate the greatness of the renunciation demanded and the uniqueness of the Twelve as those who had abandoned everything in order to follow Jesus. The conclusion to the interview with Jesus indicates that in the case of this man the Law had not yet fulfilled its function, for its historical task is to bring man's satisfaction with this world to an end and to quicken within him a thirst for righteousness and life." (NICNT-Mark)

Ray Pritchard - I find this hopeful because it means the words of Jesus hit home to him. He didn't try to argue and he didn't pretend that it didn't matter. I wonder what happened to him later. This discussion takes place just a few days before the crucifixion. Did he eventually become a follower of Jesus? We don't know for certain, but I wouldn't be surprised to see him in heaven....As far as I know, this is the only case in the New Testament where somebody came to Jesus and Jesus gave him the truth and let him leave and walk away. This "rich young ruler" walked away sorrowful because his wealth held him back. Jesus didn't come after him and say, "Let me lower the price. Let me make a deal with you so you can be my follower." He just told him the way it was and the man walked away. ([The Miserable Millionaire](#))

Very sad (deeply grieved) (4036)([perilupos](#) from **peri** = about + **lupe** = sorrow, cf study on [lupeo](#)) describes one's emotional state as very sad, exceedingly sorrowful, deeply distressed/grieved, or characterized by affliction beyond measure. This verb is very picturesque as the prefix "peri-" which means "around" which pictures this young man in essence "*surrounded by sorrow*!" Have you ever felt that way? There are only 4 NT uses of *perilupos* (Mt 26:38; Mk 6:26; 14:34; Lk 18:23), and two describe our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, which helps give us a sense of the depth of sorrow this rich young ruler must have experienced.

Constable - The man's sorrow on hearing Jesus' command was proportionate to his wealth. His unwillingness to part with his riches showed that he valued them more than treasure in heaven. He really wanted material wealth more than eternal life. Jesus' logic is quite clear in this conversation. He reasoned that God alone is perfect (Lk 18:19). Moreover God's standard for obtaining eternal life by good works is perfection (Lk 18:20-21). Therefore no one can obtain eternal life by good works.

Adam Clarke - And what were these (riches) in comparison of peace of conscience, and mental rest? Besides, he had unequivocal proof that these contributed nothing to his comfort, for he is now miserable even while he possesses them! And so will every soul be, who puts worldly goods in the place of the supreme God.

For (term of explanation) **he was extremely rich** - The same adjective ([plousios](#)) is used in the parable of "a rich man" (Lk 12:16+). O, the danger of possessions! The power of money to deceive (Mark 4:19, Pr 23:5, Eccl 5:10-16, 14, 1 T 6:9, 10, 17)! In Luke 6:24 Jesus declared "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full." In Luke 16 Jesus tells the story of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16:19; 21; 22+) to depict the horrors of eternal punishment for the rich man. In Luke 19:1+ we meet Zaccheus, another rich man, and one who made no pretense at keeping all the commandments for he was a despised tax collector. But how different the destinies of these two rich men (Lk 19:9 versus Lk 18:23 -- assuming the rich young ruler never came to his senses. We will have to wait until we get to heaven to be certain!).

Extremely rich - This is the first time we learn that the young ruler was **rich**, in fact not just **rich** but **extremely** so! Whether by inheritance or business acumen, he was at the top of the success ladder, having even gained this "prize" at a young age. But Jesus was ever looking at hearts (cf Jn 2:23-25, Jn 1:42, 46, 47, 5:42, 6:61, 64, 13:11, Lk 5:22, et al, cf 1 Sa 16:7, 1Ki 8:39b) and so He knew that his wealth was his spiritual "[Achilles heel](#)" which is why He made a frontal assault on this idol in his heart.

Rich (4145)([plousios](#) from [ploutos](#) = wealth, abundance, riches) is an adjective which defines that which exists in a large amount with implication of its being valuable. **Rich** is used most often in the NT in the sense of having abundant possessions and especially material wealth and was a frequent topic addressed by the Lord Jesus. On the other hand [plousios](#) is used figuratively in James to describe those who are **rich** in faith (Jas 2:5, cp similar use to describe the believers in Smyrna - Rev 2:9).

Plousios is used **frequently** by Luke (11/28 NT uses) - Lk. 6:24; Lk. 12:16; Lk. 14:12; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 16:19; Lk. 16:21; Lk. 16:22; Lk. 18:23; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 19:2; Lk. 21:1

Sean O'Connell sums up Jesus' "strategy" to pierce the young man's armor of self-righteousness - "Have you really kept all the commandments? All of them? Every single one of them? Ever since you were young? Well, how about, 'You shall not covet'?" He puts it this way: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mt 19:21). Jesus calls him to perfection, "perfect" in the sense of keeping both tables of the Law. He is to love others, especially the poor (i.e., widows, orphans, blind beggars, and perhaps Christ's followers), and follow (i.e., love first) Jesus. The rich man knew he lacked something. That is why he asked Jesus what he asked. But he thought whatever it was he lacked could simply be added to his life. But the one thing he lacked was a childlike dependence on Christ (Mt 18:17). So our Lord, seeking to bring this man to the point of such dependence, challenged this rich man to cut off his riches ("sell all that you possess and give to the poor") and challenged this rich ruler to cut off his self-rule ("come, follow me"). Here our Lord demands not almsgiving (giving something to someone) but everything (give everything to others and everything to me). He demands everything. Give everything to others-love your neighbor. Give everything to Christ-love the Lord your God. Well, such a challenge was too hard, too impossibly difficult. The arrow of Christ's command struck the young man's Achilles' heel. The weight of just the Tenth Commandment crushed him. This man who only moments ago knelt before Jesus enthusiastic and expectant now stood up, turned his back on our Lord, and "went away sorrowful" (Mt 19:22). Why? There is only one reason given: "for he had great possessions" (Mt 19:22), or we might rightly say, because great possessions had him. (See [Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth - Page 549](#))

I CANNOT FOLLOW SO FAR!

ILLUSTRATION - A missionary poetess and mystic, [Amy Carmichael](#) of Dohnavur, described in her famous book *Things As They Are* sitting with a Hindu queen in her palace as the queen revealed her spiritual hunger. As the conversation developed, she kept pushing Miss Carmichael regarding what was necessary for salvation, and Amy attempted to deflect her, saying she should wait.

But she was determined to hear it then and, as she insisted, I read her a little of what He says about it Himself. She knew quite enough to understand and take in the force of the forceful words. She would not consent to be led gently on. "No, I must know it now," she said; and as verse by verse we read to her, her face settled sorrowfully. "So far must I follow, so far?" she said, "I cannot follow so far..."(THE FOLLOWING QUOTE IS AN ADDITION FROM AMY CARMICHAEL'S BOOK) Then she looked at me again, and I shall never forget the look. It seemed as if she were looking me through and through, and forcing the answer to come. She spoke in little short sentences, instinct with intensity. "I CANNOT live here and break [my Caste](#). If I break it I must go. I CANNOT live here without keeping my customs. If I break them I must go. You know all this ("queen" addressing Amy). I ask you, then, tell me yes or no. Can I live here and keep [my caste](#), and at the same time follow your God? Tell me yes or no!" I did not tell her--how could I? But she read the answer in my eyes, and she said, as she had said before "**I cannot follow so far---so far, I CANNOT FOLLOW SO FAR!**"

"Reverence for opinions and practice held sacred by his ancestors is ingrained in every fiber of a Hindu's

character, and is, so to speak, bred in the very bone of his physical and moral constitution." So writes Sir Monier Williams. It is absolutely true." ([Amy Wilson-Carmichael, Things as They Are](#))

That is, in effect, what the rich man said. He was overcome with profound sadness because he had so much money. He could not possibly bring himself to give it up. [Dante referred to this as "The Great Refusal"](#) It was, for from there he became a wandering star—lost, haunted by what might have been. (From Kent Hughes with amplification of the original quote from Amy Carmichael's book)

Steven J Lawson (from **Men Who Win: Pursuing the Ultimate Prize**) - Jesus saw through the outer facade into his heart. To the greed. To the materialism. To the worldliness. To the self-centeredness. What Jesus saw was a bankrupt heart. Empty and void. With the skill of a deft surgeon, Jesus cuts to the real issue of this man's heart: "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." No, Jesus was not saying he must buy his way to Heaven. This man's problem was that money and power had become his master. His god. His life pursuit. Jesus was saying, "You must change ships in midstream and follow a new Master. I must become your new Number One. Reassign your life and all your possessions under My authority." Or it's no deal. This rich yuppie first looked at his money. Then at Christ. Back to his money. Then back to Christ. Which would it be? It was a moment of decision. Who would be his God? Money or the Master? The decision was cast. And money and power won. This young exec turned on his heels and vanished, leaving sad and grieved. His face fell, dejected. Why? Because he could not have it both ways. His money was too much to give up. Jesus watched him as he faded into the horizon and turned to His disciples saying, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24). Yes, it is hard for the rich to be saved. Hard because they have more "things" to forsake. Hard because they have to stand in line like everyone else and receive a free gift. Hard because they are more tied to this world. Hard because it is hard to forfeit power and control. How hard? "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," Jesus said. Now, that is hard. Hard, as in impossible. Camels don't fit through sewing needles. Unless it is in the movie Honey, I Shrunk the Camel. It is impossible for anyone to be saved who wants to keep control of his life and money. Impossible. I-M-P-O-S-S-I-B-L-E!

FALSE PRETENDERS

When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Matthew 19:22

All persons who are alienated from God and outside of Christ are part and parcel of a mighty deception!

They are called upon to pretend that they can have peace of mind within and that they can be relatively happy and make a big success of their human lives if they have youth and wealth and morality and high position.

In that sense of what is going on all around us, David never had to apologize for writing that "every man is a liar!" (see Psalm 116:11). The whole human concept of success and happiness and inner peace, based upon who we are and what we have, is completely false.

The rich young ruler who came to question Jesus had wealth, morality, position and youth. But his very first question gave the clue to his own inner emptiness of life: "What good thing should I do, that I may have eternal life?" (see Luke 18:18).

He knew very well that there is not a person alive who has eternal youth or eternal position or eternal righteousness. So, like every other man, he had to make a choice!

Luke 18:24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

KJV Luke 18:24 And when Jesus saw that **he was very sorrowful**, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

- **He was very sorrowful** (only in the KJV): Mk 6:26 2 Co 7:9,10
- **How hard it is for those who are wealthy**: Dt 6:10-12 8:11-17 Ps 10:3 73:5-12 Pr 11:28 18:11 30:9 Jer 2:31 5:5 Mt 19:23-25 Mk 10:23-27 1Co 1:26,27 1Ti 6:9,10 Jas 2:5-7 5:1-6
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

A SOBERING STATEMENT CALLING FOR SERIOUS CONTEMPLATION!

He was very sorrowful - in the KJV **he was very sorrowful** (Young's Literal **become very sorrowful**). The NET Note explains that "The phrase *perilupon genomenon* "[When Jesus saw him] becoming sad") is found in the majority of manuscripts and it is not unknown in Lukan style to repeat a word or phrase in adjacent passages. However, the phrase is lacking in some significant manuscripts. The shorter reading is nevertheless difficult to explain if it is not original: It is possible that these witnesses omitted this phrase out of perceived redundancy from the preceding verse, although intentional omissions, especially by several and varied witnesses, are generally unlikely. NA27 places the words in brackets, indicating doubts as to their authenticity.

Sadly this young man though sorrowful, did not have the godly sorrow described by Paul...

I now rejoice, not that you **were made sorrowful**, but that you **were made sorrowful** to the point of repentance; for you **were made sorrowful** according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the **sorrow** that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the **sorrow of the world produces death**. (2 Cor 7:9,10+)

Comment: The Corinthians' remorse was not the sorrow of self-pity, of getting caught, of despair, bitterness, wounded pride, or manipulative remorse. Their sorrow led to **repentance** (*metanoia*; a change of heart and life; a turning from sin and unto holiness, perfectly pictured in 1 Th 1:9+ and 1 Th 1:10+), which produced genuine change. They were not defensive; they did not view themselves as victims or seek to justify their sinful behavior. Their sorrow was **according to the will of God**; it was the healing, transforming sorrow for sin that God intended for them to feel, because it produces repentance. (See [1 & 2 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Related Resource: [What is godly sorrow?](#)

And Jesus looked at him and said (Matthew 19:23 says nothing about Jesus looking at the rich young ruler) - Mark 10:23 has "And Jesus, looking around (pictures Jesus turning from the rich man toward His disciples), said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! (Mt 19:23, Mk 10:23) - Remember **"to enter the Kingdom of God"** in many contexts (such as the present) is the "code word" for being saved or receiving the gift of eternal life. Mt 19:23 begins with **"Truly I say"** ([amen lego](#)) which Jesus frequently uses ([see above](#)) to introduce a solemn teaching. Mt 19:23 substitutes **"Kingdom of Heaven"** for **"Kingdom of God."**

Warren Wiersbe wrote - The disciples were shocked when Jesus announced that it was difficult for rich people to be saved. They were Jews and the Jews believed that riches were a mark of God's blessing. "If rich people can't be saved," they reasoned, "what hope is there for the rest of us?" [John D. Rockefeller](#) would have agreed with them, for he once said that riches were "a gift from heaven signifying, 'This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (**Ed:** Woe! Talk about self-deception and the deceitfulness of riches!) It is not possessing riches that keeps people out of heaven, for Abraham, David, and Solomon were wealthy men. It is being possessed by riches and trusting them that makes salvation difficult for the wealthy. Wealth gives people a false sense of success and security, and when people are satisfied with themselves, they feel no need for God." (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

In Matthew's version (Mt 19:23, also Mk 10:23 below) notice that instead of addressing His remark to the rich young ruler, Jesus directs it to His **disciples** declaring "And Jesus said to His disciples, **"Truly I say"** (["amen lego"](#) = Jesus' way of introducing a solemn teaching) to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Mark repeats Jesus' "hard saying"

And Jesus, **looking around** (*periblepo* - same verb used in Lk 6:10+), said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God (~to receive the Kingdom of God Lk 18:17 = to receive eternal life)!" The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, **"Children ([teknon](#))**, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! (Mark 10:23-24+)

It is not the fact that a man has riches that keeps him from the **kingdom of God** but the fact that his riches had him. Beware of possessions lest they end up possessing you and eventually drag you into a Christless Hell! Money is a wonderful servant but a terrible master!

Lane writes that Jesus' declaration in this verse "was shocking precisely because it entails the rejection of the concept of merit accumulated through the good works accomplished by the rich, which was presupposed in contemporary Judaism. There is no mark of God's special favor in possessions, nor in the lack of them. The peculiar danger confronting the rich, however, lies in the false

sense of security which wealth creates and in the temptation to trust in material resources and personal power when what is demanded by the Law and the gospel is a whole-hearted reliance upon God." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 369](#))

Constable - Riches are a handicap because they present two temptations to the wealthy (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9–10). First, rich people sometimes conclude that because they are rich they are superior to the poor, perhaps more blessed by God, and therefore do not need God's grace. Second, they may conclude that because they are rich they are secure, and therefore they fail to plan for the future beyond the grave.

Hard (1423)(**duskolos** [used in Mk 10:23] from the adjective **duskolos** [used in Mk 10:24] in turn from **dus** = implying difficulty + **kolon** = food - difficult about one's food, figuratively hard to please, difficult in Mk 10:24) is an adverb which means [hard](#), with difficulty, with belabored effort and pertains to that which is [difficult](#) to accomplish. Only used in three synoptic stories of the rich young ruler - Matt. 19:23; Mk. 10:23; Lk. 18:24. Not found in the Septuagint.

Ray Stedman - This is a very remarkable statement that Jesus makes. In it he highlights...the terrible danger of affluence, of riches, of seeking to get rich and loving the things money can buy. This, he says, does terrible things to the soul. Most of us, if not openly then at least secretly, are envious of rich people. We wish we had money. We say so ourselves. And yet, if we really understood what Jesus is saying, we would not feel that way. We would feel sorry for them. We think them over privileged; Jesus says they are underprivileged. They are deprived people. There is so much they are robbed of by the things they have.

Paul warns his young disciple Timothy of the danger of riches ...

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare ([pagis](#)) and many foolish and harmful desires ([epithumia](#)) which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For (term of explanation) the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Ti 6:9-10) (See sermon by Steven Cole [1 Timothy 6:9-10 The Love of Money](#) or John MacArthur on [The Danger of Loving Money](#))

John Phillips comments that "Two worlds exist: this one and the one to come. Two systems exist: this world's system, with its promises, prospects, pleasures, possessions, perspectives, and power; and that other world's system, with its totally different set of values. The two worlds appeared suddenly in human history. They surfaced immediately after the Fall. The descendants of Cain (Gen. 4) lived for this world, and the descendants of Seth (Gen. 5) lived for the world to come. There can be no compromise between these two worlds. Wealth tends to ally itself to this world, which is why materialism is such a deadly enemy of the kingdom of God. Ultimately, God brings people to Calvary, where we learn what this world thinks of Christ and what God thinks of this world. Those who have riches have a greater stake in this world than do those who are poor. That is why it is harder for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God. Riches tend to blind one's eyes to ultimate, eternal, and spiritual realities by anchoring us to the wrong world. The Lord had just upset an entire system of values. In the Old Testament, the blessing of the Lord promised riches and well-being (Pr 10:22). Indeed, this was the criterion by which Job's friends judged the stricken patriarch. It was taken for granted, even by the Lord's disciples, that wealth and health were the natural evidences and attributes of a godly life. Bethlehem, Calvary, and Pentecost have changed all of that." (See [Exploring the Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary - Page 220](#))

Luke 18:25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

- **Camel** - Mt 23:24
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Matthew 19:24+ "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mark 10:25+ "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

A CAMEL THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE? IMPOSSIBLE!

What is Jesus saying with this [rhetorical hyperbolic statement](#)? He is not saying salvation is *difficult* but that it is *impossible*! Jesus follows up with a clear statement in Lk 18:27 (cf Mk 10:27).

For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God(Mt 19:24, No parallel passage in Mark) - Matthew introduces this saying with "**Again I say to you**" and retains "the Kingdom of God" instead of his usual phrase "Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus intends this statement to be taken literally, which explains the reaction of the disciples in Lk 18:26.

Isn't it fascinating that while most Americans would view the rich as privileged, Jesus consistently viewed them as "underprivileged!" Many (especially in the first century) see wealth as a token of God's hand of blessing on their life, but Jesus saw wealth as a major hindrance to entrance into the Kingdom of God. Wealth veils one's vision to the eternal treasures in Heaven, and numbs the mind to the reality of the eternal torments in Hell!

Jesus has already given us two parables that deal with the perils of prosperity - The parable of the rich man and Lazarus gives a dramatic warning about this the deceptive danger of riches (Luke 16:19-31+). The parable of the rich fool emphasizes the danger of riches taking our focus off the eternal and placing it on the temporal things of life, concluding "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' **So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**" (A PERFECT DESCRIPTION OF THE RICH YOUNG RULER!) (Luke 12:13-19, 20, 21+). Christian should have a certain holy fear of about being rich!

Kent Hughes asks "What are the disadvantages of wealth? Primarily what it can do to the soul. How easy it is for an earnest man or woman to become so attached to material riches that he forgets what is infinitely more important. Wealth naturally works at perverting one's values. We soon know the price of everything and the value of nothing. Paul tells Timothy, "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant" (1 Timothy 6:17). Pride, arrogance, insensitivity, indifference, self-satisfaction, worldliness, and other ungodly mind-sets feed on affluence. Most tragic, wealth can steel one against the objective requirement for entering the Kingdom of God: helpless dependence. Jesus said to the Church, "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17+), and he says it today to thousands." (Preaching the Word - Mark)

And one other point of application - It is easy for a person in America to read Jesus' warning and say "That does not apply to me because I am not rich." We need to keep in mind that EVERYONE in America is RICH compared with the majority of the people in the world. For example, the per capita annual income in the Democratic Republic of Congo is about \$730 compared to the per capita income in USA of \$58,030! And so most people in America earn more in one week (\$1116/wk) than a resident of Congo earns in one year! It follows dear American reader - **YOU ARE RICH!** And it follows that you are in grave danger of falling into the same trap as the rich young ruler and that you might end up as the "camel" who never makes it supernaturally through the eye of the needle! **"Set your mind** (present imperative = enabled by the Spirit, every morning when you get up, yield to Him [Eph 5:18+] and allow Him to press the "reset button" in your mind so that it is oriented toward Christ, toward His Second Coming, toward eternity - see Vertical Vision, Maranatha Mindset) on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died (YESTERDAY=**PAST**) and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **When Christ, our life,** (TODAY=**PRESENT**) is revealed (TOMORROW=**FUTURE**), then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. (Hallelujah!) " (Col 3:2-4+; See [Three Tenses of Salvation](#))

O'Connell adds that "There is always something more on earth to buy or look forward to when one has wealth. Wealth often lures us into believing that everything can be had for a price. In most cases with wealth comes self-indulgence, self-reliance, self-importance, and self-security. Wealth has a way of ruling one's life, ruling one's time, ruling one's vocation, ruling one's commitments, ruling one's concerns. And the whole point of Jesus' "colorful hyperbole" about the camel and the eye of the needle reinforces the truth "that those who are ruled by money cannot be ruled by God." Thus, while it is true and not to be forgotten that "it is not so much the having of money, as the trusting in it, which ruins the soul," it is likewise true that it is easier to trust in it if you have it to trust in. And what is required by Christ and his gospel is a childlike faith in the heavenly Father. What is demanded is a poverty of spirit that so often goes hand in hand with a poverty of possessions." (Preaching the Word - Matthew)

Ryrie - In this proverbial expression, Christ does not say that a rich man could not be saved (v. 26), but only that, for him, it is more difficult, since such a person seldom senses his personal need as readily as a poorer man does. (Ryrie Study Bible)

Robertson - This is probably a current proverb for the impossible. The Talmud twice speaks of an **elephant** passing through the **eye of a needle** as being impossible. (**Ed**: not referring to salvation but simply referring to something that was absolutely

impossible.)

The **camel** was the largest animal found in Palestine and the **eye of a needle** was the smallest opening which clearly pictures an impossibility from the human perspective!

Mark Twain once wrote, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." The words of Jesus in Luke 18:25 are such words, wonderful words one yields to His will, but horrible words if one wills to do it his way!

It is easy for us in the modern era to say, Jesus' radical words to this rich young ruler are mere ancient history. Yes, they were true then and in the young ruler's case but they are far to radical now.

As **O'Donnell** puts it "We well-to-do Americans can indeed take some comfort in the fact that Jesus does not categorically condemn wealth and in the fact that our Lord never commanded every rich person he encountered to sell all of his or her possessions. In fact, this is the only incident we have of such a command. However, based on the fact that Jesus in the Gospels has nothing positive to say about money, that he never speaks of wealth as a blessing, that he repeatedly uses illustrations regarding the abundance of possessions to be "toxic to the soul," it is fair to state that wealth (in and of itself) can be and often is a great barrier or roadblock on the path to paradise. **In other words, nothing fattens the camel like an abundance of worldly goods"**

NET Note on eye of a needle - The **eye of a needle** refers to a sewing needle. The **eye of a needle** refers to a sewing needle, one of the smallest items one might deal with on a regular basis, in contrast to the biggest animal of the region. (ED: SOME COMMENTARIES DO NOT INTERPRET THIS LITERALLY AS A NEEDLE BUT AS A GATE HOWEVER) The gate in Jerusalem known as "The Needle's Eye" was built during the middle ages and was **not in existence in Jesus' day**. (SO CLEARLY THE "GATE" INTERPRETATION IS NOT CORRECT) Jesus was saying rhetorically that it is impossible for a rich person to enter God's kingdom, unless God (Lk 18:26) intervenes.

Marvin Vincent has a lengthy note on **camel...eye of needle** - Compare the Jewish proverb, that a man did not even in his dreams see an elephant pass through the eye of a needle. The reason why the camel was substituted for the elephant was because the proverb was from the Babylonian Talmud, and in Babylon the elephant was common, while in Palestine it was unknown. The Koran has the same figure: "The impious shall find the gates of heaven shut; nor shall he enter there till a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle." Bochart, in his history of the animals of scripture, cites a Talmudic passage: "A needle's eye is not too narrow for two friends, nor is the world wide enough for two enemies." The allusion is not to be explained by reference to a narrow gate called a needle's eye.

Still others have attempted to soften Jesus' words by saying what he was referring to was a small gate in the wall in Jerusalem, which of course is absurd, but it shows how far people will go to twist the truth when the truth hurts! Here is a Wikipedia description that relates to the "gate theory"...

The "Eye of the Needle" has been claimed to be a gate in Jerusalem, which opened after the main gate was closed at night. A camel could only pass through this smaller gate if it was stooped and had its baggage removed. This story has been put forth since at least the 15th century, and possibly as far back as the 9th century. **However, there is no widely accepted evidence for the existence of such a gate** (Ed: Thus even a secular encyclopedia debunks this idea!)

Criswell - To enter "**the kingdom of God**" (Mt 19:24), i.e., "the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:23), is as impossible by human means as it is for a camel to go through a needle's eye. Jesus consciously uses hyperbole (exaggeration) to stress His point (cf. Luke 18:25, note). He intends to show the miraculous nature of salvation for a rich man who must turn his affections from his possessions to the Savior. Thereby he is prepared for entrance into the future kingdom of God (Mt 19:28). ...Most likely this is simply a proverbial saying underscoring the impossibility of putting something large through the eye of a needle, and thus illustrating the impossibility of entry into the kingdom for a man who worships wealth (cf. Mt. 19:24).

John MacArthur writes that "Sinners are aware of their guilt and fear, and may even desire a relationship with God that would bring forgiveness and peace. But they cannot hold on to their sinful priorities and personal control and think they can come to God on their own terms. The young man illustrates that reality. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Barclay - The expression, "**the eye of a needle**," was often used in contemporary rabbinic literature to express something extremely difficult and most unusual. The rabbis sometimes spoke of an elephant passing through the eye of a needle to make their point. Jesus went on to say that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Quite often the rabbis talked of an elephant trying to get through the eye of a needle as a picture of something fantastically impossible.

Utley summarizes the proposed explanations of the camel/eye of a needle hyperbole - There have been several theories to describe this statement: (1) the term "needle's eye" refers to a small gate in the wall of Jerusalem only a pedestrian could walk through; (2) the term "camel" (kamēlon) has been mistranslated and is really the term "rope" (kamilon); (3) this is Oriental exaggeration to make a point (cf. Lk 6:41); or (4) this was a common proverb for the impossible. I believe either # 3 or #4 is correct. Number 1 has no historical corroboration and #2 is first found in one late uncial Greek manuscript and a few minuscule manuscripts

Our **Lord Jesus** used another metaphor, contrasting 2 gates, to describe **the way** that leads to life, the road that enters into the Kingdom of God...

"Enter" (a command - aorist imperative = Speaks of necessity and even urgency and only possible by a supernatural work of [the Holy Spirit](#)) through the **narrow gate**; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "For (term of explanation) the **gate** is small and the way is narrow (Jn 10:9, Jn 14:6) that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Mt 7:13-14+)

Camel ([2574](#))(**kamelos**) means camel and was used to refer to John's clothing (Mt 3:4, Mk 1:6). **Kamelos** is used by Jesus in Mt 23:24 rebuking the scribes and Pharisees as "blind guides, who strain out a gnat (smallest ceremonially unclean insect) and swallow a **camel** (largest unclean animal, both unclean and prohibited for food)" which means they were over zealous regarding small matters and careless in important matters. **MacArthur** adds that "Fastidious Pharisees would drink their wine through clenched teeth in order to filter out any small insects that might have gotten into the wine. In their typical reversal of values, those Jewish religious leaders were more concerned about being contaminated by a tiny **gnat** than by a huge **camel**. They were painstaking about formal, ceremonial trivialities but were unconcerned about their hypocrisy, dishonesty, cruelty, greed, self-worship, and a host of other serious sins. They substituted outward acts of religion for the essential virtues of the heart." (MNTC-Matthew) They would anxiously avoid small faults but willingly commit greater sins without scruples.

Some have commented that this word **kamelos** might be misspelled with an "i" for the "e" which gives us the word **kámilos**, which can mean a cable rope. So some writers have attempted to twist Jesus' words by suggesting a copyist made an error and it was not a camel but a rope. Of course they are wrong, but even a rope could hardly be forced through the eye of a needle (unless one laborious took it apart fiber by fiber and forced those through which would be a great illustration of "works based salvation.") Recall the same word **kamelos** is found in all three synoptic Gospels, which to use a pun puts ["hangs the rope theory out to dry,"](#) so to speak. **Gilbrant** adds that "As an additional note, some have attempted to replace kamēlos, "camel," with kamilon, "rope," in Jesus' statement of the "camel and the eye of a needle." However, manuscript evidence on this attempt at replacement is so weak we must conclude it is erroneous. According to Michel, "Jesus was using a typical oriental image to emphasize the impossibility of something by way of violent contrast" (Michel, "kamēlos," Kittel, 3:593). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Gilbrant on **kamelos** in the Septuagint - Mosaic law forbade the Israelites from eating camel meat (Leviticus 11:4; Deuteronomy 14:7), yet they were found to be excellent animals for other purposes. They were used for travel (Genesis 24; 31:17), for war (Judges 6:5; 7:12; 8:21; 1 Samuel 30:17 [LXX 1 Kings 30:17]), and for burden-bearing (Genesis 37:25; 1 Chronicles 12:40; Isaiah 30:6). Figuratively, the camel is used to picture Israel's pursuit of foreign gods. The image in Jeremiah 2:23 is that of a restless she-camel in heat. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Kamelos - 6x in 6v - Matt. 3:4; Matt. 19:24; Matt. 23:24; Mk. 1:6; Mk. 10:25; Lk. 18:25

Kamelos - 64x in 60v - Gen. 12:16; Gen. 24:10; Gen. 24:11; Gen. 24:14; Gen. 24:19; Gen. 24:20; Gen. 24:22; Gen. 24:30; Gen. 24:31; Gen. 24:32; Gen. 24:35; Gen. 24:44; Gen. 24:46; Gen. 24:61; Gen. 24:63; Gen. 24:64; Gen. 30:43; Gen. 31:17; Gen. 31:34; Gen. 32:15; Gen. 37:25; Exod. 9:3; Lev. 11:4; Deut. 14:7; Jdg. 6:5; Jdg. 7:12; Jdg. 8:21; Jdg. 8:26; 1 Sam. 15:3; 1 Sam. 27:9; 1 Sam. 30:17; 1 Ki. 10:2; 2 Ki. 8:9; 1 Chr. 5:21; 1 Chr. 12:40; 1 Chr. 27:30; 2 Chr. 9:1; 2 Chr. 14:15; Ezr. 2:67; Neh. 7:68; Job 1:3; Job 1:17; Job 42:12; Isa. 21:7; Isa. 30:6; Isa. 60:6; Jer. 49:29; Jer. 49:32; Ezek. 25:5; Ezek. 27:21; Zech. 14:15

Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Camel](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Camel](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Camel](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Camel](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Camel](#)

- Smith Bible Dictionary [Camel](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Camel](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Camel](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Camel](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Camels Hair Camel](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Camel](#)

Needle (this verse = only use in Bible)(956)(**belone**) is "a small, slender instrument, pointed on one end and with a hole at the other end, used in passing thread through cloth in sewing." (Louw-Nida) **A T Robertson** adds that **belone** "means originally the point of a spear and then a surgeon's needle." The Greek word **belone** is found in medical writings to describe a surgical needle used in operations, and so it stands to reason Luke a physician would choose this word for needle. On the other hand Mt 19:24 and Mk 10:25 translated **needle** with **rhapis** which means a perforation, aperture, hole or opening and then the eye of a needle. **Thayer** says classical Greek uses **belone** more often for needle.

QUESTION - [What did Jesus mean when He said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven?](#) [See video](#)

ANSWER - There are several different schools of thought on what Jesus was referring to in saying it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to gain eternal life (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25). The Persians expressed the concept of the impossible by saying it would be easier to put an elephant through the eye of a needle. The camel was a Jewish adaptation (the largest animal in Israel was a camel).

Some theorize that the needle Jesus was speaking of was the Needle Gate, supposedly a low and narrow after-hours entrance found in the wall surrounding Jerusalem. It was purposely small for security reasons, and a camel could only go through it by stripping off any saddles or packs and crawling through on its knees. The problem with this theory is there is no evidence such a gate ever existed. Beyond that, what sane camel driver would go through such contortions when larger gates were easily accessible?

Others claim that the word translated "camel" (Greek: kamelos) should actually be "cable" (Greek: kamilos). Then the verse would read that it is easier for a cable (or rope) to go through the eye of a needle. To believe this, however, brings up more problems than it solves, namely casting doubt on the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture.

The most likely explanation is that Jesus was using hyperbole, a figure of speech that exaggerates for emphasis. Jesus used this technique at other times, referring to a "plank" in one's eye (Matthew 7:3-5) and swallowing a camel (Matthew 23:24).

Jesus' message is clear—it is impossible for anyone to be saved on his own merits. Since wealth was seen as proof of God's approval, it was commonly taught by the rabbis that rich people were blessed by God and were, therefore, the most likely candidates for heaven. Jesus destroyed that notion, and along with it, the idea that anyone can earn eternal life. The disciples had the appropriate response to this startling statement. They were utterly amazed and asked, "Who then can be saved?" in the next verse. If the wealthy among them, which included the super-spiritual Pharisees and scribes, were unworthy of heaven, what hope was there for a poor man?

Jesus' answer is the basis of the gospel: "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God" (Matthew 19:26). Men are saved through God's gifts of grace, mercy, and faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Nothing we do earns salvation for us. It is the poor in spirit who inherit the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3), those who recognize their spiritual poverty and their utter inability to do anything to justify themselves to a holy God. The rich man so often is blind to his spiritual poverty because he is proud of his accomplishments and has contented himself with his wealth. He is as likely to humble himself before God as a camel is to crawl through the eye of a needle.

Related Resource:

- See interesting discussion of [Frequently Abused Verses: What Is the Eye of a Needle by Cameron Buettel](#)

Luke 18:26 They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"

- **Who:** Mt 24:22 Mk 13:20 Lu 13:23,24 Ro 10:13 11:5-7
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole

- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

IF THE RICH CANNOT BE SAVED WHO CAN BE SAVED?

They who heard it said - Who is **they** and how did they react? Mt 19:25 (Mk 10:26 is similar) writes "When **the disciples** heard this, they **were very astonished** ([ekplesso](#) = means literally to strike and figuratively expresses a strong feeling of one being "knocked out of their senses!" The disciples were struck with [astonishment](#)!)." In a word, Jesus statement in Lk 18:25 "blew them away!" Why would they be so utterly astonished? The Jews believed (obviously falsely) that riches were a clear sign of God's blessing, so that surely all those who rich would be saved. But if the rich are excluded from eternal life, then how could anyone possibly obtain eternal life?

William Lane adds this background - In Judaism it was inconceivable that riches should be a barrier to the Kingdom, since a significant strand of OT teaching regarded wealth and substance as marks of God's favor (e.g. Job 1:10; 42:10; Ps. 128:1-2; Isa. 3:10 and often). (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 369](#))

Norman Crawford - The question is not, How can a rich man be saved? but, How can anyone be saved? The answer is that none can be saved unless God does it. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Then who can be saved? - If the rich cannot be saved, then who can be saved? So if a rich man (like the rich young ruler) could not be saved, this would block even the disciples' from being saved. It was a shock to his disciples to hear that riches instead of paving the way to eternal life could actually function to block one's entrance into the Kingdom of God. The Jews believed that almsgiving was one of the keys that opened the door into the Kingdom of God. And of course who would be able to give the most alms? A rich man like this rich young ruler. And so they were astonished at Jesus' words!

The **Apocryphal Book of Tobit** and the book of **Sirach** make amazing statements (which helps me understand why the Apocryphal books are not included in the [Canon of Scripture](#))...

Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. ⁹ For **almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin.** (ED: THIS PATENTLY HERETICAL STATEMENT IS CLEARLY COUNTER TO ALL NT TEACHING WHICH EMPHASIZES THAT ONLY THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS DELIVERS FROM DEATH AND PURGES AWAY EVERY SIN! of "the free gift of God" = Ro 6:23, Gal 3:13, Ro 5:9-10 1 Th 1:10, 1 Pe 2:24) Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fulness of life; ¹⁰ but those who commit sin are the enemies of their own lives. ([Book of Tobit 12:8-10](#))

As water extinguishes a blazing fire, so **almsgiving atones for sin.** ([Sirach 3:30](#)) (Wow!)

It is notable that in [one religious tradition's catechism](#) we read "A conversion **which proceeds from a fervent charity** can [attain](#) the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain." Beloved, this statement is backwards - "fervent charity" proceeds from a changed heart, a heart transformed at "conversion," a new birth wrought by the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:3-8) (Note relationship of salvation, faith and works in Eph 2:8-9+ and Eph 2:10+. Salvation first, by faith. Then works, also by faith). The rich young ruler would have been pleased had a similar statement come from the lips of Jesus when he asked Him what he must do to inherit eternal life!

Related Resource:

- [What are indulgences and plenary indulgences and is the concept biblical?](#)

Saved ([4982](#)) (**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. Most often **sozo** refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense as illustrated in the following passages: Matthew recorded the angel's conversation with Joseph declaring "She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** (sozo) His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21) In Mt 1:21 **sozo** is equated with deliverance from sins (guilt and power of) with Jesus' Name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation".

Jesus' point (in the context of Lk 18:27) of course is that the only way a rich man or a poor man can be saved is if God intervenes!

Paul tells us who can be saved whether rich or poor...

"WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Ro 10:13+)

George MacDonald pointed out that "It is not the rich man only who is under the dominion of things; they too are slaves who, having no money, are unhappy for the lack of it.... The money the one has, the money the other would have, is in each the cause of an eternal stupidity."

Warren Wiersbe as usual hits the proverbial nail on the head writing that "The rich young ruler is a warning to people who want a Christian faith that does not change their values or upset their lifestyle. Jesus does not command every seeking sinner to sell everything and give to the poor, but He does put His finger of conviction on any area in our lives about which we are dishonest." (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Luke 18:27 But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

- **But He said, "The things that are impossible with people** Ge 18:14 Nu 11:23 Job 42:2 Ps 3:8 Ps 62:11 Jer 32:17, 27 Zec 8:6 Mk 10:27 Lu 1:37 18:27
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:18-27 How Good People Get Saved](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:18-27 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

SALVATION IS ALWAYS A MIRACLE!

But He said - Matthew 19:26 and Mk 10:27 add "**looking at them Jesus said**" where **looking** is the verb [emblepo](#) which means He looked in their faces, fixing His eyes upon the disciples (Same verb Mark uses in Mk 10:21 of Jesus' looking at the young man). **Emblepo** is also the same verb Luke 22:61+ uses to describe that incredible moment after Peter's denial when "the Lord turned and **looked** (emblepo) at Peter!" One gets the sense that this "LOOK" at His disciples conveyed the idea "You don't want to forget this. You want to nail this truth down!"

John Phillips - Salvation is impossible with men, rich or poor, be they as rich as the disappointed young ruler or as poor as the beggar Lazarus. Salvation is beyond purchase; beyond money; beyond price; and beyond all human standards of religion, morality, good works, and self-effort. The disciples should have known from the Old Testament Scriptures themselves that the basic principle of salvation rests on something other than money (Isa. 55:1; Mic. 6:5-8+). But what is impossible with men is possible with God. Salvation is God's idea, planned by Him before even time began, provided by Him at infinite cost and offered to one and all as the gift of His grace. (Exploring the Gospel of Luke)

The things that are impossible with people (Mt 19:26, Mk 10:27) - A camel passing through the eye of a needle (see [picture of camel and eye of needle](#)) is easier than a rich man entering the kingdom of God (Mt 19:24), but since the first is impossible, so is the last. A man cannot save himself because absolutely (Greek negative particle "ou" signifies absolutely) no man even seeks for God (Ro 3:11b+) No man in and of himself qualifies for eternal life.

Impossible (102) ([adunatos](#) from **a** = without + [dunatos](#) = possible, able, or powerful from **dunamai** = to be able or have power by virtue of inherent ability and resources. Note the stem *duna-* or *dyna-* conveying the basic sense of ability or capability, power, strength, might) means impossible, incapable of being or of occurring, incapable of being done.

Are possible with God - Salvation is possible for the rich but it takes a miracle! Thank God He is still a miracle working God! We too often look for miracles in all the wrong places and forget the greatest miracle we can see is by looking at the mirror each morning! Have you lost that sense of grateful wonder awe of the great miracle when God's Spirit took your hard, godless heart and gave you a new heart, a heart of flesh, a heart that is now God's dwelling place? (See Robert Munger's "[My Heart Christ's Home](#)") God's grace is sufficient to save poor men and save rich men and we see an example of the latter in Zaccheus in the next chapter, Luke 19:1-10+.

Possible (able) (1415) ([dunatos](#) from **dunamai** = referring to power one has by virtue of inherent ability and resources; see study of [dunamis](#)) means powerful, able, strong. **Able** describes that which has sufficient or necessary power, means, skill, or resources to accomplish an objective. Mary extols God as the "the Mighty One (dunatos) has done great things for me." (Lk 1:49+)

Luke's uses of **dunatos** - Lk. 1:49; Lk. 14:31; Lk. 18:27; Lk. 24:19; Acts 2:24; Acts 7:22; Acts 11:17; Acts 18:24; Acts 20:16; Acts 25:5; Rom. 4:21; Rom. 9:22; Rom. 11:23; Rom. 12:18; Rom. 15:1; 1 Co. 1:26; 2 Co. 10:4; 2 Co. 12:10; 2 Co. 13:9; Gal. 4:15; 2 Tim. 1:12; Tit. 1:9; Heb. 11:19; Jas. 3:2

See topic - [GOD IS ABLE](#)

Jesus' point is clear that from beginning to end, salvation is from God and is based on Christ's finished work and not on human work. The great, the good, and the rich won't gain entrance into the Kingdom because they are great and good and rich, but only because of the sovereign supernatural work of our Great God! This is humbling, beloved. And yet at the same time it is comforting to know that God is Able, because otherwise I would not be writing this note (See my personal testimony of God's grace because I was a successful, well-off physician when God stooped down to lift me up!)

D A Carson adds that "Jesus is not saying that all poor people and none of the wealthy enter the kingdom of heaven. That would exclude Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to say nothing of David, Solomon, and Joseph of Arimathea."

1 Cor 1:26 does not say **NOT ANY** but **NOT MANY**

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were **not many** wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

Bob Utley sums it up - God loves rich people. Abraham (and all the Patriarchs), David (and all the godly Jewish kings), Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea are good biblical examples. The key is where their faith and trust are put, in possessions or in God? See [Special Topic - Wealth](#)

As **Jonathan Edwards** once wrote, "To take on yourself to work out redemption, is a greater thing than if you had taken it upon you to create a world." Indeed, salvation is a miracle not of creation, but an even greater miracle of a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17+). This is how one "gets a big fat humpy camel through the tiny eye of a needle!" And this is why Paul calls the **Gospel**, "**the** (supernatural) **power (dunamis) of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16+) Man's part? Receive and believe the Gospel, then give it out!

Mark 10:27 says (Jesus' eyes looking into their eyes [see note above](#)) "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Scripture repeatedly reminds us that God is the God of the impossible and that "nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37+)...

Yahweh Himself testified to Abraham "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." (Ge 18:14).

The LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD'S power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not." (Nu 11:23)

Job learned and testified "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted." (Job 42:2)

Jeremiah declared "Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, (Jer 32:17+)

God affirmed Jeremiah's declaration "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?" (Jer 32:27+)

Sean O'Donnell describes how God's Spirit used Jesus' teaching about the rich young ruler to push him through the eye of the needle! -- It was nearly twenty years ago that God, in his infinite and irresistible grace, used this very story in this very Gospel as one of the means of converting me to Christ. For the first half of my life I was told and believed the most common religious lie-that I was basically a good person who occasionally sinned, but did nothing that would ultimately disqualify me from one day entering the joys of eternal life. But then the Holy Spirit taught me what should have been obvious-I was a sinner. Not a good person who occasionally sinned, but a sinner (at heart a very bad person) who was in a continual state of rebellion against a good God and his good Law. I didn't love God. I didn't love others. And I certainly loved myself. But it wasn't just the first half of this passage but also the second half that the Lord used to change my mind and heart and will. I knew that God alone was perfectly good. I believed that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and the Savior of the world. But at that time in my life he was never my Savior. He was never my Lord, the supreme Lord of my life. And as I prayed to Christ those many years ago and asked him to forgive me and to clean me up on the inside, I also (with this passage in mind) told him (in so many words) that I would "sell everything," that I would put him first in my life-first above self, first above family, first above career, first above education, first above sports, first above every aspect and

every love of my life. I told him I would be last, and he would be first! (See [Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth - Page 554](#)).

Ray Stedman - One of the pastors visiting us here this week was telling me about his congregation. He said, "I have a number of wealthy people in my congregation, and they trouble me, because" as he put it, "they dabble with Christianity." That is often true. I know of many wealthy Christians, and I find that it is rare to find one who is truly committed to obeying the Word of God. Most go along only to a point. Thank God there are some who do obey. God has reached them. I do not know how he does it, but only God can do it. He can break through, and he does, at times. Sometimes he creates in them a tremendous distaste for things and makes them so aware of an emptiness and hunger within that they lose all interest in affairs of business and wealth and money and, feeling the hollow mockery of it, like this young man, they begin to search out the realities of life. Sometimes a man has to suffer catastrophe -- almost lose his family, or get sick, or have some other disaster occur, before he begins to see things in their right perspective and comes to Christ in that way. I could tell you story after story of how God has worked to open rich men's and women's eyes to bring them back to the truth, and to show them the only way that ever has been provided. And isn't it interesting that if a rich man does come to Christ, he must come in exactly the same way as the poorest bum on skid row! He has to acknowledge his complete and utter need, and come as a guilty sinner, wretched and miserable and vile, and receive the gift of life at the hands of Jesus from the cross. There is no other way to come -- no other way! Rich men have to come that way, too. There is no special way provided for them, except the way that God has made for all. ([The Plight of the Overprivileged](#))

So Jesus makes it clear that man is unable to save himself and only God is able. This begs the question "Are you trying to be good enough to get to heaven (like many answer when ask how they plan to go to heaven)?" Jesus says it is IMPOSSIBLE. But then He says with God it is HIM-POSSIBLE! Have you been saved by grace through faith Eph 2:8-9+? Have you put your faith in Christ?" If not, cast off any hopes that you could ever be good enough to earn your way to Heaven and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ today and you will be saved from the guttermost to the uttermost (Heb 7:25KJV+).

Ray Pritchard - A rich man says, "If Jesus doesn't come through for me, that's okay. I've got my pension. I've got my stocks and bonds. I've got my options. I've got my golden parachute. I've got my safety net. If he doesn't come through it doesn't matter. I'm taking care of things myself."....I come to two conclusions and then I am through. Number one: As long as you make money and the things money can buy are the measure of your life, you will be empty and unfulfilled. Number two: Whenever you stop trusting in money and the things that money can buy and turn your life over to Jesus Christ, then and only then will your heart be satisfied. ([The Miserable Millionaire](#).)

QUESTION - [What does "with men this is impossible" mean?](#)

ANSWER - On His final journey to Jerusalem before His death, Jesus encountered a rich young man who asked what he must do to receive eternal life (Matthew 19:16–30). Jesus took the opportunity to teach His disciples about the dangers of acquiring wealth and possessions, which can often hinder one's faith. Anything that gets in the way of our commitment to following God must be forsaken (see verse 21). When Jesus stressed how hard it was for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of heaven, the disciples were utterly astounded. They had adopted the prevailing belief that [wealth](#) was evidence of God's favor. "Then who in the world can be saved?" the disciples asked (verse 25, NLT).

Looking at them intently, Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26, NKJV). Jesus presented the key to salvation. In and of themselves, humans do not have what it takes to enter the kingdom of heaven. A person may possess every earthly blessing but remains powerless to save himself. Salvation is God's gift alone (Romans 5:15–16).

Riches tend to make us self-reliant, self-centered, and distracted by worldly pursuits. We put too much confidence in ourselves and our wealth and lose our childlike trust and reliance on the goodness and mercy of God. Nonetheless, it is humanly impossible to earn our way or work our way into heaven: "But—When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life" (Titus 3:4–7, NLT).

When Jesus said, "With men this is impossible," He meant that it is only by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ that a person can be saved (Ephesians 2:4–9; see also Acts 15:11; 16:30–31; Romans 3:21–24; 5:1–2; 11:5–6). Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6; John 10:9; Hebrews 10:19–20; 1 Timothy 2:5). "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Belief in Jesus changes what is humanly impossible into unlimited possibilities with God. Through [faith in Jesus Christ](#), mere mortals receive "the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12–13). As God's children, we receive the indescribably good gift of eternal life (John 3:15–16; Romans 10:9; 2 Corinthians 9:15).

Job and others in Scripture asked similar questions as the disciples, “How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?” (Job 25:4; see also 1 Samuel 6:20; Job 4:17–19; 9:2; 15:14–16; Psalm 130:3; Psalm 143:2; Malachi 3:2; Revelation 6:17). Apart from the Lord’s intervention, becoming righteous before God is hopeless. With men, this is impossible! But with God, “we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory” (Romans 5:1–2, NLT).

With men this is impossible means there’s no place in God’s kingdom for boasting about our own righteousness (Romans 3:27–30; 1 Corinthians 1:28–31). The apostle Paul expounded, “I have been [crucified with Christ](#) and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:20–21). Paul continued, “As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world’s interest in me has also died” (Galatians 6:14, NLT).

With men this is impossible affirms that any form of self-justification is useless. We can’t buy our way into heaven or work our way into God’s kingdom. The believer’s only hope of salvation—his only confidence in drawing near to God—is in God Himself, with whom all things are possible.

Norman Geisler - see [When Critics Ask](#) - MATTHEW 19:26—Is anything impossible for God?

PROBLEM: According to this verse, “with God all things are possible.” However, Hebrews 6:18 declares that “It is impossible for God to lie.”

SOLUTION: The context in Matthew indicates that Jesus is speaking of what is humanly impossible, whereas, Hebrews informs us that some things (e.g., lying) are actually impossible for God. Note that in the former passage, Jesus said, “with men this is impossible,” indicating that He was only speaking of what was humanly impossible, but not divinely impossible. However, there are some things that even God cannot do. For example, He cannot do anything that would contradict His nature, such as, cease being God, or be unholy, or do what is logically impossible (like making a square circle, or forcing people to freely love Him). God cannot make a stone so big that He cannot lift it, since the created cannot be greater than the Creator. However, God can do anything that is possible to do. He is all-powerful (omnipotent), the “Almighty” (cf. Job 5:17; 6:14; 42:2).

Luke 18:28 Peter said, "[Behold](#), we have left our own homes and followed You."

- **We have left our own homes and followed You:** Mt 4:20-22 Mt 9:9 Dt 33:9 Mk 1:17-20 Mk 2:14 Mk 10:28 Lu 5:11,27,28 Lk 14:33 Lu 18:28 Php 3:8
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?

Peter said (Mt 19:27, Mk 10:28) - "Open mouth, insert foot!" Now that may be a bit harsh, because Jesus' response in Lk 18:29-30 (cf Mt 19:28) certainly has no hint of rebuke, but quite the opposite. Nevertheless, without doubt, Peter always seemed to be the disciple who was quick to speak (cf the antithesis in James 1:19+). Note the use of "**we**" indicating Peter is speaking for all the disciples (This is substantiated by Jesus' answer in Lk 18:29 using the plural *you*). The NET Note suggests that "Peter wants reassurance that the disciples' response and sacrifice have been noticed." The parallel synoptic passages would tend to support that thought...

Mark 10:28 has "Peter began to say to Him, “Behold, we have **left everything** and followed You.”

Matthew 19:27 has "Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have **left everything** and followed You; **what then will there be for us?**"

Wiersbe remarks that "Peter’s comment in Luke 18:28 suggests that he had a rather commercial view of discipleship: “What then will there be for us?” (Matt. 19:27)" (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Numerous passages indicate that Peter was often the spokesman for the group - Matt. 16:13-16; 26:35; John 6:67-69; Acts 1:15; 2:14, 37, 38; 5:29; Matt. 15:15, 16; 17:4 Mark 9:5; Luke 9:32, 33, Matt. 19:27; Mark 10:28

Norman Crawford - The Lord made it clear that man cannot obligate God to bless him. There are many reasons for this, the first being that as sinners we rightly deserve His righteous judgment, so all God's actions toward us in grace are undeserved. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#)) (**Ed**: As one of my mentors used to say "We deserve Hell, but God gives us Heaven!")

Behold (Look!)([2400](#))([idou](#)) is an exclamation used to arrest someone's attention. It might seem a bit [brusk](#) (marked by rude or peremptory shortness) in view of the fact that Peter is addressing the Jesus Who is the omniscient God Who misses nothing. But Jesus gives no hint of taking offense at Peter's address and question.

We have left our own homes and followed You(Mk 10:28) - Matthew 19:27 indicates that they had not just left their **own homes** but **everything** (even their fishing nets which were their source of income - Mt 4:19-20). So Peter was correct when he said they had done what the rich young ruler refused to do.

John Phillips - Peter, Andrew, James, and John gave up a prosperous business. Matthew gave up a lucrative career and all of the ill-gotten gains that he had amassed, we can be sure. They had all given up homes and families. (Exploring the Gospel of Luke)

NET Note on "left our homes," "left our possessions"; Greek "left our own things." The word *idios* can refer to one's home (including the people and possessions in it) or to one's property or possessions. (NET versions renders it "Look, we have left everything we own to follow you!")

However Peter's question suggests he had forgotten His Lord's words in Mt 16:24 when "Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." And His similar call to discipleship in Lk 14:33+ Jesus declared "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."**Oswald Chambers** was right when he said "Very few of us know the absolute "go" of abandonment to Jesus." (See [Chambers on Abandonment](#))

Have left ([863](#)) ([aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. It describes an action which causes separation and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition, in this case from their **own homes**. **Aphiemi** is used in Luke 5:11+ "When they had brought their boats to land, they **left** everything and followed Him." Matthew 4:20 says "Immediately (after Jesus' command to "**Follow Me**" - Mt 4:19) they left their nets and followed Him."

Although the verb for **left** is different in the following verse, the idea of separating from everything describes a relatively rich man named Matthew and his response to Jesus' call - "After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi (**MATTHEW**) sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "**Follow Me**." (present imperative) And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. (Lk 5:27-28+, cf Mt 9:9, Mk 2:14)

Luke's uses of **aphiemi** - Lk. 4:39; Lk. 5:11; Lk. 5:20; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 5:23; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 7:47; Lk. 7:48; Lk. 7:49; Lk. 8:51; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 10:30; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:39; Lk. 13:8; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Lk. 17:34; Lk. 17:35; Lk. 17:36; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:44; Lk. 21:6; Lk. 23:34; Jn. 4:3; Jn. 4:28; Acts 5:38; Acts 8:22; Acts 14:17

Followed You - Peter is picking up on Jesus' "invitation" to the rich young ruler to sell everything and follow Him, which is in fact what Peter and the other 11 had done. The young ruler refused, but they did not, so what is in it for us is the idea.

Followed ([190](#))([akolouthéo](#) from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way; gives us our English [acolyte](#)) means literally to go along behind and so to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils.

John MacArthur paraphrases Peter writing "We came on Your terms, didn't we?" he said in effect. "Do we thereby qualify for eternal life? The rich young ruler refused to surrender his possessions and his life to You, and he forfeited the kingdom. But we forsook our jobs, our families, our friends, and everything else we had in order to be Your disciples. We have repented of our sins and surrendered to Your lordship. Just as You commanded, we have denied ourselves and taken up our crosses for your sake. Doesn't that qualify us for a place in Your kingdom?"...**what then will there be for us?** "What are the benefits of Your kingdom for us?" they wanted to know "What do we have to look forward to as Your disciples?" (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

Guzik - There is a special honor for these disciples. They have a special place in judgment, probably in the sense of administration in the millennial Kingdom. As well, the apostles had the honor of helping to provide a singular foundation for the church (Ephesians 2:20), and have a special tribute in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 20:14). ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Luke 18:29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or

- **there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children** Lu 14:26-28 Dt 33:9 Mt 10:37-39 19:28-30 Mk 10:29-31
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

And He said to them, "Truly I say to you..." (Mt 19:29, Mk 10:28) - **Truly I say** ([amen lego](#)) introduces a solemn teaching. Jesus reassures Peter and the disciples that God is even now blessing their decision to follow Him and that there is more to come in the future!

There is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children- **No one** is the Greek adjective [oudeis](#) which means absolutely **no one** (same word Luke used in Lk 18:19)! Absolutely **no one** who is a true follower of Jesus will miss out on this promise. Jesus' promise is rock solid. It is a sure hope. "The world is passing away, and also its lusts" (1 John 2:17), but "all the promises of God in Him (Jesus) are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor 1:20)

Jesus had given a similar call in Luke 14 declaring...

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? (Lk 14:26-28+)

For the sake of the kingdom of God- That is in order to serve the cause of the kingdom and Mark adds in order to serve the cause of the Gospel = Mark 10:28 **"for My sake and the Gospel's sake."**

Jesus' answer in Matthew adds more detail (only found in Matthew) and in essence gives a description of the coming Kingdom of God which the disciples would receive declaring

"Truly I say ([amen lego](#) = THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TRUTH!) to you, that you who have followed Me (NOTICE JESUS AGREES WITH PETER'S STATEMENT IN Lk 18:28 "followed You. IN OTHER WORDS JESUS CLEARLY CHARACTERIZES THEM AS HIS DISCIPLES), in the regeneration (NEW BIRTH) when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you (JESUS IS ADDRESSING THIS PROMISE TO JEWISH DISCIPLES WHO "FOLLOWED ME"!) also shall sit upon **twelve thrones**, judging the **twelve tribes of Israel** (THIS LATTER PHRASE CREATES A REAL PROBLEM FOR THE AMILLENNIALISTS AND [THOSE WHO REPLACE ISRAEL](#) WITH THE CHURCH. JESUS SAYS "TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL" WHAT DO YOU THINK HE MEANT BY THAT STATEMENT?)" (Mt 19:28)

Comment: The Greek word regeneration was used by Josephus to describe the "new birth" of the Jewish nation after the end of their Babylonian Captivity. The only other NT use of regeneration is in Titus 3:5+ describing the new birth of believers.

O'Donnell who has a lucid, well written commentary on Matthew has an interesting comment on **"12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel"** writing **"whatever He means by this."** In other words he "punts" on this dual description of twelve. While I cannot discern with certainty from his commentary whether O'Donnell is an amillenialist (which teaches that Jesus spoke only of a spiritual kingdom in which the church presently replaces Israel) or a [supersessionist](#), his comments on eschatological sections of Matthew suggest that this is his "systematic theological" mindset. And this would explain why he has such difficulty interpreting the two twelves in Mt 19:28. Beloved, Jesus meant what He said. He literally said it and He meant it to be read and understood literally. Nothing in the text or context gives us license to interpret it any other way. Jesus' words are not difficult to interpret if the text is interpreted literally! Conversely, it is impossible to interpret accurately if not interpreted literally, because the only alternative is to [spiritualize or allegorize](#) the text which opens up a veritable ["pandora's box"](#) of interpretations. So sadly O'Donnell is forced to skim over Jesus' dramatic promise to the **TWELVE** apostles! Beloved, **twelve** is not a symbolic number here (in context Jesus is addressing 12 literal apostles) and the main verbs **shall sit** and **judging** are straightforward and can easily be interpreted to mean what they say

unless one does not believe in a regenerated, restored earth that will come about when the Messiah returns to set up His Kingdom and restore the nation of Israel to prominence.

Even the **ESV Study Bible** which does not always interpret eschatological passages literally has a comment that is relatively literal on Mt 19:28 - "In this new world, the **twelve** apostles (except for Judas, see Acts 1:12-26) will participate in **the final establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth**" (Bolding mine)

Matthew Henry (who is generally not literal on eschatology and should be read with great caution on such passages, often replacing Israel with the church) makes a comment similar to O'Donnell on "**twelve thrones...twelve tribes**" writing that "It is hard to determine the particular sense of this promise!" To reiterate, indeed this phrase is "**hard**" if one jettisons literal interpretation!

D A Carson on Mt 19:28 favors the interpretation that "the **twelve** apostles exercise judgment over the **twelve** tribes of Israel physically and racially conceived." Praise God for that literal interpretation! But then Carson goes on to say "At the consummation the **Twelve** will judge the nation of Israel, [presumably](#) for its general rejection of Jesus Messiah." He is making a somewhat [presumptuous](#) statement, one which I think Paul would find fault with because Paul teaches "all Israel (ALL THAT BELIEVE - 1/3 IN ZECHARIAH 13:8) will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (Ro 11:26-27+, cf OT parallels in Zechariah 12:10-14+, Zechariah 13:1+ and Zechariah 13:8-9+ says "two parts in it will be cut off and perish" so they are already judged for their rejection of Messiah - the 12 apostles will have nothing to do with this judgment).

MacArthur says in Mt 19:28 regeneration speaks of "the rebirth of the earth under His sovereign dominion at the time of His Second Coming. It will be paradise regained and a global parallel to the individual rebirth of Christians....Peter called it "**the period of restoration of all things** about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient times" (Acts 3:21+)." ([See related sermon](#))

Henry Morris (creationist) writes "The "regeneration" is the "re-creation," or "restoration," of the primeval perfections of the earth before the Genesis Flood. This will happen after Christ's return. This verse gives the particular assignment of the twelve disciples (judging) during the millennial period. During this period, "the saints shall judge the world" (1 Corinthians 6:2). (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

W A Criswell - The word "regeneration" (palingenesia, Gk.) is used in Titus 3:5 of personal regeneration or New Birth. The only other occurrence in the N.T. is this one, which promises cosmic regeneration. The idea, however, is certainly found elsewhere in the N.T. (Ro 8:21, 22). The time of the regeneration mentioned here is evidently the millennial restoration period prior to the forming of the new heaven and new earth in the eternal state (cf. Rev. 20:1-6+). The key to that identification is the position accorded to the disciples of "judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Therefore, the prophecy must be millennial. Mt 19:29 further declares a hundredfold reward, in addition to everlasting life, as the benefit given to the disciples.

Luke 18:30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

- **Many times as much at this time:** Lu 12:31,32 Job 42:10 Ps 37:16 63:4,5 84:10-12 119:72,103,111,127 Ps 119:162 Ro 6:21-23 1Ti 4:8 6:6 Heb 13:5,6 Rev 2:10,17 3:21
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:24-30 The Impossibility of Salvation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

IT PAYS TO SERVE JESUS

We don't serve Jesus to receive pay but because we have received the privilege to serve Him! It is all of grace from beginning to end and world without end. Amen. Undeserving sinners receive **God's Riches At Christ's Expense!** [Hallelujah! What a Savior!](#)

"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,
be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."
[Revelation 5:13+](#)

Who will not receive many times as much at this time (Mt 19:29-30, Mk 10:30) - **Receive** ([Iambano](#)) implies Jesus will give His

disciples a gift (gifts). **At this time** means in this life. **At this time** (the present age) means that Jesus gift is ALREADY giving in this life! You say how so? The answers would fill the page but let me give you one that is at the top of my list. Paul says that **at this time "Christ (is) our life."** (Col 3:4+) "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him (Christ)." (2 Peter 1:3+) As Paul said "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am....I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Php 4:13+) So like Paul we can experience genuine contentment with our lot, something possible only for believers (but sadly so few really experience it - see [Christian Contentment](#)) but impossible for non-believers. I could go on but beloved it does not get better than having Christ and His provision and His power provided by His gift of the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9+). Brothers and sisters, it does not get any better in this life and besides all this we have the promise that the best is yet to come!

The phrase "**who will not**" is a double negative in the Greek which in this context of the preceding negative *oudeis* actually serves to strongly express a positive assertion regarding Jesus' promise. As stated above, this promise is "rock solid!" They (and we) may lose one or more family members but this loss will be reversed and will be multiplied into the fullness of God's family and countless brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we will share eternity together!

Many times as much (4179) (**pollaplasion** from **polus** = many) means many times more, manifold more and refers to a quantity many times greater than expected. **BDAG** is similar - "far in excess of a quantity normally expected." Used only in Mt 19:29 and Luke 18:30. And so here in Lk 18:30 **pollaplasion** Jesus' promise is that the reward which "will be received will surpass even what one might have conceived." (Meditate on this incomprehensible thought for a moment beloved!) This is heavenly multiplication not earthly addition! As His disciples we will be rewarded "far more abundantly beyond all that we (could) ask or think" (Eph 3:20+) for our temporal "sacrifice." No one can "out give" the Lord!

Hendriksen makes an interesting point - In spite of the persecutions which they will have to endure, they will be able to enjoy even their material possessions far more than the ungodly enjoy theirs. Reason? See Isa. 26:3; contrast Isa 48:22....Do they not even now possess "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8), "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6), and "the love of God poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Ro. 5:5)? In "**the age to come**" all these blessings that constitute life everlasting will become the believers' treasure in an even much fuller sense. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Mark and Matthew elaborate on what we will receive (words in bold note in Luke's version).

Mark 10:29-31 - Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 31 but that he will receive **a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions**; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 **"But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."**

I am not sure my own (half) brother is a believer and I pray frequently for his salvation. But Jesus promises spiritual brothers now and forever. Do we truly grasp that we now and forever possess **so great a salvation** (cf Heb 2:3+)? This hundred fold promise applies to all believers who have suffered loss (in one way or another) for Jesus' sake and the Gospel's sake.

John Phillips - Each item in the first list is repeated in the second list, except for fathers and wives. A disciple of the Lord, cut off from home and hearth, can have any number of sisters and brothers and so on; he is promised ten thousand such. He does not need multiplied fathers because he already has a Father in heaven. It would have been inappropriate to promise him ten thousand wives! Having listed the marvelous return on one's investment in the cause and work of Christ, the Lord adds "with persecutions"- just in case someone should simply want to get in on only the benefits. But there is more! There is all this and heaven too! (Exploring the Gospel of Mark)

Kent Hughes on Mark's passage - I like Jesus' math. He does not say 100 percent more, but a hundredfold more! "One house gone; but a hundred doors are open! One brother in the flesh lost; but a thousand brothers in the spirit, whose love is deeper and whose kinship is profounder." (Quoting G Campbell Morgan) This has been the testimony of many missionaries who have joyfully quoted this verse and described their experience with it.

Notice the promise that many saints would rather pass over **-along with persecutions. Persecutions** (which is plural in the Greek) is [diogmos](#) (used in Acts 8:1, 2 Ti 3:11+, 2 Cor 12:10+) which literally means pursuit or chase and **BDAG** says is actually "a program or process designed to harass and oppress someone!" Sounds like the "gift" in Php 1:29+ "For to you it **has been granted for Christ's sake**, not only to believe in Him, but also **to suffer for His sake!**" (cf 2 Ti 3:12+, Acts 14:22, Acts 5:40, 41, 42)

Identification with Jesus guarantees persecution, so we need not be surprised when it comes (cf Peter's words in 1 Pe 4:14, 16+). Beloved, like Christ, we too will suffer, but suffering gives birth to glory, and in the age to come we will share with Jesus the full joy of eternal life.

Phillips on first will be last - The Lord now looks ahead to "the crowning day that's coming by and by," when some startling revelations will occur. People we have seen reigning as kings down here will find themselves set aside up there. Many people whom we regard as nobility down here are not known as great aristocrats in heaven....In other words, we cannot trust human estimates about who is first or last, greatest or least. At the judgment seat of Christ there will be many surprises. It is likely that the Lord had Judas in mind when He gave this warning. Judas was counted as one of the foremost of the disciples. He was in charge of the finances of the apostolic company-and he fell through covetousness. The Lord also intimated that Peter should beware of a spirit of pride as he smugly compared himself with the rich young ruler. (Exploring the Gospel of Mark and Matthew)

God does not order things the way we would or for the reasons we would. In Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis wrote, "If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed." Beware of thinking you are "first!"

William MacDonald - It isn't enough to start out well on the path of discipleship. It's how we finish that counts. Ironside said: "Not everyone who gave promise of being a faithful and devoted follower would continue in the path of self-denial for Christ's Name's sake, and some who seemed backward and whose devotedness was questionable would prove real and self-effacing in the hour of trial." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Matthew 19:29-30 - "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or **farms** for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and **will inherit** eternal life. 30 **"But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.**

Comment: In this story who was first? The rich young ruler. And who was last (Hint: Who spoke up)? Peter speaking for all of the disciples. A similar statement occurs in Mt 20:16 and Lk 13:30+.

John Phillips - Matthew's account reads "an hundred fold," or as we would express it, 10,000 percent! (Exploring the Gospel of Luke)

Jim Elliott - "He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot hold to gain that which he can never lose".

Lawrence Richards says it this way "I suppose each of us at times asks, "What will I get for what I must give up?" Jesus' answer is, "Gold in exchange for clay. Eternal life in exchange for a few fleeting years of selfish pleasure." We gain what we can never lose in exchange for what we could never keep." (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary](#))

We need to remember the words of Jesus

Rev 22:12-[note](#) "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Mt 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

And Paul...

2 Cor 5:10+ For we must **ALL** appear before the judgment seat ([bema](#)) of Christ, so that **EACH ONE** may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good (see [Good Deeds](#) cf Jn 15:5,16) or bad ([phaulos](#) not [kakos](#)).

Only one life

Twill soon pass

Only what's done for (in) Christ will last

Time (kairos) means a point of time or period of time, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something. An opportunity. Something that lasts for a season and so is transient, temporary or enduring only for a specific period of time. Jesus has given us the gift of "this time" which begs the question are you Redeeming the Time?

Redeem the time! God only knows

How soon our little life may close,

With all its pleasures and its woes,
Redeem the time!
—Anon.

The age to come - Recall their question in Matthew 24:3 "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of **the end of the age**?" (See "Three Significant Questions") This **age** will end (cf Mt 13:39, 40, 49). But in Mt 28:20 Jesus promised the disciples "I am with you always, even to **the end of the age**." The next **age** is the Messianic Age (Millennium) when Messiah rules and reigns and restores the nation of Israel to global prominence. This phrase **age to come** is synonymous with **"the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne"** (Mt 19:28[see comments above](#))

MacArthur summarizes who will be in the Millennial Kingdom in **the age to come** - All the saints from all of redemptive history—the Old Testament saints (Da 7:18), New Testament saints (1 Cor. 6:2), and...the twelve apostles—are going to be gathered into that glorious kingdom to enjoy all the bounty of paradise regained. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 18-24)

Age (165)([aion](#)) The specific meaning of **aion** is best determined by the context in which it is used. As a generalization **aion** usually refers to some aspect of **time** past, present or future. The English dictionary defines **age** as an era of history having some distinctive feature. E.g., we are currently in what is usually referred to as "the church age." Paul called it this "the present age" (Titus 2:12), the "present evil age" (Gal 1:4), "this age" (Eph 1:21). Then Paul said that "in the **ages** to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:7) This implies there will be more than one future age - e.g., we know (if we are not amillennial) there will be the age of the Messiah (Messianic Kingdom) and it will be followed by the age of the New Heaven and New Earth. Are there more ages after that? Scripture (to the best of my knowledge) is silent (Dt 29:29).

Eternal life - And as we stated earlier **eternal life** ([see comments](#)) for an individual is synonymous with **entering** (or receiving) **the Kingdom of God** (Heaven), describing one who is **saved** (Lk 18:26). This is the very thing the rich young ruler sought (Lk 18:18).

NET Note - Note that Luke (see also Matt 19:29; Mark 10:30; Luke 10:25) portrays eternal life as something one receives in the age to come, unlike John, who emphasizes the possibility of receiving eternal life in the present (John 5:24).

William MacDonald says "in the age to come eternal life does not mean that eternal life is gained by forsaking all; rather it refers to increased capacity for enjoying the glories of heaven, plus increased rewards in the heavenly kingdom. It means "the full realization of the life that had been received at the time of conversion, i.e., life in its fulness."" ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Eternal - see [previous note](#)

Life (zoe) - see [previous note](#). Utley adds "In Greek there are three terms for life (bios and psuchē - earthly life and zoē - spiritual life). This is not chronological life, but life in fellowship with God, life as it was meant to be!"

Barclay - Peter pointed out that he and his fellow disciples had left all to follow Jesus; and Jesus promised that no man would ever give up anything for the kingdom of God but he would be repaid many times over. It is the experience of all Christian folk that that is true. Once someone said to David Livingstone, thinking of the trials he had endured and the sorrows he had borne, of how he had lost his wife and ruined his health in Africa, "What sacrifices you have made!" Livingstone answered, "Sacrifices? I never made a sacrifice in all my life." For the man who walks the Christian way there may be things the world calls hard, but, beyond them all and through them all, there is a peace which the world cannot give and cannot take away, and a joy that no man takes from him.

Luke 18:31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.

- **Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem:** Lu 9:22 24:6,7 Mt 16:21 17:22,23 Mt 20:17-19 Mk 8:31,9,30,31 Mk 10:32-34
- **and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished** Lu 24:44-46 Ps 22:1-31 Ps 69:1-36 Isa 53:1-12 Da 9:26 Zec 13:7
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Summary of All 9 Prophecies of His Passion in the Synoptic Gospels](#)

Related Passages:

Matthew 20:17-19 As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, **He took the twelve disciples aside by**

themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 **“Behold**, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.”

Mark 10:32-34/mark-10-commentary#10:32 (WORDS IN BOLD NOT IN LUKE) **“They were on the road** going up to Jerusalem, **and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed** (thambeo - a mixture of astonishment and admiration), **and those who followed were fearful. And again** He took the twelve aside and began to tell them **what was going to happen to Him.**” 33 saying, **“Behold**, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. 34 “They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.”

Lane comments on this passage in Mark - What awakens amazement and terror in the disciples who follow is not the recognition that the road leads to Jerusalem nor an awareness of what will be accomplished there, but Jesus himself. The power of the Lord, who holds in his hands his own destiny as well as that of the people of God, is manifested for Mark and his readers in the awe and dread which characterize those around him (cf. Mark 9:32). (Ibid)

JESUS' JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM TO FULFILL THE SCRIPTURES

Then - This time phrase marks progression. In context the disciples were saying what's in it for me since I have given up so much. In that self-centered context Jesus reveals what He is about to give up for them!

He took the twelve aside ([paralambano](#)) **and said to them** (cf Parallel Passages above) - There was always a crowd around Jesus, but this conversation is for their ears only. And what He proceeds to do is tell them for the third time (directly, not counting allusions) that He is going to be killed and be resurrected ([see the Table below](#)). Jesus' first two passion predictions (Lk 9:22 and Lk 9:43-45) were given just before He set His face like flint for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51KJV) to accomplish His mission (cf Jn 4:34, Jn 17:4). Recall that Luke 9:51KJV begins a section in Luke that continues through Lk 19:27. Now as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, He gives the third and most detailed description of His Passion. In a sense Jesus' passion predictions function as "bookends" of the beginning and end of His journey toward Jerusalem. His entire journey in Lk 9:51 through Lk 19:27 is oriented toward His passion.

MacArthur has an interesting comment - One reason that Jesus needed to explain things in advance to them is that the concept of a dying Messiah was completely foreign to their understanding (cf. Luke 9:44-45). The nineteenth-century historian Emil Schürer summarized the Jewish people's expectations regarding the coming of Messiah and the establishing of His kingdom as follows: **First**, the coming of Messiah would be preceded by a time of tribulation. **Second**, in the midst of the turmoil an Elijah-like prophet would appear heralding Messiah's coming. **Third**, Messiah would establish His glorious kingdom, and vindicate His people. **Fourth**, the nations would ally themselves together to fight Messiah. **Fifth**, Messiah would destroy all those opposing nations. **Sixth**, Jerusalem would be restored, and made new and glorious. **Seventh**, the dispersed Jews scattered all over the world would return to Israel. **Eighth**, Israel would become the center of the world and all the nations would be subjugated to the Messiah. **Finally**, the Messiah would establish His kingdom, which would be a time of eternal peace, righteousness, and glory ([A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ \[New York: Scribners, 1896\], 2:154-78](#) - First page of article on ["Messianic Hope"](#)). There was no place in Jewish messianic theology for a sacrificed, a dead, or even a risen Messiah. (See [Luke 18-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Constable - Luke played down the amazement and fear of the disciples that Mark stressed. Instead he focused the reader's attention on the disciples' failure to understand what was going to happen in Jerusalem. There is a continuation of the theme of responding to Jesus' words that precedes. The rich young ruler failed to respond to the good news that Jesus proclaimed. Similarly the disciples, though believing the gospel, failed to respond to the bad news He told them. There is also a continuation of the theme of entering the kingdom. The disciples would enter because they believed in Jesus, but they would have to go through trials and tribulations, as Jesus would, before they did. The death of Jesus provided the basis for God's gracious dealings with believers through His Son (Lk 18:26-27).

Hendriksen reminds us of the context which helps understand Jesus' words in this section - Though the time and place are indefinite, it is becoming clear that the long journey from Galilee through Perea is nearing its end. Jericho is almost in sight (see Lk 18:35; 19:1). Jerusalem (and its environs) is next (Lk 19:11, 28, 41). Matters are becoming more and more serious now. So, in order to impress upon the disciples the gravity of the events that are about to take place, Jesus takes The Twelve aside. He tells them, "We are going up to Jerusalem." ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

We are going up to Jerusalem (Mt 20:18) - In the two previous passion predictions (Lk 9:22 and Lk 9:43-45) there is no mention of

Jerusalem as the place of His death. **Going up** is literal because it depicts ascending the road on the hill up to the city, standing on the highest point of the backbone ridge of hills that run north and south between the Jordan and the Great Sea. The irony is here we see Jesus, King of kings in Rev 19:16+ approaching the city which is known in both the Old and New Testament as **'the city of the Great King.'** (Ps 48:2; Mt 5:35+) But in His first coming, Jesus was **going up to Jerusalem** not to be crowned King but to be crucified like a criminal! The coronation must await His Second Coming, when His feet will "stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east" (Zech 14:4+) and He would be crowned "king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one." (Zech 14:9+) And so Jerusalem is the city of His destiny for Jesus as He Himself had earlier prophesied declaring "I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem." (Lk 13:33+) Jesus was on His final lap to "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (Mt 23:37)

Phillips comments "As the Niagara River seems to quicken its pace and move forward with renewed force as it approaches the falls, so it was with the Lord. Those who followed Him sensed it and were awed by it."

Hendriksen - "**Going up to Jerusalem**" (John 2:13; 5:1; 11:55; Acts 11:2; 25:1,9; Gal. 2:1) must be understood as having reference not only to physical ascent, Jerusalem being situated on higher ground, so that from whatever side one approaches it, that approach is always an ascent; it is far more than that. It must be interpreted as a matter not just pertaining to the feet (Ps. 122:2), but also—in fact especially—to the heart (Ps. 84:5). In Jerusalem was God's temple! When in connection with the great feasts pilgrims wended their way to Jerusalem, they were going there to worship, and this included the bringing of an offering. Jesus, too, is now "going up to Jerusalem," to bring himself as an offering for "the sin of the world." See Isa. 53:10; John 1:29. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

All things which are written ([grapho](#)) through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished ([teleo](#)) - This fact that Jesus' passion would fulfill prophecy is recorded only by Luke. **Son of Man** is a Messianic title taken from Daniel 7:13+ referring to the Divine Person Who would establish a Divine Kingdom on earth and rule over all people. Jesus is identifying Himself as that Divine Person.

A T Robertson writes "Compare these minute details of the prophecy here (Luke 18:32-33) with the words in Mark 10:33-34; Matthew 20:18-19, which see."

The first prophecy of the crucifixion is found in Genesis 3:15+ - "And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (Messiah); He (Messiah) shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel (Crucifixion would cause the victim's heel to bruise as they pushed up with their legs to try to breathe-see [explanation](#))."

This is the third prophecy of His passion (specifically His crucifixion) in Mark = (1) Mk 8:31-33, (2) Mk 9:31-32, cf Mk 9:12, (3) Mk 10:33-34, the last giving the greatest detail. The following details being found only in Mk 10:33-34 - (1) Delivered to the chief priests and scribes (fulfilled in Mk 14:53); (2) Condemned to death (fulfilled in Mk 14:64); (3) Delivered to the Romans (fulfilled in Mk 15:1,10); (4) Mocked, spit upon, scourged (fulfilled in Mk 14:65); (5) Only mention of the place of the Passion as Jerusalem. Jesus also makes other less obvious allusions to His Passion - Lk 5:35; 12:50; 13:32; 17:25.

Note that all three passion prophecies are given only to the 12 disciples, all three predict He will be killed and all three predict He will rise after 3 days. Jesus' focus on the goal of Jerusalem and His passion was fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah "the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, **I have set My face like flint**, And I know that I will not be ashamed." (Isaiah 50:7) Jesus **walking on ahead of** His disciples was a characteristic rabbinic custom. It is a foreshadowing of later passages in which Jesus says "after I have been raised, **I will go ahead of you** to Galilee." (Mk 14:28, 16:7) As an aside the great accuracy with which Jesus foretold of His passion is another clear evidence of His deity.

This was the great subject between Jesus, Moses and Elijah at His transfiguration for they "were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." (Lk 9:31+).

(DANIEL RECORDS ONE OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE **"THINGS...WRITTEN THROUGH THE PROPHETS"**)
"So you are to know and discern (NOTE TWO WORDS THAT SPEAK OF SOMETHING THEY COULD KNOW!) that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Neh 2:1-8 = 447 BC) until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks (SEVENS) and sixty-two weeks (SEVENS); it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks (THAT IS AFTER 62 "7's" + 7 "7's" = 483 YEARS - PREDICTING THE TIME OF MESSIAH'S ARRIVAL VIRTUALLY TO THE DAY - JESUS SAID "If you had known in this day" = THE JEWS COULD HAVE/SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!) the Messiah will be cut off (SUFFER A VIOLENT DEATH ~ CRUCIFIXION) and have nothing, and the people (ROME) of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary (JERUSALEM DESTROYED 70 AD). And its end will come

with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:25+, Daniel 9:26+,)

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts.

"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

(Zechariah 13:+

Related Resources:

- Messianic Prophecies - **things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man**
- **John MacArthur** summarizes a number of prophecies in [Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
- [Messianic Prophecy articles at Gotquestions](#)

John Phillips - Jesus had been studying these Scriptures since His childhood. He knew them by heart. There was to be the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9); the betrayal by Judas (Ps. 41:9); the cross with all of its terrors (Ps. 22; 69; Isa. 53); His death and burial (Ps. 16:10); His resurrection (Jonah 2; Matt. 12:40); His ascension back home to heaven (Ps. 24); and His enthronement in glory (Ps. 45:6-7), to be followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29) and His Melchizedek priesthood (Gen. 14; Ps. 110:4). He knew every detail. He knew "all things that are written by the prophets."

To Jerusalem -

Lk 9:53 And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward **Jerusalem**.

Mt 20:18-19 Behold, we are going up to **Jerusalem**; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."

Joshua with some of his last words (last words of a godly man are always worth listening to) ""Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that **not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.** (Joshua 23:14)

Acts 13:29 speaks of the accomplishment of the prophecies regarding His passion **When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him**, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb."

In Luke's first record (see [table below](#)) of Jesus' prophetic prediction of His passion (Luke 9:22+) Luke says "the Son of Man **MUST** ([dei](#)) suffer many things." The use of **must** speaks of divine necessity and reflects God's sovereign control over all these events, even the murder of His Own Son! The apostles failed to understand the "divine necessity" of the Passion (see Lk 9:44-45 and of course Lk 18:32) We see Luke's use of "must" emphasizing the divine necessity of His death in Lk 13:33 ("I **must** journey on today..." and Lk 17:25 ("first He [Son of Man] must suffer many things").

MacArthur - His death would be the culmination of the divine redemptive purpose of God. The cross is the primary event in redemptive history and therefore the primary event in all of history. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Norman Crawford - The Gospels do not record such things as the plucking of the hair from His face (Isa 50:6), nor the smiting with a rod upon the cheek (Micah 5:1), but we are assured that they did these things as well as the many other predictions that were so perfectly fulfilled in His rejection, suffering and crucifixion. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Constable has an interesting note - The Hellenistic mind resisted the idea that a God-man could be truly human. The ancient Greek concept of the gods visiting humankind lay behind this difficulty. Consequently Luke presented much evidence for his Greek readers throughout his Gospel that Jesus was a real man. The Jews on the other hand had difficulty accepting the fact that Jesus was truly God. This accounts for Matthew's stress on Jesus' deity. Throughout church history there have been those who like the Greeks had trouble accepting Jesus' full humanity and others like the Jews who have resisted His full deity. ([Luke 18](#))

[David Thompson](#) emphasizes the importance of the phrase **all things** that point to the Messianic prophecies that would be fulfilled

-

There are seven specific prophecies He would fulfill.

(Prophetic Fulfillment #1) - It is time for the Son of man to be handed over to the Gentiles. 18:32a It was clearly predicted in Psalm 2:2 that the Gentile rulers would take counsel together against the Lord's anointed. It was time for that to be fulfilled. He would go to Jerusalem and fulfill this very prophecy. He would appear

before Pilate who would be turned over to Roman soldiers for crucifixion. This of course was unthinkable to the Jews. They could not conceive of the fact that their Messiah would allow Gentiles powers to have the upper hand over Him. Of course the reason why they couldn't conceive of this is because they did not know the word of God.

(Prophetic Fulfillment #2) - It is time for the Son of man to be mocked. 18:32b It was clearly predicted that the one who would deliver people from sin would be despised and sneered at (Ps. 22:6-7). Isaiah said He would be despised and forsaken of men (Is. 53:3). People would actually see Him and mock Him and laugh at Him. He would not be respected by any one.

(Prophetic Fulfillment #3) - It is time for the Son of Man to be mistreated. 18:32c He was abused in every way. Darrel Bock, in his commentary, said Jesus would "receive shameful treatment" (Luke 9:51-24:53, p. 1497). Even His beard was predicted to be ripped from His face (Is. 50:6).

(Prophetic Fulfillment #4) - It is time for the Son of man to be spit on. 18:32d Again Isaiah specifically predicted that the One who could save people from sin, would be spit on (Is. 50:6). Jesus is pointing out the minutia of the prophetic things He must fulfill. **(Prophetic Fulfillment #5)** - It is time for the Son of man to be scourged. 18:33a Isaiah predicted that He would be so beaten that His appearance was worse than any man ever seen (Is. 52:14). He also said that the Messiah would give His back to those who would strike Him and scourge Him (Is. 50:6).

(Prophetic Fulfillment #6) - It is time for the Son of Man to be killed. 18:33b It was clearly predicted that the Son of Man would be killed. He will not just appear to be dead, He will be dead. In fact, it was specifically predicted that He would be crucified and have His hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16). Isaiah said He would allow Himself to be led like a Lamb to slaughter (Is. 53:7).

(Prophetic Fulfillment #7) - It is time for the Son of Man to be resurrected. 18:33c This would be a defining moment in identifying the God/Savior/Messiah/King. He would be raised from the dead on the third day (Ps. 16:10; 49:15; 86:13 = Acts 13:34-38).

Took...aside (3880) (**paralambano** from **para** = beside + **lambano** = receive, take) means to receive alongside or to take to oneself into close association, the latter sense of course being the intended meaning in this context. This idea of a private time with Jesus is found in other uses by Luke as when "He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray" so that these 3 might bear witness of His Transfiguration. (Lk 9:28+)

Paralambano uses by Luke - Lk. 9:10; Lk. 9:28; Lk. 11:26; Lk. 17:34; Lk. 17:35; Lk. 17:36; Lk. 18:31; Jn. 1:11; Jn. 14:3; Jn. 19:17; Acts 15:39; Acts 16:33; Acts 21:24; Acts 21:26; Acts 21:32; Acts 23:18

Behold (2400) (**idou**) a demonstrative particle is used to arrest the hearer (and reader's) attention. Jesus is saying "Listen up! Do not miss this truth!" He is alerting them to the fact that this is the beginning of the end.

Written (1125) (**grapho** from root **graph-** = primarily means to scratch on or engrave as on an ornament, reports, letters, etc; **English** = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John), paper, etc. Grapho (as it often is) is in the perfect tense signifying that everything written down in the past regarding the Son of Man **stands** written! It is a permanent and lasting record which will be fully fulfilled to the last detail. Study of the Messianic prophecies was a major element in my coming to faith in the Messiah as I came to see their incredible accuracy even though they were **written** centuries before the events.

Luke has two other similar uses of **grapho**...

because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. (Lk 21:22+)

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Lk 24:44+)

Luke's uses of **grapho** Lk. 1:3; Lk. 1:63; Lk. 2:23; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 4:4; Lk. 4:8; Lk. 4:10; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 7:27; Lk. 10:26; Lk. 16:6; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:46; Lk. 20:17; Lk. 20:28; Lk. 21:22; Lk. 22:37; Lk. 24:44; Lk. 24:46; Acts 1:20; Acts 7:42; Acts 13:29; Acts 13:33; Acts 15:15; Acts 15:23; Acts 18:27; Acts 23:5; Acts 23:25; Acts 24:14; Acts 25:26;

Will be accomplished (5055) (**teleo** from **telos** = goal, end, purpose) means to bring to an end as one brings a process, a course, a task or an undertaking to the end. The purpose for which Jesus came was that He might die. He was nearing His goal, a goal that had been set in motion by the sovereign council of the Trinity even before the beginning of the world! It is fitting that when Jesus had

once and for all time offered Himself as the sacrificial Lamb, with His dying words He used this same verb **teleo** in the perfect tense, crying out "Tetelestai!" which means **"It is finished!"**, it is **"Paid in full!"** John records this incredible event "Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, **"It is finished!"** And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. (John 19:30+)

Teleo - 28v accomplished(3), carried(1), carry(1), completed(3), finish(1), finished(11), fulfilled(2), fulfilling(1), keeps(1), pay(2), perfected(1), performed(1) - Matt. 7:28; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 11:1; Matt. 13:53; Matt. 17:24; Matt. 19:1; Matt. 26:1; Lk. 2:39; Lk. 12:50; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 22:37; Jn. 19:28; Jn. 19:30; Acts 13:29; Rom. 2:27; Rom. 13:6; 2 Co. 12:9; Gal. 5:16; 2 Tim. 4:7; Jas. 2:8; Rev. 10:7; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 17:17; Rev. 20:3; Rev. 20:5; Rev. 20:7

Summary of Jesus' Nine Prophecies of His Passion			
	Matthew	Mark	Luke
First passion announcement	Mt 16:21–23	Mk 8:31–33	Lk 9:22 [±]
Second passion announcement	Mt 17:22–23	Mk 9:30–32	Lk 9:43–45 [±]
Third passion announcement	Mt 20:17–19	Mk 10:32–34	Lk 18:31–34 [±]

Hendriksen adds an interesting analysis of the **three final passion announcements**... Limiting ourselves to the three main ones, we note that Mark lists seven items for the third prediction. These seven are:

1. The Son of man will be betrayed into the hands of chief priests and scribes,
2. They will condemn him to death,
3. And will hand him over to the Gentiles,
4. Who will mock him, spit upon him,
5. Scourge him,
6. And kill him.
7. Three days later he will rise again.

Matthew has a similar arrangement. There are minor differences; e.g., Matthew has "crucify" for "kill." Luke, who often abbreviates, here mentions only the last five; hence items 3-7. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Summary of Predictions, Reminders, and Proofs of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (from ESV Study Bible)

- Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected... and be killed, and on the third day be raised."
- Luke 9:44 "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."
- Luke 12:50 "I have a baptism to be baptized with."
- Luke 13:32 "I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course."
- Luke 13:33 "for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem."
- Luke 17:25 "But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."
- Luke 18:32 "he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon."
- Luke 18:33 "after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."
- Luke 24:6-7 "Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."
- Luke 24:25-26 "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"
- Luke 24:46 "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead."

Luke 18:32 "For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon,

- **He will be handed over to the Gentiles** Lu 23:1,11 Mt 27:2 Mk 15:1 Joh 18:28,30,35 Ac 3:13
- **and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon:** Lu 22:63-65 23:11,35 Isa 50:6 52:14 53:3 Mic 5:1 Mt 26:67 Mt 27:28-30

- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

PROPHECY OF HIS PASSION

For (term of explanation - explains how would be accomplished) **He will be handed over** ([paradidomi](#)) **to the Gentiles** ([ethnos](#)) (Mt 20:18,19, Mk 10:33-34) - The **Gentiles** refers to the Romans (including Pontius Pilate). Recall that most commentators feel Luke's Gospel is aimed at Gentile readers and here we see he emphasizes that they are guilty in Jesus' murder just as much as the Jews. Mark explains that first "the Son of Man would be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles." (Mk 10:33+).

Hendriksen - Since the Romans did not allow the Jews to carry out the death sentence (Jn 18:31), the Jewish authorities were going to hand Jesus over to the Gentiles, that is, in the present case to Pilate and those who carried out his commands. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

And will be mocked ([empaizo](#)) **and mistreated** ([hubrizo](#)) **and spit upon** ([emptuo](#)) - Mt 20:19) - Mark says that it is the **Gentiles** (especially the Roman soldiers) "will mock Him and spit on Him." (Mk 10:33-34+). This was fulfilled in Luke 22:63, 65+; Lk 23:11+. To spit upon a person's face indicated gross contempt, hatred, disrespect, and insult.

Spurgeon - It would be hard to imagine our Lord speaking more plainly. He tells them of his sufferings in detail—describes exactly what is to happen. But their thoughts did not run that way, and when you are not expecting a thing, it matters little how plainly you may be told of it. And these disciples of our Lord were looking to see him made a king; they could not comprehend that the only crown he was to have would be one of thorns and that the homage paid to him would be to be scourged and spat on. ([Luke 18](#) - exposition)

Handed over (delivered to, cf similar uses in Lk. 23:25; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:20) ([3860](#)) ([paradidomi](#) from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another.

Luke's uses of **paradidomi** - it is notable that the verb **paradidomi** is frequently translated "**betray**" (Lk 22:4, 22:6, 22:21, 22, 48) Lk. 1:2; Lk. 4:6; Lk. 9:44; Lk. 10:22; Lk. 12:58; Lk. 18:32; Lk. 20:20; Lk. 21:12; Lk. 21:16; Lk. 22:4; Lk. 22:6; Lk. 22:21; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:48; Lk. 23:25; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:20; Acts 3:13; Acts 6:14; Acts 7:42; Acts 8:3; Acts 12:4; Acts 14:26; Acts 15:26; Acts 15:40; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:11; Acts 22:4; Acts 27:1; Acts 28:17;

Mocked ([1702](#)) ([empaizo](#) from **en** = in, at + **paizo** = play as a child - **pais** - child) means to ridicule, to make fun of, to mock, to deceive, to trick, to taunt, to treat outrageously, to treat someone contemptuously in an insolent and arrogant way, to treat abusively. To to play a game with.

Vine - empaizo — emp-ahead'-zo - a compound of **paizo**, "to play like a child" (**pais**), "to sport, jest," prefixed by **en**, "in" or "at," is used only in the Synoptists, and, in every instance, of the "mockery" of Christ, except in Matthew 2:16 (there in the sense of deluding, or deceiving, of Herod by the wise men) and in Luke 14:29, of ridicule cast upon the one who after laying a foundation of a tower is unable to finish it. The word is used (a) prophetically by the Lord, of His impending sufferings, Matthew 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:32; (b) of the actual insults inflicted upon Him by the men who had taken Him from Gethsemane, Luke 22:63; by Herod and his soldiers, Luke 23:11; by the soldiers of the governor, Matthew 27:29,31; Mark 15:20; Luke 23:36; by the chief priests, Matthew 27:41; Mark 15:31.

Empaizo - 13v - mock(2), mocked(5), mocking(4), ridicule(1), tricked(1). Matt. 2:16; Matt. 20:19; Matt. 27:29; Matt. 27:31; Matt. 27:41; Mk. 10:34; Mk. 15:20; Mk. 15:31; Lk. 14:29; Lk. 18:32; Lk. 22:63; Lk. 23:11; Lk. 23:36

Mistreated (insulted) ([5195](#)) ([hubrizo](#) from **húbris** = injury, insult, reproach, arrogance, insolence, ill-treatment. Our English word **hubris** refers to exaggerated pride or self-confidence) means act with insolence, wantonness, wicked violence, to treat injuriously. To act spitefully toward someone, treat shamefully, and therefore to injure or to abuse. It conveys the idea of treating

someone contemptuously in an insolent and arrogant way. Luke uses this same verb in Acts 14:5 "when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to **mistreat** and to stone" Paul and Barnabas in Iconium.

Hubrizo - 5v - insult(1), mistreat(1), mistreated(3). Matt. 22:6; Lk. 11:45; Lk. 18:32; Acts 14:5; 1 Thess. 2:2

Spit upon (1716)(emptuo) spit on or at, as in one's face(Mt 26:67, Mt 27:30; Lxx - Nu 12:14); passive be spit on (Lk 18:32), to be understood as a gesture of extreme contempt (Lxx - 25:9)

Emptuo - 8v Matt. 26:67; Matt. 27:30; Mk. 10:34; Mk. 14:65; Mk. 15:19; Lk. 18:32 Twice in Lxx = Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9;

Luke 18:33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again."

- **the third day He will rise again:** Lu 24:7,21 Mt 27:63 1 Co 15:3,4
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN!

In Luke 9:21-22 (first Passion prediction - [see table](#)) Jesus had foretold of His murder...

But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

After they have scourged ([mastigoo](#)) Him (Mt 20:19, Mk 10:34) **They will kill Him and the third day He will rise again** (literally "the day the third") - In Roman law scourging always accompanied capital punishment. His death was substitutionary, in other words He died in our place, so that we might live with Him (cf Gal 1:4+, Titus 2:14+, 1 Pe 3:18+, 1 Jn 3:16+, Rev 1:5+). His death and resurrection are the key truths repeated in all three of Luke's mentions of the Passion ([see table](#)). Mark 10:34+ has "They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

Luke 24:7, 21+ saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."....21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

Bob Utley on the third day - In Jewish reckoning of time any part of a day was counted as a full day. Jesus died before 6 p.m. on Friday; therefore, that was one day. He was in the grave all of the Sabbath; that was day two. He arose sometime before sunrise on Sunday (remember Jews start their day at 6 p.m.); that was day three.

MacArthur - (Jesus') detailed knowledge of what would happen to Him in the future is another display of Christ's omniscience (cf. His knowledge of people's hearts [John 2:24-25; cf. Luke 6:8; 11:17]; the precise location of where a fish with a coin in its mouth would be [Matt. 17:27; cf. John 21:5-6]; that a woman whom He had met for the first time had had five husbands [John 4:18]; where the colt He would ride in the triumphal entry would be located and what its owners would say when the disciples took it [Luke 19:30-34]; that the disciples would meet a man carrying a pitcher who would show them the place where they would eat the Last Supper [Luke 22:10]; and that Jerusalem would be destroyed four decades later [Luke 21:20]).(See [Luke Commentary](#))

Paul includes the detail about Jesus' resurrection as a crucial truth in the message of the Gospel because no other world religion even claims to have a leader who rose from the dead...

1 Corinthians 15:3; 4+ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Comment: Scriptures in the NT refers to the Old Testament Scriptures because that is all they had written at that time. So the question is which OT Scriptures does Paul refer to? Psalm 16:10 says "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." In this passage Christ's resurrection is clearly alluded to and it was quoted with that intended meaning by Peter in Acts 2:27 and by Paul in Acts 13:35. Some (ESV Study Bible) see Hosea 6:2 as suggesting Christ's

resurrection on the third day but others (MacArthur) do not interpret this as a reference to His resurrection. A clear reference to the time of the resurrection is seen in Jonah 1:17 for Jesus Himself referred to it as the "sign of Jonah" declaring "just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Mt 12:40, cf Mt 16:4, Lk 11:29+).

Scourge (3146)(**mastigoo** from **mástix** = plague, whip, scourge) means literally to flog or scourge. The **scourge** was first a whip used as an instrument of punishment and then figuratively came to mean to punish severely or to drive as if by blows of a whip. (See a [Roman scourge](#))

Mattoon - Scourging was a brutal form of punishment which sometimes led to death. The victim was stripped of his clothes and tied to a post in a bent position. He was beaten with a whip with numerous leather strands which were about 18-24 inches in length. These strands were embedded with metal, bones, or glass and were tipped with hooks. The names "scorpion" or "cat-of-nine-tails" were given to these whips. Many times the scourging was not done by one man, but by a team of men that would take turns so they could rest. The skin on the sides of the person who was whipped was shredded, exposing muscle and bone. Severe blood loss and dehydration afflicted the one being whipped and many times they ended up dying. Under Jewish law, a person could be lashed not more than 39 times. Under Roman law, there was no limit on the lashings. Scourging was used to weaken the person for crucifixion. Without scourging, a strong, condemned man might survive on the cross for several days until exposure, wild animals, insects, or birds contributed to his death. The only allowable exemptions to scourging were women, Roman senators, or Roman soldiers (except in cases of desertion). Peter referred to the scourging of Jesus. "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds (STRIPES) you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24) The scourging of the Lord Jesus Christ was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. (Isa 50:6, 53:5, 52:13-14) ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

Luke 18:34 But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

Hendriksen - But they understood none of this; in fact, the (meaning of this) statement had been concealed from them, and they did not (even) begin to grasp what was said.

- Lu 2:50 Lk 9:45 Lk 24:25,45 Mk 9:32 Joh 10:6 12:16 16:1-19
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:28-34 What do You Get When You Follow Christ?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 18:31-34 Approaching the Cross with Determined Anticipation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE DISCIPLES THREE-FOLD FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND

A T Robertson says "It was a puzzling experience. No wonder that Luke tries three times to explain the continued failure of the apostles to understand Jesus. The words of Christ about his death ran counter to all their hopes and beliefs."

MacArthur - Critics see in this statement proof that Jesus never made this prediction. If He had, they argue, the disciples would surely have understood and not been surprised when what the Lord predicted came to pass. It is true that they did grasp some of the spiritual truth Jesus taught, such as the parables (Matt. 13:16-17). But there was a perfectly good reason that the disciples failed to grasp the Lord's teaching about His suffering and death: it failed to fit their messianic theology. They expected Messiah to be a king, who would defeat Israel's enemies and establish His kingdom. They were looking for a coronation, not a crucifixion; for a messiah who killed His enemies, not one who was killed by His own people. The idea of a crucified Messiah was an absurdity to them. It was so ridiculous that they could not even comprehend it. "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing," wrote Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:18. Thus "Christ crucified" was "to Jews a stumbling block" (1 Cor 1:23); a massive barrier that they could not get past. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

But - This is a sad term of contrast. The One Who is Truth personified is speaking truth to them and they simply don't "get it!"

THOUGHT -We need to see something here about understanding the word of God. It is possible to read the words and understand the words and have no clue as to what they actually mean in the scheme of things as it relates to the program of God. (David Thompson)

The disciples ([mathetes](#)) understood ([suniemi](#)) none of these things - Even Jesus' parents, Joseph and Mary, "did not understand ([suniemi](#)) the statement ("I had to be in My Father's house?"- Lk 2:49) which He had made to them." (Lk 2:50+). It is not until the Emmaus episode after His resurrection (Lk 24:13ff+), that the disciples understood for "Then He (Jesus) opened their minds to understand ([suniemi](#)) the Scriptures." (Lk 24:45+, cf Lk 24:25-26, 27+) **Understood** is active voice signifies a volitional choice, one the disciples did not willingly make (probably because they were so fixed on Jesus as a conquering King) and then the truth **was hidden** (as discussed below), this verb being passive voice indicating the hiding came from outside of themselves (divine passive).

A T Robertson explains that "The words of Christ about his death ran counter to all their hopes and beliefs."

Mattoon writes that "The light bulb did not come on in the minds of the disciples about His resurrection. It did, however, come on in the minds of the chief priests and Pharisees. They wanted the tomb guarded. (See Matthew 27:62-64)." ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

Leon Morris comments on this somewhat enigmatic verse - On the other side of the cross such sayings must have been very difficult. The disciples did not understand. Jesus said many paradoxical things and they probably reasoned, 'He cannot mean that he will literally die and rise. This must be something like the dying in order to live that he demands of us' (cf. Lk 17:33). It took the cross and the empty tomb to make them understand. For the present this saying **was hidden** from them, which may mean that they were prevented from understanding (ED: IT SEEMS THAT IS THE MOST NATURAL WAY TO INTERPRET THIS - AS POSB SAYS "THEY WOULDN'T, SO THEY COULDN'T!"). If so, the thought will be that their failure to grasp it had its place in God's purpose. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries -[The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

And the meaning of this statement was hidden ([krupto](#)) from them - **Hidden** is in the perfect tense which indicates that it was hidden at some point in time and remained hidden or concealed, although after His resurrection their spiritual eyes were opened by the Spirit. In view of the fact that **was hidden** is in the passive voice, it is almost certainly an example of the "divine passive," so somehow the significance of Jesus' passion prediction was kept veiled from the disciples. In the first direct mention of His passion Luke has a similar description of a three-fold failure to comprehend Jesus' words writing "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." But they did not **understand** (active voice) this statement, and it was **concealed** (perfect tense, passive voice, again likely the divine passive) from them so that they would not **perceive** it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement." (Luke 9:44-45+)

POSB - They understood none of these things. They would not accept nor understand the death of Christ literally. They refused to take His words at face value (ED: THIS SPEAKS OF A CHOICE); therefore, they did not understand these things. his saying **was hidden** from them. Since they **would not** literally accept His words, they **could not** understand. What He said was a puzzle, a mystery, a riddle. The meaning was completely hidden from them. The word "hid" (kekrummenon PWS: 1945) has the sense of completion in it. (Borrow [Luke Commentary](#))

Lawrence Richards agrees commenting that "Luke clearly implied that God Himself withheld understanding awaiting the right time. What a helpful reminder! Often those we teach or minister to, including our own children, seem unwilling to grasp and apply truths we know are vital. Despite all we say, they make unwise or foolish choices. While the reason may lie in their own willfulness, we must remember that it may simply be that it isn't yet God's time for them to understand. God often hides the meaning of what we teach until the time is right to reveal it. Let's deal graciously and patiently with others, as Jesus did with His disciples. If they seem slow or reluctant, let's consider the possibility that God has His own reasons for withholding understanding for a time." (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary](#))

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He wept over it (Lk 19:41) and said "If you (**ED: HE IS PERSONIFYING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM**) had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they **have been hidden ([krupto](#))** from your eyes." (Luke 19:42+)

And they did not comprehend the things that were said- Note that not is the strongest negation (ou, ouk) indicating they absolutely did not "get it!" **Comprehend** is [ginosko](#) meaning to know by experience, and in the imperfect tense means again and again they did not know, which is in keeping the fact that again and again they were told of His passion either directly or in allusions. And yet they kept on not comprehending or perceiving. John uses the same verb in explaining that "These things (referring specifically to the Zech 9:9 prophecy alluded to in Jn 12:14) His disciples did not **understand** at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him." (John 12:16)

Utley comments that "Many of Jesus' teachings did not make sense to the Apostles until after the resurrection and the coming of the

Spirit at Pentecost (cf. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13–15). They could not yet see the fullness of the gospel message because it was so different from what they had been taught and were expecting."

Rod Mattoon - Theologian Louis Lapidès states that when you look at the life of Jesus, you will find that He fulfilled 48 Old Testament prophecies including His birth by a virgin in Bethlehem, His betrayal, His bloody suffering and crucifixion. The odds that Jesus would fulfill all these predictions are astronomical. Statistical calculations by mathematician Peter Stoner confirm this. He found that the probability of any one person fulfilling forty-eight messianic prophecies is one chance in a trillion, 81 trillion, trillion... and seven more trillions! If you will not accept the Bible at face value, then accept the statistical calculations of mathematics which confirm that Jesus is the Messiah. Don't go through life with clueless sight. Realize what Jesus said is true. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

William MacDonald - It seems hard for us to understand why they were so dull in this matter, but the reason is probably this: Their minds were so filled with thoughts of a temporal deliverer who would rescue them from the yoke of Rome, and set up the kingdom immediately, that they refused to entertain any other program. We often believe what we want to believe, and resist the truth if it does not fit into our preconceived notions. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Tannehill has an interesting explanation of the apostles' **failure to understand** Jesus' clear words - The failure of the disciples to understand the necessity of Jesus' suffering and rejection involves the following interrelated defects: (1) a failure to understand God's plan as announced in Scripture, including God's way of working by using human opposition to fulfill the divine purpose; (2) a failure to accept rejection and suffering as a necessary part of discipleship; (3) a failure to reckon with the rejection of Jesus, resulting in premature, overly optimistic expectations for the immediate enjoyment of the messianic salvation; (4) rivalry over rank because of a failure to recognize that only those who devote their lives as servants can be great as Jesus is great. (Borrow [Robert C. Tannehill, The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts](#))

[David Thompson](#) has an interesting thought on the **dullness of the disciples** - There was a woman who was between flights at an airport, who went to a lounge and bought a small package of cookies. She then sat down and began reading a newspaper, waiting for her flight. Gradually she became aware of a rustling noise and from behind her paper she was flabbergasted to see a well-dressed businessman helping himself to her cookies. Not wanting to make a scene, the woman leaned over in front of the man and took a cookie herself. A minute or two later, she heard more rustling and sure enough the man was helping himself to another cookie. By this time, she had come to the end of the cookies in her package. She was so angry but she decided not to say a thing. Then when it came to the final cookie, the man broke it in half and gave her half. Just about that time her flight was announced and the woman opened her handbag to get her ticket. To her shock and amazement, there was her package of cookies, unopened in her purse. This woman had become so emotional that she lost sense of all reality. The man wasn't eating her cookies, she was eating his cookies. That is what losing track of truth will do. It will blind you. You will not see clearly or think accurately. The disciples of Jesus Christ were listening and learning. They apparently were losing sight of some reality pertaining to Jesus Christ. They could not grasp the fact that the whole program of God was contingent upon Jesus Christ going to the cross and dying as a sacrifice for sin. Even the best of disciples can get very confused. Certainly they loved the Lord, but they did not see things accurately. What we clearly see here is this: IT IS POSSIBLE FOR EVEN THE CLOSEST DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST TO MISUNDERSTAND AND MISINTERPRET THE WORD OF GOD AND WILL OF GOD IF THEY DO NOT STAY FOCUSED ON THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD. The death of Jesus Christ was one of the most predicted and critical prophetic moments in the entire program of God. This was not some small point of Biblical prophecy and eschatology. The death of Jesus Christ is the whole reason Jesus Christ came to this earth. It is the only way a sinful nation may be saved and it is the only way a sinful individual may be saved. These disciples were apparently so caught up with themselves that they actually did not or could not see and understand the whole truth of God. This is a critical point. We must always be about carefully and accurately understanding the whole counsel of God. No matter how long we have known the Lord, without a precise understanding of God's word we may be very distorted in our understanding of God's will....If ever there were a group of men who should have been tuned into the word and will of God, it should have been these twelve. He had been telling them that was God's plan multiple times prior to this (Luke 9:22, 44-45; 12:50; 13:32-34; 17:25). They knew Jesus better than anyone else. But the sad reality is, they had not been paying careful attention to everything Christ was saying and, as a result, their understanding was greatly lacking. Do not ever make the mistake of equating knowing Jesus Christ for many years with accurately knowing God's word and will. These are two distinct issues. Just because one has known the Lord for many years, does not mean that person really knows God's word well.

Understood (4920) ([suniemi](#) from [sun/syn](#) = with + [hiemi](#) = send; cf [sunesis](#)) literally means to send together or bring together. The idea is to put together "pieces of the puzzle" (so to speak) and to exhibit quick comprehension. **Suniemi** is the manifestation of the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them and thus describes the exercise of the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. The noun **sunesis** was originally used by Homer in the Odyssey to describe the running together or a flowing together of two rivers.

Suniemi - 25v - gained...insight(1), understand(17), understanding(1), understands(2), understood(5).

Matt. 13:13; Matt. 13:14; Matt. 13:15; Matt. 13:19; Matt. 13:23; Matt. 13:51; Matt. 15:10; Matt. 16:12; Matt. 17:13; Mk. 4:12; Mk. 6:52; Mk. 7:14; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 8:21; Lk. 2:50; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 18:34; Lk. 24:45; Acts 7:25; Acts 28:26; Acts 28:27; Rom. 3:11; Rom. 15:21; 2 Co. 10:12; Eph. 5:17

Was hidden (2928)(**krupto**; English = crypt, cryptic) is a verb meaning to cover, to hide, to conceal, to keep secret (either protectively or for selfish reasons) so as to keep it from being seen. In some contexts **krupto** means to hide so as to keep secret (eg, Lk 19:42). **Krupto** is used by Luke to describe leaven "**hid** in three pecks of flour." (Lk 13:21)

ILLUSTRATION - An e-mail message that was entitled "Things I Really Don't Understand" listed some questions for which there seems to be no clear-cut answer. Here are five of them:

- * Why do doctors and lawyers call what they do practice?
- * Why is abbreviation such a long word?
- * Why is it that when you're driving and looking for an address, you turn down the volume on your radio?
- * Why is a boxing ring square?
- * How do they get the deer to cross the highway at those yellow signs?

These questions represent a humorous reminder, that there are, indeed, a lot of things in this life that we just really don't understand. Such was the case with the Lord's disciples.

Luke 18:35 As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging.

- **As Jesus was approaching Jericho:** Mt 20:29,30 Mk 10:46,47
- **a blind man was sitting by the road begging** Lu 16:20,21 1Sa 2:8 Joh 9:8 Ac 3:2
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur
- [Bartimaeus - Cartoon for Children](#)

Related Passages:

The parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark add additional details (**Note that the bold font identifies details not in Luke's version**)

Mt 20:29-34 - As they were **leaving Jericho**, a **large crowd followed Him**. And **two blind men** sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on **us**, Son of David!" 31 The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, "**Lord**, Son of David, have mercy on **us**!" 3 And Jesus stopped and called **them**, and said, "**What do you want Me to do for you (plural)**?" 33 **They** said to Him, "Lord, **we want our eyes to be opened**." 34 **Moved with compassion**, Jesus **touched their eyes**; and immediately **they** regained **their** sight and followed Him.

A T Robertson's note on reconciling **leaving** Jericho by Matthew and Mark and **approaching** Jericho in Luke - Luke (Luke 18:35) places the incident as they were drawing near to Jericho (*eis Ierichō*). It is probable that Mark and Matthew refer to the **old Jericho**, the ruins of which have been discovered, while Luke alludes to the new Roman Jericho. The two blind men were apparently between the two towns. Mark (Mark 10:46) and Luke (Luke 18:35) mention only one blind man, Bartimaeus (Mark). In Kentucky there are two towns about a half mile apart both called Pleasureville (one Old Pleasureville, the other New Pleasureville). ([Matthew 20](#))

Mk 10:46-50+ (Mark's description is the most detailed and most vivid!) Then they came to Jericho. And as He was **leaving Jericho** with **His disciples and a large crowd**, a blind beggar named **Bartimaeus**, the **son of Timaeus**, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 And Jesus stopped and said, "**Call him here.**" **So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you."** 50 **Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.** 51 And answering him, Jesus said, "**What do you want Me to do for you?**" And the blind man said to Him, "**Rabboni**, (Equivalent to Luke's "Lord") I want to regain my sight!" 52 And Jesus said to him, "**Go; your faith has made you well.**" Immediately he regained his sight and

began following Him **on the road**

BARTIMAEUS THE BLIND MAN HEALED

J R Miller "It is said that when a certain French queen was journeying through her country, orders were given that no people in sadness or in trouble--blind, lame, or suffering--should be allowed anywhere along the way. The purpose was to keep from the sight of the gentlewoman everything that might cause her pain. When Jesus was journeying, however, no such commands were given. On the other hand, all kinds of sufferers thronged the waysides, and He never resented them as impertinent intrusions."

As Jesus was approaching Jericho - Since Lk 9:51 Jesus had been journeying toward His final goal, Jerusalem and the Passover (He was the **Passover Lamb** - 1Co 5:7, Jn 1:29 - play [Watch the Lamb](#)) and was now near the end, as Jerusalem was about 15 miles southwest of [Jericho](#). He had crossed the Jordan river from Perea into Judea on the road which passed through Jericho which was about 700 feet below sea level and was His last stop prior to beginning His ascent into the Holy City (Jerusalem was about 3,300 feet higher than Jericho - Thus in Lk 10:30+ "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho"). Matthew 20:29 is similar to Mark 10:46+ which says "He was **leaving Jericho** with **His disciples and a large crowd**" (See [Steven Cole's comments](#) on approaching and leaving Jericho). Notice Luke does not mention that the crowd was large.

Hendriksen on Jerusalem - Herod the Great—and later also Archelaus, his son—had strengthened and beautified this city, giving it a theater, amphitheater, villas, and baths. Even before the reign of Herod I it was already "a little paradise," with its palm trees, rose gardens, etc. Its winter climate was delightful, making it a winter residence fit for a king. Had not Mark Antony given it to Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen, as a token of his affection? ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Mattoon - Continuing on their journey toward Jerusalem, the disciples and Jesus, the Rose of Sharon, approached Jericho, the City of the Roses. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

MacArthur - Having come down from Galilee, they detoured, in the normal way, through [Perea](#), east of the Jordan River, to avoid traveling through [Samaria](#) (John 4:9). They then recrossed the Jordan near Jericho, from which they would make the six-hour ascent to Jerusalem. (Ibid)

It was an OT prophecy that the Messiah would heal the blind and the only person in Scripture who healed the blind was Jesus.

Ps 146:8 **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind**, The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous;

Isa 29:18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness **the eyes of the blind will see.**

Isa. 29:18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness **the eyes of the blind will see.**

Isa 35:5+ Then **the eyes of the blind will be opened** and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

Steven Cole comments - The second strand (FIRST WAS USE OF TITLE "SON OF DAVID" - [SEE BELOW](#)) that shows Jesus to be the promised Messiah is that He opens the eyes of the blind. Isaiah 35:5+ prophesied that Messiah would do such, and Jesus had cited that reference when he told the messengers of John the Baptist, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Lk 7:22-23+). In the Bible, only Jesus opened the eyes of the blind, and there are more of His recorded miracles in this category than any other. It shows Him to be the promised Messiah. The point is, it is important that our faith rest in Jesus as revealed in Scripture, not in a Jesus of our own imagination. The cults have invented false Christs, who do not match up to the Jesus of the Bible. Others subjectively make up a Jesus of their own liking. But we must believe in Jesus as revealed in Scripture.

Isa 42:7 **To open blind eyes**, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

Physical blindness was a metaphor of spiritual blindness (cf. Isa. 42:18–19; 59:9–10; John 9).

John 9:1-7, 35-41 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 "We must work

the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 **“While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”** 6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. ...35 Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” 36 He answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” 37 Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.” 38 And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him. 39 And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” 40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains. (cf prophecies of spiritual blindness Isa. 42:18–19; 59:9–10)

A blind man ([tuphlos](#)) was sitting by the road begging (epaiteo - present tense - continually) - Mark tells us that his name was Bartimaeus and Matthew tells us that there were two blind beggars healed that day, while Mark and Luke only mention one. Notice however, that neither Mark or Luke state that there was **ONLY ONE**. They simply choose to focus on the one who persisted in crying out to Jesus (Lk 18:39).

David Thompson has an interesting thought to ponder - It is hard to know why Luke decided to include this little episode with the blind man in this particular context. Perhaps it was because the disciples were blinded from understanding the truth of the Gospel (Luke 18:34). It may be that Jesus Christ wanted to illustrate that in their own blindness, they needed to call to Him so they might see and understand the truth of God. We know that Pharisees totally disregarded sinners.

MacArthur - Blindness, whether caused by birth defects, injury, or disease, was common in Israel (cf. Mt. 11:5; 15:30; 21:14), so common that Jesus used it to illustrate spiritual ignorance (e.g., Matt. 15:14; Luke 4:18; 14:13). Beggars also were numerous in Israel (cf. Luke 16:3; Acts 3:2, 10). The blind were despised and reduced to begging (cf. John 9:8), since their condition was considered to be God's judgment on their sin (John 9:1-2).

Mattoon on begging - Beggars often waited along the roads near cities because that was where they were able to contact the most people. Usually disabled in some way, beggars were unable to work for a living. Medical help was not available for their problems, and people tended to ignore their obligation to care for the needy. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

Adrian Rogers once quipped "Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

ISBE has an interesting note on **begging** among the Jews - It is significant that the Mosaic law contains no enactment concerning beggars, or begging, though it makes ample provision for the relief and care of "the poor in the land." Biblical Hebrew seems to have no term for professional begging, the nearest approach to it being the expressions "to ask (or seek) bread" and "to wander." This omission certainly is not accidental; it comports with the very nature of the Mosaic law, the spirit of which is breathed in this, among other kindred provisions, that a poor Hebrew who even sold himself for debt to his wealthy brother was allowed to serve him only until the Jubilee (See [JUBILEE](#)), and his master was forbidden to treat him as a slave (Leviticus 25:39). **These laws, as far as actually practiced, have always virtually done away with beggars and begging among the Jews.** (From [Beg: Beggar; Begging - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#))

Blind ([5185](#))([tuphlos](#) from [tuphlóo](#) = envelop with smoke, be unable to see clearly) can refer to literal blindness (Mt 9:27, 28; 11:5; 12:22; Lk 7:21, 22; Jn 9:1, 2, 3; Acts 13:11; Lv 19:14; Job 29:15) but more often is used to describe spiritual blindness. Figuratively then [tuphlos](#) picture one's mind as blind, ignorant, stupid, slow of understanding, being unable to understand, incapable of comprehending (see Mt 15:14; 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26; Lk 4:18; Jn 9:39,40,41; Ro 2:19; 2 Pe 1:9; Rev 3:17; Isa 42:16,18,19; 43:8) This sense speaks of both mental and spiritual blindness, often the result of self-deception so that one is unable to understand (spiritual truth). The Greek writers used [tuphlos](#) to describe those who were "mentally blind".

Begging ([TEXTUS RECEPTUS](#))(present tense = his lifestyle)([4319](#))([prosaiteo](#) from [pros](#) = toward, to, intensifies + [aiteo](#) = ask with sense of urgency even to point of demanding) means to ask earnestly, to solicit, to [importune](#). In [Textus Receptus](#) Mk 10:46, Lk 18:35, John 9:8.

Begging ([NESTLE-ALAND](#))([1871](#)) (present tense = his lifestyle)([epaiteo](#) from [epi](#) = on, upon + [aiteo](#) = ask with sense of urgency) means to strictly to ask for more and so to beg. To beg as a mendicant. In [Nestle-Aland](#) Mk 10:46, Lk 18:35, John 9:8. Used in Septuagint only in Ps 109:10.

Related Resources:

- [How should a Christian respond to beggars? | GotQuestions.org](#)

- [Beg; Beggar; Begging - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Blindness](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Blind](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Blindness](#)
- Spurgeon's Illustration Collection [Worldliness: Its Blinding Influence](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Blindness](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Blindness](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Blindness](#) [Blindness \(2\)](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Blindness](#)

Steven Cole addresses Luke's **approaching Jericho** and Matthew and Mark's **leaving Jericho** which seem to be contradicting descriptions -

There have been numerous solutions proposed, but before I mention some of them, let me point out that the variance indicates that Luke was not relying on either Matthew or Mark as his source, or the accounts would line up. Also, we are dealing with eyewitness accounts of what happened. Matthew was there personally; Mark got his story from Peter, who was there; and Luke carefully researched his account from eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4). Sometimes, eyewitness accounts of the same event can vary greatly and yet all be true. We may lack sufficient information to piece it all together, but it would be arrogant for us, from our limited perspective, to pronounce that one of the authors was in error.

Here, then, are several proposed solutions. Some say that Jesus was leaving old Jericho and about to enter the rebuilt Jericho when this incident occurred. This view is possible, but the problem is that old Jericho was not inhabited in Jesus' day, and thus it would be unusual to speak of Jesus leaving the ruins as if He were leaving the city itself. Others propose that a two-part event was condensed into one account. Bartimaeus cried out as Jesus entered the city, tagged along with the crowd, and eventually was heard by Jesus and healed along with the other beggar as Jesus left the city. Another variation is that Jesus entered and passed through the city when He encountered Zaccheus (Lk 19:1). When Zaccheus responded, Jesus turned to go back into the city, at which point He met Bartimaeus. Thus, depending on how you view it, Jesus had left the city or was entering it. Luke merely separates the accounts for his purposes.

However you resolve it, both this story (which is Luke's last miracle) and the next (about Zaccheus) are examples of how the nation should have responded to her Messiah. Bartimaeus and Zaccheus line up with the publican in Jesus' parable (Lk 18:9-17), who cried out to God for mercy. They stand in contrast to the Pharisee in the parable and the rich young ruler (Lk 18:18-27), who both tried to approach God based on their own merit. **The Pharisee and the rich young ruler were likely candidates for salvation who missed it because they trusted in themselves and refused to acknowledge their sin. Bartimaeus and Zaccheus were unlikely candidates for salvation who obtained it through faith in God's mercy, apart from anything in themselves.** Thus Luke uses this unlikely blind beggar to teach us that...When Jesus passes by, we should cry out to Him in faith and He will be merciful to us. ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

QUESTION - [Matthew 20:29-34 says Jesus healed two blind men as He left Jericho. Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43 say He healed one man as He entered Jericho. Is this a contradiction?](#)

ANSWER - In spite of apparent discrepancies, these three passages do refer to the same incident. The Matthew account cites two men healed as Jesus left Jericho. Mark and Luke refer to only one blind man healed, but Luke says it happened as Jesus was entering Jericho while Mark records it happening as He left Jericho. There are legitimate explanations for the apparent discrepancies. Let's look at them rather than deciding this is a contradiction and the Bible is in error.

That this is the same incident is seen in the similarity of the accounts, beginning with the two beggars sitting on the roadside. They call out to Jesus, referring to Him as "Son of David" (Matthew 20:30; Mark 10:48; Luke 18:38), and in all three accounts, they are rebuked by those nearby and told to be quiet but continue to shout out to Jesus (Matthew 20:31; Mark 10:48; Luke 18:39). The three accounts describe nearly identical conversations between Jesus and the beggars and the conclusions of the stories are also identical. The beggars receive their sight immediately and follow Jesus.

Only Mark chooses to identify one of the beggars as Bartimaeus, perhaps because Bartimaeus was known to Mark's readers, or they knew Bartimaeus's father, Timaeus, whereas the other blind man was a stranger to them. In any case, the fact that Mark and Luke only mention one beggar does not contradict Matthew's account. Mark and Luke never say there was *only* one beggar. They simply focus on the one, Bartimaeus, who was probably the more vocal of the two. Matthew refers to both of the blind men calling out to

Jesus, clearly indicating there were two.

The other issue in question is whether Jesus was entering Jericho or leaving it. Bible commentators cite the fact that at that time there were two Jerichos—one the mound of the ancient city (still existing today) and the other the inhabited city of Jericho. Therefore, Jesus could have healed the two men as He was leaving the ancient city of Jericho and entering the new city of Jericho.

In any case, to focus on these minor details to the exclusion of all else is to miss the point of the story—Jesus healed the blind men, proving that He was indeed the Son of God with powers beyond anything a mortal man could have. Unlike the Pharisees who refused to see what was before their eyes, our response to Jesus should be the same as that of the blind men—call on Him to give us eyes to see spiritual truth, recognize Him for who He is, and follow Him. GotQuestions.org

Related Resources:

- [Does the Bible contain errors, contradictions, or discrepancies? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What is spiritual blindness? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

Kaiser on Matthew's mention of 2 (demon possessed men, donkeys, blind men) - The second preliminary issue is that Matthew mentions two demonized men, while Mark and Luke mention only one. This is a common problem in Matthew. For example, in Matthew 9:27 and Matthew 20:30 he mentions two blind men where the other Gospels mention only one, and in Matthew 21:2, 6 he says that two donkeys were brought to Jesus while the other Gospels mention only one. In each case it is not at all unlikely that two (or more) were present. Blind beggars (and other types as well) would group at city gates, a donkey young enough not to have been used for work would likely be with its mother, and more than one demonized person might find refuge in the same groups of tombs. But even if there is no necessity of seeing a historical problem, we may wonder why Matthew would mention two when one seems to do for the others. While other answers also may suffice, one reason is that Matthew's interest in the miracles is due to his Christology. That is, the miracles show the power of Christ. By mentioning two he heightens that power. The healing of one may have been a coincidence, but not the healing of two. Similarly, if two donkeys are brought to Jesus, the significance of his fulfillment of the Scriptures is underlined. ([Go to page 335](#))

Luke 18:36 Now hearing a crowd going by, he began to inquire what this was.

- **he began to inquire what this was:** Lu 15:26 Mt 21:10,11 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

Now hearing a crowd going by - Matthew and Mark say the crowd was large (Mt 20:29, Mk 10:46). The ears of blind people are much more aware of the sounds and he knew these sounds were different. Of course a large crowd would make considerable noise.

He began to inquire ([punthanomai](#) - imperfect tense = again and again, persistently) **what this was** - The fact that **inquire** is in the imperfect tense pictures him asking again and again, as if his initial inquiries received no attention. Nevertheless, he persisted to ask "What's going on?" Is his repeated inquiry is significant. He was not going to let Jesus pass without engaging Him.

THOUGHT - How tragic that so many spiritually blind souls are wandering aimlessly through life oblivious to their desperate need for a Saving Shepherd! Something was moving in this physically blind man's soul.

Rod Mattoon - "As the day progressed, something happened that was not in the ordinary. The beggar's acute hearing heard in the distance the commotion of a crowd approaching. He could tell it was a large crowd by the sound of the many voices. Is it a fight? No, that's not it. Then he hears the swift pitter-patter of a boy running by him, crying out in a loud excited voice to his friend to come and see what was happening. The blind man, perhaps brushed by a robe, reached out and asked, "Friend, what is happening? What is going on?" (Mattoon [Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

Inquire (ask) (4441) [punthanomai](#) means to **inquire**, ask, seek to learn usually from someone (Mt 2:4; Lk 15:26; 18:36; Jn 4:52; Acts 4:7; 10:18, 29; 21:33; 23:19f. The word carries the sense of asking by inquiry, rather than asking by making a request to receive something. (2). To learn by inquiry, to find out by inquiry (Acts 23:34). When the twins Jacob and Esau struggled in the womb, Rebekah "went to **inquire** of the LORD." (Ge 25:22).

Gilbrant - In classical Greek the word is used in four related ways. The first is to learn from a person. The second is to hear and thereby to learn. The third is to make an inquiry. The fourth is to ask for something from

another (Liddell-Scott). The classical usage is much softer than the later New Testament meaning of "demand." **Punthanomai** appears in the Septuagint on several occasions, generally indicating an inquiry of any sort. Concerned over the jostling of Jacob and Esau in her womb, Rebekah "inquired" of the Lord (Genesis 25:22). When he saw great piles of tithed items, Hezekiah "asked" the priest about them (2 Chronicles 31:9). A certain Heliodorus, upon arriving in Jerusalem, inquired about the situation there (2 Maccabees 3:9). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Luke 18:37 They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

- **They told him** : Mk 2:1-3 Joh 12:35,36 2Co 6:2 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- **Jesus of Nazareth was passing by**: Lu 2:51 Mt 2:23 Joh 1:45 19:19 Ac 2:22 4:10
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

BARTIMAEUS RECOGNIZES A SMALL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by ([parerchomai](#)) - This is all he need to hear! This was the opportunity of a lifetime! But it was a "passing" (pun intended) opportunity (as are most opportunities).

The word **OPPORTUNITY** is derived from the Latin "**ob portu**." In ancient times before modern harbors, ships had to wait for the timing of the tide before they could make it safely to port. Thus "OB PORTU," described the ship waiting "FOR PORT," ready to seize the crucial moment when it could ride the tide into safe harbor. The captain knew that if he missed the passing tide, the ship would have to wait for another tide to come in. God gives each of us many "ob portu's", but we must be spiritually wise and Spirit filled in order to see and seize them. As Charles Swindoll said "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities (ob portu's) brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." Shakespeare's famous line from Julius Caesar conveys the same thought: "There is a tide in the affairs of men (an "ob portu"), Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures." In short, Bartimaeus had a deep sense that this was an "opportune time," his small "window of opportunity!" (cf 2 Cor 6:2, Isa 55:6) (From Redeem the Time)

Jesus ([lesous](#)) **of Nazareth** - Yes, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but in that time a man was usually associated with the town in which he had been raised when for Jesus was Nazareth - Matthew 2:23 (Jesus) "came and lived in a city called **Nazareth**. Nazareth was considered to be a town of little significance. For example, "Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip *said to him, "Come and see." (Jn 1:46) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a **Nazarene**." (Cf Mt 26:71; Jn 1:45; Acts 10:38; 26:9; Mk 14:67; Lk 24:19; Jn 18:5; Acts 2:22; 6:14) Peter summarized Jesus' 3 year ministry declaring "You know of **Jesus of Nazareth**, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

Jesus of Nazareth - 7x in 7v - Matt. 26:71; Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34; Lk. 18:37; Jn. 1:45; Acts 10:38; Acts 26:9

The alternate Name is **Jesus the Nazarene** - 9x in 9v - Mk. 10:47; Mk. 14:67; Mk. 16:6; Lk. 24:19; Jn. 18:5; Jn. 18:7; Jn. 19:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 22:8

Jesus was on a one way trip to the Cross. This would be the last time He would be passing by the blind beggar's location in Jericho. Perhaps the beggar sensed this great urgency and realized that he must seek Jesus now or never. We see this thought expressed in Isaiah 55:6...

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near." (He may not always be near!)

Dear reader - "If you do not know the Lord, you have right now an opportunity for your life to be changed. **Jesus is passing by, if you please**. You have an opportunity for your eternal destiny to be changed from Hell to Heaven. Your sins can be forgiven by asking Christ to forgive you and by putting your faith in Him. Realize you won't always have this opportunity. When you die, it will be gone. This is why Paul urged the lost to trust in the Lord now. 2 Corinthians 6:2." (Mattoon [Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

Was passing by ([3928](#))([parerchomai](#)) from **para** = beside, near + **erchomai** = come, go) means to pass near, pass by or pass

away and is used literally (as in this passage) and figurative (e.g. of the Law not passing away - Mt 5:18). This verb describes Jesus in Mark 6:48 = "Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He *came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to **pass by** them." In Mt 8:28 it describes two demons who "were so extremely violent that no one could **pass by** that way."

Parechomai - 26v - came along(1), come(2), disregard(1), late(1), neglected(1), over(1), pass(5), pass away(14), passed away(1), passing(2), past(1). Matt. 5:18; Matt. 8:28; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 24:34; Matt. 24:35; Matt. 26:39; Matt. 26:42; Mk. 6:48; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 13:31; Mk. 14:35; Lk. 11:42; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 16:17; Lk. 17:7; Lk. 18:37; Lk. 21:32; Lk. 21:33; Acts 16:8; Acts 24:7; Acts 27:9; 2 Co. 5:17; Jas. 1:10; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 3:10

Blind people can comprehend things people with sight cannot comprehend as shown by this story in Luke But it is also true in general - "Blind people can easily comprehend speech that is sped up far beyond the maximum rate that sighted people can understand. When we speak rapidly we are verbalizing at about six syllables per second. That hyperactive radio announcer spewing fine print at the end of a commercial jabbars at 10 syllables per second, the absolute limit of comprehension for sighted people. Blind people, however, can comprehend speech sped up to 25 syllables per second. Human beings cannot talk this fast!" ([Scientific American](#))

ILLUSTRATION - Steven Cole - David Brainerd, the 18th century missionary to the American Indians, was once witnessing to a chief who was close to trusting in Christ. But he held back. Brainerd got up, took a stick, drew a circle in the dirt around the chief, and said, "Decide before you cross that line." Why was Brainerd so urgent? Because he recognized that Jesus was passing by that chief at that moment. He might never be so close again. ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

Luke 18:38 And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

- **Jesus:** Ps 62:12 Isa 9:6,7 Isa 11:1 Jer 23:5 Mt 9:27 12:23 15:22 21:9,15 Mt 22:42-45 Ro 1:3 Rev 22:16 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

SON OF DAVID A MESSIANIC TITLE

And he called (boao) out, saying - Luke uses **boao** which can be a loud cry or shout, expressing strong emotion (see below). Matthew's parallel (Mt 20:30) uses **krazo** (also used in Lk 18:39) which describes a loud cry expressing deep emotion, crying out harshly, often with an inarticulate and brutish sound. **Krazo** is [onomatopoeic](#), the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry or croak of the raven. The verb **boáo** especially conveys the idea of a cry for help. Both of these verbs give us a vivid word picture of this scene -- imagine yourself following behind Jesus and all of sudden a blind beggar begins crying out ([listen to this raven and think about the beggar](#))! It probably is Bartimaeus, but Matthew tells us there were two blind men.

Jesus, Son of David - He uses the Name Jesus, which means Jehovah Saves. Using the title **Son of David** (found most often in Matthew) he is clearly addressing Jesus with a known Messianic title, one which describes Him as the heir of David's throne and the One Who would fulfill the Covenant God made with David. This would suggest that this man had an element of faith, for he is in essence confessing Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One (cf the confession in Romans 10:9-10+). Notice he calls Jesus "Lord" in Lk 18:41 which seems to reflect more than his respect, but his faith, which Jesus affirms (Lk 18:42). It is also worth noting that in the Gospel of Luke it is only this blind man who acknowledges Jesus as **Son of David** (Jesus used this term Himself in Lk 20:41), reflecting the fact that while physically blind, he had the more important vision which was spiritual!

Constable - "Son of David" was a messianic title that expressed the man's faith in Jesus as Israel's Messiah (cf. Lk 1:27, 32; 2 Sa 7:8-16; Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23-24). Like the tax collector (v. 13), he called out for mercy without claiming any merit. His insistence reflected his belief that Jesus could help him and his hope that Jesus would help him. Opposition only made him more adamant in his desire.

Notice the [paradox](#) in this passage - a blind beggar is the one who [recognizes](#) Jesus as the Messiah!

(Yahweh speaks these words to His prophet Nathan to in turn speak to King David) "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you (SOLOMON), who will

come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever** (THIS WAS NOT SOLOMON WHO GAVE RISE TO A TEMPORARY DIVIDED KINGDOM BUT IS ULTIMATELY A REFERENCE TO THE MESSIAH - cf "from then on and forevermore" in Isa 9:6-7+). (2 Sa 7:12-13)

Mattoon - The title, **Son of David**, refers to God's promise to King David that he would have a descendant who would have an eternal throne and be the Messiah King. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

(The angel speaking to Mary declaring) "He (JESUS) will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and **the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David** 33 and **He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.**" (Lk 1:32, 33+)

It is ironic that while most of the nation of Israel was blind to the presence of the Messiah, two other blind men had the spiritual insight to recognize and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, the "**Son of David**"...

Matthew 9:27+ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, **Son of David!**"

Son of David is used 16 times in the NT all in the Gospels but most often in Matthew which was addressed to a Jewish audience who would be familiar with the fact that Son of David was a title of their long expected Messiah - Mt. 1:1 (IN JESUS' GENEALOGY), Mt 1:20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9,15; 22:42; Mk. 10:47-48; 12:35; Lk. 3:31; 18:38-39

It is almost certain the beggar used **Son of David** as a title of the Messiah, for during His ministry those names had become synonyms...

Mark 11:9; 10 (JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY IN WHICH CROWDS THOUGHT MESSIAH WAS COMING - WHICH HE WAS!) Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna! (= "Save Now" ~ Save us from the Roman Oppression) BLESSED IS **HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; (QUOTING FROM Ps 118:25-26 PART OF THE HALLEL ["PRAISE] SUNG AT JEWISH FESTIVALS, ESPECIALLY THE PASSOVER) 10 Blessed is **the coming kingdom of our father David**; Hosanna in the highest!" (THE JEWISH CROWDS ACKNOWLEDGED JESUS AS THE MESSIAH SON OF DAVID [cf Mt 21:9 = "The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "**Hosanna to the Son of David.**"] AND HE LET THEM DO IT!. THEY THOUGHT HE WAS BRINGING IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM WHICH THEY KNEW HAD BEEN PROMISED TO DAVID'S SON!) (As an eschatological aside - The date of Messiah's "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem was Monday, 10 Nisan, 30 AD, exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes - SEE Da 9:24+, Da 9:25+, Da 9:26+).

Mark 12:35-37 And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that **THE CHRIST** (TRANSLATION OF OT HEBREW WORD FOR MESSIAH) is the **SON OF DAVID**? 36 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'THE LORD (JEHOVAH) SAID TO MY (DAVID'S) LORD (ADONAI), "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET.'" (Quoting Ps 110:1 A MESSIANIC PSALM) 37 "**David** himself calls Him '**Lord**'; so in what sense is He his son?" And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

Comment: David pictures Jehovah (Yahweh) speaking to the Messiah, Whom David in turn calls his **Lord**. The Jewish religious leaders recognized Psalm 110 as clearly Messianic.

Robertson comments - The scribes all taught that the Messiah was to be the **son of David** (John 7:41-42). The people in the Triumphal Entry had acclaimed Jesus as the **son of David** (Matthew 21:9). But the rabbis had overlooked the fact that **David** in Psalm 110:1 called the **Messiah** his **Lord** also. The deity and the humanity of the Messiah are both involved in the problem. Matthew 22:45 observes that "no one was able to answer him a word." (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

A CRY FOR MERCY

Have mercy (eleeo) on me - **Mercy** always involves help to those who are in need or distress. We have already seen the cry of the tax collector was "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" (Lk 18:13+). This beggar was not pleading from merit but because of his desperate need. Pleading mercy is humbling, but is a good pattern for all of us to emulate, for as sinners we too were once all spiritually blind and condemned to eternal darkness and separation from the Light of the world! Here was a man that was in the dark, and yet he was crying out in faith to the Light of the world and as a result received not only his sight but "the Light of life!" (Jn

The verb **have mercy** ([eleeo](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) is a command in Greek but in this context is not a demand that presumes authority over Jesus, but rather a reverent and urgent appeal to Him, expressing their deep need and their faith (believing He has the power to show mercy). One might paraphrase it something like "Please, Lord—do this!" As such it reflects more of a cry for help than a command to control. In Jewish prayer tradition, especially in the Psalms, it's very common to find imperative forms addressed to God. For example in Psalm 51:1 David prayed "Have mercy on me, O God" which is an imperative in Hebrew (חַנּוּן). However David clearly was not being irreverent, but rather was desperately appealing to the One He knew could show him mercy. And in our present passage note that Jesus does not rebuke their use of the imperative but in fact He responds to it with compassion and healing. Their urgent plea is met with divine mercy.

*"Never plead merit when asking God for things,
always plead mercy."*

William MacDonald writes "It was a good thing that Bartimaeus sought the Lord that day because the Savior never passed that way again!" (See [Believer's Bible Commentary - Page 1281](#))

THOUGHT - Dear reader, if you have yet to see yourself at a sinner bound for Hell, then you need to repent and believe the Good News that Jesus will deliver you from having to go to Hell and you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. So today Jesus is passing by your heart. Cry out for His mercy. Beg Him for spiritual sight. And by all means DO NOT put off today what you may not be able to do tomorrow, because Jesus may never pass by your heart again. (2 Cor 6:2).

THOUGHT - Beloved, it strikes me that it is not just the blind man who needed to cry "have mercy on me," but it is me, it is you, for daily we commit sins of thought, word and deed, some we are not aware of, some that sadly are presumptive, but daily we too are like this blind beggar and should frequently find ourselves crying out for mercy from Jesus our great High Priest "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that **we may receive mercy** and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:15-16+). Rich Mullins has a great song entitled [Let Mercy Lead](#). May God grant you a few minutes to listen to the song, and then listen to the Spirit, in Jesus' Name. Amen

As someone said "Never plead merit when asking God for things, always plead mercy." Salvation is not rooted in the merit of man — but in the mercy of God.

Justice is God giving us what we deserve.

Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve.

Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve.

One of these days *the dam of God's mercy* will give way to His *justice*.

Adrian Rogers adds that "**Mercy** is sympathy with legs."

Called ([994](#)) (**boao** from **boé** = to cry) means raise a cry aloud or shout by using one's voice with high volume. Crying out was in the context of one seeking help or assistance. Some uses mean simply a loud cry but in some of these situations the cry reflects a state of agitation. Of John the Baptist "crying in the wilderness" (Mt 3:3, Mk 1:3, Lk 3:4, Jn 1:23). Of Jesus crying out to His Father from the Cross (Mk 15:34). Of persons crying out to Jesus for help (Lk 9:38, Lk 18:7, 38). Of unclean spirits coming out of people (Acts 8:7). The Greeks used **boáo** to describe the sound of certain things such as the wind and waves (to sound, resound, roar, howl). Matthew's verb *krazo* depicts him screaming this Name at the top of his lungs so to speak! He is desperate! Jesus is passing by and will soon be out of ear shot!

Boao - 12v - **called(1), cried(1), cry(1), crying(4), loudly declaring(1), shout(1), shouted(1), shouting(2).**

Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Mk. 15:34; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 9:38; Lk. 18:7; Lk. 18:38; Jn. 1:23; Acts 8:7; Acts 17:6; Acts 25:24; Gal. 4:27

Have mercy on me ([1653](#)) ([eleeo](#) from [eleos](#)) means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." Describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need. It indicates being moved to pity and compassion by tragedy and includes the fear that this could happen to me. To see someone in dire need (including one who may not deserve the misfortune), to have compassion on them, and to give help to remove the need. Matthew 20:34 says Jesus responds in kind for He was "**Moved with compassion** ([splanchnizomai](#) - feeling sympathy, taking pity)," this same verb used to describe Jesus' response in Lk 7:13. [Splanchnizomai](#) described the Samaritan's

reaction in Lk 10:33 and finally the father's reaction when he saw his prodigal son from afar (Lk 15:20). Every God does for His sinful creatures is based on His boundless compassion (cf Titus 3:4-5+)

Luke's uses of **eleeo** - Rich man in Hades = Lk. 16:24; Ten lepers = Lk. 17:13; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39;

Related Resources:

- [What is the story of blind Bartimaeus?](#)
- [Why doesn't God respond when I cry out, "God, please help me!"?](#)

Luke 18:39 Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

BGT Luke 18:39 καὶ οἱ προγόντες πετμῶν αὐτὸν αἰγίσσαντες ὁπολλὸν κρᾶζεν· οὐ Δαυὶδ, λήσιν με.

KJV Luke 18:39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

NET Luke 18:39 And those who were in front scolded him to get him to be quiet, but he shouted even more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

CSB Luke 18:39 Then those in front told him to keep quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

ESV Luke 18:39 And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

NIV Luke 18:39 Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

NLT Luke 18:39 "Be quiet!" the people in front yelled at him. But he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

NRS Luke 18:39 Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

- **Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet** Lu 18:15 8:49 11:52 19:39 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- **but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"** Lu 11:8-10 18:1 Ge 32:26-28 Ps 141:1 Jer 29:12,13 Mt 7:7 26:40-44 2Co 12:8
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

EARNEST SEEKING OF THE SAVIOR

Those who led the way - Apparently those who had to job of controlling the crowds. Mark's version (Mk 10:48) says it was not just a few but "**MANY**" and Matthew's version (Mt 20:31) say it was a "**CROWD**" trying to silence this beggar they perceived as a "[rabble rouser](#)." When a sin sick soul begins to seek Christ, don't be surprised at the opposition sounded by the skeptics! And dear reader if you are a seeker, do not be surprised that the majority will not be for you but against you when you seek the Lord, for the majority are themselves not on the right road (cf Mt 7:13, 14+). Notice also where the opposition to this blind beggar came from -- from those who were "following" Jesus! How often I have seen an older believer try to throw a damp blanket on the enthusiasm of a new convert.

Were sternly telling ([epitimao](#) - scolded) **him to be quiet** ([sigao](#)) - NLT = they "yelled at him." **Were sternly telling** is in the ([imperfect tense](#) indicating that they were telling him again and again. He matches them with his loud cries (see below). The tragedy in this scene is that those who were following Jesus had little if any of the compassion which moved their Master (see Mt 20:34)! (As a follower of Christ how am I doing in regard to demonstrating His compassion? Ouch!) The crowd shows their utter [disdain](#) (lack of respect accompanied by a feeling of intense dislike) for this lowly, despised beggar. He is of no value in their eyes, but not thank God, every "lowly, despised" soul is precious in the sight of the Creator and He wishes for none to perish! (cf 2Pe 3:9+) This

physically blind man saw more than the spiritually blind crowd who tried to prevent him from crying out to Jesus!

THOUGHT - By way of application it is notable that opposition to this blind beggar's seeking of Christ is a picture of the sure Satanic opposition experienced by all who seek Christ for healing of their spiritual blindness. If you have ever shared the Gospel with individuals, you are well aware of this spiritual opposition. But the certainty of opposition must not stop us from endeavoring to move ahead with sharing the Gospel with the soul which God's Spirit has placed on our heart.

Steven Cole - Whenever you trust in God, you will encounter **hindrances**. Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus in faith, and the crowd sternly told him to shut up (Lk 18:39). But the more they told him to be quiet, the louder he shouted. This was his one opportunity to be healed, and he wasn't about to sit there passively. He persisted until Jesus heard him. He was like the widow in Jesus' parable at the start of this chapter (Lk 18:1-8). She kept hounding the judge until he granted her request. ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

NET Note - The crowd's view was that surely Jesus would not be bothered with someone as unimportant as a blind beggar.

But (term of contrast) **he kept crying out** ([krazo](#)) **all the more**, "**Son of David, have mercy (eleeo) on me!**" - Kept crying out is [imperfect tense](#) indicating he was shrieking loudly over and over, even as the crowd kept telling him again and again to shut up! Don't you love the phrase "**all the more!**" This man was persistent! Opposition only inspired him more! He could not be silenced in seeking Jesus' help! (May his persistence in seeking the Savior be true of us beloved!) Apparently he believed Jesus was the Messiah Who alone could heal him. "His heart had seen the light before his eyes did." (MacArthur) It is also interesting that opposition did not alter his "doctrine," for he continued to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah crying **Son of David**.

THOUGHT - When opposition comes, may the Spirit enable us to imitate this blind beggar and not recant or in any way change our convictions about Jesus.

David Thompson - It is interesting to observe the verbs "Call" (18:38) and "Cry" (18:39). They are two different distinct words. "Call" refers to articulate calling. "Cry" refers to emotional crying. In other words, the more the blind man was told to be quiet, the more emotional he became in crying out to the Lord. This blind man sensed the urgency of the moment. If Christ would have made it into Jericho, this opportunity would have passed him by.

Bartimaeus was a man with a desperate need,
a knowledge of the need,
and a determination to have it met.

Steven Cole - Bartimaeus didn't cry, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on *us*." According to Matthew, there were two of them. It might have been more polite to ask for healing for both. But each man had to come on his own. Bartimaeus could have thought, "I'm a Jew, a son of Abraham." He could have tried to get this blessing on the group plan. But he didn't. Generic faith won't do. The only way anyone can come to Christ is to cry out, "Jesus, have mercy on *me*. I'm the sinner. I'm the spiritually blind one. Lord, please be gracious to *me*!" ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

NET Note - Public opinion would not sway the blind man from getting Jesus' attention. The term shouted is strong as it can be used of animal cries.

Whether the blind beggar knew the OT prophetic passage in the book of Joel we cannot say, but we can say he put it into action! Joel 2:32+ says "it will come about that **whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered**" and is such a great promise that is quoted by Peter (Acts 2:21+) and by Paul (Ro 10:13+). Play Rich Mullins' great song [My Deliverer](#) especially the line "My Deliverer is coming. My Deliverer is standing by."

Sternly telling (2008)([epitimao](#)) means to express strong disapproval of someone, reproving or censuring them. This is the very verb the disciples used to discourage parents from bringing their children to Jesus (Lk 18:15). **Epitimao** is the word used by Jesus to rebuke demons (Lk 4:35, 41, 9:42), fever (Lk 4:39), the wind and waves (Lk 8:24), His disciples James and John (Lk 9:55).

Epitimao - 30v - **rebuke(6), rebuked(13), rebuking(3), sternly telling(2), sternly told(1), warned(5)**. Matt. 8:26; Matt. 12:16; Matt. 16:20; Matt. 16:22; Matt. 17:18; Matt. 19:13; Matt. 20:31; Mk. 1:25; Mk. 3:12; Mk. 4:39; Mk. 8:30; Mk. 8:32; Mk. 8:33; Mk. 9:25; Mk. 10:13; Mk. 10:48; Lk. 4:35; Lk. 4:39; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 9:21; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 9:55; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 18:15; Lk. 18:39; Lk. 19:39; Lk. 23:40; 2 Tim. 4:2; Jude 1:9

Be quiet (4601) [sigao](#) from **signe** = silence) meant to be silent, to "hold one's peace", to keep in silence or keep secret. The idea is to say nothing, keep still, keep silent (eg, [Lk 9:36](#)) or to stop speaking (eg, [Lk 18:39](#)). In the passive voice sigao means to be kept in silence. Finally, sigao can convey idea of keeping something from becoming known, to be concealed or to be kept secret (the only NT use with this meaning being here in [Ro 16:25](#))

Sigao -10v - became silent(1), keep silent(3), kept secret(1), kept silent(2), quiet(1), silent(1), stopped speaking(1). Lk. 9:36; Lk. 18:39; Lk. 20:26; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:12; Acts 15:13; Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 14:28; 1 Co. 14:30; 1 Co. 14:34

Kept crying out (2896) **krazo** refers to a loud cry or vociferation, and is a strong word expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those [onomatopoeic](#) words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven ([listen](#)), and can be an inarticulate and brutish sound or an exclamation of fear or pain. Abbott-Smith says "generally used of inarticulate cries, *to scream, cry out* (Aesch., etc.)." It is used of the cry of an animal, the barking of a dog and two men in a quarrel, trying to bawl each other down (so Aristophanes, Knights, 1017)" "The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish, cries over Israel" (Morison)" **Krazō** was also a technical, rabbinic term to refer to the loud summons of a prophet, needing to be heard. In Lk 18:39+ the blind beggar cried "to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek." (You can almost hear him shrieking! He is motivated because he is blind and thinks this Man might help him see!)

Krazo - 55x in 54v -Mt 8:29; 9:27; 14:26, 30; 15:22f; 20:30f; 21:9, 15; 27:23, 50; Mark 3:11; 5:5, 7; 9:24, 26; 10:47f; 11:9; 15:13f; Luke 9:39; 18:39; 19:40; John 1:15; 7:28, 37; 12:44; Acts 7:57, 60; 14:14; 16:17; 19:28, 32, 34; 21:28, 36; 23:6; 24:21; Rom 8:15; 9:27; Gal 4:6; Jas 5:4; Rev 6:10; 7:2, 10; 10:3; 12:2; 14:15; 18:2, 18f; 19:17. **Krazo** is translated (NAS) - cried(20), cries(2), cry(5), crying(12), screaming(1), screams(1), shout(1), shouted(4), shouting(8).

Luke 18:40 And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him; and when he came near, He questioned him,

- Mt 20:31-34 Mk 10:48-52 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

AND JESUS STOPPED!

And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him - What incredible words! The Lord of the Universe responded to the repeated loud cries of this despised blind man. The Messiah on the final leg of His journey to die for the sins of the world and yet He takes time to stop for a blind beggar! I like the NKJ rendering which vividly says "So Jesus stood still." **J N Darby** commented that "Joshua (meaning "Jehovah is salvation") once bade the sun stand still in the heavens (Joshua 10:12,13), but here **the Lord of the sun, and the moon, and the heavens**, stands still at the bidding of a blind beggar!" Oh my, Who is this Jesus? Who can comprehend the infinite depth of His compassion for all of us blind beggars in this fallen world? Does this not make you love Jesus all the more - while the multitudes were not interested in a beggar, Jesus was, and He still is for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8+) While it is true that many have been brought to the Saviour by others, the ones who brought him were probably the ones who initially tried to shut him up.

Mark's version has more detail which gives us a vivid picture of this dramatic scene....

Mark 10:49-51+ And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "**Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you .**" 50 **Throwing aside his cloak** (his outer robe), **he jumped up** (leaping up) **and came to Jesus**. 51 And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "**Rabboni** (Equivalent to Luke's "Lord" in Lk 18:41), I want to regain my sight!"

Hendriksen Comments on [Rabboni](#) - "At least for some time the Jews recognized three ranks of "teachers," called, in ascending order of prominence, **rab**, **rabbi**, and **rabboni**, and that the title [Rabboni](#) was given to only a few rabbis (for example, to Gamaliel I and Gamaliel II)." [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

MacArthur - In his eager faith, he cast away his beggar's cloak, likely the only thing he possessed. His act symbolizes genuine faith, which abandons all to follow Christ (cf Lk 14:33). (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Comment on He is calling - This phrase is also in Jn 11:28 ("The Teacher is here and is calling for you.") addressing **Mary** who had just lost her brother Lazarus - so Jesus call is to two people in deep trouble - **Bartimaeus** and Mary. **Hendriksen** adds that "Even today, in such circumstances of life, yes and always, Jesus is calling us to His side, for He is a wonderful Savior. He calls in order to comfort, to cheer, and, as

in this case, to heal, to restore."(Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark)

THOUGHT - As noted above Mark's version says that Jesus is calling for Bartimaeus, who did respond. Sadly not everyone is ready to respond to Jesus' call! Have you heard His call...to salvation?...to a specific ministry?...etc? Have you like Bartimaeus thrown aside your cloak (cf whatever it is that encumbers you) and jumped to your feet (enthusiastically responding) and come to Jesus? I know men who have had calls from Jesus to be a pastor and yet because of their successful professions they refused to respond. One shared with me before he died that it was the greatest mistake of his life and it hounded him for some 40 years. The other man became very wealthy being in on the ground floor with Dell Computers and I totally lost track of him after he rejected Jesus' offer -- I remember that his wife was considerably distressed by his decision to stay with Dell and bypass full time ministry. Perhaps he had a change of heart but as I said I lost track of this couple.

And when he came near, He questioned him - Jesus knew hearts so He already knew what this man wanted, but He wants us to hear.

Luke 18:41 "What do you want Me to do for you?" And he said, "Lord, I want to regain my sight!"

- **What do you want Me to do for you?:** 1Ki 3:5-15 Mt 20:21,22 Ro 8:25 Php 4:6 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS EVER THE SERVANT

What do you want Me to do for you? - Compare the young ruler who ran up and knelt down and asked what can I **DO** to inherit eternal life? Here Jesus asks what the beggar wanted **HIM TO DO** for him. Jesus inverts the dynamic, for the King becomes the servant of the beggar! Only Jesus, Who came to seek and to save the lost.

Steven Cole - Luke wants us to see that we all are blind beggars before God. Satan has "blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4). Before God we are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Rev. 3:17). This is perhaps the major stumbling block that keeps people from coming to Christ: they want to commend themselves and their good deeds. God has to open our eyes to our true condition before Him. We have nothing in ourselves to merit His salvation. We are spiritually blind sinners, and the only way we can come to Him is to ask for mercy, not for merit. ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

MacArthur - Incredibly, the high King of heaven, the sovereign, creator God of the universe, offered to be the servant of this lowly outcast. Here is an amazing example of God's mercy and grace. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Hendriksen - To be sure, Jesus already knew what Bartimaeus wanted, but he wants him to ask for it. So also it is true in general that even though the heavenly Father is well acquainted with the needs of his children, he nevertheless tells them to "open their mouth wide" (Ps. 81:10), so he may fill it. * ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Guzik - This is a wonderful, simple question God has not stopped asking. Sometimes we go without when God would want to give us something simply because we will not answer this question, and we do not have because we do not ask (James 4:2). i. Jesus asked this question with full knowledge that this man was blind. He knew what he needed and what he wanted, but God still wants us to tell Him our needs as a constant expression of our trust and reliance on Him. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

Richards - In a simple act Jesus demonstrated the greatness that He taught. Despite the immediate prospect of His own suffering, He stopped to help a blind man the crowds uncaringly tried to quiet. When you and I learn to think of others despite our own hurts and concerns, we will be great indeed. For we will follow the example of our Lord....And at last we understand. Greatness in the kingdom of Jesus is stopping for the needs of others. It is setting aside for the moment our own hurts and concerns, to listen, and then to ask, "What do you want me to do for you?" We may be little in the eyes of other men. But if we follow Christ's example of servanthood, we will be great in the eyes of God. (cf Mk 10:45). (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary](#))

Norman Crawford - Many have been brought to the Saviour by others. This man was also brought and the cry for mercy is now

interpreted in relation to his need. A vague understanding of need may be the start of stirring in the heart of a sinner, but definite need must be known before it is met. There can be no salvation for those who are unawakened to their true condition. In his response to the question about his need, he addressed Jesus as **"Lord"**. The significance of this can be more fully appreciated by comparing the various forms of address to Christ. **He was never addressed as Lord by Judas. He was often called didaskalos** ("master" or "teacher"): by the lawyers (Lk 10:25; 11:45); by the man who disputed with his brother over the inheritance (Lk 12:13); by the rich young ruler, "Good Master" (Lk 18:18); by the Pharisees (Lk 19:39); by the chief priests (20:21); by the Sadducees (Lk 20:28); by the scribes (Lk 20:39); and by the disciples (Lk 21:7). The Lord called Himself didaskalos ("Master", Lk 22:11; cf. John 13:13, 14) and it is more frequently used in Luke than in the other Gospels; but the blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight". He recognized that the **"Son of David"** was truly the **Lord**, so the man with blinded eyes had an enlightened heart by which he understood the words of David, "The Lord said unto my Lord ..." (Ps 110:1). ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Steven Cole - One reason Bartimaeus' faith was so bold was that he felt so keenly his deep need. He lived each day in total darkness. Those who could see did not feel the desperation that Bartimaeus felt. He could walk out into the bright sunshine and it was pitch black for him. I once heard Bill Cosby tell how he was staying in the same hotel as the blind singer, Ray Charles. He decided to stop by Ray's room and say hello. He knocked on the door and Ray yelled, "Come in." Cosby walked in and heard Ray's electric razor going in the bathroom, but the lights were off and entire place was pitch black. Before thinking, Cosby blurted out, "Hey, Ray, why are you shaving in the dark?" Then it hit him and he thought, "Dumb! Dumb! Dumb!" Ray good-naturedly called back, "I do everything in the dark, brother." It is when we realize our true spiritual condition that we will sense our desperate need for Jesus Christ. Deliverance by man is in vain. We need deliverance by God, and so we must cast ourselves totally on Him. ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

And he said, "Lord, I want to regain my sight (anablepo)!" - **Regain** implies he may not have been born blind but lost it at some point. Can we not see a great lesson here for all of us regarding our prayers to God? "When Jesus asked what they wanted, they didn't indulge in generalities, as we often do when we pray. They came right to the point. Without hesitation or generalization, the beggar replied that he wanted his sight. **His prayer was short, specific, and full of faith.**" (MacDonald [Believer's Bible Commentary](#) - borrow. This resource is always worth checking)

Steven Cole - Jesus doesn't always grant our requests, even when they are specific. Matthew and Mark both report that just prior to this incident, James and John had come to Jesus and asked Him to do whatever they would request. Jesus responded, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They answered, "Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left" (Mark 10:37). But Jesus didn't grant that request. It wasn't for His glory to grant it. But it is for His glory to grant salvation by His free grace to blind beggars who cry out, "Lord, I want to receive my sight!" Be specific: tell the Lord that you have sinned and that you want His forgiveness. He will say, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

And notice his submissive response addressing Jesus as **"Lord."** Sometimes I hear folks say you need to make Jesus "Lord" of you life. If you are a true believer is the fact that He is **Lord** already. Period. You do not need to "make Him Lord." What you need to do is to submit, yield, or surrender to His Lordship in every area of your life. Personally, this is my daily challenge!

Lord (master, owner)(2962)(**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (used this way of Roman emperors - Act 25:26) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power.

I love the words of the converted slave trader **John Newton's** powerful hymn [Come My Soul Thy Suit Prepare](#) (play this beautiful version and let each of us beg God to give us this blind beggar's kind of faith when we bring our petitions to the King)...

Come, my soul, thy suit prepare:
Jesus loves to answer prayer;
He Himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not say thee nay;
Therefore will not say thee nay.

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.
—John Newton

Luke 18:42 And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."

- **Receive your sight;** : Ps 33:9 107:20 Mt 8:3 15:28 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50)
- **your faith has made you well:** Lu 7:50 8:48 17:19
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

And Jesus said to him receive your sight ([anablepo](#) in [aorist imperative](#)) - Jesus "commands" him to receive his sight. The NAS marginal note has "regain your sight," which would imply that at one time he could see but had lost his sight (disease?, accident?, etc).

THOUGHT - He had made a specific prayer and here received a specific answer. Be specific in your prayers. "Lord, bless me" sounds good (and it is not bad per se), but is better when it is specific. Then you can see His specific answer if He says "Yes" and you will go away glorifying God. ([See sculpture of this event](#))

Matthew (see [full text of parallel passages in Matthew and Mark above](#)) gives us more detail (**words in bold** not in Luke or Mark), and in so doing shows us Jesus' "*motivation*" and His "*method*"

Moved with compassion ([splanchnizomai](#) - Jesus experienced a deep visceral feeling for the blind men), **Jesus touched** ([hapto](#) = same verb Luke used to describe Jesus touching their babies - Lk 18:15+, touching a coffin - Lk 7:14+) **their eyes**; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him. (Mt 20:34)

Comment: The verb [splanchnizomai](#) is used repeatedly to describe the heart of Jesus - Mt 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34, Mk 1:41, 6:34, 8:2, Lk 7:13. This verb describes the Samaritan in Lk 10:33+ and the prodigal's father in Lk 15:20+.

David Thompson - Three times in three verses the word "regain" or "receive" shows up. Each word is used in a different mood that really adds color to his narrative: Verse 41 the word "regain" is in the subjunctive mood - which means the blind beggar knows that receiving sight is a possibility. Verse 42 the word "receive" is in the imperative mood - which means receiving sight is commanded. Verse 43 the word "regained" is in the indicative mood - which means receiving sight is a factual reality.

Mark's version has "And Jesus said to him, '**Go** (present active imperative); your faith has made you well.'" Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road (Mk 10:52+)

Your faith ([pistis](#)) **has made you well** ([sozo](#)) - Your personal faith, the faith you possess. His faith was [instrumental](#) in his healing. It is worth noting that this is the last miracle recorded by Luke and other than causing a fig tree to wither, is the last miracle before the Cross and before the greatest miracle, His resurrection from the dead.

Leon Morris on **Your faith has made you well** - This does not mean that the man's faith created the cure, but that it was the means by which he received it. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries - [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

I disagree with comments like that of the NET Notes (and I highly respect their notes) which says "Greek "has saved you," but in a non-soteriological sense; the man has been delivered from his disability." My comment - Look at the context - He begins to follow Jesus like a true disciple. He is clearly saved physically and spiritually!

Hendriksen comments that "Moreover, in view of the fact that **faith** is itself God's gift (see Eph. 2:8), it is nothing less than astounding that Jesus here and elsewhere praises the recipient of the gift for exercising it! This proves the generous character of his love. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Steven Cole - Jesus' words, "**Your faith has saved you**," have a double meaning. On one level, he was "saved" physically, so that he could now see. But on a deeper level, his **faith** had **saved** him spiritually. That is the greater miracle. Instantly God forgave his sins and imparted new life to him, making him a child of God. As Jesus said, "He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). God promises that "whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Ro 10:13). ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

Guzik - Jesus connected the man's healing with the man's **faith**. There were many notable aspects of this man's **faith** that made him ready to receive from Jesus.

- It was faith that wanted Jesus.
- It was faith that knew who He was.

- It was faith that knew what he deserved from Jesus.
- It was faith that could tell Jesus what it wanted.
- It was faith that could call Jesus Lord. ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

William MacDonald says "We may learn from this incident that we should dare to believe God for the impossible. Great faith greatly honors Him." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Richards - The healing of the beggar illustrates the way in which human beings lay hold on all that Jesus provides. Jesus told him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you" (18:42). We need only come to Jesus, confident that He is able to save. That faith is the channel through which God's goodness flows. Note, however, that faith is the beginning of a new life, not simply the end of the old. The blind man received his sight, ending his years in darkness. And he "followed Jesus, praising God." This is the essential nature of the new life faith launches. It is a life of following Jesus. And of praising God. (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary](#))

Receive sight (308) **anablepo** from **ana** = up, again + **blepo** = to look, to perceive and so discern) means to look up or direct one's vision upward (Of Jesus "looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food," = Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41; Lk 9:16; Of Jesus "and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh" = Mk 7:34; Of man who regained his sight "he looked up and said, "I see men..." = Mk 8:24; "at that very time I looked up at him" = Acts 22:13) To regain one's sight or recover from blindness and thus see again ("the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT" = Mt 11:5; "'Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!" = Mk 10:51; "so that he might regain his sight" = Acts 9:12, 17, 18). Of one born blind **anablepo** means to gain sight, become able to see, receive sight ("I went away and washed, and I received sight." = Jn 9:11, 15, 18).

Gilbrant - Three basic uses of **anablepō** are found among classical writers: "to look up," "to see again, regain sight," and metaphorically "to revive." "Looking up" is particularly a mark of confidence (Liddell-Scott). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Anablepo - 25x in 23v - looked(4), looking(5), receive...sight(2), receive sight(2), received...sight(2), received sight(2), regain his sight(1), regain...sight(3), regained...sight(4). Matt. 11:5; Matt. 14:19; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 6:41; Mk. 7:34; Mk. 8:24; Mk. 10:51; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 16:4; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 9:16; Lk. 18:41; Lk. 18:42; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 19:5; Lk. 21:1; Jn. 9:11; Jn. 9:15; Jn. 9:18; Acts 9:12; Acts 9:17; Acts 9:18; Acts 22:13

Faith (4102)(**pistis**) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, yea, even the Son of David.

Luke's uses of **pistis** - Lk. 5:20; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 7:50; Lk. 8:25; Lk. 8:48; Lk. 17:5; Lk. 17:6; Lk. 17:19; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 18:42; Lk. 22:32; Acts 3:16; Acts 6:5; Acts 6:7; Acts 11:24; Acts 13:8; Acts 14:9; Acts 14:22; Acts 14:27; Acts 15:9; Acts 16:5; Acts 17:31; Acts 20:21; Acts 24:24; Acts 26:18

Has made you well (see Mk 10:52)(4982) (**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. It is notable that Jesus used the perfect tense which speaks of permanence. Similarly to the woman with 12 years of hemorrhage (Mt 9:20), Jesus said "take courage; your **faith** has made you **well** (sozo)." (Mt 9:22; Mk 5:34; Lk 8:48). To the one (out of 10) lepers who returned to thank Jesus, He declared "Stand up and go; your **faith** has made you **well** (sozo)." (Lk 17:19) So in each of these cases, Jesus was responsible for a miraculous healing, and He identifies their faith as the instrumental cause of the healing.

Luke 18:43 Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.

- **Immediately he regained his sight** : Ps 30:2 146:8 Isa 29:18,19 35:5 42:16 43:8 Mt 9:28-30 11:5 Mt 21:14 Joh 9:5-7,39,40 Ac 26:18 (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-52)
- **and began following Him**: Lu 4:39 5:26 17:15-18 Ps 103:1-3 107:8,15,21,22,31,32 Isa 43:7,8 Isa 43:21 Ac 4:21 11:18 Ga 1:24 2Th 1:10-12 1Pe 2:9
- Luke 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 18:35-43 When Jesus Passes By](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives Saving Sight](#) - John MacArthur

HEALED BLINKD MAN

BECOMES DISCIPLE

Immediately he regained his sight ([anablepo](#)) - There is no delay in this miracle. It was instantaneous. "One moment total blindness... the next unimpaired vision. How astounding!" (Hendriksen [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

And began following ([akolouthéo](#)) **Him, glorifying** ([doxazo](#) in present tense - continually) **God** - Not only did Bartimaeus follow Jesus but so did the other blind beggar. Notice the irony of this blind man, who now can see and immediately became a follower (disciple) of Jesus, whereas the 12 apostles had no insight into where Jesus was headed in Lk 18:34+! Humble souls like the despised tax collector receive healing (salvation) while those like the self-righteous Pharisee, who fail to acknowledge their desperate need and dependence like a little child, do not (cf Lk 18:9-14+). **Akolouthéo** is in the imperfect tense picturing his continual following of Jesus. Many think that is why Mark gives his name Bartimaeus, reasoning that he continued to follow Jesus to the Cross and later became part of the early church. To mention his name suggests he was known to other believers.

Steven Cole - The mark of true faith in Jesus Christ is that the person who got saved gives glory to God and begins a new life of following Jesus in which others are led to give praise to God. Bartimaeus didn't go around telling everyone about his great faith. Yes, Jesus says that his faith saved him, but clearly He means that Bartimaeus' faith was the means through which salvation came to him. It was God's power through Jesus that gave him his sight. The power and will to heal rested completely with the Lord. Faith is just the hand that receives God's gift of eternal life, and even faith is a gift from God. No one can boast in his great faith. We can only glory in God who opened our eyes and showed us His great mercy. ([When Jesus Passes By](#))

Guzik - The way of Jesus became his way. This was especially significant considering that Jesus was on His way towards Jerusalem to die. (cf Mk 8:34-35) ([Luke 18 Commentary](#))

As an aside, I have often heard Christians say that discipleship is not for every believer, but only for those who are more mature. The example of Bartimaeus who **immediately began following** Jesus squelches that argument. ALL believers are FOLLOWERS of Jesus. ALL believers are DISCIPLES. So it should not come as a surprise that the most common word Luke uses for believers in the book of Acts is DISCIPLE (see references below. Note especially Acts 11:26).

Acts 6:1; Acts 6:2; Acts 6:7; Acts 9:1; Acts 9:10; Acts 9:19; Acts 9:25; Acts 9:26; Acts 9:36; Acts 9:38; Acts 11:26; Acts 11:29; Acts 13:52; Acts 14:20; Acts 14:21; Acts 14:22; Acts 14:28; Acts 15:10; Acts 16:1; Acts 18:23; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:9; Acts 19:30; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:30; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:16

John G Butler on **began following Him** - How noble. When a person is saved he will evidence it by following the Lord. We are justified in being suspicious about the professed salvation of a person, when after they are saved there is no change in their conduct. The blind men no longer sat by the wayside begging, for they had eye sight and used it to conduct themselves differently. When a person is saved by the power of Christ, he will act differently. Following Christ shows the gratitude and honor given Christ for the compassion and power of Christ on their behalf. (Sermon Starters - Volume 6)

The Significance of Jesus giving sight to the Blind - According to the OT prophecies (eg. Isa 35:5; Isa 41:7) one of the SIGNS of the Messiah would be giving sight to the blind. This was one of the signs expected by the ancient Jews, that they would be performed by the Messiah. And so several times in the Gospels, He bestows sight to the blind, this miracle substantiating that He was the Messiah. And yet the Jews still rejected Him for they were looking for a delivering Messiah, not a suffering Messiah!

- [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs](#)

Glorifying God is exactly what Jesus had commanded His listeners in the Sermon on the Mount regarding "their light"...

"You are the light of the world" (THIS IS EVERY BELIEVER'S "JOB DESCRIPTION" SO TO SPEAK!). A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 **"Let your light shine"** (aorist imperative, active voice [active = volitional choice - you have to make this choice...enabled by the Spirit] - Command to "Do this now!" "Don't delay!" can imply some degree of urgency) before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify (GIVE A PROPER OPINION OF) your Father Who is in heaven. (Mt 5:14-16+)

Comment - So here the healing of the blind men and their commitment to begin following Jesus was their "light shining" before the people, who gave glory to God. Our lives are to do the same beloved follower of Christ. When people see the "supernatural" power in our life, manifest in our audible words and visible acts, they receive a proper opinion of the invisible God. I'm not talking about raising the dead or other sensational miracles, but about "everyday miracles" like forgiving a hurt most people would hold as a grudge forever, controlling your tongue in circumstances where most people would respond in anger, of loving your wife sacrificially and unconditionally, etc, etc. When the world sees this "supernatural" power in

flesh and blood followers of Christ, they know it cannot be natural power but has to be supernatural and thus points to the unseen, omnipotent Father in heaven.

When all the people saw it, they gave praise to God- This response is not found in (Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-50) but is only recorded by Luke. Although Luke uses a different Greek word, he records similar responses by the shepherds to whom the angels had appeared to announce Jesus' birth (Lk 2:20), on healing the paralytic (Lk 5:25, 26), on raising the widow of Nain's son (Lk. 7:16), on healing the "woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all" (Lk. 13:13, 11), on healing the lepers (one) "turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice," (Lk. 17:15, 18) and "the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." (Lk. 23:47).

Hendriksen sums up this section - What a beautiful illustration of the way of salvation: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me" (Ps 50:15; cf. 1 Cor 10:31). (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark)

Began following (190) (**akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils.

Akoloutheo - 86v - Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55; Mk. 1:18; Mk. 2:14; Mk. 2:15; Mk. 3:7; Mk. 5:24; Mk. 6:1; Mk. 8:34; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 10:21; Mk. 10:28; Mk. 10:32; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 11:9; Mk. 14:13; Mk. 14:54; Mk. 15:41; Lk. 5:11; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 5:28; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:23; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 9:57; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 9:61; Lk. 18:22; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 22:10; Lk. 22:39; Lk. 22:54; Lk. 23:27; Jn. 1:37; Jn. 1:38; Jn. 1:40; Jn. 1:43; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 10:4; Jn. 10:5; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 12:26; Jn. 13:36; Jn. 13:37; Jn. 18:15; Jn. 20:6; Jn. 21:19; Jn. 21:20; Jn. 21:22; Acts 12:8; Acts 12:9; Acts 13:43; Acts 21:36; 1 Co. 10:4; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 14:4; Rev. 14:8; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 19:14

Glorifying (1392) (**doxazo** from **doxa** = glory) has a secular meaning of to think, suppose, be of opinion, (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon, Plato, Thucydides) but generally is not used in this sense in Scripture. **Doxazo** means to praise, honor or magnify (Mt 5:16; 6:2; Lk 5:25f; Ac 11:18; Ro 11:13; 1 Cor 12:26; 1 Pt 4:16) and to clothe in splendor, glorify (John 8:54; 13:31f; 17:1, 4; 21:19; 2 Cor 3:10; 1 Pt 1:8; of life after death John 12:16, 23; Ac 3:13; Ro 8:30)

ILLUSTRATION - A new contact lens helps blind people see. Developed by Dr. Perry Rosenthal, the Boston Scleral Lens sits only on the white of the eye, protecting the cornea with a layer of fluid. People who cannot see due to corneal damage can wear them and lead normal lives. Individual lenses are custom-made to fit individual eyes, and cost about \$7,500. Unfortunately, insurance companies have so far refused to pay for them, but Dr. Rosenthal turns no one away. He hopes to open clinics around the country to help as many as possible. Helping blind people see is what the Messiah came to do as well (see Isa. 42:6–7)....In this passage, we can also see how people should respond to Christ. Faith is central....Merely to recognize Jesus is not the same as saving faith: as we see, even demons recognized Him. True faith responds to His power and goodness with love and obedience. Matthew himself was a good example in this regard. (Today in the Word)