

Salvation and Grace

What is the reality of grace? Luke 18:9-14: "And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.

I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax-gatherer, 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!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.'"

The Author of Grace (9-10). The first thing we notice is who is speaking the parable. "He" is the Lord Jesus Christ immediately we recognize the principle that grace is revealed by the Living Word. "Trusted", in v. 9 means that they had confidence not in God but in themselves. They confidently believed that they were better than others. They were confident of their self-righteousness. This is nothing more than the self-righteous arrogance of religion, the inevitable result of ritual without reality!

Such human viewpoint of self-righteousness grows in arrogance. "Others" comes from the word *loipos* meaning 'the rest,' i.e., all those who weren't Pharisees, who didn't belong to their exclusive sect. "With contempt" is the Greek verb *exoutheneo*- 'despise utterly, treat with contempt and scorn.' This teaches us two things right away. Self-righteous arrogance leads to contempt and scorn of everyone that doesn't fit your lofty ideal. The fastest way to move from humility to arrogance, from grace orientation to self-righteousness is to trust in yourself your strength, your knowledge, your power.

Grace teaches us dependence on God. Self-righteousness is dependence on illusionary (arrogance) ability and capacity which does not really exist. Growing and advancing believers are totally dependence on God's power (the Holy Spirit) and God's provision (Bible doctrine).

Since spirituality or carnality is absolute, the dependence of the Christians on God or self is always absolute. Carnality is not 50% reliance on self and 50% reliance on God but 100% reliance on self. In verse 10 we notice the two characters who've now taken the stage of our parable, both of them heading for the temple to pray the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer.

Both attended the temple services. Majority of those who continually rejects the grace of God are in the local churches. They that reject the grace of God: There is an amazing phrase that comes to life for us if we will read v. 11 with the utmost care and attention the Pharisee was praying "thus to himself." While we may find this humorous I find it hilarious it is no wonder to him, because in his mind he really was as good as God. He was convinced God held his lofty standard.

The term "Pharisee" is a transliteration of *Pharisaioi*, which literally means the separated ones. It was a name originally given them by their adversaries; however, they were indeed separatist's legalists to an extreme and arrogant to the maximum. They called themselves *Chaver*, a Hebrew term used in the Mishnah and in ancient Rabbinical writings for 'one who strictly observes the law.' His expression of thank you was void of genuine thanksgiving.

The statement about not being like other people was a bold-faced lie; he was exactly like other people. Arrogance always short-circuits in comparing self with others. In verse 12 we find the culmination of his impressive self-worth. Notice throughout his entire prayer that the Pharisee has no praise for God, only praise for self; in the place of praise was self-exaltation. He makes no request of God because he is totally unaware of any need; therefore, he gets nothing because he asks for nothing!

Which brings us to an important principle: The trouble with our religious as opposed to spiritual ideals is that if we live up to all of them, we become impossible to live with. Religion drives people away from God. No amount of religious sacrifices, service or zealousness can save man or make him acceptable before God. What Jesus did was sufficient (John 19:30).

To the extent that we are self-made saints like the Pharisees or neutral like Pilate never making the leap in trust we let the prostitutes and publicans go first into the Kingdom, while we ...are in the background having our alleged virtue burnt out of us. The hookers and swindlers enter before us because they know they cannot save themselves, they cannot make themselves presentable or lovable.

They risked everything on Jesus and knowing they didn't have it all together, were not too proud to accept the handout of amazing grace "The blood of the Lamb points to the truth of grace: what we cannot do for ourselves, God has done for us." And what God has done for us is clearly understood by those without self-righteousness.

Some Church Age believers find the Royal Priesthood boring, lifeless, unsatisfying and unfulfilling. They see absolutely no need for anything that God has to give in grace; consequently, they get exactly what they ask for. Some Christians never benefit from Bible class, no matter how on target, how intense or how practical. They don't go away full because they don't come in hungry.

The Lord Jesus told the religious Jews in John 6:35, that "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." They that received the grace of God: The term "tax-gatherer" was just another way of saying "a tax-collector for the Romans." These men were considered traitors by their fellow Jews, and were despised by almost everyone, especially the Pharisees, who classed them as 'sinners' ranking right alongside harlots and Gentiles.

The fact that the tax-gatherer was standing away and apart, unwilling to even look towards God's direction was an indication of the emptiness in his soul. In utter humility he was about to fling himself recklessly at the mercy of God!

Grace teaches us about sinfulness. Grace shows us the most undeserving person who has received so much from God. It points us to the greatest sinner, no other than me, me and me. If you cannot look at yourself objectively in the light of the Word of God and in the light of grace, you will never understand the attitude of humility expressed by the tax-gatherer in Luke 18:13.

“Be merciful” is from the verb hilaskomai, which in the pass. voice means be propitiated, be gracious and merciful. It reminds us of the fact that grace gives us what we do not deserve, it is extended to those with absolutely no merit; while mercy withholds from us judgment we rightfully deserve, for mercy is extended, in spite of human merit. The only people who can lay hold of grace are those who recognize their need for mercy.

The tax-collector hated, rejected, an outcast in his own nation stood in the temple and uttered seven words, seven words that form one of the most profound prayers in the entire Bible: “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!” He had no grand illusions about himself, no egotistically inflated ideas about being good enough for God. He saw how awesome his need was, and he knew that nothing but God’s mercy could sustain him. Mercy and grace are vitally united, inextricably linked in the Word of God. Mercy naturally precedes grace.

Mercy must remove the condemnation we rightfully deserve before grace can bestow the blessing that we cannot earn and never deserve. In verse 14, the Lord Jesus tells us that the tax-gatherer left the temple “justified.” “Justified” is dikaioo, a legal term meaning- ‘vindicate, acquit; declare legally righteous.’

This tells us that in the recognition of his need for mercy and grace the tax-gatherer had believed in the Messiah of Israel Yehowah Elohim for there is no other way to stand justified, vindicated, legally righteous before God unless we have received His absolute righteousness, the imputed righteousness which belongs to us through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).

Galatians 2:16, “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.” One man went up to the temple in humility and for his faith received eternal life; the other entered with an attitude of arrogance and for his self righteousness received nothing. The Lord Jesus gives us the reason why in the closing phrase of verse 14, “for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.”

The deeper we grow in our spiritual relationship with Christ, the poorer we become in our own eyes, realizing that everything we have in life is a gift. There is only one song that comes deep from the soul of such believer, the song of humble and genuine gratitude.

Awareness of our poverty and ineptitude causes us to rejoice in the gift of being called out of darkness into the wondrous light and translated into the Kingdom of God’s beloved Son. The poor in spirit are the most non-judgmental of peoples; they get along well with sinners. The” humble “man and woman have made peace with their flawed existence.

They are aware of their lack of wholeness, their brokenness, the simple fact that they don’t have it all together. While they do not excuse their sin, they are humbly aware that sin is precisely what has caused them to throw themselves at the mercy of the Father. They do not pretend to be anything but what they are-sinners saved by grace. These are the saints empowered by the Holy Spirit.



Salvation & Grace

Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries
www.dlkaosune.com

Tract No. W5
Salvation and Grace