

Luke 18:14

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 June 1985

Preacher: Alex J MacDonald

[0 : 00] Now let's turn to the first passage we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 18, and especially the words of our Lord in verse 14.

I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

How should we approach God? That's really the question that our Lord is dealing with here, as he tells this parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

How should we come to God? What kind of attitude should we have towards ourselves and towards God as we come to him?

Now surely that is the most fundamental religious question of all. Indeed, we may say the most fundamental question of our whole lives.

[1 : 14] How are we to come to God? Let's look then at these words that Jesus speaks here. Let's look at the comparison he makes between the two different approaches that were made.

Because there's a very glaring contrast between the way the Pharisee approached God and the way the tax collector approached him. And Jesus says it was only one of these men that was justified before God.

In other words, that means that he was right before God. He was right with God. He had the proper relationship with God.

Linking it up with other New Testament doctrines, that was the one who had eternal life. That was the one who pleased God in this life. That was the one who was a member of God's family.

That was the one who was going to be with God in heaven. So then we see that it's a very crucial question indeed as to how we approach God.

[2 : 22] And again we see this emphasis of our Lord Jesus that there aren't many different ways by which we can come to God. He makes a distinct contrast between these two attempts to come to him.

And the one is the right way to come and the other is the wrong way. So again there is very much Jesus' emphasis upon division.

That there is only one way to come to him. And if we don't come in that way we are separated from him. Well we need to look first at what they had in common, these two men.

Because it's perhaps easier for us to see what was different about them. And we'll come to think about that in a minute. But first of all they had certain things in common.

First they were in the same place. We're told that they went up to the temple. Now we don't need to go into great detail about what the temple actually was.

[3 : 27] It's enough that we know that that was a place that God had appointed for him to be specially worshipped under the Old Testament dispensation. That was the place where people had to focus their worship of God.

That was a way in which the right way of coming to God was symbolized. It was symbolized by all the sacrifice that went on there.

It was symbolized by the fact that in the past God had shown in a visible way that he was present there. When there was what was called the Shekinah glory. The visible radiance of God's presence in the temple.

It was the place where people could meet with God in the way he appointed. Now that's got something to say to ourselves here tonight. It may be difficult for us to put ourselves in the place of these two men living so long ago under different circumstances, a different society, even a different regime by which people approach God.

But there's something similar about it. Because we know that the same word, the temple, is used in the New Testament not of a building but of the living temple of God, that is his church.

[4 : 49] And really, strictly speaking, today we shouldn't use the word church of the building in which we sit tonight. Or rather we should use a different word for that from what we are ourselves as the church of Christ.

In the Bible it's the people who are the church of Christ. And it doesn't really matter all that much where we meet. That's a matter of convenience. So if you're here tonight, you are part and parcel of this way of approaching God.

The fact that you're here ties you in with these two men who went up to worship God. They went to the temple. You come to where the people of God are.

It just so happens we're here in this building. And there are other people meeting in other buildings throughout the city and throughout the country. But it is important that they are coming in the way in which God has appointed.

So that you are coming like those men coming in a similar kind of way. Coming to God.

[6 : 00] And we're told that there was also something else particularly, specifically, that was similar about them. They went up to the temple for the specific purpose of praying to God.

Two men went up to the temple to pray. One a fallacy and the other a tax collector. They weren't just going for any old reason. They weren't just going because they thought that maybe it was just an interesting way of passing an hour or so.

They didn't just go to be seen by other people. Although that may have had some part in the thinking of one of them. But they went specifically to pray.

In other words, it was a definite religious intent that they had. They intended to come to speak to God.

Now again, this is of relevance to ourselves. No doubt there are all kinds of reasons why people might come to church. But of course the only sensible reason is that we should come to meet with our God.

[7 : 14] Because we're coming to the place where God is proclaimed. His word is proclaimed. The way of coming to him is proclaimed.

We're coming among the people who are singing God's praises. And praying to God. And the only meaningful way in which we can come and be present at a service like this.

Is to do that same thing. To come and to meet with God. To approach God. Now let me ask you. Is that why you're here tonight?

Are you here tonight? To do serious business with God. Because that is the only reasonable explanation for being here.

And indeed, more than that. It is the only way in which we can be blessed by coming here. We can't be blessed, as it were, kind of magically.

- [8 : 18] Or in a superstitious kind of way. Just by being present in this building. Or just being among God's people. As if somehow by rubbing shoulders with them.
- Some of their holiness or goodness might rub off on us. It doesn't work like that. We've got to come with this single-minded intent.
- To pray to God. And that means we want to speak to God. And we want to hear him speaking to us. What is your prayer? As you sit here in church tonight.
- Is your prayer that you want to know God. And you want to be accepted by God. You want to approach God in the right way. And to be received by him.
- If that is your attitude. Then your prayer will not be disappointed. Because we're told that all who seek him. Shall find him. But if that's not your attitude tonight.
- [9 : 15] Then you must seriously examine yourself. To see really why you are here. And I would encourage you. To think along these lines that I've been saying.
- Otherwise. This time of coming here. Could be worse than a waste of time. Because if we do not approach this whole thing seriously.
- We are guilty of trifling. With almighty God. Then let's look at. The totally different approaches. That these men made to God.
- We thought about. The similarity between them. They both went up to the temple. Both went up there among the people of God. Approaching outwardly. Externally. In the way in which God.
- Had commanded. They both went. Deliberately. To pray. But their approaches. Were very different. First let's look at the approach of the Pharisee.
- [10 : 15] Now we need to say a few words. Just about the Pharisees. As a class of people. We know quite a bit about them. From the New Testament. In fact.
- Probably. We know more about them. From the New Testament. Than other sources. Although. Others. Like the historian Josephus. Fill us in a good deal. About the Pharisees as well.
- The Pharisees. Were a group of people. Quite. Probably quite a large. An influential group of people. Within the Judaism of this time. Who regarded themselves really.
- As the guardians. Of God's law. There were other parties. Within Judaism of that time. Some of them are mentioned. Like the Sadducees. And there were other groups. Like the Essenes.
- Who tended to keep themselves apart. But the Pharisees. Were the most influential group. It would seem. And probably. The most highly regarded. By the people in general. Because.
- [11 : 13] They did live. Lives. That were. In strict. Outward adherence. To the law of God. And they had this tremendous regard. For.
- The Old Testament. Law of God. Now. When we say the law of God. We must be clear. Exactly. What we're meaning there. They saw really. No. Distinction. Between.
- Any. Of the commands. That were given. In the Old Testament. All of it. Particularly. All that of the law of Moses. They were really all viewed. As equivalent. By them.
- So that. The laws. Concerning. What we would regard. As ceremonial things. Things regarding. Things relating. To the temple. And things relating. To.
- Certain foods. That were to be eaten. And others. That weren't to be eaten. All these. Were on a par. With. What we would call. The moral commandments. Of God. Like the Ten Commandments. So when we're talking.

- [12 : 09] About the law of God. We're not just talking. About the moral. Law of God. The unchanging. Law of God. But we're talking. About those. Things that God. Had commanded.
- For the first time. Say at Sinai. In his covenant. With the people. Of Israel there. These. Were all. Part and partial. Of what the Pharisees.
- Saw. As been. Absolutely. Essential. In. Their approach. To God. God. And. As we know. They were very meticulous.
- In their observance. Of. The law of God. So that. Jesus. Could save them. That they gave. Tithes. Of. The small. Herbs.
- Of their garden. Things like. Mint. And. Cummin. These very. Small. Herbs. That they might grow. In their back gardens. They gave a tenth of that. To God. So meticulous.
- [13 : 03] Were they. To observe. These. Commands. In the Old Testament. And Jesus. In some ways. Had a very high regard. For. The Pharisees.
- Because he said to his disciples. Your righteousness. Must exceed that. Of. The scribes. And Pharisees. So he said. That.
- In some ways. Their attitude. In seeking. To do God's will. Was a good one. Although. In other ways. As we know. They were very badly. Mistaken.
- But generally. We would have to recognize. That these men. Were very. Upright men. At least. We would say. Outwardly. And with a very.
- Definite regard. For the details. Of God's law. Well then. Let's look at this. Particular Pharisee. And probably here. Jesus is doing. No injustice.
- [13 : 57] At all. To the Pharisees. As a class. Although he's taking. Here a particular. Example. This would be. The way. In which. They would. Speak to God.
- No doubt. Our Lord Jesus. On many occasions. Heard them. Praying. In a similar way. We see. First of all. What he thought. Of himself. Jesus said.
- It says in verse 11. The Pharisee. Stood up. And prayed. About himself. God. I thank you. That I am not like. All other men. Robbers. Evil doers. Adulterers. Or even like this tax collector.
- I fast twice a week. And give a tenth. Of all I get. What he thought. Of himself. Is extremely important.
- Because it very much. Bears. On how he approaches. God. And what you think. Of yourself. Is extremely important. As you think about. How you are to approach.
- [14 : 56] God. Well this Pharisee. We see. First he was very confident. In his own righteousness. That's the expression. That's used in verse 9.
- Jesus spoke to some. Who were confident. Of their own righteousness. And looked down. On everybody else. And this Pharisee. Was very confident.
- Of his own. Righteousness. He had this estimate. Of himself. Which. Betrays. That he thought.
- That he. Was. Righteous. He was. Good. What he did. Was pleasing. To God. He doesn't make reference.
- To any. Failure. On his part. He doesn't make reference. To any. Sin. On his part. He speaks. About. The good things. That he does.
- [15 : 51] And how he is different. From others. Who don't do. Those. Good things. Things. Now we see. As part and parcel. Of that. That there is a. Self-centeredness.
- About his prayer. And that's brought out. By. The expression. That's translated here. He prayed. About himself. Could be translated.

He prayed. With himself. Or even. He prayed. To himself. But maybe. That's going. A little bit far. It seems to mean. Really. That his prayer. Was all concentrated. About.

Himself. And as we look at it. That's exactly. What it was. We see here. That his. His own. That the preposition. I. Occurs. Several times.

He's talking. About. Himself. What he has done. And. What he hasn't done. In terms of not being like. These other people. He regards. As sinners.

[16 : 46] So there's a self-centeredness. About it. There's also. Of course. Very much. A self-righteousness. About it. Because. We see. He's. Boasting.

About. His own. Achievements. In verse 12. Especially. I fast. Twice a week. And give a tenth. Of all I get. Now these things.

Are praiseworthy. In themselves. And still. To this day. These things. Are praiseworthy. That we should be. Abstemious. With regard. To food and drink.

And also. That we should. Give. A proportion. Of what we. Earn. To God. And indeed. It would be a tremendous thing.

For the Christian church. If we were. All as good. As the Pharisees. At giving. A tenth. Of income. To God. These things. Are praiseworthy.

[17 : 41] And good. But. It was the Pharisees. Attitude. Towards it. That was so wrong. He was approaching God. And saying.

This is what I've done. These are all the good things. I've done. And. That was really it. That was. His prayer. Describing.

What he thought. Of himself. And he thought. That he was. Very much. Okay. Now. There are another two. Aspects. Of his prayer.

That we need to notice. With regard to himself. We notice. That he was measuring himself. Against. Others. In verse 11.

I thank you. That I am not like. All other men. Robbers. Evil doers. Adulterers. Or even. This text. Collective. The standard.

[18 : 37] That he had. In his mind. When he was thinking. Of approaching God. And how he would be. Accepted. By God. Was the standard. Really. Of people. Round about him. As he looked.

Round about him. At his society. He could pat himself. On the back. And he could say. Well. I am not. A criminal. I don't. Rob people. I am not.

A sort of. Person. Who. Obviously. Does some kind. Of. Social. Evil. Or social. Ill. I don't. Commit.

Adultery. I don't. Go off. With other people's wives. And I'm certainly not. Like this. Tax collector. Someone who was. Despised. As being. Greedy. And rapacious.

And someone. Who was. Viewed. With. Great. Disdain. By the population. At large. Comparing himself. With all these others. Of course. The Pharisee.

[19 : 32] Came out. Pretty high up. In the list. But you see. He was only. Measuring. By the standards. Of man. By the standards.

Of the age. In which he lived. He wasn't measuring himself. By God's standard. Now I wonder. What kind of standard. You're measuring yourself by.

As. You seek to approach God. Here tonight. Are you measuring yourself. Simply by looking at society. Around us. Well.

It wouldn't be very hard. To be self-righteous. If you're just measuring yourself. Against the society. In which we live. All these sins.

That we've mentioned here. That the Pharisee. Looked down on. These are commonplace. Today. And if we abstain. From these. At least outwardly. Well. We too.

[20 : 26] Could pat ourselves. On the back. And. Speak to God. In this kind of way. I thank you. That I'm not like. All these other people. That I don't commit. Adultery. And so on.

So you see. We've got to be very careful. That our standard. That we're measuring ourselves up against. Is.

God's standard. And not just that. Of people around us. And God's standard. Is far more stringent. Than simply comparing ourselves.

To the age in which we live. The Lord Jesus. Made it very clear. That the Pharisees. Understanding. Of the law of God. Just wasn't good enough.

They viewed it very much. As a matter of externals. As to the sins. That people could see you doing. The actual. Committing. Of sins.

[21 : 26] Outwardly. And as long as you abstain from that. Then. Everything was fine. But Jesus. Makes very clear. On the sermon. In the sermon on the mount. That that is not God's standard.

God's standard. Relates. Not only to the outward action. But also to the heart. To the thoughts. He says. It's not just a matter of. The commandment.

About not killing. Not committing murder. But the actual. Sin. That's inherent. In that outward act. And that sin. Is. A wrongful.

Anger. Or hatred. Against. Against another human being. And if you have that. Within your heart. Maybe nobody else knows about it. That also. Is sin.

And he says. It's not just a matter. Of committing. Adultery. Committing the actual. Outward act. He says. Whoever. Would look at another person. With lust.

[22 : 22] That too. Is sin. And again. That's not something. That can easily be seen. Or detected. Because lust. Or wrongful desire. Is within your heart.

Within your mind. Within your own thoughts. So Jesus. Is in his interpretation. And application. Of the law of God. Was far more stringent. And devastating.

Than the Pharisees. Because although they may have. Multiplied laws. Trying to protect. God's law. Trying to make a hedge. Round it. As they said. They really.

In a sense. Made it easy. For themselves. To keep. Because these were all externals. Jesus. Showed. That it was a matter. Of the heart. And where really.

Our heart is. If our heart is really. Desiring to do. God's will. Or not. So then. We see. By that comparison.

[23 : 18] With the words of Jesus. How this. Phantasy's. Idea. Of himself. Fell. Fell. Very far short. Of what it ought to be.

He had this attitude. That he was comparing himself. With others. According to the. These external. Applications. Of God's law. And so. He could feel that he came out.

Quite well. No doubt. Many of us. Many of us. Brought up within. A Christian home. Within the church. Given. A good start. In life. With regard.

To being moral. And upright. We could boast. Of these very same things. The apostle Paul. Himself. Could say. That he could boast. Of all these things. That the other Jews.

Boasted about. Even more. He said. A Pharisee. Of the Pharisees. He was. Yet he says. I count all these things. But done. I count these things.

[24 : 12] Just rubbish. Useless. All I want to know. He says. Is Christ. Because he alone. Can give me life. Now we need to disabuse ourselves.

Of these same ideas as well. That the Pharisees had. With regard. To ourselves. And to realize. That we cannot come to God. On the basis of.

Any kind of self-righteousness. Any kind of self-attainment. Because Jesus says. Categorically. It was not this man.

Not the Pharisee. Who was justified. With God. So we must put away. From ourselves. Any idea. That God will accept us.

Because of our background. Because of our outward. Keeping of the word of God. Because of our being. Perhaps. In the eyes of others. Moral. Or upright citizens.

[25 : 10] Then we just look briefly. At what this man. Asked from God. Because after all. Wasn't that the whole purpose. Of him going up to the temple. He went up there. To the temple. To pray. And he addresses God. He says. God. I thank you. He thanks God. For what he is. And goes on to talk about himself.

A great deal. But what does he ask God for? What does he want God. To do for him? How does he see himself. As being. Accepted by God.

Well. We discover the answer to that. Is very simple. Doesn't ask God for anything. Nothing. You can search his prayer here. And there's nothing.

That he actually asks for. Now I wonder. Is that like your prayers? Perhaps. Perhaps. In coming to.

[26 : 06] Worship God. Here. You may be full of. Many ideas. Maybe interested in. The. Part of the Bible. We're looking at.

Maybe interested in. Theology. In general. Perhaps. But have you got any prayer. That you want to address.

To God. Have you got something. That you're dying. To ask God. And particularly. Are you asking God. To accept you.

And receive you. That is what this man. Didn't have. He just didn't see. The need of it. Because he thought. That he was all right already. How sad it would be.

If there was to be. Anyone here. Tonight. Who had that same. Impression of God. And was to go away. From this place. Thinking. That. Everything was all right. And we can be accepted.

[27 : 02] By God. Through our own effort. This man. Certainly wasn't. Jesus said. But then we must look at. The tax collector.

Who approached God. In a radically. Different way. And this was the way. Jesus said. That was the right way. Because this man. Went home. Justified. Before God.

Rather than the other. Now again. We must fill in a little bit. About what kind of man. This would have been. Because. Immediately. Jesus used those names. Pharisee.

Or tax collector. He would have immediately. Conjured up. In people's minds. A certain impression. Of a certain type. Of man. In those days. We've looked at. What a Pharisee.

Would have involved. A tax collector. Was. Someone who was. Really hated. By most people. It's perhaps. Difficult for us. To understand.

[27 : 56] The intensity. Of the hatred. With which he would be regarded. He was hated. For several reasons. He was hated. By the people. Living in. Israel.

Around this time. Regarded with hatred. In the same way. As he would be regarded. With hatred. In most of the provinces. Of the Roman Empire. Because. Quite simply. Not only was he a man.

Who was. Taking money from them. For taxes. But. He was someone. Who notoriously. Was dishonest. That he was taking. Far too much.

Taxes. Taking. Some. For himself. Creaming off. A great deal. That he shouldn't have been. This was notorious. Throughout. The Roman Empire. So. In general.

He would be regarded. As someone who is immoral. Dishonest. Who is a cheat. And an exploiter. An oppressor. Of people. But more than that.

[28 : 51] By the Jew. He would be regarded. With a particular hatred. Perhaps. Especially. If that tax collector. Was a Jew himself. As. Many of them were.

People like. Matthew. We know. He was Jewish. But yet he was a tax collector. And Zacchaeus. No doubt as well. These people. Were regarded.

With particular hatred. Not just because. They were. Kind of regarded. As traitors. To the. Their nation. But more particularly. Because. They were regarded. As being.

Unclean. The Pharisees. Especially. Would have looked down. On such people. Because of their. Contacts. With Gentiles. All the time. They were dealing. With the Romans.

And all the time. They were breaking. God's law. In every kind of way. Eating with Gentiles. Paying no attention. To the. The ritual law. That the Pharisees. Laid such importance on.

[29 : 45] Particularly. Working on the Sabbath. Well. This was something. That they would be. Hated for. And disregarded for. So then. We get some kind of impression.

Of. What kind of man. Jesus. Is talking about here. Someone. Who comes from. That kind of background. Someone who would be regarded. In that kind of way.

Now let's see. What did this man. Think of himself. How did he approach God. What was his attitude. As he came into God's presence. Well we're told.

The tax collector. Stood. At a distance. He would not even. Look up to heaven. But beat his breast. And said. God have mercy on me.

A sinner. Now we see there. Most strikingly. First of all. A lack of presumption. On this man's part. Such a contrast.

[30 : 44] To the Pharisee. The Pharisee presumed. That he could just march. Into God's presence. And start gobbling on. About himself. Boasting about his achievement.

The tax collector. Is not like that. However bad. He may have been. Whatever sins. He may have committed. That the Pharisee. May never have committed. Outwardly. At any rate. He does not presume.

That he can simply. March into God's presence. And start laying down. The law. About himself. And about his relationship. To God.

We see. That he stood. At a distance. The very things. That he did. The very attitude. Of his. His mind. Is communicated. Through the attitude. Of his body.

He stood at a distance. He wouldn't even. Look up to him. The whole. His whole bearing. Was one. Of. Not presuming.

[31 : 42] Anything. He. He felt. Far away. From God. And he stood. In some obscure. Corner. Of the temple. Far off. At a distance.

From the center. Of things. He wouldn't even. Look up to heaven. He felt he couldn't. Even raise his face. Up to God. Even. In an outward gesture. And then he beat.

On his breast. A sign. In those days. Of. Sorrow. A depth. Of sorrow. It was the kind of thing. That people would do. When. They had been bereaved.

When somebody had died. It. Communicated. A great. Sense of sorrow. And a depth. Of feeling. An intensity. Of feeling. This is the way.

That this man. Approached God. A lack. Of presumption. He wasn't. Presuming. Anything. And. A great. Sense of. Shame.

- [32 : 38] And sorrow. As he came. Into God's presence. And it's all summed up. One word. With regard. To himself. A sinner.
- That's what he calls himself. Literally. It is. The sinner. It's a bit difficult. For us. Really. To. Translate that. Properly. Because we. We wouldn't say. That kind of thing.
- Normally. In English. But. It's as if. He's laying. Great stress. Upon. What he is. And he's saying. I'm the sinner. And that's all he says.
- With regard to himself. Notice. How much shorter. This prayer is. Than the other one. Jesus reminds us. We're not heard by God. Because of our many words.
- That's all he has to say. About himself. No doubt. There are many things. He could say. He could have told God. A good deal. About his background. He could have made.
- [33 : 36] Perhaps all kinds of excuses. Extenuating circumstances. That perhaps. He could have brought in. That. Well. Maybe. He wouldn't have turned out. As badly. As he had. Maybe he had a better home.
- Or. If maybe he hadn't fallen under. A bad influence. In his youth. Or. Maybe if. Economic. Situation. The economic situation. Was better. So that he wouldn't have had to get. This kind of job.
- And wouldn't get into contact. With these people. He could have said a great deal. No doubt. About himself. Much of it. With some. Justification. But he didn't say.
- Any of these things. The only name. He gave himself. Was sinner. Someone. Separated. From God. Someone.
- Who was a rebel. Against God. Because he knew. In his heart. Of hearts. That that was. What he was. That.
- [34 : 30] He wasn't. Just socially. Unaccepted. And hated. Because of the fault. Of other people. But he knew. That within himself. He was rotten.
- And he deserved. That kind. Of attitude. From others. And you know. That's what. Each one of us. Has got to discover.
- For ourselves. If we're to approach God. In the right way. This is the way. We are to approach God. So that we may be justified. Made right with God.
- Accepted by God. To come. Recognizing. What we are. That is. Quite simply. Sinners. We've rebelled.
- Against God. We have said. To God. I don't want. To go your way. I want.
- [35 : 24] To go my way. And it doesn't matter. What your law says. Doesn't matter. What my parents say. It doesn't matter. What the law of the land says. Doesn't matter.
- Maybe what public opinion says. All these things. Of course. May be. Right or wrong. These human institutions. In various ways. But it is the attitude. Of the heart. That says.
- I want to go. My way. I don't want God. Telling me. What to do. In fact. Really. If truth be told. I don't want anyone. Telling me. What to do. I'll put up with it.
- Just to keep the peace. Sometimes. But I don't really want it. I want my way. Now this. Is the heart. Of the sinner. And this is what this man.
- Was confessing. And that was all. He could say. About himself. A sinner. The sinner. He viewed himself.
- [36 : 18] As so bad. As the apostle Paul did. On another occasion. He said. He described himself. As the chief. Of sinners. That's how badly. He felt. About himself.
- Now this. Is. An essential. Item. Of the Christian faith. And an essential. Part. Of our proper. Approach to God. There are many things.

In the Bible. That give us cause. For happiness. Joy. Many positive. Emphasis. In God's word. But unless. We have. An appreciation.

Of what we are. As sinners. Before God. This. If you like. This very negative. Emphasis. This very. Serious. And solemn. Emphasis.

We can't really. Have anything. Of the rest. Jesus says. This man. Went down. To his house. Justified. Rather than the other. This man. Who approached God.

[37 : 17] In this particular way. With shame. And sorrow. And calling himself. A sinner. He. Was accepted. By God. Is that your attitude.

Tonight. As you seek to come. Into God's presence. Describing yourself. Just as a sinner. Not trying to make any excuses. Not trying to make any distinctions. With.

In comparison. With other people. Or not really trying. To make any distinctions. Between. External sins. And internal ones. Because you know.

It's just all a matter. Of degree. Those people. That may be. Looked down upon. By others. In society. You know. That but for the grace of God. But for. A good upbringing.

Perhaps. But for a good influence. At a certain time. In your life. You would be there. In the same place. As they are. So you come to God. Just saying. I'm a sinner.

[38 : 11] I've rebelled. Against you. And I owe. A great debt. To you. Breaking your law. And I cannot. Be accepted. By you. In any other way.

Because this is. What I am. Now notice here. The great way. In which this man. Approached God. Because here.

He is actually. Asking God. For something. He has this certain. Attitude to himself. He describes himself. As a sinner.

But in stating that. It is part and partial. Of his. His prayer. To God. Where he is actually. Asking God. To do something. For him. He doesn't just. Come to God.

And say. I'm a sinner. He says. God have mercy. On me. A sinner. And that is. The balance. That we need here.

[39 : 07] For it to be. A right. And proper prayer. That is never. Go away. With the impression. That we can simply. Come to God. And say. I'm a sinner. And just leave it at that.

As if. Well. I'm a sinner. Well. I can't help it. Nothing much. We can do about it. That's fact. We have to come to God.

In this way. And say. God have mercy on me. A sinner. We're asking God. To do something. We're asking God. To accept us. In some way. To do something.

That is necessary. So that we may be received. By God. And that is the seriousness. Of this man's prayer. But nonetheless.

We see quite clearly. That the man. Knew. That that was the only way. He could come to God. By saying.

[40 : 05] What he was. He knew that he couldn't come to God. Pretending. That he was anything else. Like the Pharisee was. Consciously or unconsciously.

He was really keeping up. A pretense. He was trying to come to God. In a way. In which he could never come. Because simply. He wasn't that kind of person. That he thought he was.

He wasn't that righteous person. He thought he was. But he wasn't. And the only way. We can honestly come to God. The only way. In which we can effectively. Come to God. Is coming as we are.

It's no use. You. Attempting to come to God. And saying. Well. This is the kind of person. I was. Accept me as that.

Or. This is the kind of person. I would like to be. Accept me as that. No. You've got to come and say. This is the kind of person. I am. With all.

[41 : 00] My shameful. Deeds. And thoughts. And words. This is what I am. I'm not boasting about it. I'm not presuming anything. But this is what I am.

And I'm asking you. To have mercy on me. So we see. That this man. Differed from the Pharisee. In actually asking God. For something.

He actually had a prayer. A very real prayer. And it was this. Have mercy on me. Not the. Implication. Of what the Pharisee's prayer was.

And that was. I'm righteous. So you must accept me. I'm not even going to debate about it. The Pharisee said. I'm not even going to raise the question. You've just got to accept me. Because I'm all right.

I'm righteous. I've done all these good things. But the. The tax collector. In a very real prayer. And that was. Have mercy on me. Really just simply saying.

[41 : 57] I need forgiveness. I need pardon. I'm wrong. I've wronged you. I've offended you. I'm in debt to you. And I need to be forgiven.

I need my debt cancelled. I need all my wrongs. Wiped away. I need my sins forgiven. That was his prayer. Have mercy on me.

A sinner. And that still remains today. The only way. In which we can approach God. The only way. In which we can know. The friendship of God.

And come into the family of God. The apostle Paul. Develops this. In great theological detail. But it is the same approach. There is no divorce.

Between the words of our Lord Jesus. And the words of his apostle. Modern scholarship. May have tried to do that kind of thing. But there is no dichotomy. Between the two. Jesus here says.

[42 : 55] The man who comes. Confessing his sin. And asking for God's mercy. He's justified before God. The man who doesn't do that. He's not justified.

Paul uses this same great word. Of being justified. And he shows. How it is only by a man. Coming. In the way God has appointed. That is. The full way.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the grace of God. Demonstrated. In the death for sinners. Of Jesus Christ. It is the man coming in that way.

Who is accepted by God. And justified. In his sight. His sins. Are forgiven. It is the same way. The identical way. The way of grace.

The way of forgiveness. And not the way. Of us. Receiving. What we deserve. To receive what we deserve. We would receive.

[43 : 50] The hell of hell. Because of our sin. And rebellion against God. And this man. Didn't come asking God. For what he deserved. He came asking him.

For mercy. And so. We are to come today. In the same way. Not asking God. To reward us. For all. The good things we've done.

Or all the bad things. We've abstained from doing. But asking God. To accept us. Because he is merciful. And because he has been pleased. To.

Invent. This way. By which we could come to him. Through the Lord Jesus Christ. The way by which. Jesus Christ. Received. What we deserve.

And we. Because he was our representative. Receive. What he deserved. And that is. Acceptance with God. The righteousness of God.

[44 : 48] Entry into the family of God. And every blessing. Of eternal life. So then. There is this. Great contrast. That Jesus makes.

In the last words. Of verse 14. For everyone. Who exalts himself. Will be humbled. And he who humbles himself. Will be exalted. And that's an abiding.

Rule. An abiding law. Of this universe. By which we are to approach God. If we exalt ourselves. If we come to God. Presuming. That we can.

Simply. Walk into his presence. And he must accept us. Because of what we are. Then indeed. We will be humbled. Maybe it will not appear. In this life. Maybe we will be highly respected.

In this life. But the time will come. When we will be humbled. Indeed. When the Lord Jesus himself. Will say. Depart from me. I never knew you.

[45 : 43] And those. Jesus says. Who humble themselves. Here and now. Who come like that tax collector. With shame. And with sorrow. Because of sin.

They. Will be exalted. Maybe not again. Exalted in this life. Maybe they will be despised. And consider the offscouring. Of the earth. Like the apostle Paul himself.

But. There will come the time. When they will be exalted. With their Lord. When they will. Be raised up. To newness of life. To all the enjoyment.

Of the new universe. That God is making. In Christ Jesus. This. Law. Unchangeable. This law. That cannot be destroyed.

A man who exalts himself. Will be humbled. And he who humbles himself. Will be exalted. May it be that tonight. You are humbled. By the word of God.

[46 : 43] To come. As that tax collector did. So long ago. Let us pray. uties from the country.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.