

## Humbly Receiving the One We Need

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**L**uke shares a parable in **18:9-14** where two men went to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. Jesus picks the occupations with purpose, playing on preconceived notions. The Pharisee thanked God he was not like other men. He kept the law to his own satisfaction. He pointed to the tax collector as his opposite. The tax collector would not even look up; his whole person was affected by his current state. He asked God for mercy. Jesus concluded, *“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

This parable points to the theme of **Luke 18**: humbly receive God, the only one you truly need.

In **Luke 18:1-8** a widow of no distinction, having no ability to persuade with her own merit, came to the local judge seeking justice. The judge finally decided to grant her justice, not wanting to be completely worn out by her persistence. Jesus compares this parable to God’s willingness to hear and respond to us if we would always pray and not lose heart.

**Luke 18:15-17** details an incident involving little children. Although the disciples wanted to rebuke their parents for bringing them to Jesus, Jesus welcomed the babies. He told the disciples that these were the ones who make up the kingdom of heaven. If we want to receive the kingdom, we must receive it like a little child.

**Luke 18:18-30** presents a young (see **Matthew 19:20**) man with authority and great wealth. He came to Jesus wanting to know what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus instructed him in the law, but the young man explained that all of these he had kept since childhood. The young man was not bragging. Instead, he wanted more. He understood there was more than checking boxes. Salvation is not a step process. Jesus saw his sincerity, and so he shared the hard truth (**Proverbs 3:12**): you are letting wealth ensnare you. You cannot receive me fully because you do not trust me fully.

Would it not be great to know that this young ruler later reflected on Jesus’ words and received the kingdom? We do not know his ending. Jesus invites, “Will we hear the truth?”

This is not an easy truth, especially when snares in this world hold back our growth. The disciples wondered, *“Who then can be saved?”* The ruler kept the law, but he could not receive the kingdom. Jesus explained, *“What is impossible with men is possible with God”* (**18:27**). God makes choosing him easier because He works in us, helping us carry the burden. *“It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure”* (**Philippians 2:13**). Your submission succeeds because He works through you. We can receive and accept the cross of Christ, whatever the cost because God will be our help.

If you find yourself as the Pharisee did, checking the boxes and feeling good about all you have done, you need God. And if you receive his correction humbly, he will bear fruit through your virtuous deeds. *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”* (**John 15:5**).

If you find yourself in sin, like the tax collector, you need God. And if you come to him humbly, his mercy will exalt you in due time. *“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”* (**Hebrews 4:16**).

If you find yourself in the depths of pain inflicted by a cruel world, like the widow, you need God. And if you come to him with persistent humility, the justice of God will be ready to comfort your spirit. *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).*

If you find yourself free from challenges, like a little child enjoying the goodness of God, you need God. Keep receiving the kingdom with all the trust and confidence of a little child. Keep appreciating God’s goodness and leaning on Him to help you through whatever challenges come your way,

*...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19).*

If you find yourself keeping God’s commands with a heart ensnared by the cares of this world, like this rich young ruler, you need God. And if you come to him with a humble heart that is ready to receive him no matter the cost, God will help you overcome to stand victorious with him in eternal life,

*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith (1 John 5:3-4).*

Put your trust in God and receive him as a humble child. YOU NEED HIM!