



Kingdom Call – Humility

The theme for this week's study is taken from Luke 18:9-14, focusing on arrogance and humility. The passage is a parable that Jesus told to those who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else. The main message of this parable of Jesus would have shocked his listeners. But that is exactly what Jesus always does – subverting the cultures of the day, including our own, because the truth from God transcends any cultural and societal norms. We should not be surprised of this. So, let us take a look at this passage and ask the Spirit to give us wisdom to understand and apply this passage.

Launch

- 1) What are some examples of overwhelming arrogance/pride that you have seen, either in other people/companies/celebrities or even yourself? What is it about arrogance/pride that we find so hard to accept in others?

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Read Luke 18:9-14

- 2) To whom was Jesus telling this parable to? (v9) In this parable, who were the two people that went to the temple to pray?
- 3) Describe the prayer of the Pharisee.
 - a. Is there anything untrue about the Pharisee's prayer?
 - b. What then do you think is the problem/issue with his prayer, especially when he even thanks God for all the things he has done? (v11-12)
 - c. What are some modern examples of prayers like this? (Perhaps you can share from your own prayer life or come up with an example.)
- 4) Describe the prayer and the posture of the tax collector.
 - a. What do you think the tax collector thought he deserved from his prayer? What do you think he was trying to accomplish by this prayer?
 - b. How can we as Christians today develop the same kind of attitude and posture in our prayers today?
- 5) What did Jesus say about God's acceptance of the Pharisee and the tax collector? (v14)
 - a. Why is that? (v14)
 - b. What are some other examples of God humbling the exalted and exalting the humble throughout Scripture?

c. Who is the ultimate example of what Jesus himself says in v14? (cf. Phil 2:5-11)

6) Describe what you think a modern day “arrogant” Christian and humble Christian may look like.

Modern Day “Arrogant” Christian	Modern Day Humble Christian

7) Many Christian scholars throughout the centuries have mentioned that pride is the root sin to all sins. How do you think the sin of pride manifests itself in other sins?

8) Why do you think we find it so hard to be humble? How does fake humility look like?

a. What can we do to combat pride in ourselves and learn to be humble?

9) Who are model examples of humility that you know in your own life? What is it about them that draws others to them?

Jesus provides a damning verdict on those who are confident of their own righteousness. Instead, those who are humble – realising their own status and sinfulness before God – they are the ones who will be justified by God. This is because it is only in realising our utter helplessness in the face of an almighty, glorious and holy God that we are willing to turn to Jesus Christ, the only one who demonstrated true humility. “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.” This quote is often mistakenly attributed to C.S. Lewis¹. What he actually wrote in is this,

Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call “humble” nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him, it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all. If anyone who like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise 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.²

If that is the first step, dare I commend to you that the second step is to look to the cross of Christ. For who can dare to stand at the foot of the cross and be arrogant?

¹ Rick Warren was the one who first said that, accurately summarising what Lewis himself said.

² *Mere Christianity*, Chapter 8, “The Great Sin”