

WEEK EIGHT: TWO MEN WENT TO CHURCH

Hear the story. See the King. Answer the call. Luke 18:9-14

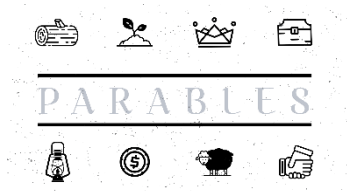
1. When you stand before God, are you trusting His mercy or presenting your résumé? What are you tempted to rely on besides Christ?
2. Who are you most tempted to compare yourself to spiritually? What does that reveal about your heart?
3. What specific sin do you need to bring honestly before God? Where have you been excusing or minimizing it?
4. How would your obedience change if you remembered it's the fruit of salvation, not the price of it?

WEEKLY CALL

Each day this week, pray... *"God, have mercy on me, a sinner."*
Name an actual sin. Confess it. Turn from it. Then remind yourself... ***My only hope is Jesus.***



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PRAYER GUIDE

WEEK EIGHT: TWO MEN WENT TO CHURCH

Luke 18:9-14

When you stand before God, are you trusting His mercy...
or presenting your résumé?

OPENING REFLECTION

Rather than building a spiritual resume through comparison and performance, this guide helps you approach God with empty hands, honest confession, and complete dependence on His grace.

SECTION 1: ADORATION – RECOGNIZING GOD’S HOLINESS

Scripture Meditation

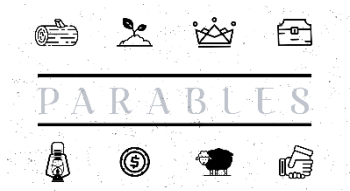
- Isaiah 6:3 - Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.
- Psalm 99:1-3 - Meditate on God's holiness and righteousness as the true standard
- Revelation 4:8 - Reflect on the eternal worship of God's holiness

Guided Prayer Template

"Father, I come before You recognizing that You are holy and righteous. Your standard is not measured by how I compare to others, but by Your perfect character and infinite holiness. You are..."

Complete these thoughts in your own words:

- God, You are holy because..
- Your righteousness is different from mine because...
- I need Your mercy because I cannot meet Your holy standard...



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SECTION 2: CONFESSION – RELEASING YOUR RESUME

This is where you honestly admit your sin and stop defending yourself.

Scripture Meditation

- 1 John 1:8-9 - "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
- Proverbs 28:13 - "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."
- Psalm 51:1-4 - David's model of honest confession before God

Guided Prayer Template

"God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

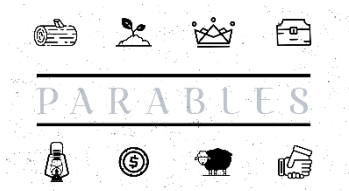
Now make it specific.

- What sin have you been minimizing?
- What have you been defending?
- Where have you compared yourself to someone else so you could feel better about yourself?
- Where have you trusted your own goodness instead of God's mercy?

Name your actual sin before God.

"Father, I confess _____. I don't want to excuse it, defend it, or compare it to someone else's sin. I confess it honestly before You. Help me turn from it and trust completely in Christ."

Pause here and allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart.



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SECTION 3: THANKSGIVING – CELEBRATING GOD’S MERCY IN CHRIST

Shift your focus to what God has done for you through Jesus.

Scripture Meditation

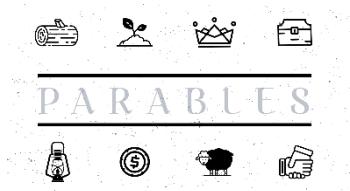
- Romans 3:21-24 - "But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known... This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."
- 1 Peter 1:3-4 - "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."
- Ephesians 2:4-5 - "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions."

Guided Prayer Template

"Jesus, thank You that my hope is not in my résumé. Thank You for living the righteous life I could never live. Thank You for bearing the judgment my sin deserves. Thank You for dying in my place. Thank You for rising from the grave. Thank You that everyone who repents and believes in You can be forgiven, reconciled to God, and given new life through the Holy Spirit.

My hope is not in how well I prayed. My hope is not in how sorry I felt. My hope is not in how much better I promise to do tomorrow. My only hope is Jesus."

Take a moment to thank Christ specifically for the mercy He has shown you.



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SECTION 4: SUPPLICATION – ASKING FOR GOD’S HELP

Ask God to help you live out what you've just prayed.

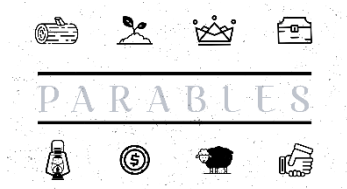
Scripture Meditation

- Philippians 4:6-7 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
- James 4:6-7 - "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 - "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

Guided Prayer Template

"Father, search my heart and show me where pride, comparison, or self-righteousness still lives. Help me stop using the failures of others to make myself look better. Help me respond to others with humility and mercy instead of comparison. By Your Spirit, help me pray, serve, give, love, and pursue holiness... not to earn Your mercy, but because I have received it. Help me live this week like someone whose hope is completely in Jesus."

What is one specific area where you need God’s help this week? _____



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CLOSING PRAYER

"Father, forgive me for how easily I trust myself. Forgive me for comparing, performing, and quietly believing that my obedience makes me more deserving of Your grace than somebody else.

Thank You for Jesus. Thank You that I can be justified by grace through faith in Him. Teach me to come honestly before You. Show me the sins I've excused or minimized. Give me grace to repent, stop defending myself, and trust completely in Christ.

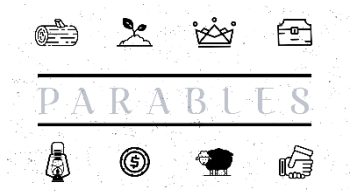
And then, by Your Spirit, help me live an obedient and grateful life... not to earn Your mercy, but because I've received it.

In Jesus' name, Amen."

JOURNALING PROMPTS

Spend 2-3 minutes reflecting on these questions in a journal:

1. Honest Assessment: What does your spiritual resume look like? What accomplishments, good works, or comparisons are you tempted to present to God?
2. Comparison Patterns: Who do you find yourself comparing yourself to (favorably)? How does recognizing this pattern help you understand the Pharisee's heart?
3. Mercy Received: Describe a time when you received mercy you didn't deserve. How does that experience help you understand the tax collector's prayer?
4. Obedience Motivation: How would your obedience change if you truly believed it was the fruit of salvation rather than the price of salvation?
5. This Week Ahead: What specific situation is coming up this week where you'll be tempted to build your resume instead of trusting God's mercy?



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THIS WEEK'S "CALL"

Each day this week, pray the tax collector's prayer:

"God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Don't leave it vague. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring an actual sin to mind. Name it honestly before God. Confess it. Turn from it.

Then remind yourself: My only hope is Jesus.

If you are trusting Christ, you don't have to defend your sin or try to pay for it yourself. Christ has made forgiveness possible through His death and resurrection. And then get up and live like someone who has received mercy.

Drop the résumé. Stop comparing. Admit your sin.

Repent and trust Christ.

HEAR THE STORY.

SEE THE KING.

ANSWER THE CALL.

