

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



Luke 18 contains a series of teachings and events that highlight themes of persistence in prayer, humility, justice, and the nature of the Kingdom of God.

Parable of the Persistent Widow (18:1-8): Jesus teaches about the importance of persistent prayer through the story of a widow who continually petitions an unjust judge for justice. The judge eventually grants her request, and Jesus contrasts this with God's responsiveness, urging his followers to always pray and not lose heart, as God will answer them much more swiftly.

Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:9-14): This parable highlights the importance of humility. A Pharisee, proud of his religious deeds, prays arrogantly, while a tax collector, aware of his sinfulness, humbly asks for mercy. Jesus teaches that those who humble themselves will be exalted, and those who exalt themselves will be humbled.

Jesus Blesses Little Children (18:15-17): Jesus welcomes children, teaching that the Kingdom of God belongs to those who receive it with childlike humility and trust, emphasizing that faith must be simple and pure, not self-reliant.

The Rich Ruler (18:18-30): A rich young ruler asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him to sell all his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him. The ruler, unwilling to give up his wealth, walks away sad. Jesus then teaches how difficult it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God, but with God, all things are possible. Peter wonders what the disciples will gain, and Jesus assures them of their great reward in heaven.

Jesus Predicts His Death (18:31-34): Jesus once again predicts His suffering, death, and resurrection, but the disciples do not fully understand or grasp the significance of His words.

Healing of a Blind Beggar (18:35-43): As Jesus approaches Jericho, a blind beggar calls out to Him for mercy. Despite others telling him to be quiet, the man persistently calls out, and Jesus heals him, noting his faith.

Overall, Luke 18 emphasizes the importance of **humility, persistence in prayer, and faith in God's justice and provision**. It calls for a willingness to give up earthly attachments in pursuit of the Kingdom of God and highlights Jesus' compassion for the marginalized and those in need.

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LUKE 18

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

4 “For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

6 And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you; he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The



LUKE 18:38 He called out,

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

18:1–8 Though prayer is prominent in the parables in verses 1–8 and 9–14, references to the Son of Man’s return (v. 8) and the tax collector’s longing for vindication (v. 14) link these parables to the preceding teaching about the kingdom of God at the end time. In verses 1–8 Jesus tells the parable of a judge who finally gives in to a persistent widow—not because of his compassion or concern for justice but simply because of the woman’s persistence. God is not like this unjust judge; his own chosen people can be certain that he does care and will answer their cries and bring about justice for them. While we wait for the Son of Man’s return, faith is evidenced in persistent prayer.

18:9–14 In this fifth subsection of Luke 9:51—19:44 (18:9–30), the focus shifts from how to wait for the consummation of the kingdom (16:1—18:8) to how one gains entry to the kingdom (18:9–30). Entry is described in a variety of ways: justification (v. 14), receiving and entering the kingdom (vv. 16–17), and inheriting eternal life/being saved (vv. 18,26). Those who enter are

Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

13 “But 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.’

14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

The Little Children and Jesus

15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

18 A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

19 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’[a]”

21 “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.

22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the

described in terms of their lack of self-reliance.

This parable (vv. 9–14) shows that those who humbly confess their sin and cry for mercy are justified as opposed to those who trust in their own righteousness. Two men approach God in the temple complex. The Pharisee’s prayer focuses on himself as he compares himself to others and describes his fasting and giving. The humility of the tax collector is contrasted with the attitude of the Pharisee. Whereas the Pharisee thinks of others as sinners, the tax collector views himself as the sinner and appeals for God’s favor in place of wrath. Jesus declares that his request has been answered. The verdict has been rendered, and God has declared the tax collector “justified,” or “right,” before him. That this favorable verdict comes by grace is seen in the contrast between the tax collector and the Pharisee in the final statement of verse 14: the Pharisee, who is confident of his own righteousness and exalts himself (v. 9), is humbled, and the humble tax collector is exalted.

18:15–17 People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples... Though the disciples rebuke those who bring little children to Jesus, Jesus himself invites them to come to him. The reason is that the kingdom of God belongs to those who come to Jesus like these children. As with the previous parable (vv. 10–14), those who come to Jesus with humility will enter the kingdom.

18:18–30 The ruler’s question to Jesus indicates he is relying on what he is able to do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus challenges the man’s flattery and questions his intentions as he cites five of the ten commandments (Ex 20:12–16; Dt 5:16–20). The ruler, however, expresses his confidence in his comprehensive obedience to God’s laws. Jesus’ command to follow him shows that the point of the instructions in Luke 18:22 is to have dependent trust in Jesus, who is to have priority over everything. The man’s grief indicates that money is his master, and he epitomizes how difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom. In fact, it is like a very large animal trying to enter through the minuscule eye of a needle; it is impossible (vv. 25,27). Those listening to Jesus respond with a question that asks, in essence, “If the rich, who seem to be obviously blessed by God, aren’t saved, then who is?” Jesus links the concept of being “saved” (v. 26) to having “treasure in heaven” and entering “the kingdom of God” (vv. 22,24–25)—these are only possible by God’s grace. In reply to Peter’s question, Jesus reassures his disciples that for those who rely only on him, there is a secure reward that more than compensates for losses in this life. This secure reward

kingdom of God.”

26 Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

27 Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

28 Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”

29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; 33 they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”

34 The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

35 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. 37 They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”

38 **He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”**

39 Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

40 Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him,

41 **“What do you want me to do for you?”**

“Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

42 Jesus said to him,

“Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”

43 Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

includes belonging to the family of God in this age and the promise of eternal life in the age to come.

18:31–34 This sixth and final subsection of Luke 9:51–19:44 (18:31–19:44) records Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. It is characterized by numerous references to travel and landmarks (cf. 18:31,35; 19:1,11,28,29,37,41). Many of the themes from Luke 18:9–30 continue in this subsection: receiving mercy, being saved, and entry to exclusion from the kingdom as related to one’s response to the King. This final subsection of the journey to Jerusalem, however, emphasizes more than the fifth subsection (18:9–30) who Jesus is and what he does. He is the suffering Son of Man, the Son of David, the saving Son of Man, the King and Lord who mercifully grants spiritual sight, seeks and saves the lost, rewards his servants, and judges his enemies. This final subsection begins with Jesus’ final and most detailed prediction of the suffering that is ahead of him in Jerusalem (18:31–34) and concludes with Jesus’ grief over the judgment that lies ahead for Jerusalem (19:41–44).

Jesus teaches his disciples that God’s saving plan is anticipated in Scripture and will be accomplished through the suffering Son of Man. The details here—his suffering, death, and resurrection—are fulfilled in the chapters that follow (cf. 22:63; 23:11,36; 24:7–8,20,46). The disciples’ lack of understanding shows that divine enabling is required to grasp the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection (18:34; cf. 24:31,45).

18:35–43 This account describes the fourth and last miracle of the journey to Jerusalem and shows that spiritual sight is granted by Jesus through faith (cf. 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19). Upon hearing that Jesus is passing by, a blind man cries out for mercy to Jesus as the Son of David. This cry for mercy highlights the man’s desperate plight, yet it is an expression of trust in Jesus to heal despite the opposition from those around him. At Jesus’ command, the man is immediately able to see. Glorifying God in response to Jesus’ ministry is a common theme in Luke’s Gospel (2:14,20; 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 19:38).

Bible Study Questions**Luke 5**

1. How does the parable of the persistent widow encourage you in your prayer life?
2. What does the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector reveal about God's perspective on humility and self-righteousness?
3. How does Jesus' interaction with the little children shape your understanding of the Kingdom of God?
4. What challenges and lessons does the encounter with the rich ruler present about wealth and discipleship?
5. How do you understand Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection in this chapter?
6. How does the healing of the blind beggar inspire your faith in Jesus?
7. How can the teaching on persistent prayer apply to your current life situations?
8. How do you guard against self-righteousness in your spiritual life as portrayed in the Pharisee's prayer?
9. What steps can you take to cultivate a childlike faith in your walk with God?
10. How do you approach the challenge of wealth and possession in your discipleship journey?
11. How does the prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection deepen your understanding of His mission?
12. How can you emulate the faith and persistence of the blind beggar in your life?
13. How do the lessons in this chapter challenge societal norms and expectations about prayer, humility, faith, wealth, and healing?
14. In what ways does this chapter inspire you to reevaluate your approach to prayer, humility, and discipleship?
15. How can you practically demonstrate faith that persists, like the widow and the blind beggar, in your day-to-day living?

16. How can we learn to view our wealth and possessions in the light of the Kingdom of God, as Jesus taught?

17. How does the healing of the blind beggar challenge you in your expectation of God's intervention in your life?

18. How does the crowd's reaction to the blind beggar's healing inspire your response to God's works in your life?

19. How does this chapter encourage us to persist in our faith, maintain humility, and keep our eyes on the eternal Kingdom?

20. How can these teachings guide us in living as persistent, humble, and faithful followers of Christ in the present-day world?