

Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor
 CrossRoad Church, UMC
 July 18, 2010

I. The Surrendered Heart

II. Previous message Luke 18: 1-8 *Heart Health*

A. *(Luke 18:1-8 NRSV) Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. {2} He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. {3} In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' {4} For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, {5} yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" {6} And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. {7} And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? {8} I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"*

B. *A Healthy Heart has Hope!*

C. *Hope requires Persistence.*

D. *Prayer is fueled by Hope and Persistence.*

E. *Prayer enables us to Persevere!*

F. *It takes Faith in God!*

G. *Faith believes God is Concerned for our well being!*

H. *Faith believes God is not bothered by our Persistence!*

I. *Faith believes God has His own Time Table*

J. *God is Pleased by Faith!*

III. Contrasting _____.

A. As a follow-up to this parable, Jesus tells another to describe even further what a Healthy Heart looks like to God.

B. *(Luke 18:9-14 NRSV) He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: {10} "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. {11} The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. {12} I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' {13} But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' {14} I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."*

C. At first glance, it appears that this parable is about prayer.

D. It does give us some insights into prayer and helps break down some of the lofty and wordy expressions of prayer at which some people excel.

E. The fact that a person prays well out loud may not always be the best indicator of a person's faith or the condition of their heart.

F. Frankly, it is more an indication of their verbal skills and may in fact say nothing about the person's faith.

G. Let's not knock a person's ability to pray. Generally, I would rather listen to someone who has actually given some thought about what they are going to pray than to listen to someone just ramble aimlessly.

H. There are times, however, when it is very refreshing to hear a person stumble, their voice crack and their words seem inadequate to express their feelings of love and gratitude towards the God whose grace they have encountered in the living presence of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ.

- I. Certainly, Jesus is helping us understand that *WHAT PLEASES GOD IN PRAYER IS AUTHENTICITY*.
- J. There does seem to be another agenda for Jesus. This parable is about the *Contrasting Hearts* of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.
- K. Let's keep in mind that the Pharisees are the religious leaders of the community and the tax collectors are sort of like loan sharks.
- L. They are Jews who are independent contractors employed by the Romans to collect taxes from their fellow Jews. They would bid on a certain region estimating how much revenue it would bring. Some were known for extorting more than necessary—whatever they could add on that was over and above the tax would be theirs.
- M. It was obviously an unregulated industry.
- N. It is sort of the feeling you get when you rent a car at the airport. The price of the vehicle is one thing, but they keep asking if you want to add on this coverage, and then there is a local sales tax, an airport fee, a tourist tax, a tax if you have blue eyes, a tax if you are a blonde.....
- O. During His ministry, Jesus was often confronted by the Pharisees.
- P. Part of the reason for Jesus sharing this story was typically Pharisees did a lot of things to get the notice and praise of people.
- Q. (*Mat 23:1-11 NRSV*) Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, {2} "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; {3} therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. {4} They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. {5} They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. {6} They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, {7} and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. {8} But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. {9} And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father--the one in heaven. {10} Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. {11} The greatest among you will be your servant.
- R. Tom Holladay, *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* Loc. 2716-18 Those who need to be noticed not only have a love of symbols; they also have a love of recognition and honor. For these religious leaders, it meant making sure they had a place at the head table at the banquet—the place where others could look at them and think, "He must be important; look at where he is sitting."
- S. Highlight Loc. 2724-26 Out of our need to be noticed grow a love of symbols, a love of honor and recognition, and, finally, a love of titles. It wasn't enough to be a teacher; these religious leaders of Jesus' day wanted to hear people call them "Teacher."
- T. Loc. 2733-35 Added on Sunday, January 11, 1970, 12:20 AM To exalt yourself means you need to be noticed by others. It's a need that is never fulfilled. If you go down that road, you'll find that the more notice you get, the more you need. You can make a different choice. You can choose to humble yourself and to notice others' needs. The only way to be cured of this need to be noticed is to start noticing other people's needs.
- U. Sadly, this type of need to be noticed, to have titles, to be an authority still exists in the Church of Jesus Christ.
- V. A young woman went to her pastor and said, "Pastor, I have a besetting sin, and I want your help. I come to church on Sunday and can't help thinking I'm the prettiest girl in the congregation. I know I ought not think that, but I can't help it. I want you to help me with it."
The pastor replied, "Mary, don't worry about it. In your case it's not a sin. It's just a horrible mistake." -- Haddon Robinson, "Good Guys, Bad Guys, and Us Guys," Preaching Today, Tape No. 80.
- W. Understand, Jesus isn't condoning the actions of the Tax Collectors.
- X. His corruption is just as repugnant to God as the self-righteousness of the Pharisee.
- Y. It is the contrast of the attitudes that Jesus is illustrating.
- Z. The Pharisee is content to justify himself, the Tax Collector recognizes that there is no way for self-justification.

AA.C. S. Lewis, *Leadership*, Vol. 7, no. 4. When a man is getting better, he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less.

BB.It is at this point of Surrender that Jesus wants His followers to be.

IV. A Surrendered Heart is Authentic

A.Pledging Fraternity

1. During Hell week, there was a particular night of verbal abuse that we went through.
2. When it came my term, I was shocked by one of the brother's impression of me.
3. The two terms, I remember well, were hypocrite and plastic smile.
4. Quite honestly, those words changed the course of my life.
5. At first not for good. At nineteen my faith was mainly outward. I was self-righteous. I went away from that night wanting to prove that I was not plastic, not a hypocrite, so over the course of the next 3–4 years my faith eroded to almost nothing.
6. As painful as those years were, that awakening led me to faith that is not based on my self-righteousness, but on the Righteousness of Jesus Christ.
7. It was finally OK for me to accept that I couldn't justify myself.
8. My self-justification had led me to be highly judgmental of others who couldn't make the mark.
9. Probably that night led me to be the kind of Pastor who would admit his Imperfections and would want to offer Grace and Love to Imperfect People. (Use Bumper Sticker)

B.Bruce Larson tells of some advice given to him. "... do you know what's wrong with you? You judge people by their actions and yourself by your intentions. If you could reverse that, it would change your life." Since then I've been trying to judge others not by what they do, but by what they meant to do. Try judging yourself not by what you meant, but by what you did—which is how people perceive you. That's a giant step on the way to humility.

V. A Surrendered Heart is Humble

A.The Life You've Always Wanted John Ortberg #57 pg. 103 "Humility, if ever we could grow into it, would not be a burden. It would be an immense gift."

"Humility is the freedom to stop trying to be what we're not, or pretending to be what we're not, and accepting our 'appropriate smallness.'"

B.The Relationship Principles of Jesus (Tom Holladay) - Highlight Loc. 2686-88 With the choice to humble yourself, you begin to see the world differently. Instead of always needing to be noticed by others, you begin to notice others' needs. You're no longer the sole focus of your soul's attention. You find a refreshing freedom to see, care about, and act on the needs you see around you.

C.G. Timothy Johnson in *The Covenant Companion* (Oct. 1987). *Christianity Today*, Vol. 32, no. 1. Here is a little rule I have come to believe: the more dramatic and pious we become about our faith, the more likely it is that we are trying to please the gods of this earth—sometimes disguised in religious robes—rather than the one true and holy God. Jesus couldn't stomach publicly sanctimonious displays of religiosity. He preferred those whose actions spoke for their faith. That is a thought that should scare us all into judgment. I have long believed that our checkbook will say more about our true commitment than all the pious words we utter.

VI. A Surrendered Heart is not Self-Righteous

A.Heath Kit Do It Yourself Electronic company. (2 Images)

B.There are No DIY Christians

C.*The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay) How does humility handle the personal relationship we have with God? Let's remind ourselves of our daily greatness quiz: Will I exalt myself, or will I humble myself?

When you exalt yourself, you end up with a do-it-yourself design for relating to God. It's all up to you. It is no accident that this Pharisee, who was immersed in religion, had fallen into the do-it-yourself trap—a trap you may be more prone to fall into the longer you hang around church. What started out as a fresh dependence on God can slide into a less challenging reliance on yourself. “After all,” you think, “I’ve made progress on the ‘faith thing.’ God, I think I’ve got it figured out now. I’ll take it from here.” All of a sudden, you’re depending on yourself. No one ever intends to become a Pharisee. This Pharisee didn’t wake up one day and think, “In my pursuit of God, I’d like to get as far away from him as possible, so I’m going to build rules into my life that ruin my heart for him: He just slid into it step by step, rule by rule, condemnation of others by condemnation of others. Jesus’ simple story about the Pharisee and the tax collector serves to encourage us to break out of the discouragement of a do-it-yourself life.

In this story, Jesus pointed to the signs of do-it-yourself religion. These can serve as warning signs for all of us, showing us that we are moving from depending on God to doing it ourselves:

- D. *You become confident in yourself.* The feeling begins to creep into the back of your mind that God is fortunate to have you as a follower.
- E. *You become condemning of others.* Whenever you quickly and easily fall into the trap of condemning others, you give evidence that you’re depending on yourself.
- F. *You become content with externals.* “I fast... and give a tenth.” It’s not that there is anything wrong with these externals; it’s just that they are all that’s left. You’ve become content with the trappings of religion.
- G.H. A. Williams A do-gooder is a person trying to live beyond his spiritual income. --, Leadership, Vol. 3, no. 3.

VII. **The Surrendered Heart is Truly Free**

A. *(Worship Team make your way to the stage)*

B. Alison’s definition of Surrender

1. There are those who get to their last straw and have exhausted every avenue and then surrender.
2. There are those who just acknowledge that they are powerless and need to surrender to Jesus.
3. The Good News is that God accepts both surrenders.

C. Recently, I had a chance to visit Pearl Harbor. I was prepared to see the USS Arizona Memorial where over 1700 lost their lives.

D. We chose to also visit the USS Missouri that was brought to Pearl Harbor.

E. After being decommissioned on March 31, 1992, she was donated in 1998 to the USS Missouri Memorial Association and became a museum ship at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

F. The significance of the USS Memorial to be in Pearl Harbor is that the Japanese surrendered to the United States on board the ship on September 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay, Japan.

G. You get to see the place where World War II began and ended.

H. General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Halsey received the Japanese on the deck and the treaty was signed.

I. Our tour guide, who I think may have served on the Missouri, shared that the Japanese were reluctant to sign and it was a very uncomfortable exchange.

J. Their surrender was forced upon them, though their pride had not been surrendered.

K. As a part of the wisdom of General MacArthur was his invitation to General Wainwright, who had been captured when Corregidor fell and kept a POW, and also General Percival of the British Army, who had been in command at Singapore and taken prisoner then—he had these two come and stand alongside him. They were, of course, very emaciated-looking and had just been flown in the day before from a prison in Manchuria where they'd been released by the Japanese or rescued by our prison camp troops who went around to take

care of all of them and get them out. He gave each of those—he gave Wainwright his first pen when he started out signing and Percival the second one.

L.I think there is a great lesson here. When we stand before God, some will feel forced into submission to bow, to surrender.

M.But others like Wainwright and Percival, will recognize their weak condition, and give thanks for a Savior.

N.They will cry out '*God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*'

VIII. Prayer