



I. Introduction

What is a Parable?

Parables are brief stories that are true to life, given for the purpose of teaching some spiritual truth.

The word parable is from 2 Greek words:

- "Para" – along side
- "bello" – to put, to place, to throw

In the Bible parables are only one type of figurative language that is used. There are three steps in studying a parable:

1. Study the three parts

- the setting
- the story
- the spiritual message

2. Find the central message

- Each parable has one and one only central message
- Each parable has a number of details that have spiritual significance of their own. But all these details relate to the one central message.
- Each parable has details that have no special spiritual significance.

3. Apply it to our lives

II. The **SETTING** Luke 18:9-14

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "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.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

III. The **SETTING**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: Luke 18:9 (NIV)

IV. The **STORY**

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 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.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:10-14 (NIV)

- This Pharisee was a **RELIGIOUS MAN**.
- He was a **PRAYING MAN**.
- He was a regular **WORSHIPER** of God.
- He was **ORTHODOX**.
- He was an **HONEST** man.
- He was **JUST**.
- He was a zealous seeker after God, to the extent of fasting **TWICE** a week.
- He was a scrupulous **TITHER**.
- His heart toward God was **ABSOLUTELY WRONG**.

An important element in the teaching - as nearly always in the parables - is **CONTRAST**.

TAX COLLECTOR

- He knows that he has **NO RIGHT** to be in that area.
- He is unwilling to lift up his **EYES** to heaven. **John 17:1 (NIV)**
- He beats his **CHEST**.
- He cried for **MERCY**.

V. The SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

*I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. **Luke 18:14 (NIV)***

These words of our Lord may be taken as part of the story itself or as the spiritual message.

What is the **CENTRAL MESSAGE**?

The Parable gives a picture of what the sinner's attitude should be toward the holy, merciful, and compassionate God.

The Pharisee is a picture of how **NOT TO COME** to God.

We also see what the heart of the **CHRISTIAN** should be.

In order to become a Christian, a man must come as a **BROKEN-HEARTED** sinner, with a **HUMBLE** and contrite heart, casting himself on the mercy of God.

EVERY MAN must begin there.

Every man must **CONTINUE** there, with this attitude toward God.

Before God I have **NO RIGHTEOUSNESS** of my own; so all boasting or trust in myself and my works must be excluded, and I must in humility cast myself on the mercy of God.

VI. Personal Application

Observations:

- There are those who trust in **THEMSELVES**. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**
- There are those who are **SELF RIGHTEOUS**. **Psalms 143:2, Romans 10:2-4 (NIV)**
- There are those who **DESPISE OTHERS**. **James 2:1-4 (NIV)**
- There are those who know they **NEED MERCY**.
- There are those who understand they need to **REPENT**.
- The issues of your life don't matter as much as the issue of your **HEART**.

1. Who am I in this story?
2. Attitude of the **HEART** is the issue.
3. We never get to a point that we don't need **GOD'S MERCY**.
4. It is dangerous to take God's mercy for **GRANTED**.