

SESSION EIGHTEEN: What kind of person does God accept? *Luke 18 v 9-14*
Full Route

1. He is not an extortioner (as most tax collectors were—they taxed people slightly more than the Romans wanted, to keep a slice for themselves). He is not unjust in his dealings with others. He is not having an affair. And, positively, he fasts regularly and gives away 10% (a tithe) of his income.

2. Verse 9—he was trusting in himself for being righteous ie: right with God. And his confidence came from comparing his own performance and goodness with that of others, and thinking himself better than they were. In this way, he treated others with contempt. Verse 14 suggests he was proud—he “exalted” himself.

4. That he’s a sinner.

5. That he needs mercy from God, because he doesn’t deserve to be “justified” (for a definition of that word, see question seven). It’s right for him to feel this because he is a sinner! As a tax collector, he’s working for the Romans, the enemies of God’s people, Israel, and he may well have been taxing a little too much in order to keep more for himself. But, as we’ve seen, we are all sinners—whoever this man is and whatever job he has, he’s right to feel the way he does.

7. Because those who are humble enough to know they don’t deserve to be right with God are those who will ask for mercy, which God loves to give. But “everyone who exalts himself”, who thinks they’re good enough to be right with God, won’t think they need to ask for mercy, so won’t get it, and will end up being humbled as they discover they aren’t justified before God (have a look back at 13 v 23-30).

8. That we mustn’t think that what we do, and the fact other people behave worse than us, means we’re right with God. We need to accept that we’re sinners, be humble, and beg God for his undeserved mercy. It is people who do that (like Simon Peter in Luke 5 v 1-11) who are justified by God.

9. By following the example of the tax collector: by speaking to God humbly, admitting we’re a sinner, and asking for mercy. And by avoiding the attitude of the Pharisee, who thinks he’s “good enough” for God.

10. God will give us the riches and glory of relationship with him for eternity if we admit our sin and beg for undeserved mercy.