

Luke Chapter 18 Questions - Approaching God

Ice Breaker: What strategies did you use to get what you wanted from your parents? Which ones work best? Which ones did not work?

Read Luke 18:1-8 The Parable of the Persistent Widow: This parable concerning prayer tells about a widow who kept coming to a godless judge to get justice. The judge at first refused the widow but, because of her persistence, he eventually gave in just to keep her from pestering him. Jesus then explains the parable that it is important for God's people to be persistent in the pursuit of justice. He ends it with being concerned that people will lose faith.

1. What method did the widow use to get what she wanted from the judge? How is God like and unlike the judge in this parable?
2. What was the point Jesus was making in this parable (1, 6-8)? How does persistent prayer relate to faith (8)? How will God bring about justice for those who are His?
3. For what are you persistently seeking in prayer?

Read Luke 18:9-14 The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector: This parable compares two people: one is a Pharisee who considers himself better than all the sinners; the other is a tax collector who is disturbed by his sin and asking God for mercy. Jesus points out that it is the tax collector who will be justified because of his humility. The one who exalts himself will ultimately be humbled and the one who humbles himself will ultimately be exalted.

4. To whom was Jesus speaking? Why do you think Jesus directed this parable to them? Is there anything wrong with being confident? Please explain.

5. Who does society look down on today? How do we look down or feel superior to others? How can we guard against treating others as less than us?

6. What point was Jesus making with this parable? What does this parable teach us about how we are to approach God?

7. In Pastor Dave's sermon, he makes the following points about this parable.

Which of these points or other portions of the sermon resonated most with you?

a. The Pharisee stands by himself (to avoid being defiled by those he despised) and offers prayers spoken out loud.

b. Rather than comparing himself to God's expectations of him, he compares himself to others.

c. The tax-collector stands at a distance and beats his chest where his heart is located.

d. God shows compassion and atonement to the meek and humble, while rejecting the arrogant.

e. Only those who sense their unworthiness in God's presence, can appropriately receive God's offered grace.

8. What are ways we can live out our faith in the world without exalting ourselves and being viewed as arrogant or self-righteous? (Colossians 4:5-6)

Read Luke 18:15-17 Blessing the children: Jesus rebukes the disciples for not allowing children to come to him. He uses the children as an object lesson for how we should receive the Kingdom of God.

9. What point was Jesus making with this event? What does it teach us about how we are to approach God?

10. How does a passage like this inform us about how we are to share Jesus with children?

Read Luke 18:18-30 The rich young ruler and the Kingdom of God: A rich young ruler comes to Jesus to find out what he must do to enter the Kingdom of God. He justifies himself by the way he lives according to the 10 commandments, but Jesus points out that his focus is in the wrong place. He is chasing after justification based upon his own righteousness and success rather than pursuing Jesus. For the rich young ruler, wealth was his "god"; therefore, wealth is what Jesus pointed to for him to be able to follow Christ. Jesus then points out that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God because he puts his hope in his wealth. Jesus declares that only God can make it possible for people to enter the Kingdom of God and it is those who leave everything behind to follow God that will inherit eternal life.

11. What things can keep us from fully following Christ? What should we do if we have things that keep us from fully following Jesus?

12. What was the ultimate answer to the rich young ruler's question, "what can I do to inherit eternal life"?

13. What point was Jesus making with this encounter? What does it teach us about how we are to approach God?

Read Luke 18:31-34 The 3rd prediction of his death: Jesus again prophesied that he will be handed over to the Gentiles, suffer, will die, and then rise on the 3rd day. The disciples did not understand!

14. Why did Luke include this narrative after the encounter with the rich young ruler?

Read Luke 18:35-42 The blind man receives his sight: Jesus was traveling to Jericho when a blind man cried out for Jesus to have mercy on him. Jesus stopped to ask the man what he wanted, which was to receive his sight, and Jesus gave him his sight stating that his faith has saved him. The blind man and all the people who witnessed it began to praise God.

15. What point was Jesus making with this encounter? What does it teach us about how we are to approach God?

16. How did the blind man's response provide evidence of his faith in Jesus?

17. How should our response to the healing and forgiveness we receive(d) from Jesus provide evidence of our faith to the all the people in our lives?

Summary: Most of the stories revolve around how to approach God. The widow was persistent. The tax collector repentant and humble. The children came with complete trust and innocence. The rich young ruler missed the point that it is God who justifies a person not their righteousness and it is the ones who pursue God above all else through faith in Jesus Christ that will inherit eternal life. The blind man took his blindness to Jesus in faith and it is that faith that healed him.

18. Which of these lessons on approaching God spoke to you? Which areas could you improve your approach to God?