

✚ As is true of most of the Lord's parables, this one is counterintuitive. This is in fact more than counterintuitive, it was outrageous, scandalous, even shameful by the religious standards of the day. The idea presented here had no place in the theology of that day. It is not the man who's good but the man who knows he's wicked that is justified by God. In Luke 18:9 we have those "who trusted in themselves", therefore, not God. Your entire eternity; your everlasting life is dependent on you and what you've done? As opposed to your entire eternity dependent on Jesus and what He's done for you? Your eternal declaration will either be "God has saved me" or "I have saved me."

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## 1. There are only two possibilities for eternity.

- ✓ Either you are self-righteous, you supply your own, or you are God-righteous, God is your supply. It's not complicated or convoluted or complex: it is just simply either you can make yourself right with God or you cannot. Either you can achieve a righteousness that satisfies God or you can't. Either you can make yourself acceptable or it has to be done for you. This is the simple division of every religion on the planet. It is the biggest lie on the planet that a person can earn heaven by being good enough. You cannot do this!, note Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:10 and James 2:10.
  - ✓ This is a very old lie dating way back the gates of the Garden of Eden, two brothers brought different things to God for different reasons. Abel brought a sacrifice of blood, Abel brought what he was told and had faith in what God had said. Cain, even though he knew what God had said, brought what he wanted. He attempted to make his own deal with God. He tried to be self-righteous instead of accepting the righteousness offered by God.
  - ✓ Leading the parade of the self-righteous were the Pharisees, Luke 18:10-12. He refers to himself no less than 5 times in prayer that is not really directed at God but simply a proclamation of his superiority. He trusted in himself and not God, it's pretty clear who he worshipped, "I, I, I, I, I." He asks for no mercy, grace, forgiveness or help. His fasting scheme of twice a week on Monday and Thursdays, why? Because those were market days, the crowds were bigger, he had better chance of showing off. He stood to pray so they could get a good look at a righteous person! "Watch out!" Jesus warned them. "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Matthew 16:6. Those headed to hell seek God's commendation, those headed to Heaven seek His forgiveness.
  - ✓ The fact is a sinner is a sinner, this tax collector had many public sins: stealing, hatred, usury, adultery, idolatry, Sabbath breaker, blasphemer, Luke 18:13. The Pharisee had been careful to keep his sins private: he had stolen but only from those he deemed worthy of being stolen from; he had murdered but only in his heart, he had committed adultery but only in his mind; committed idolatry as he marked up the price of the goods he sold travelers.
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## 2. The ticket to hell only costs us one sin, the only way out of that is God's grace.

- ✓ Unlike the Pharisee, the tax collector's prayer is directed at God: "God, be merciful to me **the** sinner." He wasn't fooled by the thinking that he could be self-righteous. He's a big sinner and he knows it, such an incredibly important grace of God is **informing us about our sin**. Have you ever asked God to reveal your sin to you? The Pharisee didn't believe he had committed no sin, he just believed that he had earned the right to be forgiven. It is that notion that is sending him to hell! It is that notion that is sending most people to hell.
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## Luke 18:9-14, "Who Goes to Heaven?, Part 2"

- ✓ "But is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed." Galatians 1:7-9. It's the same old lie! The same old religion started by Cain, "I'm not submitting to God's way, I'm going to bring what I want, and God will accept me."

**Hell will be full of sincere people!, see Romans 3:20, and Galatians 2:16. It still all boils down to, one of them thought he could please God on his own and the other one knew he couldn't. So, it will be: whoever exalts himself in this life will be humbled forever, and whoever humbles himself in this life will exalted forever, Luke 18:14. Those headed to hell think they aren't. The saved know it comes as a gift, they know they aren't worthy, they know eternal life can't be earned.**

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