

(Luke) 44 - the Mercy of God

by Ed Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in the mercy of God and being humble like a child, rather than relying on one's own righteousness or accomplishments.

Duration: 45:38

Scripture: Matthew 19:16, Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 10:17-27, Luke 17:11 - 18:8, Luke 18:18-30

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Salvation Truth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of not judging God based on external appearances. He uses the example of the unjust judge to illustrate how things may look good on the outside but be bad on the inside. The preacher then moves on to the parable of the proud Pharisee and the humble tax collector, emphasizing the truth of salvation. He highlights the need to trust in God's mercy rather than relying on one's own righteousness. The sermon concludes by summarizing the key points of salvation, emphasizing that those who trust in themselves will not be justified, but those who humbly trust in God's mercy will be.

Transcript

Good morning. I guess we can begin. Sorry about last week, our little cancellation.

By the way, if you were not contacted, I hope you didn't get here and find it canceled. If you would leave your name and number if you want to be contacted in a case that we have to, that would be very helpful. And I don't know, Yvonne, if you'd be willing to take that.

Well, you can just write it on the back of one of these. Thank you so much. All right, let's commit our time unto the Lord and look in His Word.

Our Father, once again, we are so thankful that we have this privilege, week after week, to just gather in your name and to wait before the Holy Spirit and just focus in a living, a vital way, our hearts upon the Lord Himself. And we'd ask you, Lord, to guide us this morning as we fellowship in your Word. We thank you in advance that you know our hearts and you will minister unto us.

We pray that the meditations that we have would honor you. And we just commit our little session unto you in the all-prevailing name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, I'll ask you please to turn to Luke chapter 18. Luke chapter 18, that's where we left off. By way of review, I'm not going to give an awful lot, but I'll just remind you that we're at the end of the great teaching ministry, as Luke presents it, of our Lord Jesus.

And after he has taught topic after topic after topic, Luke then summarizes all of the wonderful teaching of the Lord Jesus. So far we've looked at three stories that I think summarize the truth of all of the different topics Jesus was teaching. The first is in chapter 17, 11-19, the ten lepers.

And the summary in that story, in my understanding, seems to be the spontaneous overflow of the heart that is ministered unto. Remember that one leper returned and kept the spirit of the commandment. Go show yourself to the priest.

Showing yourself to the priest was for the purpose of giving evidence that you'd truly been cleansed. And that leper surely gave evidence of it. When he fell down before the feet of Jesus, he showed himself to the priest.

And then we looked at chapter 17, 20-37, his great discourse on the coming of the kingdom and the coming of the king. And the principle there is the revelation of the Son of Man. In other words, in his time, in his way, in ordinary days, the Son of Man will appear to us, and when he does, he'll transform us.

And then we looked at chapter 18 last time, the first eight verses, and we discussed the parable of the unjust judge. The parable illustrates the truth that we're always to trust the Lord and not to think. We're always to depend on Him.

Even when it looks like, you see, He's the opposite of the judge. On the outside, the unjust judge looked good. It looked like he loved God and that he respected man.

But God tells us the truth in his heart. He did not fear God. He didn't respect man.

And though sometimes on the outside it looks like he did good, but we know he was bad, sometimes it looks like God does bad. We can't judge Him by His hand. We must always judge Him by His heart.

And that's where we left off last time. We come this morning to the fourth summary truth, illustrated in chapter 18, verses 9-14. The parable of the proud Pharisee and the humble tax collector.

Once again, he's still summarizing the truth of salvation. Follow along please as we read from verse 9. And he told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt. Two men went up to the temple to pray.

One a Pharisee, the other a tax gatherer or a publican. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself. God, I thank Thee that I'm not like other people, swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax gatherer.

I fast twice a week. I pay tithes of all that I get. But the tax gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven.

He was beating his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who exalts himself shall be humble, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted. This is the wonderful parable of the proud Pharisee and the humble publican.

Now before we look at the message of this great parable, let me give you a little background. I think you're probably already familiar with these truths, but let me just get it before you. I think you all know what the Pharisee was and represented.

He was the religious leader, external, doing very many self-righteous things, pious on the outside. In verse 10, you have the word in the King James Publican, the New American Standard and other translations, call him a tax collector. For years I had the wrong idea of the publican.

Because they were linked together over and over, you hear about, for example, in Mark 2, 16, publicans and sinners. They just sort of grouped together. And in Matthew 11, 19, they were upset because Jesus was a friend of publicans and sinners.

And because they were linked like that, I had the idea that a publican was sort of a low-class person, a sinner kind of a thing. Now we know from Luke chapter 5, that there was not a small number of these. It says a great number of publicans gathered.

What was a publican, a tax collector? They were not uneducated, repulsive sinners who came from the slum, like I thought. The opposite is true. When we come to chapter 19, we're going to study Zacchaeus.

The chief tax collector. He didn't come from the slum. He was on the avenue.

And you know the difference. These tax collectors were very, very wealthy. Matthew 10, 3 talks about Matthew, the tax collector.

And we know how wealthy he was. And after he came to the Lord, he threw this great bash and invited all of his low-class friends to come to hear the Lord Jesus. Why were they linked with sinners, harlots, drunkards? The sinners and the publicans.

They were hated for two reasons. Number one, because they worked for Rome. And the Jews sort of despised that.

They felt like they were God's chosen people. And to be under the heel of a foreign government, they just felt like God was going to deliver them. That was anathema to them.

And then they were hated because they were thieves. They were extortioners. They were very oppressive.

Here's how the system worked in Rome. You see, Rome did not tax people. We get taxes, and that's coming up.

And everybody gets taxed. But Rome didn't tax people. It taxed districts.

So if you're on Quidditch Island, there would be a district Newport, a district Middletown, a district Portsmouth. And that whole district would owe so much money. Well, then how did they collect the money? These tax gatherers would go out, and they would buy the job.

They would purchase the job. They'd go to Rome and say, I'd like Newport. How much for Newport? And they'd say, well, Newport owes us \$5 million.

And so the tax gatherer would buy that job. How did he get paid? And the answer is commission. Rome paid him nothing.

Everything he could collect above what they owed, that district owed Rome, belonged to him. And Rome didn't care. So the Roman army and the soldiers enforced all of the oppression that these tax gatherers would do.

They could do anything. They could close down your farm. They could foreclose on your property.

And they did exactly that. And so they were very wealthy. Only the rich could be tax gatherers because they had to buy the job.

And they got richer and richer because they could do anything they wanted to. So that's what the publican was. He was one of these rich tax collectors.

And so the proud Pharisee went up to pray. And this publican also went to pray. Now let me suggest another fact that I think will help us get into the heart of the parable.

I not only was wrong on what I thought the publican was, but I thought for years that this was a parable on prayer. It is not. You know, from chapter 18, verse 10, two men went to the temple to pray.

So I said, oh, we're going to learn about prayer. That's what it looks like. And then verse 11, the Pharisee, that's an interesting expression, the Pharisee prayed to himself.

Well, you know where your prayer goes if you pray to yourself. It's not going to go anywhere. So I thought this was all about prayer.

Verse 13, this man prays. He beats his breast and cries out, God be merciful to me, a sinner. But this is not a parable about prayer.

That's included, but that's not the point. Look at verse 14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.

Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted. This is a parable about salvation. God is summarizing his salvation.

This man went away justified. The other man didn't. Notice in verse 9. And he told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt.

Now let me put it in one sentence, the essence of this parable. This parable can be summarized in these words. Those who trust in themselves will not be justified.

Those who trust in the mercy of God will be justified. That's the point of this parable. Verse 13, the tax gatherer standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift his eyes to heaven, was beating his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, the sinner.

Those who trust in themselves will never be justified. Those who trust in the free mercy of God, they'll go home justified. Now what gave this self-trusting Pharisee the confidence that he was going to be accepted by God? Two things we see in this parable.

Number one is in verse 11, he compared himself not to God. We're going to see that again in another connection, the absolute standard. But he compared himself to other people.

And because he looked pretty good next to the ones he was standing next to, he said, Lord, I thank you I'm not like this swindler, and like the unjust, and like the adulterer, and even like this tax collector. I'll tell you, that'll give you a false sense of security if you begin to compare yourself to somebody else. Because then you think you look pretty good before God.

One of the prophets gives that message. While he was talking, he said, everybody's comparing themselves. And he had this vision.

And in the vision, a plumb line fell from heaven. And it went right next to the wall that they were building. Well, it looked pretty straight until that plumb line came down.

And as soon as the plumb line from heaven came down, that wall was just as crooked as crooked could be. And so there's a false sense of security if we look at our lives like that proud Pharisee did, and we say, well, compared to so-and-so, I'm doing pretty well. And then the second thing he did that gave him a false sense of security was he was leaning on his religious activity.

Did you notice that in verse 12? I fast twice a week. You know, in the Bible times, they would fast. When they fasted twice a week, they would fast on Mondays and Thursdays.

Because they claimed that Moses went up Mount Sinai on Monday and then he came back on a Thursday. So they thought that was pretty spiritual. You know, many Christians, when they fast, they fast on Wednesdays or they fast on Fridays.

And because they tied into the cross and the 40 days before the cross and so on. I pay tithes of all. You know, in Matthew 23, it tells how the Pharisees were so meticulous in tithing.

You might tithe your income, but they tithed their vegetables. And they had herbs and they would divide it up. Ten percent belonged to the temple.

And they'd have a carrot divided into ten pieces. And one of them would go off to the temple and so on. And they thought they were so religious when they did that.

Those who trust themselves, compare themselves with somebody else, or trust their religious activity will not be justified before God. Those who trust in the pure mercy of God and throw themselves as sinners upon the Lord. Verse 12, God be merciful to me, the sinner.

That's been called the sinner's prayer. Many times when, in evangelism, someone is leading someone, pulling the net in, showing them how to trust in the Lord. They'll come to that verse.

Yes, tell the Lord this prayer. God be merciful to me, a sinner. Before we leave this wonderful parable, let me point out what should be self-evident.

And that is that salvation is a matter of the heart. I call attention to this because there's a right way to say what the Pharisee said. And there's a wrong way to say what the publican said.

It depends upon the heart. It's not their words that condemn them. It was their heart.

If God didn't tell us in verse 9 that the Pharisee trusted himself and held others in contempt, we wouldn't have that window to his heart. God filled us in on that. He told us about that.

You can look at me, but you don't know for sure if I'm trusting my own righteousness or trusting the Lord. I can look at you. I can't see your heart.

I can't see on the inside. Just so we can't look at one another and judge and say, wow, he's just holding that person in contempt. You don't know that from the outside.

Look at verse 11. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, God, I thank Thee I'm not like other people, swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. Now think about it.

Isn't there a right way to say that? Isn't there a right way to pray that? Isn't that the same truth as there but for the grace of God go I? Isn't there a way to come before the Lord and say, Lord, thank you that I'm not like that. Especially if in our past life before we came to trust in the Lord, we were involved in those kind of things. You could say those words.

Just because he said those words, that's not what made him go home unjustified. The same thing is true in verse 12. I fast twice a week.

I pay tithes of all I get. I can see someone coming before the Lord with an honest heart, praising God. Let's say in his past he squandered and gambled and was reckless with his income.

And he's just doing an inventory and he comes before the Lord and says, Thank you, Lord. Thank you. Here I am.

I'm paid in tithe. I used to gamble and lose all this provision from you. And there's a right way to say that.

Just so, verse 13. God be merciful to me, a sinner. Anybody can say those words.

You know, the Bible talks in Matthew 15 about people who honor God with their lips and yet far from him in their heart. We have heard many people say, I have sinned. Admitting sin is not confessing sin.

It was interesting, the other day I took my concordance and I went through and I looked up everybody who said I have sinned. And I was a little bit shocked. Who said it? Pharaoh said, I have sinned.

Balaam said, I have sinned. Achan said, I have sinned. King Saul said, I have sinned.

Judas said, I have sinned. Not saying those words. So just because you say, I have sinned, that doesn't mean a thing.

God sees the heart. So there's a right way to say, praise God, I'm not like other people. There's a wrong way to say it, but there's a right way to say it.

And there's a wrong way to say, I have sinned. It's the heart. And our words, if they're not an index of the heart, we can't judge a lot by our words.

It's not an accident that as soon as this parable ended and Luke brings it all together, mothers began to bring their babies to the Lord Jesus. There is connection between this next little event, beginning in verse 14, and that parable. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled. He who humbles himself shall be exalted. And they were bringing their babies to him that he might touch them.

When his disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. Jesus called for them, saying, Permit the children to come to me. Do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. Now what does it mean to be humble? See, this publican came humbly before God. And now we have an illustration of how he came.

Let me make a couple of observations about this scene. First of all, in chapter 18, verse 15, notice the word. You don't really see it so much in the English, but you do a little bit.

Babies. They brought their babies. The word, some translations say infants.

This is a different Greek word than he used in Matthew chapter 18. He's laying down a lesson that he laid down before, but they missed it. Remember in Matthew 18, they were discussing who's the greatest in the kingdom of God.

They were discussing greatness. And Jesus took a child. Now this is not the same word.

Because there the word can be like a toddler. That child walked. That child stood by himself.

He took a child and he pointed to the child and he said, except you become like this child, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Well that was a wasted illustration. It was wasted because they misunderstood it.

And they thought, well now we've got to be like children. We've got to have the disposition of children. And so they tried to copy children.

And they thought, well we'll believe like children. Because a child, he believes everything. You tell him anything.

Tell him about Santa Claus or whatever. He's going to believe you. So we'll believe like a child.

We'll behave like children. You know, they always obey and so on. You tell them to do something, they do it.

We'll be humble like a child. You know how humble children are. Do you have children? I have six children.

They're not too humble. And so on. Later on, the epistles had to undo that terrible thinking.

Ephesians 4. Be no longer children. Toss to and fro with every wind of darkness. He said, will you stop believing like children.

1 Corinthians 3.1. Brethren, I could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as carnal, as babes in Christ. Stop being so proud you're like a child. Jesus said, except you be like children, you can't enter in.

But don't believe like a child. Except you be like children, but don't be humble like a child. 1 Corinthians 14.20. Brethren, be not children in mind, in malice be babes, but in mind, in understanding, be men.

They had the idea, well, we'll be naive. A child is naive. Doesn't involve himself in complicated things.

I'll just think like a child. He said, don't do that. Don't believe like a child.

Don't be humble like a child. Don't try to think like a child. Later he was talking about the generation, and he said, to what shall I compare this generation? They're like children in a marketplace.

We pipe, they don't dance. We mourn, and they won't weep. They're never satisfied.

They're fickle. In other words, Jesus takes a little child. He said, except you be like this, you can't enter in.

But don't believe like that, and don't be humble like that, and don't think like that, and don't behave like that. Then what's his point? How in the world are we supposed to be like children if in every way a child is, we can't imitate their disposition? He said, I think I'll give the illustration again. And so mothers brought their infants.

That word is such a beautiful... Remember when Elizabeth, her baby in her womb, kicked, responding to the baby in Mary's womb? That's the word that's used. The word here, B.B. Warfield, the great Presbyterian theologian, analyzes the Greek, and he said, actually it's a word that means infant of days. They were bringing babies days old.

Now you got a little baby. And Jesus said, all right, now let's get the lesson again. You missed it when I brought the toddler.

Now let's see if you can get it. Except you become like that, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. Well, he can't be talking about disposition.

That baby can't think. That baby can't behave. What can it do? It can cry and mess up.

And that's all it can do. And he was talking about helplessness. He was not talking about what a baby does, but what a baby is.

It wasn't a disposition. It was a condition of nature. And he's saying, unless you come.

And that's what that publican did. As a little baby, he fell helplessly in the arms of the Lord Jesus. And he just said, Lord, be merciful unto me.

And that's the point he's making. In verse 15, they rebuked these mothers and said, don't bring these little babies. Don't annoy Jesus.

One of the strongest words ever used about our Lord Jesus. Mark 10 records it. Same story, when they brought their babies.

And then the disciples. See, I used to think that after they tried to stop the mothers, Jesus just said, suffer the little children to come unto me. That's not how it happened.

He didn't just say, suffer the little children to come unto me. The way it happened was, Mark 10 tells us, He became indignant with them and said, suffer the little children. You've got to get that attitude in there.

He didn't become indignant with anybody except his disciples. He never even became indignant with the Pharisee. But with his disciples because they were standing against one of the greatest principles in the Bible.

Helpless dependence. Everything depended on that. And so he became indignant.

Notice verse 15, they were bringing their babies to him that he might touch them. I want you to get this picture in your mind's eye because it's going to help you understand what it means to receive Jesus. Except you receive Jesus like this baby.

That's helpless dependence. The mothers were bringing their babies to Jesus. Who's the receiver? If they're bringing the babies to Jesus, Jesus is the receiver.

Jesus is receiving babies. I call attention to that because then Jesus looked at the disciples and said, except you receive as the baby receives. Who's doing the receiving? Jesus received babies.

He said, now you've got to receive as a child. Are babies receiving Jesus or is Jesus receiving babies? What does it mean to receive Jesus? It means to let him receive you. That's the idea of what it means to receive Jesus.

It means to fall helplessly in the arms of Christ. They brought their babies to Jesus and Jesus received them. And Jesus said to the disciples, pay attention because that's how to get saved.

By believing that he's receiving me. As I see him accepting me, that is what it means to receive him. So we need to be helpless ourselves and not to stand in the way of others who need to be helpless.

That's the fourth summary of his teaching. Worship was the first. The revelation of Christ was the second.

Trusting not fainting was the third. And this childlike dependence for salvation was the fourth. Now let me introduce the next story and we'll develop it next time.

I think you're familiar with it. The Rich Young Ruler. Let me just read the text and then we'll unfold it next time.

Verse 18. A certain ruler questioned him saying, Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? There is none good except God alone. You know the commandments.

Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal.

Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. And he said, All these things I've kept from my youth.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, One thing you still lack. Sell all you possess and distribute it to the poor and you shall have treasures in heaven. Come, follow me.

And when he heard these things, he became very sad for he was extremely rich. Jesus looked at him and said, How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

And they heard it. They who heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things impossible with men are possible with God. Let me just read three more verses.

I want you to see what Peter says here. Peter said, Behold, we've left our own homes and followed you. And he said to them, Verily I say to you, There is no one who has left house, wife, brothers, parents,

children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times as much as this in this time and in the age to come eternal life.

Now, this is a story of a rich young ruler. You say, I know from verse 18 that he's rich, that he's a ruler, or 23 said he was extremely rich. But how do you know he was young? We call him a rich young ruler.

Well, Luke doesn't tell us that, but Matthew does. Matthew 19.22 calls him a young man. Many guesses have been made.

Who is he? We don't know who he is. Some have even suggested it might be Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. That's the rich young ruler.

There's no evidence of that. Now, when you look at this in a surface way, I speak reverently, even though it's going to sound like I'm not. When you look at it in a surface way, it looks like Jesus really blew an opportunity to witness the Lord.

When you look at it, would you go up, if someone came to you and said, what can I do to inherit eternal life? Would you say, keep the commandments? Was that what you would tell them? That's a great opportunity. Only once in my life has anyone come up and said, can you tell me how to get saved? Only one time. I don't think I would have done what our Lord Jesus did.

And then after you told him that, would you tell him, sell everything you had and then give away that money to the poor? And then after you did that and he started walking away, would you let him go? Or would you call him back and say, hey, I was just kidding. Or let me explain what I meant. Or let me fill in the details.

Jesus just let him go. As far as evangelism goes, on the level of earth, and I speak as a fool, it looks like he just threw this opportunity away. Here comes a man, how do I get to heaven? Keep the commandments, sell everything, give it all away.

And when the man couldn't do it, he said, oh well. And I said, what's happening here? Of course, that's not the reality. The reality is he did not blow an opportunity.

He was intending to teach one of the most wonderful truths about salvation. Let me introduce it this morning and we'll develop it next time. In the parable of the proud Pharisee and the humble publican, he was teaching that salvation is by the pure mercy of God.

Now in this parable, he's gone one step further. He's not only saying that salvation is for those who fall helplessly into the arms of Jesus and trust the mercy of God. But he's going to show that salvation is a mighty miracle of God.

He is deliberately taking it out of the hands of man and putting it in the hands of God. Now let me give you several keys to help understand this parable. The first is the question the man asked.

Verse 18. What shall I do? Underscore, I do. What shall I do? You see, this man wanted to do something.

And he's asking, what works? How can I get to heaven by doing? What works can I do? To understand Jesus' response, you've got to understand why he said verse 19. Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? There's none good. Except one.

Only God is good. You see, in Matthew, he didn't say, what shall I do? Matthew chapter 19, 15, gives the full question. What good thing shall I do? You see, the man had a relative view of goodness.

What good thing? He said, good. Are you ready for this? Do you want to know what good thing you do? Let's start here. There's only one good, and that's God.

And you want to know what good thing to do? Be perfect. Be as holy as God is holy. And he took this second table of the law, the standard of God, and he said, if you want to inherit by doing, then here's the commandment, do them.

He didn't even get to the first table with his relationship with God, but only the second table. This guy didn't have a clue. That's why he said in verse 21, all these I've kept from my youth up.

He had no idea of the perfection required to be accepted into God's holy heaven. It's an amazing thing to realize that the only way, if we're ever going to get there by what we do, to get into God's holy heaven, we've got to be as holy as God is holy. Aren't you glad for the gospel? Because that makes us as holy as God.

He took my place. We traded records. I get his record, he gets mine.

And that's what the book of life is. You know, for years I misunderstood the book of life. I thought it was like a telephone book.

A directory, got all these names, alphabetical order. And God would look at it one day and just go through the thing and Miller, Miller, Miller, Miller, Ed, Ed, Ed, alright, he's in the book, I guess I have it. That's not what the book of life is.

Revelation tells us that God keeps records on every person. There's a record book on your life. There's a record book on my life.

It's called the Lamb book of life. Not just the book of life, the Lamb book of life. It's a record book.

It's the Lamb record book. How'd you like to have your name in the Lamb's record book? It's like a report card. And so when he looks at that record, it's not just a name.

It's the record of the Lord Jesus. And that's later on he'll develop all of that. But that's what he's trying to say to this man.

You want to do something to get to heaven? Then you gotta be as holy as God is holy. Next time we'll pick up the idea of selling everything you have. But let me close with the chief point of the story.

When it was all over, after he had laid that all out, the disciple said in verse 26, who then can be saved? If that's the requirement. If you gotta be that perfect. Who can be saved? Verse 27.

Things impossible with men are possible with God. In other words, it's a mighty miracle. Nobody can be saved apart from a mighty miracle of God.

You're all familiar with that wonderful illustration of that miracle. Verse 25. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Perhaps you've heard of that explanation the natural explanation for the eye of a needle. They say in Jerusalem there's a hole in the wall in the gate and it's called the needle's eye. And a camel can't get through without unloading first and with difficulty he has to squeeze through.

That is not the point of this. The word here actually is a surgical needle. It was a bone needle.

It's a needle like you sew with. It's a needle's eye. And what he's trying to say is it's a miracle.

The camel was the largest animal in that part of the world and the needle's eye was the smallest opening. And he said it's easier to get the largest animal through the smallest opening than to try to be saved by doing something. You can't be saved that way.

It's a miracle. Every time a self-righteous person trusts the Lord, the camel goes through the needle's eye. Every time a drunkard trusts in the Lord, the camel goes through the needle's eye.

Every time a fallen person puts their faith in the Lord, the camel goes through the needle's eye. And what he's saying is he wasn't blowing this opportunity. He was teaching this man what good was.

He was giving him a perfect salvation. He was showing that it's not possible to do anything. That it's a mighty miracle of God.

And next time we're going to hone in on what was in the heart of God when he said you've got to sell everything and give it away. There's a wonderful truth there, but we'll leave that for next time. Let me just summarize.

Two points about salvation. Those who trust in themselves will not go home justified. Those who fall helplessly into the arms of Jesus and trust the pure mercy of God will go home justified.

Second point. Salvation is a mighty miracle. Comments or questions? Well, I think two.

Well, I think he might have been challenging this man do you understand what good is? Or he might have been saying do you understand who you're talking to? Other comments or questions? Well, let's bow before the Lord. Our Father, we thank you that you don't judge us by our mouths but by our hearts. I'm sure many times we've prayed like the Pharisee but you saw our hearts.

We praise you for the mercy of God. We thank you that we can receive you by letting you receive us. We thank you for the mighty miracle that in our lives the camel has already passed through the needle's eye.

Oh, we rejoice in our salvation and in our Savior. Ground us thoroughly in these great truths we pray and bring us back again in your will to meditate on your word. We ask in Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15144.mp3>

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