

[Impossible with Men] / Gospel of Luke Chapter Eighteen

~ Our Spiritual Safari looks out onto a vast vista of Scripture in this report that is absolutely breathtaking in the Word of God. The Lord Jesus was God manifest in the flesh when He was down here as a physical man with a ministry. However, it's important to know He was no less God because He was man, and He was no less of a man because He was God. He was both; wholly and equally, unilaterally. We are talking about the real and perfect man of the Lord Jesus Christ - the Blessed Hope of the world.

I don't like pictures of Jesus, as many of you may know. I've never seen one single picture where Jesus was smiling, either. I think He laughed a lot when He was here. When I am around proper Christians, it's fun; and they are a joy and a blessing to hang around. We always laugh - a lot. If you had been around Jesus and the disciples, I believe you would have enjoyed their company. In fact, it would have been the best time you had ever had. I think that would have been a real privilege and a real joy to hear Jesus laughing. Of course, there are people in your life you just love to be with because they joke around and laugh with you. Well, we'll hear Jesus laughing in this report; and if you pray and ask to hear Him talking to you personally, He will do that, too....

1 And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint;

~ In this chapter, Jesus is giving us the 'other side' of prayer. See, we don't storm the gates of the Throne Room and knock the door down and shout out our demands - God doesn't recognize us that way. We come to Him in recognition of our need, and He fulfills our life. That's when our prayers become incense on the altar. Lovingly, Jesus is telling the apostles, "don't be discouraged in your prayer life." Genuine prayer in which we make spiritual contact with our Father in Heaven through His Word is an experience beyond description - and it is quite difficult to attain. We have no record of the disciples making a connection to God in Jesus through prayer when He was here on earth - but they could have. Frankly, it boggles the mind; at least, it does mine. Just keep practicing prayer; and it is a practice - one by which practice makes perfect prayer. I always urge you to

pray for me because I want God Himself to intervene on my behalf. It's not possible to be any more lovely and perfect than Christ....

2 saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man:

~ A judge who fears not God nor regards men is the typical politician today – every single one of them. This is the condition of our judges and courts, too. I think when Jesus said this, everyone laughed – hard – and I think they knew who the judge was that Jesus was speaking of. I think that judge may have been sitting right there with them at the time - laughing along - totally oblivious and not even dimly aware of what was going on....

3 and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.

~ So, the widow says, “avenge me of my adversary” and “avenge” means “give justice.” This woman wants justice from his court. Then, the Lord Jesus quotes what the unjust judge said. In the last chapter, Jesus was talking about the “days of Noah.” We skipped that in Luke because we dealt with it completely in Matthew. We live in an age of big trouble and crises, criticism, doubt and despair, discouragement, discontentment, debt! The condition of America today is not good! Candidly, if there is ever to be justice, I am going to require being avenged.

Well, my friends, we have two alternatives: either you are going to pray, or you are going to faint. Prayer is our attitude towards God, and it is the very essence of our existence. It's much more than merely memorizing words. We should so deeply desire the ultimate acceptance of the Father on a personal level - and we should strive to reach that far off goal that we cannot possibly attain unto down here; that is, the direct will of God in our

lives. So much so that it consumes our every thought and deed. Most people toss prayer off so lightly with “in Jesus name Thy will be done.” Do we really want the will of God in our lives? Frankly, most people are asking God for exactly the opposite of what He wants for them in this life. That’s what God is asking you here; and it sure is a strong contrast. Persistence in prayer is rewarding. God is no unjust judge, though. The judge we’re talking about in this parable is totally corrupt. When Christ returns will He find faith in OUR judgment?

Romans 15: 30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ~

Christians are to strive together. Strive is the same word ‘agonize’ is derived from. Our agonizing in prayer doesn’t have to be some long, drawn out affair, though. We can make all of our desires and hopes known in supplication to prayer. The important thing is the depth of meaning in our prayers. Even more important than that is to actually pray! Moses and Paul prayed this way and it’s the way we should pray today, also. If we really mean business in His will for our lives then we can really move the arm of God, friends. God doesn’t always do things the way we want them done, but He is going to answer the prayers of the just. Only if we have a very definite knowledge of the Word of God can we lay hold of the truths of God; that requires some Bible study – there’s no other way. We need to pray properly for all of the situations that concern our feelings of well being because God cares about those deep needs we have. The things that affect Christians have a direct impact on the social climate locally and abroad....

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and [yet] he is longsuffering over them?

8 I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others as nought:

~ You will never get anywhere with God praying like this Pharisee prays in verse eleven, you may be sure. I think many people pray down regarding other Christians. They pray for the critical spirit in others to be taken away and for the Lord to bring people back into the fold; and they pray some brother will love the sisters more – or something like that. They never pray for their own wisdom and understanding of Scriptures - because they do not study the Bible. I don't think those people ever pray the proper things for themselves, either. They never ask for the restoring of the saints as they are supposed to. Be careful, the same thing may happen to you! We need to pray for ourselves and our own spiritual understanding in that regard.

Well, in this true-life parable, we don't know who the Pharisee is, but I suspect the publican is the same Zacchaeus we will meet very soon. I like the way this is stated by Jesus that the Pharisee "prayed with himself." That Pharisee's prayer didn't even bounce off the ceiling - it was in internal deception; it just fell flat on the ground because he had not come into the temple to pray to God. This Pharisee was only at the temple to be seen patting himself on the back and congratulating himself for being such a perfect little Sunday school tither. The Pharisee thought very highly of himself, but he never thought of others. He didn't quite understand how everyone else could be so dumb while he trusted only in his own intellectual capabilities. Again, this Pharisee reached in his thumb and pulled out a plum and thought he had done something spectacular....

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.

13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.

~ The reality is that the Pharisee who thinks he does no wrong is a bigger sinner than anyone he names in his prayers of condescension. This Pharisee does things the publican wouldn't dare do. Naturally, the Pharisee is a religious phony who went through religious exercises that most gymnastics cannot emulate. He made himself out to be a very nice boy, indeed. Legally, the poor publican had no part at the mercy seat of Christ in the tabernacle. We saw he would have been denied access in Leviticus; so, the proper translation for verse thirteen would be, "...make Thou a mercy seat for me; that a poor publican can go to." Well, we're going to see the Lord Jesus does exactly that....

14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

~ The biggest stumbling block any one of us has is that of ourselves. The biggest hindrance to being saved is thinking we are good enough and strong enough in and of ourselves. That, actually, ends in the theory that we don't need a Savior at all! Likewise, the biggest hindrance to Christian service is the man or woman who thinks they have some kind of talent that God can't live without. Friends, they are arbitrarily attempting to use some self-perceived and self-proclaimed gift to glorify themselves – NOT God! Some people are determined to be a soloist singer, for example, but they can't sing; others are going to start a Bible study when they know nothing about the Bible. That study group will invariably break down into a clique of people who assert whatever half-baked philosophy they believe the Bible means to them; but there will be no spiritual edification or substance. They never ask for the Holy Spirit of God to lead and teach their searching of the Scripture for the cause of Christ – that's for sure. Well, they persist on feeling like they're the only ones in the world God would dare use for anything. They always think they have some special gift or ability to communicate with God outside of the Word of God, too. These people could serve God so effectively if they would get into His will for their lives

and out of their own will for their lives. Everyone has a gift; but it's not always singing the solo!

Many people who are singers ask God to help them sing. Many preachers ask God to help them preach. How many people ask God to help them out because they are sinners? May I say to you – it makes all the difference in the world! When is the last time we asked the Lord to show us what He wanted us to do? That is the all-important thing to remember. We can, so easily, allow self to get in our way. Paul saw that within his own flesh there was no good thing. The things Paul wanted to do were the things he didn't do. That isn't the devil in the way – that's Paul in the way of Paul! The old nature can be labeled 'Saul!' Well, all those who love the Lord Jesus are laughing now, to be sure. It's always wonderful to be with Him. Even the little children want to be around Him now....

15 And they were bringing unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

~ The spirit of the child that dies in infancy goes immediately to behold the Father's face forever! Jesus already talked to us before about offending little ones. The little ones will never reject the teachings of the Bible when said teaching is presented properly, correctly and completely. Of course, the child will do just about anything you want them to do. They will place complete trust in you, my Christian friends and parents. May God have mercy on you if you do not honor your responsibility to God in this connection to your child! Don't prevent your children from coming to Christ, friends. That's the worst mistake you could ever make. Yes, they are born with a fallen nature, but that child has not reached the age of accountability yet. The only decision a child makes are ones that are suggested to them; that is child psychology one zero one. After they grow

up and develop their sin complex through a will of their own is when the choices are to be made in life. That's what you are to prepare them for. Jesus is calling them, and He is calling you, too, friends....

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

~ The rich young ruler comes before us again and we have considered him in both Matthew and Mark. All there is left to ask this man now is, "what are you going to do?" The Lord Jesus made inquiry into this man's conduct regarding the Pioutis, and not the Probatus; this man's relationship to God is what is in question. This young ruler's life was a good one, too, by the way. This rich man kept all the commandments Jesus names towards man; and I would say he is quite remarkable in that aspect. The rich man's heart was simply not right towards God! This passage cannot be spiritualized away, friends. This world has no clear vision or leadership because no man is willing to sell all he has and give it to the poor and then go and follow Christ.

No, friends; what we see today are people that have lost everything to poor choices and drugs and who-knows-what and they want to call that selling everything. Well, that just doesn't happen to get it. What about your relationship to God and giving to support His Word going to the entire World? That is the real problem today. If you read these reports – how often do you pray for the writer thereof – me? If you do not plan to put Jesus first, then you are reading the wrong commentary in the Spiritual Safari.

Moving on, I now plan to point out the impossibility of man to save himself - from this point forward. If you are not prepared to give up everything then you cannot follow Christ. The record says Jesus loved this man in spite of the fact that the rich man would not follow Him. God loves you, too – I can promise you this - but you can go your own way, too. Who is the rich young ruler? Maybe that rich man is you....

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, [even] God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and mother.

21 And he said, All these things have I observed from my youth up.

22 And when Jesus heard it, he said unto him, One thing thou lackest yet: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 But when he heard these things, he became exceeding sorrowful; for he was very rich.

24 And Jesus seeing him said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard it said, Then who can be saved?

27 But he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

28 And Peter said, Lo, we have left our own, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the world to come eternal life.

31 And he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man.

32 For he shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully treated, and spit upon:

33 and they shall scourge and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, and they perceived not the things that were said.

35 And it came to pass, as he drew nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36 and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant.

37 And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

41 What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

~ Our spiritual Safari concludes this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with Jesus announcing, once again, His death at Jerusalem. Then, immediately after that, the blind man is healed. Matthew

and Mark took up these accounts so we will just keep moving now. We're moving fast towards Jerusalem - with Jesus - where the religious rulers are going to arrest Him and Kill Him ~

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