

Sermon: How to Approach God.
Series: Luke: The Gospel for Everyone.

Scripture: Luke 18:1-17.
Date: November 9, 2025

OBSERVATION -- As a group, talk through and summarize the passage. Think through *Who, What, Where, When, How, Why* questions together.

INTERPRETATION -- Answer these questions together:

1. What does this passage teach us about God?

- a) Share your thoughts on this statement from Pastor Mark: "What we believe about God determines how we relate to God." Do you agree? Why?
- b) This passage in Luke 18 presents God as both a just judge and a caring father. Why is it so important to see God as both of these things as we approach him in prayer?

2. What does this passage teach us about us?

- a) Jesus wants us to pray and not lose heart (v.1). Can you describe a time when you have lost heart in prayer? How does our persistent prayer demonstrate our faith (v.8)?
- b) Consider verses 9-14. Do your prayers sound more like the Pharisee's or the tax collector's? Can you identify any areas of self-righteous comparison, like the Pharisee's, in your life?

3. What does this passage teach us about grace/salvation? How does it point to Christ?

- a) Read verses 13-14 again. How does the tax collector's prayer point ahead to our atonement through the death of Christ? (Consider that the word "merciful" is the word "atonement," or "mercy seat" like on the Ark of the Covenant)
- b) Do you agree with this assessment of the human heart: "We all need a verdict from outside of ourselves"? If so, how does the cross satisfy this desire of the human heart? How does the cross give us both a "guilty" and a "not guilty" verdict at the same time?

APPLICATION

- a) What is a practical step you can take to be more persistent in prayer?
- b) What might it look like to live before God as a child who comes boldly to God in spite of our humble estate? Be specific.

PRAYER

- Acknowledge God as both our just judge and caring Father.
- Confess ways that you have distrusted God and compared yourself to others.
- Thank Jesus for his atoning substitution that has given us the verdict "paid in full."
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to stay humbly persistent in prayer.