

A Powerful Good

Luke 18:9-17



A Powerful Good

A good action that brings significant good

A Powerless Good

A good action that is unlikely to make any difference

Which is humility?



Reading the Bible

To read the Bible, we must learn to read and listen as if we were the first readers and listeners

The "plain meaning of the text" might be exactly wrong!

Today: "a good Samaritan"

In Jesus' day: no Samaritan was good

Pecking Order

	Today	Jesus' day
Most respected	Nurses, Grade school teachers	Pharisees
Least respected	Lobbyists, members of congress	Tax collectors, prostitutes
Least valued	Homeless(?)	Infants

Luke 18:9-14

Humble = to make low. Exalt = to raise up

Luke 18:15-17

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." 1 Peter 5:6

To humble oneself under God's mighty hand

God is holy → I am not

God is the righteous judge → I am neither

God has all authority → I must submit to Him

God knows everything → My knowledge is limited

God has true freedom → I do not

To be vulnerable / To be dependent / To be at His mercy

When I put myself UNDER the mighty hand of God

I also put myself INTO the loving hand of God

One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard:

"Power belongs to you, God,

and with you, LORD, is **unfailing love**" Psalm 62:11-12a

The Big Idea

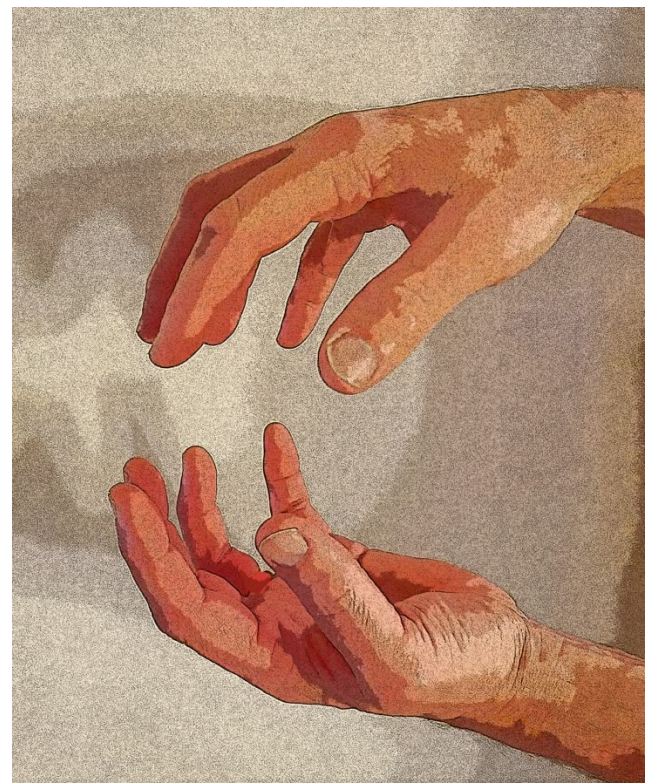
God raises up those who lower themselves

in Him and before others

Humility is not: "I'm a nobody and a terrible person"

Humility is:

finding my place UNDER God's hand and BELOW others



Humility in Action

Lower ourselves in God

Submit to His authority and commands

“After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.”

Mark 1:7

“He must become greater; I must become less.” John 3:30

Recognize His right and rightness to judge us

Cry out for His mercy: “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Luke 18:13

Lower ourselves before others

Submit to authorities

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority.” 1 Peter 5:13

Value others above ourselves

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Philippians 2:3-4

Trusting that God Himself will raise us up

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” 1 Peter 5:6

Jesus lowered himself in God

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” Luke 22:42

“he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” Philippians 2:8

He lowered himself before others

“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet” John 13:3-4

“he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” Philippians 2:7

He was raised by God to the highest place!

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name” Philippians 2:9

Because of God’s action...humility is a most powerful good!

Reflection Questions for later today or this week..

1. What are the **good** qualities of the Pharisee? What are the **bad** qualities of the tax collector?
2. Why was the tax collector “justified before God” that day, and the Pharisee was not?
3. Why is the only way into the kingdom of God through the lowly door that only children can fit through?
4. What makes humility be a powerful good? Does your heart really believe it?
5. What is humility in action, before God and before people? What makes it challenging?

Conversation starters

Is humility a good quality? Who is a model of humility for you?