

THE REALLY GOOD LIFE

(The Life of Christ Series)

Gospel of Luke

Justification: Not Innocent; Not Guilty; Declared Righteous

A judge may dismiss charges against a defendant but it doesn't necessarily mean he or she is actually innocent. There could be a lack of evidence, violation of the rights of the defendant, or some other litigation technicality as cause for dismissal. If a full trial takes place and the jury finds the defendant *not guilty*, it doesn't guarantee defendant's *innocence*.

How different it is with the Judge of the universe, His Honor, the Lord Jesus Christ (**John 5:22-23**); He justifies the guilty who come repentantly before Him. **Romans 5:1-2** announces His verdict and sentence to all who plead guilty on all counts: "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*". Any sinner pleading *guilty as charged* for crimes against God (**Rom. 3:23**), may throw themselves upon the mercy of God and receive divine justice. According to the Bible, Judge Jesus then pays all the penalties and court costs (**Rom. 5:8**) out of His infinite, inexhaustible resources of grace and mercy (**Eph. 2:4-7**). This should not be seen as God dropping the charges, but rather by vicarious substitution, God's Son, Jesus, suffers our eternal capital punishment by His death on the cross (**Col. 2:13-14**). True converts understandably owe their lives to Him and need to express their thanks for His verdict of *justification* (**Rom. 10:9-13**).

Justification is more than just being pardoned of our due penalty; it is the *imputation* (crediting our account with the very righteousness of Christ), "*...the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe*" (**Rom. 3:22**). That's why being *saved* by grace is so much more than *as though I never sinned*; justification is far better than that! When Christ comes into your life, you're new status is not even up – you are now endowed with the eternal righteousness of the One Who is now within you (**2 Cor. 5:21**)! An earthly judge may throw out your case or acquit you, or declare you *not guilty*; but only Judge Jesus can find you *guilty as charged*, then by the power vested in Him, declare you righteous, adopt you as His child, making you co-heir of everything He possesses! This is biblical *justification*!

Have you been *justified* (declared righteous) by the Supreme Court of Jesus Christ? If so, when was your case adjudicated and finalized? Certainly, that magnanimous event was important enough to remember if it really did happen! If you can't recall when or how and what happened, maybe yours is better termed a *cold case* that needs to be reopened. Just review the indictment against you – "*(you) have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (**Rom. 3:23**). Biblically, you have been found guilty as charged and justly sentenced to eternal damnation – "*the wages of sin is death*" (**Rom. 6:23**). What is your plea - *guilty* or *not guilty*? If you plead *not guilty* then you must go the appeal court of the Great White Throne Judgment (**Rev. 20:11-15** / *please notice that all appeals will be denied – mitigation will only affect severity of sentence*). But if you plead *guilty* and throw yourself upon the mercy of His court, Jesus will pardon you, *declare you righteous* (**Rom. 10:9-13, Phil. 3:9, Titus 3:5-7**) and set you free to live righteously from now on. If you can't remember ever understanding God's legal system this way, just forget any past *mistrial* you've been trusting and have a *retrial* right now in prayer. Turn that *cold case* into a *closed case* by being declared righteous and being filled with His righteousness today. If you sincerely do that from a repentant heart you can be sure that the charges have been dropped and *court is now adjourned* (**John 3:16**). It is now your privilege, obligation, and joy to live righteously for Him, Who was your Judge but now is your Savior, Lord, and Friend (**1 Tim. 6:11, Titus 2:12, 1 John 2:29**).

'Prayer-ables of Jesus' (PART 2)

(Prayer Keys to Keeping the Faith in the Last Days)

Luke 18:1-27

Synopsis: Jesus' teaching of the 12 about preparedness for His future return began in **Luke 17:20-37**. His religious antagonists, the Pharisees, challenged Him to establish the earthly kingdom of God. He told them the *observable* kingdom would be a future reality, but in the meantime His sovereign throne would exist in believers' hearts. He then taught how the dispensation between His comings would proceed. It would begin as the days of Noah – a long period of building a vehicle of deliverance to escape the wrath to come (*Noah's ark then the Church/body of Christ in the interim*). This period concludes as the days of Lot (*evacuation of him from Sodom then/ the imminent rapture of the Church*). In both cases society was decadent and getting more perverse as God's Day of Wrath against sin approached. Jesus predicted the Church Age between Christ's advents would be increasingly dangerous and prayerfulness would be absolutely essential for true Christians to endure. Two *prayer-ables* teach how prayer is to be composed – **tenacity** (*the widow and the unjust judge/ 18:1-9*) and **humility** (*the Pharisee and the tax-collector/ 18:10-14*). Prayer-able #1 (**18:1-8**) teaches that disciples are to be tenacious in prayer as they await His coming. Prayer-able #2 (**18:9-14**) teaches that God only answers the prayers of those who are truly *justified* by faith and that He rejects self-righteous religion.

The Pharisee & Tax-Man
(How to Tell a Religious Speech from Real Prayer)

Prayer-able #2
(How & How Not to Talk with God)

Profane Religious Praying
(The Religious Man & Self-righteous Prayer)

“Also (Jesus) spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself**, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extorters, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” **18:9-12**

Pompous Religious Praying

Jesus taught this parable as a rebuke to some self-righteous, haughty listeners (probably religious leaders present) who looked down on some others there that day (tax collectors and others mentioned in vs. 11). Although the self-righteous man probably didn’t say it out loud, he felt right with God because of his presumed moral superiority to others.

- **What was wrong with his attitude, his theology, and his prayer?**
- **Have you ever heard prayers that don’t really ask anything but seem intended to impress God and others?**
- **What does God think of such praying (see *Matthew 6:1-14*)?**
- **What kind of answer does God promise to prideful prayer people (see *Luke 18:14b*)?**
- **Discuss *1 Peter 5:5-8* relative to prayer.**

Precious Reverent Praying
(The Repentant Man & A Sinner’s Prayer)

‘And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified** rather than the other; **for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**’ **18:13-14**

The repentant tax collector’s prayer was simple, short, and sincere, but got him what he asked for (mercy) and more (justification immediately and exaltation eventually).

- **Discuss why prayers from the heart (not recitations from books) please God.**

The repentant sinner’s prayer was answered because it was to the right One Who could answer it, in the right attitude (*1 Timothy 2:5-6, Hebrews 4:15-16/ John 3:21-23 & 5:14-15*).

The man prayed to be *bless-able* and he got mercy plus justification and exaltation.

- **Discuss praying more about our spiritual condition than material and personal desires (°).**
- **Discuss what you can do to make your prayer time with God better (personally, as a family, in church).**

Justification

(How to commute your sentence from eternal death to eternal life)

1. Justification (being made right and holy before God) is required for entrance to heaven.	2. Jesus Christ is the only One Who has perfect holiness and righteousness (for He is God).
3. All human beings lack righteousness and holiness, and cannot acquire it for themselves.	4. All are welcome to cry out to Jesus Christ for mercy, pardon and a new way of life.
5. All trusting Jesus’ sacrifice are pardoned and imputed with His righteousness.	6. Justified people will then live righteously and godly lifestyles on the earth.
7. Justified people will be welcomed into with heaven when this life is over.	8. Unjustified people object to God’s one way of justification.
9. Unjustified people continue to maintain their indulgent, sinful lifestyles.	10. Unjustified people will not be allowed into heaven since they preferred sin to the Savior.
11. Unjustified people will suffer the eternal consequences of living their way instead of His way.	12. Justification is still available to repentant, people who walk away from sin to the Savior.