

What Would Jesus Undo? Msg 3  
 Spiritual Pride  
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl  
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church  
 November 2 & 3, 2019

We're in a series we started a couple of weeks ago called **What Would Jesus Undo?**  
 It's tied to that question that was made popular in the 90's with all those bracelets that had the letters . . .

**WWJD**

**Which stood for What Would Jesus Do?**

In the 90's you could see those bracelets everywhere.

And lest you think that this fashion trend died in at the turn of the century, you need to know that it's still around.

If you were watching last year's Superbowl, you would have seen

**Super-bowl winning quarterback**

**Nick Foles of the Philadelphia Eagles** wearing one of those WWJD bracelets as he led his team to victory over the New England Patriots.

But in our current series, we're looking at the **WWJD** concept in reverse.

**What would Jesus UNDO in our lives?**

**What would he take away?**

**What would he have us surrender** in our lives so that we could be more of who he wants us to be?

So that our lives could have **more purpose, more power, more passion.**

The thing that we're looking at this morning that he would undo in us is, an unhealthy kind of

**Spiritual Pride**

When I use that term "**Spiritual Pride**" what I'm talking about **is when we find our value and our meaning in ourselves**, in **what we accomplish** and **how we compare to others** rather than finding that value where we're supposed to find it, which is in Jesus Christ.

He wants to undo this in our lives, not for his benefit, but for our own.

And we'll see why, as we look at our text for this morning which is in . . .

**Luke 18:9-14**

This is the parable of the **Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

And even before we get into the story, the gospel writer who records it, Luke, tells us why Jesus told it. . .

***"Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: (Luke 18:9)***

Who was this story told to?

First it was told to

***some who had great confidence in their own righteousness***

And the key words there are "***Their own***"

Jesus was talking to people who were **100% confident in themselves**

They were trusting in ***their own goodness, their own righteous deeds, their own good works.***

The problem with trying to approach God this way is that **Romans 3:20** says it doesn't work. . .

***"No one will ever be declared righteous in God's sight by means of human works."***

**Titus 3:5** says . . .

***"God saves us. . . not on the basis of works of righteousness which we have done, but by His mercy" Titus 3:5***

So Jesus was talking to people who were confident in their own righteousness

**SECONDLY**, he's talking to people who

***scorned everyone else:***

People who . . .

***"looked down on everybody else"***

And with that introduction he tells us that . . .

***"Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector." Luke 18:9-10***

***“The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people - cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’” Luke 18:11-12***

In order **TO UNDERSTAND THE PARABLE** . . .

You need **TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTERS** . . .

The **TWO MAIN CHARACTERS** in the story - - represented the **two extremes in Jewish society** at the time of Christ

On the one hand there was a

**PHARISEE**

The Pharisees were like ***RABBIS ON STEROIDS***

In Jesus' day the Pharisees were **THE SPIRITUAL ELITE**

These were men who had **devoted their entire lives to the scriptures**

The word ***“Pharisee”*** comes from a word that means **separated**.

These were men who had **separated themselves** from society and **committed themselves to the study of scripture**.

They were **SERIOUS** about **their walk with God**

Every week we challenge you to **MEMORIZE A VERSE OF SCRIPTURE**.

A lot of you take that challenge to heart, and you may feel pretty good when you get that verse memorized.

Well the **Pharisees memorized the entire Bible** that they had

All of the Old Testament

The Pharisees were men who also **PRAYED REGULARLY** - - -

They probably prayed more than anybody else on the planet.

They **FASTED MORE THAN OTHERS** - - -

Any of you here ever fast?

The Pharisees **fasted twice a week**

They **TITHED** - - - even down to the smallest little herb that grew in their garden.

These were people who **NEVER MISSED WORSHIP**

They were the **first ones to arrive at the temple** and the **last ones to leave**

Everyone around them regarded them as **the most righteous men alive**. . .

If you were living at that time, you would think that if anybody was going to be pronounced right before God, it would be a Pharisee.

And yet as we’ll see in this story, he’s not the one who went home justified before God.

It was the other character

Why???

Well simply stated . . .

**When we are full of Ourselves, there is no room for God**

When the Bible talks about sin, it talks about it like a **sickness** or a **virus** that we have.

**If you know you’re sick**, you’re going to be interested in finding a cure.

**If you or a friend or family member has recently been diagnosed with a serious condition**, and a story comes across the news about a new breakthrough in the treatment for that condition, you’re going to listen up, because it’s something you need.

**The Bible says when it comes to the sickness of our sin**, the antidote, or the cure is God’s grace.

**If someone doesn’t think they’re sick, that cure** - - - that antidote won’t mean anything to them.

Jesus said it this way in Mark 2:17

***“Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.” Mark 2:17***

**If you don’t think you have a problem with the sickness that the Bible calls “Sin”** - - - you won’t be interested in the cure God offers called Grace.

That was **“The Pharisee”**

The second character in this story is the

**“Tax Collector”**

Or as he’s referred to in verse 10 – the **“despised tax collector”**

Tax collectors were Jewish men, who collected taxes from their fellow Jews - - - and they did if for the Roman Government who was occupying Israel at the time

The way it worked was that the Romans gave each tax collector an amount that he was responsible to collect and turn into them, but whatever they could collect beyond that amount they were free to keep for themselves.

And so the tax collectors got rich by gouging their fellow Jews with exorbitant taxes - - and there was nothing the Jews could do about it because these tax collectors were backed up by the Roman army itself.

As a result the Jewish people of Jesus' day absolutely hated these tax collectors

They regarded them as the worst traitors known to man

Synagogues weren't allowed to accept tithes from tax collectors

In fact they weren't even allowed to let tax collectors in the door

But the amazing thing about this tax collector is that not only was he the total opposite of the Pharisee when he came to his standing in society - - he was also the Pharisee's total opposite when it came to the inner attitude of heart towards God

***"But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.'" Luke 18:13***

Here was a man who was so ashamed of his sin, that he wouldn't even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed, but instead stood at a distance

He beat his chest as a sign of inner grief and inner anguish over his sin

The one thing he did was plead for God's mercy, which he was totally aware he did not deserve.

And yet the story ends by telling us that. . .

Verse 14 Jesus

***"I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God.***

That word "justified" is a legal word, and it means to be declared not guilty

It means to be pronounced righteous in the sight of God

The story ends with our MEMORY VERSE for this week which is. . .

***For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Luke 18:14***

Why????

Because . . .

**When we are full of Ourselves, there is no room for God**

But the flip side of that is . . .

**When we Empty Ourselves, we're in the perfect position to be Filled by God's grace.**

And here's why that's good news - because some of you walked into church today and you're already feeling humbled.

Maybe it's a life situation that has humbled you,

Maybe it's some choices that you've made have brought humility to you and you're already saying what the tax collector was saying which is **"God if you don't intervene in my life I'm hopeless."**

The good news for you is that God wants to intervene in your life through Jesus Christ, and he wants to bring hope, and he wants to bring mercy, and he wants to be bring forgiveness

All we have to do is empty ourselves and He will fill us with his grace.

And not only will he fill us, but he will also use us. . .

**When we Empty Ourselves, we're in the perfect position to be Used by God.**

You would think that it would be the other way around . . .

When you were a kid on the playground, and they were choosing up teams . . .

They would look for the players with the greatest ability and choose them first.

That's not the way God works . . .

I love the way that the Message Paraphrase says it in 1 Corinthians 1:26ff

***"Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of "the brightest and the best" among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these "nobodies" to expose the hollow pretensions of the "somebodies"?"***

**"That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God. Everything that we have - right thinking and right living, a clean slate and a fresh start - comes from God by way of Jesus Christ. That's why we have the saying, "If you're going to blow a horn, blow a trumpet for God." 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (MSG)**

"If you're going to blow a horn, blow a trumpet for God."

**Pride is about My Glory, Humility is about God's Glory.**

The problem is, so often when we look at the things that God has done, we forget that He's the one who's done them, and we take credit for them.

One of my favorite examples of that, comes from an old Jimmy Stewart movie where the family is sitting down to give thanks for God's blessings before they have dinner.

**Video Shenandoah (1:11)**

**Pride is about My Glory, Humility is about God's Glory.**

God gives us the choice as to which one we'll choose.

***("For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Luke 18:14b)***

We can, like the **Pharisee** in our story, choose to live **for our glory**

Or we can, like the **Tax Collector**, choose to make it, not about us, but all about God.

If we do that – we'll get the reward that he got.

And that's the point of the parable.

**The Point Of The Story**

The point of the story is . . .

**To Get what the tax collector Got We've got to Come To God  
the way the tax collector Came**

God will deal with each of us individually, based on the way that we come to him.

If we come like the Pharisee came - **asking God to deal with us on the basis of on our own righteousness. . .**

He'll do that.

All of us know people who don't see any need in their lives for God, or any need for a relationship with Him through his Son J.C., because, like the Pharisee in this story, **they are confident in their own righteousness.**

They **probably don't claim to be perfect**, but they **do claim to be "good enough"**

And while they may not go so far as to **"look down"** on everybody else, the **fact is they've "looked around"** at everybody else,

And they figure that based on what they see, **they're good enough** so that **if there is an eternity**, and **if there is a coming day of judgment**, when that day comes, they will have earned God's stamp of approval.

**The problem** with approaching God on that basis is two-fold.

**The people who think that way underestimate two** things

**# 1 - The Holiness of God**

**#2 - The Seriousness of their Sin**

They figure that to God - **Holiness isn't that big a deal**

And they figure that - **Their sin isn't that big a deal either.**

This table reminds us of just how big a deal those two things are.

If there was **any other way of satisfying God's requirement for holiness** apart from the death of His sin, **he would have chosen it.**

Because **if there were another way**, it would mean that Jesus' death on the cross was an enormous waste - - - it was unnecessary - - didn't have to happen.

Each of us could have just tried a little harder and made it to heaven on our own merit.

Because that wasn't possible - God sent His son.

The tax collector understood that.

He came to God, not seeking justice, but seeking mercy, and that's what he found.

**And if we WANT TO GET WHAT HE GOT**

**Then we NEED TO COME TO GOD THE WAY THAT HE CAME**

How did He come to God?

**He came To God Humbly**

He came Mourning and Grieving over his sinfulness

He came under deep conviction about his shortcomings and his failures before God

**That's why he stood at a distance**

**That's why he wouldn't lift his eyes up to heaven**

**That's why he beat his chest in sorrow.**

Over and over in the Bible, God declares that this is the kind of heart that God is looking for  
King David tells us that . . .

***"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."* Psalm 51:17**

Every great man and woman of God who has ever lived, has had this deep sense of humility before God that comes from a profound awareness of their own sinfulness before a holy and awesome God

***Peter*** said ***"Depart from me Lord for I am a sinful man"***

***David*** said ***"I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me"***

***Isaiah*** said ***"Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips"***

And the ***Apostle Paul*** said ***"I am the chief among sinners"***

Some of you might think that that this kind of view of self.=m would result in the worst kind of depression

But the fact is that the opposite is true.

By the time the mercy of God is through with us we don't feel depressed at all, we feel cleansed, and we feel loved, and we feel forgiven, and we feel restored.

**If you want to get what the Tax Collector got** you need to come to God the way the Tax Collector Came.

**FIRST** - He came **HUMBLY**

**SECOND** - He came . . .

**He came To God Helpless**

When he came into God's presence there at the Temple, he offered God nothing

He didn't offer God his good works

He didn't offer God his standing in society

He didn't offer God his religious activity

He simply cast himself on the mercy of God just like the repentant thief on the cross.

It's like the old hymn says it says ***"Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling"***

And this is how God wants us coming to Him

With nothing of our own to convince him to give us his mercy but simply casting ourselves helplessly on him and saying ***"God, have mercy on me, a sinner"***

FINALLY **NUMBER THREE**

The tax collector not only came to God **HUMBLY**

And he not only came to God **HELPLESS**

But third and finally and most importantly . . .

**He came To God**

You say ***"What does that mean???"***

What I mean is lots of people in our world feel **HELPLESS** from time to time

And lots of people in our world feel **HUMBLED** from time to time

Through circumstances, they become painfully aware of their failures and their mistakes and their shortcomings

But this doesn't mean that they automatically receive the mercy of God

There's a third and crucial ingredient, and that is that a person has to actively seek that mercy from God

The Psalmist says it this way in Psalm 86. . .

***"O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love***

***For who???"***

***for all who ask for your help."* Psalm 86:5**

Not to all who call upon Buddha

Or to all who call upon Confucius, or Mohammed

It's to those who call upon God

If you and I want mercy from God.

The mercy that comes through His son Jesus Christ  
Then we've got to come to God through His son and seek it.  
The Bible says **"YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT"**  
We need to come to God and ask for mercy  
We need to **regularly and intentionally** come to God. . .  
And ask for **FORGIVENESS** when we sin  
And for **STRENGTH** when we're weak,  
And for **HOPE** when we're discouraged  
As followers of Christ we need to make this regular attitude of our heart  
Constantly going to God and seeking His mercy  
And then we can claim the promise that God's Word gives in Psalm chapter 9 verse 10 says  
It says  
***"For you oh Lord have never forsaken those who seek you"***  
May God help us to do just that!  
**Let's pray**