

Attitudes That Connect With God

KSBC 11/30/08

Luke 18:18-30

INTRO *For this is what the high and lofty One says – he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*
Isaiah 57:15

Some attitudes attract God’s favor and some do not. God is on record as being attracted to and clearly committed to acting on behalf of the humble, broken and childlike. Just like actions are often affected or defined by the attitude in which they are done in our daily relationships, so God looks past our actions and connects with the orientation of our hearts.

There are many ways that people try to connect with God. In most cases, even professing Christians express their confidence of being connected to God in terms of not doing bad things, doing good things and pointing to the ways God has ‘blessed’ their lives. The contrast of humility and self confidence is typically obvious to everyone except the professing Christian. Jesus teaches the impossibility of entering his kingdom without experiencing a confrontation with God that produces sincere humility, genuine childlike trust and exclusive ‘God first above all else’ loyalty.

The three accounts that Luke links together to correct our orientation toward God and saving faith are found in Luke 18 . . .

1. Sincere humility is necessary to be made right with God. 18:9-14
2. Simple trust is necessary to enter the kingdom of God. 18:15-17
3. Exclusive loyalty is necessary to have eternal life. 18:18-30

This morning we investigate Jesus interaction with a rich young man who approached him with a serious question. The format of the story is basically question and answer that provoke us to serious reflection about the nature of our own hearts before God. Jesus’ question and answers leads us on a clear path to understanding and having the attitude of exclusive loyalty.

Read Luke 18:18-30

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Exchange with the rich ruler | 18-23 |
| Lessons about exclusive loyalty | 24-30 |

The only hope for us as well as the rich ruler of being connected to God is to enter into an honest and reflective dialogue with truth. The characters in the conversation are confronted with questions and responses that cause them to wrestle with what they find in their own hearts. The ruler has to wrestle with his basic orientation toward God, the crowd who hears the exchange is forced to reflect on their concept of how people are saved while the disciples are pushed to examine their own experience of saving faith. Humility that God connects to does not come to the busy, defensive, self confident or controlling. To reflect simply means to honestly read and respond to what you see in your attitude as the Spirit of God speaks the word of God into your life this morning.

Sincere humility, simple trust, and exclusive loyalty – attitudes that God connects with, come from honest reflection concerning four truths. Reflection on these truths can be shaped by thoughtfully addressing these questions:

1. Is God good?

L18:18-19

‘no one is good – except God alone.’

The ruler's question and Jesus' answer cause us to reflect on the basic character of God. If the ruler meant that Jesus was good, thus implying that he believed God was good, then that should promote exclusive loyalty to the only one who is genuinely good.

God's goodness means . . .

- He is the final standard for goodness
- All he is/does is worthy of approval

Wrestle with God's goodness in the Psalms . . .

Psalm 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Has God kept/delivered you from fears, shame, trouble, weakness . . .

Psalm 106:1 Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Do you give thought to and remember kindnesses and miracles . . . v.7

Psalm 118:1, 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

How is appreciation of God's goodness developed . . . anguish 5, pushed back 13, severe chastening 18

Cmp Gen.1:31 – Is God good in everything he is and does?

2. What holds first place in your heart?

L18:20-23

20-21 Note the ruler's self awareness and confidence is high in matters related to his view of God. Compare your confidence to his as expressed in . . .

- I don't do bad things.
- I do good things.
- God has blessed me.

22 Note Jesus challenges his confidence with a different set of measurements. Selling all is intended to force the ruler to trust God and humbly rely on him. Compare your response to the ruler as Jesus again asks a sinner to . . .

- Sell everything – deny yourself.
- Give to the poor – take on Jesus priorities.
- Follow me – live in his way.

23 Note the ruler's sadness reveals that the fundamental allegiance of his heart is not God and eternal life. Reflect upon these characteristics of a sad, lost, religious person:

- Functioning ears
- Hard heart

Cmp. 5:11, 27 9:23, 57-61 14:27

Regardless of how good a teacher the ruler thinks Jesus is . . . he is not good enough to cause the ruler to change the fundamental allegiance, affection of his heart.

3. What is the potential of you being saved without massive help from God? L18:24-27a

Jesus summary statement about the ruler – 24

Jesus humorous illustration to clarify his point – 25

The crowds defining question – 26

Jesus restates the truth – 27a

It is impossible for a person to be saved with out massive help from God.

Heart/riches illus. 6:24; 12:15-21; 8:14 Romans 2:5

Connect humility/God's goodness with massive help from God . . . Psa. 107

4. What is the most 'impossible' thing that you need that only God can do? L18:27-30

What is impossible for you, change your heart orientation from self/sin to God, is possible with God.

- God changes heart orientation to exclusive loyalty to him. 27
- Example of exclusive loyalty. 28
- Reality of exclusive loyalty. 29-30
 - Sacrifice and hard decisions
 - Abandonment of vocational/financial security
 - Leaving or exclusion from family
 - Favor of God now and later

Putting God first/exclusive loyalty is a general reorientation of your life and it is possible!

Reflect and respond!

1. Is God good?
2. What holds first place in your heart?
3. What is the potential of you being saved without massive help from God?
4. What is the most 'impossiblest' thing that you need that only God can do?

Matthew 5:3-12 p.958