

[LUKE 18:9-30]

Sunday 24th Feb 2008

/ Children should be seen and observed

[Introduction]

If you want a passport you have to fill in the Identity and Passport services application form the right way.

You can't just go and fill it in your way.

Your form won't be accepted if it is filled in the wrong way.

You have to do it the IPS way.

Often we like to do things our way. And sometimes we think we can get into heaven our way; on our terms. But we can't.

We can only enter heaven God's way. Luke chapter 18 verses 9-30 say to us: **We can only enter God's kingdom God's way!**

[1] We can only enter God's kingdom humbly (v9-14)

Right away Jesus tells us who this parable is for: it is for people who are confident of their own righteousness/goodness.

The two men that go to the temple to pray couldn't be more different. The Pharisee is religious and respected. The Tax Collector is not religious and certainly not respected.

The Pharisee prays about himself... he's good on the outside but a stuck up prig on the inside.

The Tax Collector is under no such illusions of grandeur. He calls himself a sinner and asks God for mercy.

Shockingly, the Tax Collector was the one who went away justified, i.e. he was accepted by God, forgiven and given entrance into heaven.

Jesus is saying that to get to heaven, you must be humble... like the Tax Collector.

People who think they are good and are proud that they are good and glad that they are not like bad people won't get to heaven.

What are you like?

Are you proud of your goodness?

None of us are good. We are sinful. Sin is that attitude which doesn't want God. It is also an attitude that blinds us to what we are. We have to humbly concede we are not good if we are ever to get into heaven.

[2] We can only enter God's kingdom honestly (v18-30)

Verses 18-30 are not a parable, they are real. And they contain another bloke who thought he was good but soooo wasn't.

He flounced up to Jesus and asked him how he could get into heaven. Jesus says to him "keep the rules. That's how you get into heaven. You know the commandments. Keep them and you'll be fine."

The ruler tells Jesus that he has kept the commandments right from when he was a boy. It is clear he thinks he's a very good person.

So Jesus asks him to do another good thing: sell his stuff and give the money to the poor.

The man becomes sad. He is sad at the thought of losing his stuff.

This instantly reveals that he values his stuff more than he values God!

He isn't good! He's bad! He loves wealth more than he loves God!

He isn't being honest with himself. He's saying to himself that he's good but he's not.

If we are to get to heaven, we have to be honest with ourselves.

Are you honest with yourself?

If you are you'll see you're not good. You haven't kept the commands.

It is impossible for you to get to heaven. Therefore you need to trust Jesus, who did keep the commands and was punished instead of those who failed to keep them.

[3] We can only enter God's kingdom with dependant trust (v15-17)

This section (v15-17) is the climax of the passage we've been looking at (v9-30).

Some Mums and Dads were bringing their children to Jesus so He could touch them (and probably bless them).

The disciples didn't like this; they tried to stop the pesky Mums and Dads bringing the poxy children to the puissant Jesus.

But Jesus says No!

Children should not be seen and not heard.

Children should be seen and observed.

Because they teach us how to enter heaven.

Children are dependant and trusting. That is how we are to be. We are to totally depend on God to save us. It is impossible, as we've seen, for us to save ourselves, we must depend on God. And we are to trust that God has provided Jesus to save us. Jesus is God's gift to us. When we trust He died for us, our sins are forgiven and God counts His totally good life as ours.

What will you do?

Will you depend on God to get into heaven, like a child depends on their parents?

Will you trustingly accept the gift God offers you, like a child trustingly accepts a birthday present?