

Luke 18:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Analysis

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other—Jesus delivers the shocking verdict. *Dedikaiōmenos* (δεδικαιωμένος) means 'declared righteous,' the same justification language Paul uses (Romans 3-5). The tax collector, not the Pharisee, received God's favorable verdict. *Par' ekeinon* (παρ' ἐκεῖνον)—'rather than the other'—makes the contrast absolute.

For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted—the principle of divine reversal. *Ho hypsōn heauton tapeinōthēsetai* (ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται)—self-exaltation leads to humbling. *Ho tapeinōn heauton hypsōthēsetai* (ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται)—self-humbling leads to exaltation. God's kingdom reverses worldly values: the first shall be last (Matthew 20:16), the humble are exalted (James 4:10).

Historical Context

First-century Judaism debated righteousness: Was it achieved through Torah observance or received as God's gift? Jesus settles the question: justification comes through humble repentance, not self-righteous performance. This teaching anticipated Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Pharisee trusted his works; the tax collector cast himself on God's mercy. Only the latter went home justified—declared righteous before God.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the tax collector's justification reveal about God's basis for declaring someone righteous?
2. How does Jesus's principle of reversal (humble exalted, proud abased) challenge worldly definitions of success?
3. In what areas might you be trusting your religious performance rather than God's mercy for acceptance?

Interlinear Text

λέγω	ὑμῖν	κατέβη	οὗτος	δεδικαιωμένος	εἰς	τὸν	οἶκον
I tell	you	went down	this man	justified	to	G3588	house
G3004	G5213	G2597	G3778	G1344	G1519		G3624

αὐτοῦ	ἢ	ἐκεῖνος·	ὅτι	πᾶς	ὁ	ὑψωθήσεται
G846	rather than	the other	for	every one	G3588	shall be exalted
	G2228	G1565	G3754	G3956		G5312

ἑαυτὸν	ταπεινῶν	ὁ	δὲ	ταπεινῶν	ἑαυτὸν
himself	he that humbleth	G3588	and	he that humbleth	himself
G1438	G5013		G1161	G5013	G1438

ὑψωθήσεται
shall be exalted
G5312

Additional Cross-References

Luke 14:11 (Parallel theme): For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Luke 16:15 (Righteousness): And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

James 4:10 (Parallel theme): Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Proverbs 29:23 (Parallel theme): A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Matthew 23:12 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

James 4:6 (Parallel theme): But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Psalms 138:6 (Parallel theme): Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Luke 1:52 (Parallel theme): He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

Isaiah 57:15 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Matthew 5:3 (Parallel theme): Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.