

The Parables of Jesus: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Introduction

Tonight is week four of a four-week series on the parables of Jesus.

Terry Brown taught us about The Unforgiving Servant in **Matthew 18**. David Barber taught us about The Rich Man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**. And Adam Christ taught us about The Workers in the Vineyard in **Matthew 20**. Tonight, I'm going to finish this series with the Pharisee and the Publican in **Luke 18:9-14**.

Key thought: **I** am **self**-righteous

Read (What does it say?): Luke 18:9-14 (Author = Luke)

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 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."

Explain (What does it mean?)

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted [second perfect (completed action with the results continuing) active participle (verbal adjective—can add an -ing); convinced, pacified, assented, relied, agreed, assured, believed, had confidence, were content, made friends, persuaded, trusted] **in themselves that they were righteous** [equitable, innocent, holy, just, righteous; we have all been guilty of this], **and despised** [present active participle (verbal adjective—can add an -ing); contemptible, despised, least esteemed, set at naught; this means to think nothing of others] **others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple** [sacred place, temple] **to pray** [pray, supplicate, worship; **Barclay: The devout observed three prayer times daily—9 a.m., 12 midday and 3 p.m. Prayer was held to be specially efficacious if it was offered in the Temple and so at these hours many went up to the Temple courts to pray.**], **one a Pharisee** [separatist, exclusively religious, Pharisee; **Coffman: Pharisees . . . were a very wealthy, zealous, and powerful sect among the Jews. They were proud, conceited, worldly, and vigilant enemies of our Lord; and yet they were the leaders among the ancient Jews and doubtless had many fine and commendable qualities which tend to be obscured by the fact that they opposed the work of Christ. Ledlow lists seven distinct classes of**

Pharisees, as follows: (1) The Shoulder Pharisee who wore all his good deeds on his shoulder and did his alms to be seen of men (Matthew 6:5); (2) The Wait-a-Little Pharisee who always suggested something else to do first. Of this type was the man who when asked to follow Christ said, “Suffer me first to go and bury my father” (Luke 9:59-60); (3) The Bruised Pharisee who was too pious to look upon a woman and who shut his eyes when one approached, which caused him to stumble into a wall and be bruised or cut; (4) The Pestle and Mortar Pharisee who walked with his head down in mock humility, also called the Hump-Backed Pharisee; (5) The Ever-Reckoning Pharisee who kept a ledger of good deeds and bad deeds in an effort to balance accounts with himself; (6) The God-Loving Pharisee, the noblest of the group; and (7) The Timid Pharisee who was the schizophrene of his day. It was probably to this latter class that Jesus addressed his warning that no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).] **and the other a tax collector** [tax farmer, collector of public revenue, publican; **Coffman: The publicans were the tax collectors, particularly odious to the Jews because they were willing agents of Roman oppression; and besides that, many tax gatherers were dishonest. The very name “publican” passed into the popular vocabulary as a designation for one who was hated and despised.**]. **11 The Pharisee stood** [aorist passive participle] **and prayed** [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past time) middle indicative; the Pharisee appears to be using vain repetitions] **thus with himself** [This is easier to do than we think—internal conversations with ourselves aren’t prayers], **‘God, I thank** [am grateful to, express gratitude to; specifically the word used to say ‘grace’ before a meal; give thanks] **You that I am not like other men** [remaining ones, others, remnant, residue]—**extortioners** [rapacious, extortion, ravening], **unjust** [unjust, wicked, treacherous, heathen, unrighteous], **adulterers** [paramour, apostate, adulterer], **or even as this tax collector.** **12 I fast** [abstain from food religiously, fast] **twice a week** [can either mean Sabbath or the space between two Sabbaths—here it makes sense to be the space between two Sabbaths; **David Guzik: In those days many Jews fasted on the second and fifth days of each week, because they believed that Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the law on the fifth day of the week, and that he came down with the law on the second day of the week**]; **I give tithes of all that I possess** [get, acquire, own, obtain; the Pharisee uses ‘I’ **five** times. **Who is the hero of the Pharisee’s story? Himself.** **Barclay: The Pharisee did not really go to pray; he went to inform God how good he was. . . . But the question is not, “Am I as good as my fellow-men?” The question is, “Am I as good as God?” Spurgeon: A fine peacock, truly! See how he spreads out his feathers, and struts before God, glorifying himself. Coffman: He had fallen into the fatal error of supposing that he had placed God in his debt, that God owed him salvation on the basis of the good deeds that he did and his outward observance of the commandments in the law. Calvin: No disease is more dangerous than arrogance.].’ **13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not** [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past**

time) active indicative] **so much as raise** [raise up, exalt self, poise up] **his eyes to heaven, but beat** [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past time) active indicative; thumped, pummeled by repeated blows] **his breast** [chest], **saying, 'God, be merciful** [aorist passive imperative; conciliate, atone for sin, be propitious, be merciful, make reconciliation for; only used elsewhere in **Hebrews 2:17**] **to me a** ['the,' not 'a'—**Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: The Pharisee thought of others as sinners. The publican thinks of himself alone as the sinner, not of others at all.**] **sinner** [**Who is the star of the tax collector's story? God.** Ironside: Literally, it might be translated, "God be propitiated to me, the sinner." Calvary's cross was the answer to that prayer when the Lord Jesus became the propitiation for our sins. This man, recognizing he needed propitiation, cried to God for that which he knew he did not deserve, but which must come to him by grace if it was to come at all.!!']

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [perfect (completed action with the results continuing) passive participle; rendered just, rendered innocent, free, justified, made righteous; **David Guzik: The justification of the tax collector was immediate. He humbly came to God on the basis of His atoning sacrifice, and was justified. He didn't earn his justification, he didn't have a probationary period; he was simply justified.**] **rather than the other; for everyone who exalts** [elevates, exalts, lifts up] **himself will be humbled** [future middle indicative (not subjunctive); depressed, humiliated, abased, brought low, humbled], **and he who humbles himself will be exalted** [future middle indicative]."

Proverbs 3:34: Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble. James 4:6: But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5: Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Luke 14:11: For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

F.B. Meyer: Let it never be forgotten that those who will be justified and stand accepted before God are they who are nothing in their own estimate.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Internal self-exaltation results in external **humbling**
2. Internal humbling results in external **exaltation**
3. We are self-righteous

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Do not exalt ourselves (that's God's job)
2. Humble ourselves (that's our job)
3. **Repent** and **believe** (that's almost always a good response)

Going forward, we'll be pausing our Sunday evening services at the Hixson Campus until July 9 when we will resume our E100 series.