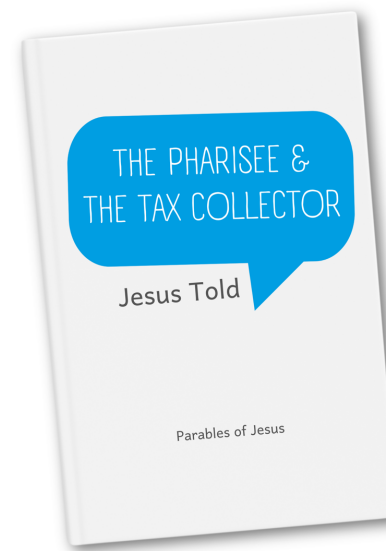


Questions

1. Read Romans 3:21 – 4:25. What more does Paul teach us about justification by faith alone?
2. Read Luke 5:27-32. Why is it paradoxically good news for us to admit that we are a sinner? How can this be an encouragement when we are convicted of our sin?
3. What convicts you about the self-righteous prayer of the Pharisee?
4. What can it look like for you to play the comparison game? (specific people or occasions or situations?)
5. In what ways are you tempted to smuggle in your performance into God's "grace alone" equation?
6. Are you able to see some of the recovering pharisee in your remaining sin? How so? How can your Home Group help you to sever ties with that ole pharisee?
7. What areas in your life are you in need of reclaiming the attitude of the Tax Collector prayer?

*After each service, if you need prayer,
someone will be available up front to pray with you.*

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Luke 18:9-14

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May 5, 2024

In the parable of The Pharisee & The Collector, Jesus explains how sinners are justified—accepted and approved—by Holy God. He does this through a story that expounds the peril of pride and the promise of humility.

Jesus tells this parable to those who wholeheartedly have misplaced confidence that they are accepted by God based their own merits, especially as compared to others. And Jesus tells this parable to Recovering Pharisees like you and me who are still tempted to find confidence in ourselves for how we *daily* relate to God, *daily* experience His acceptance and approval.

2 PEOPLE (vv.9-10)

The Pharisee

The Tax Collector

This parable is designed to teach a principle of salvation—justification by faith alone apart from one's own merits—through a shocking twist in the end when the pronouncement is made of who is justified. But there is no shock value for us if we miss that, for them *then*, the Pharisee is the “good” guy, and the Tax Collector is the “bad” guy.

2 PRAYERS (vv.11-13)

The Pharisee's Prayer – The Proud Prayer (vv.11-12)

The key to understand this prayer is in verse 9. This is the one, “...who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else...” This is the one in the end (v.14) whom Jesus says, “exalts himself”, and so in the end will be humbled.

This is a prayer of praise...but it's in the wrong direction. The Pharisee is simply giving a nod to God, but this prayer is self-congratulatory.

The problem is not with what the Pharisee has avoided or done. His problem is spiritual pride. The damnable thing is, his behavior may be righteous, but his heart was arrogantly far from God.

The Tax Collector's Prayer – The Humble Prayer (v.13)

The key to understand this prayer is in verse 14. This is the one whom Jesus declares as justified by God. This is the one whom Jesus describes as, “the one who humbles himself”, and so in the end he will be exalted.

3 Notes About This Prayer

1. God is the main subject.
2. The Tax Collector is fully aware of his own sinfulness.
3. Because of his awareness of his sinfulness, the Tax Collector is fully aware of his neediness.

The CSB footnotes “have mercy on” with, “*Or God, turn your wrath from me*”. In the original language, “have mercy on” is one word. It has to do with turning away God's wrath by means of a sacrifice. That one word is “propitiation”. (Rom. 3:25)

1 PRONOUNCEMENT (v.14)

Justified!

The one who trusted in himself that he was righteous and despised everyone else, his spiritual pride resulted in his eternal condemnation. But the upside-down nature of grace and mercy is, one plea from that one sinner, led to that one pronouncement. Justified! Our acceptance by God is based solely on the blood of the lamb. Jesus' death having forgiven you and Jesus' righteousness now belonging to you. Your acceptance by God is forever based on Jesus and his performance on your behalf.