



Luke 18:9-14, *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE OF THE STORY

- ✳ **Those who were confident of their own righteousness** | trusted in themselves that the righteousness they have attained makes them acceptable and more favorable to God.
- ✳ **And treated others with contempt** | looked down on others as less than or as nobodies.

1. TWO MEN AT THE TEMPLE

Luke 18:10, *Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

THE TEMPLE

- ✳ The temple was the place for the Jewish people to go for sacrifice and worship.
- ✳ The sacrifices at the temple happened each day once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- ✳ During times of sacrifice, it was common to worship and to pray.

THE PHARISEE

- ✳ The name Pharisee literally means "separated ones". Separated from normal sinful humanity.
- ✳ They represented a life devoted to religious purity and strict adherence to the written law of Moses.
- ✳ Pharisees represented the pinnacle of religious practice and in that culture most people viewed them as the closest you could get to godliness.

THE TAX COLLECTOR

- ✳ This is a Jewish person who collected taxes from his own people on behalf of the Roman Empire. To make a profit, a tax collector would add extra fees and overcharge his own people.
- ✳ They were despised and considered to be traitors to their nation and their religion.
- ✳ In the eyes of the Jews at that time, the tax collector is the furthest away from God.

2. TWO PRAYERS

Prayer of the Pharisee:

Luke 18:11-12, *The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'*

- ✳ Tells God all about himself—who he is and who he isn't, which are based on the religious works that he does.
- ✳ Exalts himself because of all the “righteous” things he does and thanks God that he is above all the sinners.

Prayer of the Tax Collector:

Luke 18:13 *But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'*

- ✳ **Standing far off** | stands far away from the temple (possibly because he wasn't allowed any closer) and humbly can't even look up to God.
- ✳ **Beat his breast** | represents repentance and deep sorrow for sin.
- ✳ **Be Merciful (*hiláskomai*)** | not the word normally used for mercy. Means to propitiate or to make reconciliation for. Only used twice in the entire New Testament - here in Luke 18 and also Hebrews 2:17.

3. ONLY ONE JUSTIFIED

Luke 18:14, *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.*

- ✳ **Justified** | to be declared guiltless or made to be in a right standing.
- ✳ Justified does not describe a process of moral improvement, rather it is a verdict rendered before God.
- ✳ **Rather than the other** | The pharisee wasn't right before God because he couldn't make himself right before God—as opposed to the tax collector who knew he couldn't.
- ✳ Those who humbly trust in the saving work of Christ are exalted with the righteousness of God...this is the only way to enter the Kingdom of God.

PRESENT DAY TAKEAWAYS:

Those who have not yet trusted Jesus:

- ✳ The ability to enter God's Kingdom does not originate from the kingdom of mankind or by the efforts of mankind.
- ✳ The only way to enter the Kingdom of God is by the righteousness of Christ given to us by faith in the atoning work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection. (Romans 3:22-26)

Those who have already trusted Jesus:

- ✳ Self-reliance can easily creep into our hearts and the church. (Galatians 3:1-3)
- ✳ May we continue to pray with humble hearts and thank the Lord that He applied His atonement to someone like me.
- ✳ And for anything that is truly good in us...this is just evidence in our lives that He has done something in us (Philippians 2:13). To God be all the glory!