

LUKE 18:9-14 -- The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

7/2/16 Sat Morn Prayer

Luke 18:9-14 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.**"

Context/Biblical Background – Jesus has been speaking with His disciples about the importance of persistence in prayer. Now He is continuing with another parable about self-righteousness and not loving one another.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector:

Now Jesus gives another parable and this parable again is explained in that it was directed towards those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and they looked down on **others** (18:10):

- **Two men went up to the temple to pray:** Both men prayed, but both men did not come to God the same way. The Pharisee prayed (really just boasted) with himself. **His prayer was to impress himself. How wonderful I am.** Notice that he only speaks of God once, in the beginning, and from then on it is I, I, I, I, I. Impressed with himself.
- God is just sort of mentioned in the beginning but he's praying really to himself or within himself, congratulating himself for how righteous he was. We can address our words to God, but **actually be praying to ourselves**, because **our focus is on ourselves, not on God**. Our passion is for **our agenda, not God's**. Our attitude is, **my will be done not Your will be done**.
- **God, I thank You that I am not like other men:** Looking **down on him**. Those that **trusted in their own righteousness and despised others**. How could the Pharisee have such a high opinion of himself? It's easy when you compare yourself to other men – such as a tax collector! You can always find someone worse.
- **I fast twice a week:** 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.
- We can imagine the Pharisee praying with eloquent words and flowing, spiritual style; anyone who heard him pray would say that he was a spiritual man. And the tax collector would pray awkwardly, with halting phrases and fear; **but his prayer pleased God**.
- **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!"** The Pharisee **relied on his own power and deeds** before God, but the **tax collector relied on the mercy and compassion of God**. He recognized that he was a sinner who needed the mercy of God. Psa 40:12 *For innumerable evils have surrounded me; My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; They are more than the hairs of my head; Therefore my heart fails me.*
- Why would the tax collector beat his breast? The idea was that **you were so aware of the sin and corruption of your heart that you would hit at your own heart as a punishment**. The verb tense of beat his breast describes a continual action - he kept on doing it.
- **'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'** Merciful, *hilaskomai* in the original, means reconciliation or an atoning sacrifice. The fullest sense of what the tax collector is saying is, **"God, be merciful to me through Your atoning sacrifice for sins, because I am a sinner."** The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is in *Heb. 2:17*, where it is translated *propitiation*.
- **This man went down to his house justified rather than the other:** 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. **Rom 3:23-24** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

- If judgment had been to have been made, and sentence passed according to the then conduct and behavior of both parties, **the publican had greatly the advantage**, in the sight of God; **an humble demeanor being well pleasing and acceptable to Him**, when **pride, and arrogance, boasting of, and trusting in a man's own righteousness, are abhorred by Him**;
- Jesus applies the message of the parable: *everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*. Essentially, the Pharisee saw prayer and his spiritual life as a way to be exalted, but the tax collector approached God in humility.
- **True humbleness is simply seeing things the way they are**. The Pharisee saw himself as something great when he wasn't, and **the tax collector saw himself as a sinner needing God's mercy, which he was. How do we see ourselves right now?**
- This again is a principle that Jesus is emphasizing and we had it just a few weeks ago where He again was emphasizing the basic principle, **If you exalt yourself, you'll be abased**. *"Pride cometh before destruction, a haughty spirit before the fall"* (Proverbs 16:18). Exalt yourself, you'll be abased. Humble yourself and you will be exalted. James it was said, *"(James 4:10).*

SUMMARY:

- **Our prayers can tell a lot about the way we view ourselves and those around us! What is your main purpose in prayer?**
- **Self-righteousness is looked upon by the Lord, as filthy rags! Isa 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.**
- **The Pharisee, typical of us all in the sense of being prideful and self-centered, like much to compare ourselves to others and NOT to the One, to whom we should self-compare – the standard of God - that of Jesus Christ!**
- **Let us be careful of presenting proud devotions to the Lords and of despising others.**
- **Note the humility in the tax collector – He wouldn't even raise up his eyes to heaven, but kept on beating his breast, - punishing his heart, the fountain of his sin, - crying out for mercy.**
- **Are our prayers more like that of the Pharisee or of the tax collector?**
- **The Bible tells us of the dangers and consequences of prideful exalting of ourselves – we will be brought down?**
- **But rather, "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He shall lift you up"**

Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord – Maranatha Music

*Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord
And He shall lift you up (higher and higher)
And He shall lift you up (2X)*

*Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord*

*And He shall lift you up (higher and higher)
And He shall lift you up
And He shall lift you up (up into heaven)
And He shall lift you up (2X)*

*And He shall lift you up (higher and higher)
And He shall lift you up
And He shall lift you up (up into heaven)
And He shall lift you up (2X)*

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