

Pray Humbly Luke 18:9-14

“But the truth is, pride and looking down on others wrecks everything. It is a cancer that spreads till it kills. If we want to please the Lord and hear, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant,’ we need to see it in the mirror and root it out immediately, at all costs. If not, we’ll become a Pharisee – accidentally perhaps, but a Pharisee, nonetheless.” **Larry Osborne**

“ Human nature is like a drunk peasant (riding a horse). Lift him into the saddle on one side, over he topples on the other side.” **Martin Luther**

Jesus goes after spiritual pride by pointing to two men, a Pharisee and a tax collector, not so that we would ask whether we are one or the other but to recognize that both live inside us.

I. What attitude do you have towards people even before you pray?

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt...” **Luke 18:9**

“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.” **Luke 11:9-10**

“In this parable, Jesus will assail and take away what the hearers have put their trust in, namely their self-assurance that they are right with God.”

David Garland

One of the signs that you trust in yourself is that you treat others with contempt.

“Humility toward men will be the only sufficient proof that our humility before God is real.”

Andrew Murray

Ask this question – do I have contempt for anyone in my life?

If you do...

You might just be a “Pharisee.”

II. What approach do you have when praying to God?

Luke 18:10-13

- **Notice the Position of the two men: Both see themselves as exceptional.**

The Pharisee “standing by himself”

The Tax Collector “standing far off”

“The Pharisee stands by himself, self-satisfied and smug, **considering himself too holy to be defiled by others.**” Tom Schreiner

**The tax collector doesn’t want to contaminate others. He feels unworthy.
The Pharisee doesn’t want to be contaminated by others. He feels superior.**

Ask this question – Do you feel exceptionally spiritual in some area of your Christian life?

You might just be a “Pharisee.”

- **Notice the Vision of the Two Men: Both were comparing themselves with others.**

The Pharisee – horizontal

The Tax Collector – vertical

Ask yourself the question – who are you comparing yourself with?

If you are comparing yourself with others rather than Christ...

You might just be a “Pharisee.”

- **Notice the Expectation of the two men: Presumption Versus Desperation**

The Pharisee - “Thank you God, I am not like other men...”

The Tax Collector: “God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

The Pharisee believes that God would see him as worthy of blessing.

The Tax collector believes that God would see him as worthy of being cursed.

“The tax collector experiences anguish of the temple’s promise of atonement from the daily sacrifice and the reality of his own sinful life. **The forgiveness offered in the temple sacrifice confirmed by the priestly benediction does not apply to the likes of him.** In his brokenness, he cries out ‘God make atonement for me!’” **David Garland**

“Knowing that he was under God’s judgment because of sin, the only thing the tax collector could do was to ask for God to be ‘mercy-seated’ to him. That’s what the Greek verb *hiaskomai* refers to. The tax collector was asking for God to atone for his sins, covering his guilt and protecting him from eternal judgment.” **Philip Ryken**

Ask this question: What is the ground that you plea for God’s blessing – your righteousness or God’s mercy?

If it’s your faithfulness...

You might just be a “Pharisee.”

III. What answer should anticipate from Jesus?

“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.” **Luke 18:14**

How is it possible that this one who feels outside of the reach of the offerings of the law walks away justified?

“From Luke’s perspective, God is preparing an atonement sacrifice that will expiate this man’s sin apart from the temple sacrifices”

D. Garland

“For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in

Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as **a propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith.” **Romans 3:22b-25**

Jesus came to go to the mercy seat so that the tax collector and the Pharisee in us could go home justified.

Ask this question: Have you brought your pride and self-righteousness, your sin and failure, to the mercy seat?

If you have, you can go home... justified.