

Church of God Sunday School

PARABLES OF JESUS: THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Luke 18:9-14

One day as Jesus was teaching, some of the people who were listening to Him felt that they were righteous, or morally good. They trusted in their own goodness and despised people that they thought were not as good as themselves. (To despise someone is to greatly dislike them or feel that they are not good enough for your attention.)

Jesus knew exactly how the people listening to Him were feeling about themselves and about others. So, Jesus told a parable (story) to show how wrong it is to be so proud.

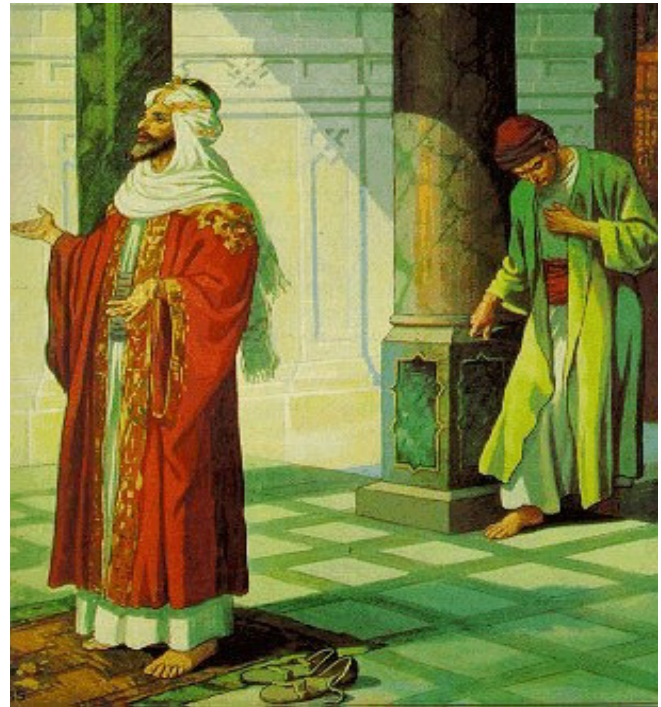
Two men went up to the temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee, and the other man was a publican. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who were very careful to strictly obey all of the Law.

The Pharisees kept themselves separate from Gentiles (people who were not Jews) and from other Jews who did not obey the Law as carefully as they did. Because Pharisees obeyed every part of the Law and did many good things, they did not feel their need of being saved from sin.

When the Pharisee came to the temple, he stood and "prayed thus with himself." He said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." He could not see anything wrong that he had done. He was more concerned with being glad that he was not like everybody else. He even mentioned how thankful he was that he was not as this other man who had come to pray—the publican.

Then the Pharisee began to list his good works: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes [*tithes* are a tenth part of one's income] of all that I possess." (How many times did the Pharisee use the word "I" in his prayer?) The Pharisee did not thank God for His blessings, he did not confess his sins to God, and he did not ask for God's help. Did he think that he needed anything from God?

The publican also came to the temple to pray. The publicans were tax collectors and hated by most of the Jewish people. Many publicans cheated people by taking more money for taxes than they were supposed



to. This might be why the Pharisee spoke so unkindly of the publican in his prayer.

The publican did not come to the temple proudly. He stood "afar off" and would not raise his eyes "unto heaven." He "smote [or beat] upon his breast." This is the short prayer of the humble publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner." How was this prayer different from the Pharisee's prayer? Which prayer did God truly hear?

Jesus ended the parable by saying that the publican (not the Pharisee) "went down to his house justified." The publican was forgiven and in right standing with God. Jesus told why: "For every one that exalteth himself [gives credit to himself] shall be abased [brought down]; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

What was the difference between the prayers of these two men? Pride can separate us from God.

Have you ever felt that you were better than someone else? It is easy to look down on someone when you have better clothes or toys or a better home than they do.

Do you know children who often get in trouble? Do you think you are better than they are because you do not get into trouble? Have you ever said, "I'm not as bad as they are"? That is trusting in your own goodness.

God is looking at your heart. He knows your thoughts. Are you proud like the Pharisee? Or do you feel your need of a Savior? If you haven't asked Jesus to come into your heart, why not ask Him now?

MEMORY VERSE:

"The publican . . . smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."

—Luke 18:13

The Pharisee and the Publican

D L T K C L
 I G E V Z F
 P O P E K B
 C H T A N B
 D D P R E T
 X L O R A J
 G W N A B N
 K U P A Y L
 A H H B E E
 O N U A U R
 K E M R V J
 U A D B I M
 D J T L S M
 I V G X E E

I P W J K N
 F R T L Z F
 I A I W E E
 Q C D Q O Q
 G G K E V A
 K D J E I N
 X O G A Q E
 M A W B L P
 K V L M P Q
 R X Z M K X
 W M K E O L
 H G T U A W
 K Y U T H S
 M H A I D Z

**FAST
 HUMBLE
 JESUS
 JEWS
 PARABLE
 PHARISEE
 PRAYER
 PRIDE
 PUBLICAN
 TEMPLE
 TITHES**

W Q N Y V E
 O T P P R X
 B I P U W S
 R Z T I B L
 B K H T L W V I I U A R
 U H Q E K I Y C V U O O
 O L H S N C G Q M Y
 K J G A G J A H Y W
 U E J U E E N G
 W T W X S G H H
 W P S U Z G
 L V E S P Y
 T P S K
 G S U L



Two Different Prayers

(Fill in the blanks to complete the two prayers)

The Pharisee's Prayer:

"God I thank thee, that I am not as other _____ are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this _____. I fast twice in the week, I give _____ of all that I possess."

The Publican's Prayer:

"God be _____ to me a sinner."

