

THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

Luke 18:9-14

Thursday, March 8, 2018, 20th Day of Lent

⁹ 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.”

Picture this if you would. It is a meeting of the church council and they are discussing the needs and direction of the church for the upcoming year. The assorted church leaders are putting out great ideas and working hard to build up the church. As always, they talk of finances and membership; they decide on a new computer system and a new face book page, so the community will see what wonderful things they are doing and want to be a part; they discuss much needed repairs and updates to the facility. They want to attract more people and it won't hurt anything if some of these are the community big shots.

In the corner stands a little girl and she wonders when they will answer some of her questions. Who will be here when I have hard questions about my life and the lives of my friends? Who will comfort me when I am hurt and grieving? Who will help me find a way when I get lost? Who will protect me from bullies and predators that take over my life? Does the church care for those like me?

And the participants of the meeting, good, honest, caring, God fearing, kind, loving, respectable Christians never hear her because they are so busy leading the church that we forget to be the church. And the little girl falls through the cracks and is gone.

My prayer for this season of Lent, a season of repentance is quite simple. “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” Amen

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