

Parable of Pharisee and Publican Sermon Outline

Scripture: Luke 18:9-14

Purpose: God desires a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart. (Ps 51:17)

Introduction: The parable was told in response to a prideful attitude of the Pharisees (Luke 18:9)

It is difficult for a prideful person to put his trust in (love) God because he sees no need or to love his neighbors. Where is our trust today? Self or God? Do we love our neighbors or are we focused on our own desires?

I. Two People

Things in common – went to same place and at same time. Possibly at either the morning or evening sacrifice.

Contrast:

1. Pharisee – proud – seeking justice

Thinks that he can be good enough – obey the law
No conviction of sin

2. Publican – humble – seeking mercy

Knows that he needs the “blood of the lamb”
Convicted of sin

II. Two Prayers

Contrast:

1. Prideful – “I” focused (King Saul)
2. Plea – God focused – have mercy on me! - similar to Isaiah 6 “woe is me” and King David (Ps 51 &32)

III. Two Proclamations

1. Justified – publican received grace
2. Condemned – the Pharisee received justice – John 3:18 (condemned already)

Conclusion: Do you want Justice or Grace today?

It is by His grace through faith unto good works (Eph 2:8-10). This is crying out for mercy?

If it is by faith in our works it is Justice not grace.

God does require works but they are His works of the Spirit through us and not our works if the flesh.

Title: Parable of Pharisee and Publican

Introduction: In Luke 18:9 Jesus told this parable to those that trusted in their own righteousness and felt they were better than others. As we attempt to understand this parable it is important that we examine ourselves in regard to these two areas. The Pharisee's attitudes were the opposite of what Jesus said was the greatest commandments; Love God and love your neighbor.

Where do we place our trust (loyalty) today? Are we trusting in our job, educational background, family, social or economic status or are we trusting in God? We also should ask ourselves do we look down on (despise) others today? Do we love or despise others? Do we despise others of different color, nationality, or those with a perceived lower social or economic status?

This parable focuses on two types of people. One that is seeking justice in his own righteousness and the other is seeking mercy? One is betting on the "Law" and the other is betting on the blood of the "Lamb". What are you and I betting on today? Are we seeking justice based on our own self-efforts to measure up to the "law"? A quick check is are we measuring ourselves with others or are we measuring ourselves with the "plum line" of God's Word?

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:8-10 that we are saved by grace through faith in the work of Christ. We are not to boast because we have done nothing to warrant this free gift. However verse ten tells us that we are saved unto good works that were established for us to do after we have received this free salvation.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Jesus in His parables draw beautiful word pictures that burn the image into our brain where we can meditate on them and allow the Holy Spirit to bring us to a better understanding of what Jesus wants to teach us by each parable.

Let us look at this parable in three divisions; two people, two prayers, and two proclamations. In looking at the parable in this manner we will see that the self-righteous person is just opposite of the person who loves and trust God. The person who despises others is just opposite of the one who loves others. In other words the persons who Jesus is addressing in this parable are the ones who do not love God with all their heart, mind and soul and do not love others as themselves.

Two People – Pharisee & Publican (tax collector) Luke 18:10

The Pharisee and the Publican had some things in common. They went to the same place to pray, the temple. They went at the same time, which probably meant that it was at the morning or

evening sacrifice, which was a public time of worship. The people would come to observe the sacrifice and the duties of the priest and at the same time worship and praise God.

They both voiced a prayer. They also both were sinners, however it appears only one acknowledged that he was a sinner. The publican say have mercy on me a sinner. The Pharisee was self-righteous and was trusting in his works.

There also were many things in contrast (different) between the Pharisee and the publican. How people viewed them was different. The Pharisee was a well-respected member of the Jewish religious community while the publican was a despised outcaste. This was because the publican worked for the enemy. In the capacity of a tax collector he collected taxes due Rome and was allowed to keep a portion for himself. In many cases it appears the tax collectors abused their position and collected more taxes than were due. This allowed them to keep more for themselves.

Also how they viewed others were different. The Pharisee looked down on others. When he voiced his prayer (prayed with himself), he stated I am glad that I am not like that man over there in reference to the publican. His prayer was very prideful and voiced no need from God but stated how self-righteous he was. For example he fasted and tithed more than the law required. He fasted twice per week and the law only required once per year. He

tithed on all things and the law only required a tithe on a few things.

The publican did not look to others as a basis of his righteous. He looked up to God and saw how sinful he was. He could only cry for mercy. This is similar to the account of Isaiah in Isaiah chapter six where Isaiah sees God and the sees himself. He cries out “woe is me a man of unclean lips. “

God and man evaluate men differently. In 1 Samuel 16:7 where Samuel is appointing David as King to replace Saul, God tells Samuel that He does not look at the external appearance of a man but He looks at his heart. In first and second Samuel we get a good comparison of King Saul and King David. We see that Saul is a very prideful man and he becomes very angry when the women in 1 Samuel 18:7-8 are saying that “Saul kills thousands, but David kills ten thousands”. In comparison God says David had a contrite heart, one like God.

Two men go up to the temple to pray, one prays a very prideful prayer unto himself, and the other’s prayer is but a plea for mercy!

Two Prayers – of Pride & a Plea
Luke 18:11-13

As we look at the prayers of the Pharisee and the Publican we will see that one of them is a prayer of pride and the other is a plea. The Pharisee’s prayer is nothing but a statement of self-righteousness; in

fact Jesus says that he prays “with himself”. His prayer is full of “I” quoting his works. How he fast and tithes more than the “Law” requires. He was not looking at God, but down on his fellow man. He said I am glad that I am not like that publican over there. He had no needs. He was not seeking mercy but justice since he felt that he was more obedient to God than other men, especially the publican.

Yet the publican’s prayer is nothing but a plea, “Have mercy on me a sinner.” He cried out to God. He was like Isaiah in chapter 6 of Isaiah, he saw God high and lifted up and he saw himself as a man of unclean lips (sinner). As I mentioned they came to the temple at the same time, which probably was the time of the daily sacrifice, where a lamb was slain for the sins of Israel. The publican in his mind could see the “blood of the lamb” being sprinkled on the mercy seat in his behalf.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one was seeking mercy and the other justice! Where are we this morning are we here to seek mercy or justice. Are we like the Pharisee depending on our selves, our own works of goodness for justice or are we like the publican depending on the work of Christ on the cross, His blood, for mercy? Jesus said, “It is finished”. The work of salvation was complete by His death on the cross.

Two Proclamations – Justified or Condemned Luke 18:14

Jesus declared the publican not guilty. He says that he went home justified. This was a shock to those that we listening to Jesus teach, because all of them saw the Pharisee as the one who was righteous and the publican as the sinner.

1 John 1:9 states that God is faithful to forgive those who confess their sins. The publican had confessed his sin and cried for mercy. God granted mercy and declared him righteous. That is he was in right standing before God and declared not guilty! His sins had been atoned by Christ. He was at-one-ment with God.

The proclamation of guilty was declared to the self-righteous and is implied by the statement that the other goes home justified, plus the statement the exalted will be humbled. This reminds me of John 3:18, which states those, that believe in Jesus are not condemned, but those who don’t believe in Him are condemned already. Guilty!

Elsewhere Jesus says that if one is to be justified on his own merit that he must be more righteous than the Pharisees and scribes. Which is impossible to be justified on your own merits. This amplifies the thought that the purpose of the Law is to point us to Christ.

Two men went up to the temple to pray. One prayed a prayer of pride, the other a plea. The one with a plea for mercy went home justified!

Had you rather be dignified or justified?

Conclusion: What is our attitude today. Is it one of trusting in ourselves instead of in Christ? Do we love and trust in God? Do we despise (look down on) others? Have we ever recognized a need for a savior and cried out for mercy? The Bible tells us that all have sinned (Rom 3:23) and the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). It states that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8) and all we must do to have eternal life is believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that Jesus died, was buried and resurrected (Rom 10:9).

It is by grace through faith and not of works that we are saved (Ep 2:8-9). It is a gift of God. It is mercy! Plea, Lord, have mercy on me a sinner and you will be declared justified. You to can go home justified!

John 3:14 references that Jesus must be lifted up like the bronze serpent in Numbers 21. There we see that serpents were biting the people of Israel and they were dieing. They cried out and God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. When they were bitten if they would look at the bronze serpent with faith they would live. That is true today all have been bitten by the serpent

Satan and all we have to do is look at Christ lifted up (on the cross) and be saved.

What is our standing before God today? Are we standing on our righteousness or His? Seek mercy and not justice.

The Church of Laodicia in the Rev 3:14-17 is a church that is neither hot nor cold. They have need of nothing like the Pharisee. Jesus says they need to be zealous and repent. This could be the status of some here this morning that profess Christ but are neither hot nor cold.

Jesus desires fellowship with us this morning. He stands at the door of our heart and knocks. If we will open the door He will come in and fellowship with us. Open the door!

Let us close with a moment of silent prayer where we ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if we love God and others. Do we have a humble heart and are depending on Jesus' work on the cross or are we depending on our own god works?

Let us pray!