



Daily Reflections

March 30, 2019

Scripture

Luke 18: 9-14

Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else.

"Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.

The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity — greedy, dishonest, adulterous — or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.'

But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed,

'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'

I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Our Scripture Reflection

The word Pharisee comes from Hebrew and means "separated one." How did they get such a name? In an attempt to strive for holiness, they extracted

from the first five books of the Old Testament 613 individual Commandments to which they added a whole body of oral Commandments. In essence, they had built a large legal fence around themselves which separated them from the rest of humanity. We see in our Gospel reading the kind of attitude that is born from such a separation. The Pharisee who is too arrogant to bow his head as he prays his litany of self-righteousness can only see sinfulness and unworthiness as he looks at the man at the back of the room. The tax collector, however, bows his head and looks only into his own heart and at his own sins. Because of his humility, only he leaves the Temple that day truly right with God.

Food for your Journey

C.S. Lewis on pride (*Mere Christianity*, 106): "There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people except Christians ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. ... There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it in ourselves, the more we dislike it in others."

The word "humility" is related to our word humus meaning earth, or earthy. If you're humble, you're close to the ground, near the bottom.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, Yes, I am a sinner. Yes, I have rejected the love You have shown me. I have no one to blame but myself. I find great solace in the words of King David in Psalm 51: "A humble, contrite heart You will never spurn." Lord, accept my humility as a sign of my desire to change and to grow into the person You have created me to be. Amen