



Daily Reflections

October 23, 2016

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 whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus gives us the rationale for His parable in the introduction: "to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else." The Pharisee's posture speaks volumes:

1. He pridefully goes to the front of the prayer room;

2. He does not bow his head and appears to address God almost as an equal;

3. He brags about his spiritual life and monetary generosity;

And worse of all....

4. He points out and stands upon the sins of the tax collector to make himself look good.

The tax collector, on the other hand,

1. Stays in the very back of the prayer room;

2. Humbly keeps his head bowed; and

3. Simply begs for God's forgiveness.

The tax collector lives the powerful words of Psalm 51: "A humbled contrite heart, Oh Lord, You will never spurn."

Do you wish to be right with God? Then, imitate the tax collector.

Food for your Journey

My wife and I recently had a college student and the girl he was dating over to our house for lunch on a Sunday. As we started to relax, I said, "Why don't you take your coat off?" I'd already taken off my tie and coat. The young man kind of hem-hawed around, however, as if he didn't want to do it. Finally, he got me off in a corner and said, reminding me of an old trick I knew well when I was in college, "The only parts of my shirt I ironed were the cuffs and the collar." He had pressed just the parts that showed. The rest of the shirt looked as if he had ironed it with a weedeater! That was the way of the

Pharisees: the part people could see looked great, but a weed eater appeared to have done the ironing on the inside.

--Mike Cope, *Righteousness Inside Out*(Nashville, Tenn.: Christian Communications, 1988), 26.

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.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You, the Lord of all, humbled Yourself and accepted a humiliating death on the cross for me. Please remove my false pride and self-righteousness. Make me humble as You were humble. Fill my heart with the love that motivated You to give everything for Your people. Amen.