

The Pharisee And The Publican

Luke 18:9-14

Introduction

1. The parable of “The Pharisee and The Publican” is found only in Luke’s gospel.
2. The parable is clearly addressed to those who were self-righteous and held “others with contempt.” (Lk 18:9).

LUK 18:9 And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

- “trusted in themselves” - They felt they were right with God based on their own conduct.
- “contempt” is from “eksoutheneo” [eks oo theh **neh** oh] meaning “to despise, reject, treat with contempt.” They had a very low regard for others.

Two Men

Pharisees

1. The name “Pharisee” stood for one who was separated from others.
 - a. Many scholars believe that the word “Pharisee” comes from the Hebrew word “parus” (“separated one”).
 - b. This name was likely given them by others and not chosen by themselves.
 - c. There were only about 6,000 Pharisees.
 - d. The Pharisee were not paid professional clergy but influential lay persons (farmers, carpenters, merchants, etc).
2. They insisted on the meticulous observance of the Mosaical law.
3. This was good. (Deut. 4:2).
3. They regarded themselves as protectors of the law.
4. They added their own traditions to the law and allowed their traditions to negate the law. (Matt. 15:1-9).
 - a. The law of Moses taught men to honor parents.
 - b. They avoided this commandment by the Corban vow. (Mk. 7:7-13).

MAR 7:7 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'

MAR 7:8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

MAR 7:9 He was also saying to them, "You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

MAR 7:10 "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death';

MAR 7:11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban (that is to say, given to God),'

MAR 7:12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;

MAR 7:13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that. "

5. They believed in the resurrection and angels. (Acts 23:8).

ACT 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

6. Most were very corrupt. (Matt. 23:25-28).

MAT 23:25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.

MAT 23:26 "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

MAT 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

MAT 23:28 "Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

a. There were probably exceptions, such as, Nicodemus. (Jn. 3:1; 7:45-52; 19:39). See Jn. 7:50.

b. Joseph of Arimathea (Jn. 19:38, 39). He was "a prominent member of the council." (Mk. 15:43). He may have been a Pharisee or possibly a Sadducee. Most of the Pharisees and Sadducees did not believe in Jesus. (Jn. 12:42).

JOH 19:38 And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body.

JOH 19:39 And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

c. Paul was an exception. (Phil 3:5,6).

PHI 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

PHI 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

1) Paul was a man who sincerely served God in "good conscience." (Acts 23:1).

2) He was not a hypocrite, but had been very wrong. (1 Tim. 1:12-15).

3) He had "acted ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. 1:13).

7. The Pharisees were men of prayer and the Pharisee of this parable comes to the temple at the precise hour of prayer.

a. Jesus alluded to them when He delivered His sermon from the Mount. (Matt. 6:5, 6).

MAT 6:5 "And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

MAT 6:6 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

b. The "hypocrites" included many of the Pharisees and others of the same mind set.

8. The Pharisee arrogantly enters the Court of Israel and draws near to the altar of burnt offering and sanctuary.

Tax-Collector

1. These men collected taxes for the Roman government who held the Jews in servitude.

2. The tax-collectors could keep all the money they collected above what was due. (Lk. 3:12, 13).

LUK 3:12 And some tax-gatherers also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

LUK 3:13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."

3. These men were hated because they collected taxes for the Romans and were notoriously dishonest.

4. This particular tax-collector it would appear was not an exception, but he had come to repentance and is praying for forgiveness.

5. **Zaccheus** was another notable tax-collector who came to Jesus. (Lk. 19:1-10).

a. He was a honest and humble tax-collector who was willing to make restitution for collection mistakes.

b. Jesus saved this little man because of faith in Him. (Lk. 19:8, 9).

LUK 18:10 "**Two men went up** [since temple was on hill] **into the** [court of the] **temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer.**

1. The stated hours of prayer were 9 a.m. and 3 p.m..

2. Men could go there whenever they felt like it and pray privately.

3. The time for public prayer was 9 A.M. and 3 P.M..

Prayer of the Pharisee

LUK 18:11 "**The Pharisee stood** [likely in the Court of Israel] **and was praying thus** [these things] **to** [about] **himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers** [robbers, plunderers, grafters], **unjust** [dishonest], **adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.**

• "tauta" [tow tah] is translated "thus," but literally is "these things."

1. Standing was a common posture in prayer. (Matt. 6:5; Mk. 11:25).

MAT 6:5 "And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners , in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.	MAR 11:25 " And whenever you stand praying , forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.
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2. The Pharisee's words sound like a boast rather than a prayer.

- “pros heauton” [prahs heh ow **tahn**] - “with, to, concerning, with reference to.”
- “with himself” - KJV, RSV - This might suggest to some that the Pharisee prayed silently. This is not how the Jews at that time prayed. They prayed audibly.
- “prayed to himself.” TEV - This suggests the Pharisee was not praying to God but to himself. It could have the idea that God was not listening to his prayer. (Prov. 6:16-19; 28:9).
- “about himself” - NIV - This suggests that the main focus of his prayer to brag about himself before God - not to humbly confess sins.
- “Standing by himself was praying thus” - NRSV

3. **There was nothing in his prayer but "I."** It is a self-eulogy. (Lk. 18:11,12).

LUK 18:11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, **I** thank Thee that **I** am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.

LUK 18:12 '**I** fast twice a week; **I** pay tithes of all that **I** get.' "I" used 5 times.

4. But his gratitude to God is for his own virtues, not for God's mercies to him. One of the rabbis offers a prayer like this of gratitude that he was in a class by himself because he was a Jew and not a Gentile, because he was a Pharisee and not of the common people, because he was a man and not a woman.

5. This is mostly a prayer of imperfect goodness.

- a. He was not a swindler or unjust or adulterer or tax-gatherer.
- b. He even bragged about his fasting and giving.

6. The Pharisee eyes rove about until he see the tax collector and he quickly told God how much better he was than the tax-collector.

LUK 18:12 '**I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get** [my income].'

1. The law only required fasting on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29,30). but the Pharisees fasted on Monday and Thursday

- a. The two days of fasting mentioned in the Talmud are Monday and Thursday (Ta'am, 12a).
- b. A “fast” would usually involve going without food or drink from sunrise to sunset.
- c. It was not wrong to fast if done in the right way. (Matt. 6:16-18).

MAT 6:16 "And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

MAT 6:17 "But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face

MAT 6:18 so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

d. Fasting was not commanded, but it was anticipated - "And whenever you fast." The practice and frequency of fasting was the choice of a person.

2. The Pharisees tithed all their earnings even to petty things. (Matt. 23:23).

MAT 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

3. **Some observations about the Pharisee's prayer.**

a. He did not seek pardon nor did he praise God.

b. He did not seek divine strength or guidance.

c. He didn't thank God for protecting him against the circumstances that might have led him to become a thief or an adulterer. See 1 Cor. 10:13.

d. He did not pray for others - lost, sick, orphans, needy, rulers, etc..

5. He had no sense of guilt and had learned nothing from the penitential psalms. (Pss. 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 140).

6. He did not pray for others, but exalted himself above others.

Tax-Collector

LUK 18:13 "**But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away [from the Pharisee and sanctuary], was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'**"

1. "Beating his breast" was an expression of grief for sin.

2. The Pharisee looked upon others as sinners.

3. The words "the sinner" shows the tax-collector thought of himself alone as "the sinner" or the worse of sinners.

- Gr. "to hamartolo" [toh hah mahr toh loh] is literally "the sinner."

- Weymouth translates "sinner that I am."

a. He did not attempt to rationalize or justify his sins.

b. He did not blame them on others, but cries out for God to be merciful to him "the sinner.

4. He had no feelings of arrogance and self-righteousness. See Psalms 40:12; Ezra 9:6.

PSA 40:12 For evils beyond number have surrounded me; My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; They are more numerous than the hairs of my head; And my heart has failed me.	EZR 9:6 and I said, "O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads, and our guilt has grown even to the heavens.
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5. It was common to look up to heaven in prayer. (Mk. 6:41; 7:34; Jn. 11:41; 17:1; Psa. 123:1).

The Praise Of Jesus

LUK 18:14 **"I tell you, this man went down to his house [left the temple for his home] justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."**

1. This man was "justified" [made right with God] by his attitude of godly sorrow and repentance. (2 Cor. 7:10).
 - a. "dikaioo" [dee ki ah oh] means "to render just and innocent, justify."
 - b. Williams has "forgiven and accepted by God."
2. The Pharisee was lost because of his self-righteous attitude.
3. He was not about to confess and acknowledge his sins to God or man.
4. See Luke 14:11; Matthew 23:12.

Observations

1. God wants us to pray. (Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17).
 - a. We can pray at any time.
 - b. It is not wrong to pray at set hours. (Acts 3:1).
- ACT 3:1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.
- c. It is not wrong if others see us pray as long as we do not pray to be seen of men (receive their praise). (Matt. 6:5, 6).
 2. He desires that we confess personal sin in prayer - not the sins of others. (Matt. 6:12).
 3. God despises arrogance and self-righteousness. (Matt. 5:3; Jas 4:6; Prov. 6:16-19).
 4. We must all recognize that we are sinners. (Rom. 3:10,11,23; 1 Jn. 1:8,10).
 - a. Some only look upon others as sinners, and look upon themselves not as sinners who need repentance.
 - b. We must recognize that we are "the sinner."
 - c. We rationalize our sins, but God knows all our sins and is not fooled by our rationalizations or denials.
 - d. All sin leads to condemnation unless confessed. (Psa. 51; Lk. 11:4).
 5. Sin is to be confessed to God - not man.
 - a. This means all sin must be confessed to God.
 - b. We must ask forgiveness of those we have sinned against. See Matt. 5:24.
 - 1) This should be done if possible.

2) A good guideline would be to make the confession as public as the sin committed.

c. Note: There is an exception. (Jas. 5:16).

JAM 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

1) We must confess the sins we have committed against others. We repent to those we have sinned against - not every Christian.

2) It may also be helpful to let others know about our sins that they may help us overcome them.

3) It is not healthy to hide sin because it keeps us from being forgiven and because when we attempt to hide sin guilt remains.

4) This does not mean these confessions must be detailed and in explicit detail to one another.

6. We must not trust in our own righteousness.

a. We are saved by grace. (Eph. 2:5, 8-9).

b. Our own righteousness is but filthy rags in the sight of God.

c. Only the blood of Jesus can save us. (Isa. 53:4-6; Heb. 9:22).

d. One can only boast in the Lord. (1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17).

1CO 1:31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."
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2CO 10:17 But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

7. One is not saved by just being religious.

a. The Pharisees were very religious.

b. They were still lost unless they came to Christ.

c. One must humbly obey God to be saved. (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46).

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