

TWO MEN AT CHURCH
LUKE 18:9-14

Woodland Park Church of Christ
29 August 2021

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.**”

Luke 18:9-14 [NKJV]

BACKDROP

- The Lord provides a parable to warn against self-righteousness, self-exaltation, and pride.
- We live in an era when so many want to shine the spotlight on themselves.
- “Look at me, and how great I am!”
- Seems that everyone wants the light to shine on them.

God frowns on this type attitude/behavior –

*These six things the LORD hates; indeed, seven are repulsive to Him: ¹⁷ **A proud look [the attitude that makes one overestimate oneself and discount others]** . . . Proverbs 6:16-17 [AMP]*

***Let another man praise you**, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips. Proverbs 27:2*

- We are all undone creatures before God, irrespective of earthly fame and accomplishment.
- It takes the blood of Christ to span the gulf of what and where we are and a point of acceptance (justification) before God.
- At our very best, we are simply redeemed beings – existing on God’s matchless grace and unfailing mercy.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23

*For the wages of sin is death, but **the gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 6:23***

I. HUMILITY PRECEDES HONOR & GLORY

- Honor and glory usually come before humility only in the dictionary.

*Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And **before honor is humility.** Proverbs 18:12*

- **MANY MISS OUT ON BLESSINGS BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO HUMBLE THEMSELVES!**

Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

***"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."***

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time . . . | Peter 5:5-6

- **The Lord provides a shining example!**

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but **made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant**, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him** and given Him the name which is above every name, **Philippians 2:5-9***

Alabama Law Foundation Scholarship

- ALFS awarded annually to rising second year law student(s) with ties to the state of Alabama, regardless of school
- Like most scholarships, things like academic performance, extracurricular activities, community engagement weigh heavily in the selection
- One year, a candidate seemed to have it all together – Ivy League law student with stellar grades; great work in the community; had landed a summer associate position with a huge law firm
- He was a clear cut and obvious favorite.
- He showed up with the attitude, “You all can mail my funds anytime you like.”
- However, he did not receive the scholarship, because the Committee did not feel he demonstrated the proper attitude and spirit – **LACK OF HUMILITY**

II. SEEK TO BE INCLUSIVE RATHER THAN EXCLUSIVE

- Engage in expanding boundaries to bring in more, rather than restrict and limit.
- We should not make the church an organization where membership and acceptance is reserved for those who have attained certain status or reached certain levels.
- We are all works in progress and an assembly of recovering sinners.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10:12

- The kingdom (church) is made up of people from all walks of life and of various colors, shades and hues.
- When we start limiting and excluding, it indicates partiality and bias, which are clearly antithetical to the teachings of CHRIST and the mission of the CHURCH.

*“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and **caught all kinds of fish**. . .”*

Matthew 13:47

*My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. ² For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, ³ and **you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes** and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” ⁴ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? **James 2:1-4***

- However, this does not mean we accept or embrace anything and everything.
- Neither does scripture teach that we are to form associations with those who habitually engage in nefarious, unwholesome and destructive behavior.
- In fact, scripture teaches us to be circumspect about those to whom we become attached and to avoid bad company.

*Do not even associate with a man given to angry outbursts; or go [along] with a hot-tempered man,
25 Or **you will learn his [undisciplined] ways**
And get yourself trapped [in a situation from which it is hard to escape]. Proverbs 22:24-25 [AMP]*

III. BUT FOR GOD'S GRACE, WHERE WOULD WE BE?

- Sometimes we have to be reminded that we have not always been where we are, if we are truly there.
- We can play the role well at times, masking who and what we really are.

MEMOREX → Is it live or is it Memorex?

If we have truly matured in the faith and have reached a point where we can overcome and keep our minds steady on the Lord in times of temptation, trial and adversity, remember Paul's teaching.

*Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And **that is what some of you were**. But you were washed, you were sanctified, **you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God**. I Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)*

IV. JUSTIFICATION BEFORE GOD IS MORE ABOUT HIS GRACE THAN OUR GOOD DEEDS & PURPORTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

*But we are all like an unclean thing,
and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; Isaiah 64:6*

Note that everything the Pharisee said was true --

- He had distinguished himself from others in a positive way -- not an extortioner, unjust, adulterer
- Fasted twice a week (presumably to pray and focus)
- Gave as commanded

**But that does not necessarily impress God or trigger
His blessings!**

For **by grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ **not of works**, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Many Pharisees and Sadducees also came to be baptized. But John said to them: You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment? ⁸ Do something to show that you have really given up your sins. ⁹ And don't start telling yourselves that you belong to Abraham's family. I tell you that God can turn these stones into children for Abraham. Matthew 3:7-9 [CEB]

- We encourage our people to do their best, to become accomplished; work tirelessly at whatever their hands find to do, be good parents and spouses, stalwarts in our communities, etc.
- To be sure, however, bloodlines, academic accomplishments, works, sacrifices, pedigree don't justify us before God and won't save us in the end.

**WE MUST DECREASE AND HUMBLY, BUT
CONFIDENTLY, RELY ON GOD'S GRACE AND
MERCY TO SAVE US!**

Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- **Be added to the Lord's body**

Hear (Acts 15:7)

Believe (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17)

Repent (Acts 2:38)

Confess (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10)

Be baptized (Acts 2:38, 8:38)

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- **Be reconciled unto the Lord** (I John 1:8-9); or
- **Desire prayer** (James 5:16).

Virtual attendees responding to the invitation or requesting prayer –

prayer.request@woodlandparkchurchofchrist.com