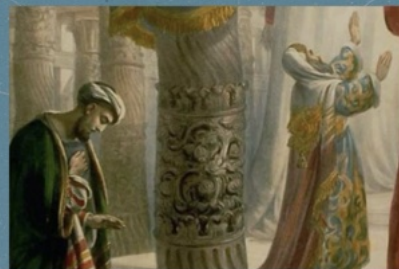


# Gospel *and* the Heart

## The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)



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How this relates to us:

Verse 9: He also told this parable to some who *trusted in themselves* that they were *righteous*, and treated others with *contempt*...

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Today's Focus:

The Sin of Pride and Comparison

*In what way(s) did this show up this past week?*

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### Luke 18:9-14:

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ...

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But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." – Luke 18:9-14

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## The Sin of Pride and Comparison

1. The Pharisee as a Mirror for Revealing (10-12)
2. The Tax Collector as a Guide for Healing (13-14)

Verse 10: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

- a. How the original hearers would have categorized the two people in the parable
- b. Grace reframes the categories
- c. As we will see, two different prayers!

Verses 11-12: The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’

## The Dynamics of Pride:

- a. Self-focus: “I” is used 5x! (“I thank you”, “I am not like”, “I fast”, “I give”, “I get”)
- b. “Flexing”: “God, I thank you...”
- c. Comparing: “that I am not like...”
- d. Justifying: “I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.”

The Pharisee’s prayer is like taking a selfie in front of the temple — it appears holy and godly, but it’s still about him!



## Takeaways (1 of 3):

1. Pride is a sin that is competitive and comparative at its core.



CS Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about." ...

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"It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone. That is why I say that Pride is essentially competitive in a way that the other vices are not..." ...

Gospel ~  
Heart

"In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that - and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison - you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see some thing that is above you."

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Takeaways (2 of 3):

**2. Pride blinds us to the true condition of our heart.**

We can be fooled into thinking that our prayers, bible knowledge, serving, and obedience have brought us closer to God when in reality, we could be standing far away!

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Heart

One way we can tell if we are being fooled is there is no joy:

"Comparison is like a poison that seeps into our hearts and kills our joy in grace."



Takeaways (3 of 3):

**3. Jesus holds up this Pharisee as a mirror — not for us to think of others, but to recognize ourselves.**

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Every time we think,

“At least I’m not like that person (parent, coworker, etc)”

“At least our church is more faithful than that one”

“At least I’m more serious about my faith than they are”

...we are praying the same prayer.

Gospel ~  
Heart

## The Sin of Pride and Comparison

1. The Pharisee as a Mirror for Revealing (10-12)

2. The Tax Collector as a Guide for Healing (13-14)

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Heart

Verse 13: But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’

What this tax collector is not doing:

- Comparing with others (Pharisee)
- Looking within (self-pity)
- Praying to God and making excuses
- Praying to God and committing to “be better”

Gospel ~  
Heart

## Takeaways:

1. Whereas the Pharisee reflects the sin of **prideful comparison**, the Tax Collector reveals the cure through **humble confession**:

“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

Gospel ~  
Heart

2. As the gospel addresses our hearts, we experience gratitude and joy because **God’s mercy does not ever run out or hold out!**

Lamentations 3:22-23: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Gospel ~  
Heart

3. As the gospel addresses our hearts, we are both **humbled and secure** because we stand justified through Christ alone!

Verse 14a: “I tell you, this man (ie Tax Collector) went down to his house justified, rather than the other.”

Romans 5:1: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel ~  
Heart



4. As the gospel addresses our hearts, we experience awe and astonishment because God “exalts us in Christ.”

Verse 14b: “...For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Gospel ~  
Heart



Concluding with The 3 R's: The Sin of Pride and Comparison

*“If I am honest, in my pride I’ve been harsh or uncaring about others. I’ve found myself looking down and being critical of others.”*

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REVEAL (from Sonship): “Lord, as you ‘search me and know my heart’, reveal how my dismissive attitude towards others is really deep seated arrogance – an awareness of, and confidence in, my so called great abilities and successes. If I am honest, my attitude has been, ‘People don’t understand as quickly as I do. People ought to know better. So many people have really big problems.’ Holy Spirit, convict me of my self righteousness and how I’ve been foolishly thinking, ‘I’m not a big sinner. I am right.’”

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REPENT: “Lord, I confess that I have judged and dismissed others because I have lost touch with the gospel. Because of my pride, I have struggled to listen to others and have thought, ‘Why listen when I know the right answer? Others are slow talkers and slow thinkers – why not just cut them short?’ Forgive me for being unloving and unkind. Forgive me for foolishly thinking that I have more wisdom and knowledge than others. Forgive me for sitting on the judgment seat that is only reserved for you and you alone!

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REJOICE: “Lord, thank you that I stand forgiven for my sin of pride and judgment because because Jesus made atonement for my sin on the cross! Thank you for your great mercy that you never withhold from me! With Christ as my righteousness and delight, I no longer need to justify myself by comparing myself to others. In the gospel, help me to move towards others with greater humility, compassion, and understanding. By grace, help me to be more tender towards others, as you have been tender towards me. Amen.”

Gospel ~  
Heart