

Bible Stories for Adults

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18:9 - 14

Opening

- Gathering: Identify a public figure who fell from high esteem after a sin of theirs became known.
- Today's Focus: Jesus used a parable to teach that we are to rely upon His righteousness and not ours.
- Key Verses: *God have mercy on me, a sinner.* Luke 18:13
Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Luke 18:14

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Obedience to God's Law (*Deuteronomy 4, Psalm 19, Psalm 119*)

- What does God require of His people?
Deuteronomy 4:1
- Can these Laws be updated and modified as society changes?
Deuteronomy 4:2
- How readily do God's Laws fit our lives today and how clearly do they apply?
Psalm 19:7-8
- Why do God's people want to obey His Laws?
Psalm 19:9-11
Leviticus 18:4-5
- What did David say about those who keep God's Laws?
Psalm 119:1-4
- What is the prayer of God's people?
Psalm 119:33-35, 40

The Righteous (*Romans 3*)

- What percentage of God's people have kept God's Laws as described in Psalm 119?
Romans 3:10-12
- Don't the good things we do count for anything?
Isaiah 64:6
- But doesn't the Bible tell about people who were righteous?
Luke 1:5-6
- How is this possible?
Romans 3:21-22
- How does this righteousness from God fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law?
Romans 8:1-4

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God's Righteousness (*1 Corinthians 1:30-31*)

What happens to our righteousness if we sin?

1 John 1:8-2:1

What does Jesus say about those who long for His righteousness?

Matthew 5:6; 6:33

How proud can we be of our righteousness?

1 Corinthians 1:30-31

Jesus and the Law (*Matthew 5*)

Does all of this mean that Jesus came to abolish the Law?

Matthew 5:17

Which parts of the Law are we no longer required to follow since Jesus came?

Matthew 5:18

What instructions did Jesus give for those who want to be great in heaven?

Matthew 5:19

Who was recognized in Jesus' time as the ultimate example of how to live righteously?

Acts 26:5

Did Jesus feel they were a good example to emulate?

Matthew 5:20

What is the point of the details of the Law Jesus gives in Matthew 5:21-47?

Matthew 5:21-22

What standard did Jesus give on how to live righteously under the Law?

Matthew 5:48

Obey or Disobey? (*Romans 6*)

Does this mean that the way to live forever is to do our best to keep God's Law perfectly?

Galatians 3:10-11

Since we are unable to obey, are we free to sin to our hearts' content?

Romans 6:15-18

Acts of Righteousness (*Matthew 6, 23*)

As slaves to righteousness, how are we to show acts of righteousness for others to emulate?

Matthew 6:1

Why not? Give an example.

Matthew 6:2

How are we rewarded when we do these things purely to God's glory?

Matthew 6:3-4

Give another example.

Matthew 6:5-6

How about one more example?

Matthew 6:16-18

Who was Jesus using as an example that the Jews of His day would recognize?

Matthew 23:2, 5-7

How did Jesus explain the problem of their righteous outward appearance?

Matthew 23:25-28

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Chief of Sinners (*Luke 15:1*)

What group of people were considered by the Jews as the scum of the earth?

Luke 15:1

Jewish traitors (collected for Rome), Forced more than required (profit)

Did Jesus recognize this reputation?

Matthew 18:17

Matthew 5:44, 46

Today's Counterparts

Give examples of people today who have respected reputations like the Pharisees did.

Give examples of people today who have despised reputations like the tax collectors did.

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (*Luke 18:9-10*)

To whom was today's parable intended?

Luke 18:9

What two extremes of society did Jesus use to make the point?

Luke 18:10

The Pharisee's Prayer (*Luke 18:11-12*)

What did the Pharisee pray about and what was his posture?

Luke 18:11a

For what was the Pharisee grateful?

Luke 18:11

What evidence did the Pharisee give for deserving this praise?

Luke 18:12

What was so special about fasting twice per week?

Leviticus 16:29

What was so special about tithing everything?

Leviticus 27:30-33

Matthew 23:23-24

Was the Pharisee just putting on a show or did he really feel this way?

Positives

Negatives

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The Tax Collector's Prayer (*Luke 18:13*)

What was the tax collector's posture in prayer?

Luke 18:13a

For what did the tax collector pray?

Luke 18:13

What three key elements were in the tax collector's prayer?

Romans 5:8

Titus 3:5a

Exodus 34:6-7a

The Father's Response (*Luke 18:14*)

Which man received justification by the Father for his prayer?

Luke 18:14a

What is the key message of this parable?

Luke 18:14b

James 4:6

James 4:10

Closing Prayer (*Say together*)

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment.

For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways
to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What acts of righteousness have I done with some intention of being seen by men?
(*Matthew 6:1-18; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:41-44; Galatians 6:12-14; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:23-24*)
2. When have I felt righteous and how did I show it?
(*Luke 18:9, 11-12; 16:15; Matthew 5:17-48; Romans 3; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 3:18-23; 1 John 1:8-2:1*)
3. When have I really recognized my sinfulness and how did I respond to it?
(*Luke 18:13; Matthew 5:6; 6:33; 9:10-13; Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29*)
4. When have I exalted myself only to be humbled?
(*Luke 18:11-12, 14; 14:7-9; 20:46; Psalm 18:27; Proverbs 3:34; Ezekiel 21:26; Matthew 23:5-12*)
5. When have I humbled myself and then been exalted?
(*Luke 18:13-14; 14:7-14; 1 Samuel 2:7-8; Proverbs 25:6-7; Isaiah 57:15; Philippians 2:5-11*)