

Pharisee & Publican

Luke 18:9-15



The Story

When Jesus lived on this earth, He used special stories to teach people certain truths about the kingdom of God. Jesus used examples from everyday life in these stories which are called parables.

One day Jesus told a parable to warn the Pharisees that they couldn't be saved by doing good things for God. The Pharisees were a group of people who were very proud. They thought they were better than other people. They also thought that they didn't need a Savior.

This is Jesus' parable: There were two men who went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who thought that he kept God's law. The other man was a publican or a tax collector. In those days many tax collectors cheated people by collecting too much money from them. They were hated by most people.

The Pharisee stood where everyone could see him when he prayed. He thanked God that he wasn't like other men who did sinful things like lying and stealing. He also

thanked God that he wasn't like the tax collector. Then he told God about all the good things he did. He fasted, or went without food, twice a week and gave a lot of money to the church. He didn't ask God to forgive his sins because he didn't think he had sinned.

The tax collector realized that he was sinful. He was ashamed of the things he had done. He stood way off in a corner and hung his head in shame. He prayed, "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner."

After Jesus had told this parable, He said, " Now I tell you, this man (the tax collector) went home with his sins forgiven. For everyone who brags about himself before God will be humbled, or brought down, but whoever humbles himself and admits his sinfulness, will be lifted up or honored by God."

In this parable, Jesus wants to teach us that we are all sinful and not better than other people. We cannot do anything to earn forgiveness or salvation. It is only through Jesus' death that we can be saved.

The Pharisee trusted in himself. The Publican looked to Jesus for salvation.

Activity One - Place an X in front of the best ending for each sentence.

1. The Pharisee was ...

a. _____ better than other people.

c. _____ a sinner.

b. _____ merciful to the tax collector.

2. The Pharisee told God ...
 - a. _____ about the good things he did.
 - b. _____ about his sin.
 - c. _____ about how good the tax collector was.

3. The tax collector asked God to ...
 - a. _____ notice how good he was.
 - b. _____ take away his sins.
 - c. _____ punish him for his sins.

4. The man who was forgiven was ...
 - a. _____ the Pharisee.
 - b. _____ the tax collector.

5. The Pharisee was as sinful as the tax collector because ...
 - a. _____ all people are sinful in their hearts.
 - b. _____ he did not go to the temple.
 - c. _____ he prayed too loudly.

6. God wants us to ...
 - a. _____ confess our sins.
 - b. _____ make believe that we have no sins.
 - c. _____ tell Him that we are better than most people.

7. When we have done something wrong, God wants us to ...
 - a. _____ run away.
 - b. _____ say that someone else did it.
 - c. _____ ask for forgiveness.

8. Our sins are taken away ...
 - a. _____ by what we do.
 - b. _____ by what Jesus did for us.
 - c. _____ by waiting until people forgive us.

Believers rely only on Jesus for salvation.

