**Luke 18:9-14 - The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

**Devotional Exercise**

**March 15, 2020**

* Take a minute to let all the distractions go away. Turn off the tv. Put away the phones or computers or whatever else might distract you. Then open in prayer. Pray aloud. Ask God to meet with you where you are. Offer to God any worries or concerns you might have.
* If you would like to, sing a hymn or song of praise to God. (Or sing 3 or 4 if that would bring you joy. I am certain that it would bring God joy.)
* Read aloud or have someone read aloud Luke 18:9-14. I have included the NIV translation below:

**9To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’**

**13“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’**

**14“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”**

* If you are in a group, try to answer the following questions. If you are alone, find some paper or a journal and write down your thoughts. (NOTE: I will include the material from my sermon in a separate document to help provide some of these answers, but I would suggest not reading those until having discussed or written your own responses first. IF you are meeting in a group, the facilitator may want to access those notes and thoughts during the discussion.)

1. What is the simplest meaning of this parable? (Yes, it is pretty obvious).
2. What do you already know about Pharisees and tax collectors in Jesus’ day?
3. Both men in the parable go to the temple to pray. Take a moment to name as many differences in the ways that they approached God and prayed as you can. (or if children are present, let them find these!)
4. What do we learn about God from Jesus’ explanation in verse 14?

This parable has a simple meaning for sure: *Don’t be like the Pharisee who thinks much of himself. Think of yourself like the tax collector who knows he stands in need of God’s mercy.*

1. How easy would it be to fall into the trap of being grateful that you are not like the Pharisee and what must we do to avoid that?

This parable raises the question of how our assessment of people squares with God’s assessment of people (including ourselves).

1. Read Psalm 1 aloud.

**Psalm 1**

**1Blessed is the one  
    who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
    or sit in the company of mockers,  
2but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
    and who meditates on his law day and night.  
3That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
    which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
    whatever they do prospers.**

**4Not so the wicked!  
    They are like chaff  
    that the wind blows away.  
5Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
    nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**

**6For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
    but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.**

1. How do we live as a separate people and still demonstrate grace, not having a mindset that would allow for an elevated view of ourselves?”

* Once you have answered these questions, write or share whatever prayer requests you might have and pray for them.