

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Share a time when you misjudged someone based on appearances or reputation. How did your perception change once you got to know them better?

## What the Text Says:

How does Jesus subvert his audience's expectations in this parable?

## Understanding:

How does this parable relate to the concept of justification by faith alone?

How does the Gospel reframe our good works?

## Application:

In what ways might we be tempted to compare ourselves to others, like the Pharisee did?

How can we cultivate genuine humility in our relationship with God and others?

## Next Steps:

What's one area in your life where you need to rely more on God's mercy rather than your own efforts?

## Missional Living:

How might this parable change the way we view and interact with people society considers "sinners"?

How can we share the message of God's mercy with others without coming across as self-righteous?

*Finally, what did this parable leave you to think about?*

OCTOBER 20, 2024

# PARABLES

## 6: THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR LUKE 18:9-14

### TODAY'S VERSES:

Luke 18:9-14

Hebrews 2:17

Romans 3:24-25

Matthew 23:11-12

Philippians 2



## 6: THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR LUKE 18:9-14

Jesus tells a parable about two men who went to the temple to pray: a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee, considered righteous by society, prays confidently, thanking God that he's not like other sinners. He lists his good deeds, such as fasting twice a week and tithing everything he gets. In contrast, the tax collector, despised by society, stands at a distance, not even lifting his eyes to heaven. He beats his chest and prays, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Jesus shocks His audience by declaring that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, went home justified before God. He concludes, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

This parable teaches us about true righteousness and humility before God. The Pharisee's prayer, though sincere, reveals his self-righteousness and contempt for others. He measures himself by comparing his actions to others, failing to recognize his own sin and need for God's mercy.

The tax collector, aware of his sinfulness, throws himself on God's mercy. His prayer for propitiation shows his understanding that only God can make him righteous (restore right relationship with God).

### Jesus' point is twofold:

- First, regarding salvation, we are justified by faith alone, not by our own righteousness or good works.
- Second, this humility should characterize our entire Christian life, especially in how we serve others.

The parable challenges us to examine our hearts: Do we trust in our own righteousness or in Christ alone for salvation? Does our humility before God translate into humble service to others? As Martin Luther said, there are only two types of people: "sinners who think themselves righteous and the righteous who think themselves sinners." Which are we?