

pride as it takes a form. We cannot go far in discipleship without confronting the fact that there is someone else on the throne of life. Self in all of its manifestations of pride and self righteousness cannot be abided.

In the parable, Jesus ^{made} a sweeping assault upon the morality accepted in the way of judgement. What startled those who first heard him has become so familiar to us as to miss the full entent of it. Even the very popularity of the parable has lost its sharp edge and some people do not feel that this has any meaning for the church today. But here is a desperate insight into the need that we cannot escape today.

Here are two classes of people represented. They are not just simple, but they are people who play roles in life. A self-righteous and proud individual always boasting and never letting so much as a prayer pass his lips without talking about his own virtues and was not a Publican really humble as he appeared in the traditional interpretation.

The Pharisee was a pillar of the church and a patriot. He was a respected citizen and learns about God's commandments and the cost of following them. After all, you can tell whether a man's heart is in a thing when it touches his stomach or his pocketbook, or both. From his own word which we are inclined to disbelieve this Pharisee said that he (fasted) twice a

"Mimicry" of Religious

Luke 18:10-14

I

Introduction

What a repulsive picture we have here. Suppose a dead man was taken from the casket, stood upon his feet, and charged with electricity so as to cause him to act like a living man. See his hollow eyes; observe his look. See his nimble motion. Such a picture would frighten one almost to death. Yet, that is exactly what we see in this Scripture we are discussing tonight.

One man was saying, "I am too religious for my church." If my church doesn't get more religious, I will have to get out." I have actually heard some people talk about different churches as though the church of the Lord Jesus Christ was something that could be a different kind of category. They say, "Well, this (church is spiritual) or that church is not spiritual." Here was a man who said that he was (too spiritual) for his church. He was, in fact, (too religious.) You know that that was a problem in the early church in the early days! There were some who actually thought that the (world was evil), and that their bodies had to be abused in order to obtain salvation. There was a time in the (Middle Ages) when the pillar saints spent their days and their years on high pillars, exposed to heat, cold, wind, and storm. They lived and they died. It seems to me they had too much religion. In other words, this man was saying, "Look at me; give me the once over. How could the kingdom ever get along without me." He was thanking God that he did not go to dances,

play cards, or attend theatres. There were other things that he did not do and some things that he did do. He had so much religion that he just makes you sick to think about it. A religion that looked upon his self! For one thing, he retained his membership in the church when he was conscious of the fact that he was not living right. He could sing, pray, and testify in the meetings, but he was conscious of the fact that he did not have really the love of God in his heart nor a concern for the lost people.

It is possible for people to retain an office in the church and yet be backsliden in their heart. You might say that he had really ceased to breathe spiritually. When you claim to be so spiritual, you may not be spiritual. For what the (lungs) are to the physical body prayer and praise are to the spiritual body. It is impossible to remain alive spiritually without keeping the spirit of prayer and praise alive. There was no warmth; there was this loud, proclaiming that he was something -- he was just (a religious mimick) and he was powerless to win souls or pray for the conviction of sinners. There was too much pride and formality.

This had lead him to be sour. When things come into decay, they are unwholesome -- they have lost their mild, gentle, flavor. This man had lost all of that.

The story of the Pharisee and the Publican is the story of

two great sinners -- one knew that he was a sinner and acknowledged it, and the other did not know that he was a sinner and boasted of his righteousness. This is really the story of a good man who went to Hell and a bad man who went to Heaven.

!!! We see these two men going to the Temple. One of them goes in and proudly takes his place and prays, "Lord, I thank you that I am not as other men. I do all these things that are good and I do not do anything that is bad."

The other man felt so sinful in deed that he did not even go up toward the front of the building, but stood afar off. Here we see two different attitudes. One man boasting of himself; the other man pouring his heart out to God. One man saw his great need; the other man saw his great self. We have these same two types of people today. We meet them on every side. One man says, "I am a good man. Look at all the fine things that I am doing. But look yonder at that person. What a shame! I am so glad that I am better than he is." The other man says, "Lord, I am a sinner; I need help; I am guilty and I need mercy."

The time came when church was out that these two men went down to their homes. One was wrapped up in his own importance and the other went home thinking about God and forgiven of his sins.

The judgement of God is upon the church today for here is

heaven of what he was careful to do and what he would not be found doing. He thought God was honored by his morality, but whatever morality he had was little. His self-complacency was an expressed expectation that God would endorse the good opinion he had of himself.

He was delighted to spot the Publican standing in the shadows. What a terrible character! It served to point out a contrast between his own righteousness and he even dragged the Publican into his prayer for displaying his own righteousness. Little did he realize his own true spiritual condition.

He looked down rather than upward. Was not the Pharisee right in asserting his own moral worth to be higher than the Publican's? Surely it would be hypocrisy that humility leveled all the differences and moral distinctions and to pretend that both men were alike in God's sight. If the commandments stand and if God is just, it would only dishonor Him to devalue all moral effort in His name.

But this is not the problem exactly. We are told the truth about his (outer life) but he did not know the truth about his (inner life). That is where his standard is false and wrong. There was self-deceit.

Invariable it is the same with each one of us. When man's nature is left to itself, despite all the (religious props) and

week and that he gave his money as the law required.

What fault may we find of this man? It goes a little deeper than just his understanding and his attitude.

And the (Publican!) He was probably a pretty rough character. He was a tax collector, under the Roman government, and involved in swindle. He was of the common folk of Judea and had been raised by them. He had sold out and chose to be despised by his own people for the sake of material gain and his office was a license to steal. He did this to enrich himself.

The difference between these two men as we look at the Pharisee who was a moral man and seemed to be a credit to the community and labored to preserve the best while the Publican was nothing more than a corrupting influence to the community. Make no mistake about it. God does not take into account these (moral distinctions) which even non-religious people can detect. Even man has within him that attitude which determines his relation to God. (Outwardly) there was good, but (inwardly) there was serious fault with the Pharisee. The Publican was outwardly bad but he came with the right attitude inwardly.

What were the (similarities) of these two men. From God's viewpoint they are described in verse 10 as two men who went to the temple to pray. Just two men; each saw the other as

someone entirely different from himself. God saw only two sinful men in need of His redeeming grace.

Both of these men had a self-appraisal as they approached the time of prayer. Neither of these men had gone to a heathen God or temple. But as they stood here they began to be concerned with themselves. They had a standard of self-evaluation. Both came to the conclusion that their respective standard indicated that they confess something about themselves that they sincerely believed to be true. Who is to say the Pharisee was not sincere!

Both of these men addressed God. This evidently meant a very different thing to them. It is strange that they have such a contrast found in the place of prayer. To the Pharisee it was a God impressed with outward conduct, and that God didn't pay much attention to his inner attitude or his thoughts. He felt that God would honor his little trifles and his rituals.

To the Publican it was a God before whom all men were sinners and his approach was to pray for mercy.

They separated themselves one from the other. They were both praying in the temple but the Pharisee no doubt got close to the sacred altar where he could pull his skirt about him. He was seeking to keep far from the company of this

unworthy man. The Publican withdrew into the shadows thinking and feeling that he was unfit to mingle with the other worshippers. The Pharisee was drawing close to the inner circle with God on the outside, and the Publican was drawing a circle of faith and in it he was getting the mercies of God.

Another thing to note is that both of these men prayed. If there were something you might discover in verse 13 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself." Well, he was his own audience. This reminds us of the newspaper's account of the clergyman's prayer -- the most eloquent ever offered to a Boston audience. It is the statement of Campbell Morgan. "Into the circle of his own self-centered personality he dragged God by name and degraded Him there." Yes, we can even degrade God with our prayers.

Thus, the Pharisee said, "God, I thank Thee." Now this prayer had no element of Thanksgiving at all. The poor Publican did not express thankfulness, but exhibited it whereas the Pharisee expressed thankfulness but did not exhibit it. He had no sense of believing or of blessings received. There was no plea that he made for there was no need of which he was aware. He expressed love neither for God nor for man. He made no intercession on behalf of those whose needs he was even then recounting.

The Pharisee congratulated himself on his virtues, informing

There are some who think they have a spiritual privilege-- that they are (special sinners) and that (God has selected) them. The story that is true to life would not end even there. I can think of hearing the (Publican) continuing his prayer: "I have no need of the temple to pray in because standing here near this Pharisee I could only stunt my growth for sure. Therefore this church is not spiritual enough for me. Certainly that Pharisee can contribute nothing to my spiritual life."

It is possible for a (Publican) to start right only to end by despising and lacking appreciation for the message which has saved him.

We must keep in mind here that (church members) need fellowship with God and at the same time they cannot remain apart from others of God's people--be they Pharisees or Publicans. Here we face the Prodigal's (elder brother). There was pride which elevated itself over others. The Pharisee and Publican may seek to avoid each other but both must confront the other when they are in the temple or church and in the wisdom of God the church stands for the necessity of both. They must be humble together; they must seek the mercy of God together. Here they are to discover themselves as members of the spiritual community. They are members of Christ's body and hence members of one another. I think here is a tragic sin of Christians--we separate

crutches which we might stand upon, this pride enters in and soon takes over. The spiritual status becomes very important although we would never acknowledge it. So we measure ourselves being careful to (find some Publican who is beneath us) to serve as our standard.

It is meaningful if we can find such a one who is conveniently (located in our own church) and we are horrified at what we see in that other person. We are (more than pleased) with what we think we see in ourselves. Therefore, we fail to see ourselves (as God) or any other really sees us. Now this kind of pride is nurtured. There are those who are (spiritual status) seekers within the evangelical church. They have the Pharisee image and they are familiar to us all. The ugly fruits are a presumption against God, and they stand aloft men.

(Genuine humility) is a hard, self-examination is no longer necessary, and instead spiritual pride, blindness, and lovelessness rise. There is no compassion. The self-righteous man has no friends in heaven nor on earth nor can he show himself friendly.

If we should speculate for a moment, let us suppose that this Pharisee a week or so later who had been illuminated by his true spiritual condition should return to this church to pray--how different would his prayer have been? Would it have been

something like this: "God, I thank Thee. I am not as other men outwardly, although I confess that inwardly I am sinful and need Thy mercy. I see my self-righteousness and pride as sin in Thy sight. I am no extortioner; it is true, but I confess that I have often coveted. I am not unjust, but I am far from kind. I have had sinful thoughts in my heart. I have not sold out like the Publican, yet I have had little compassion for them." On we might go speculating about this man's prayer.

V. 13 Now, if the Publican could return and we see that the parable took place here, he too was engaged in self-appraisal but his standard was God and not man. How different now would he measure himself? Out of the sense of deep need and true repentance and humility he prayed for God to be merciful unto him in verse 13. In other words, he prayed that God might meet him on the grounds of an atonement for sin and deal with him graciously. He mentioned no need for self-merit; he did not compare himself with another, though I am sure he could have found someone lower than himself, but beating his breast was no window display or advertising showing his repentance. He was earnestly beating on the gates of heaven because he saw God in the right perspective. Now suppose he should return to the temple a week later to pray and would come in with joy that he had accepted God's grace. He would have felt more at home in the temple this time. He had noticed the

proud Pharisee on the first visit and he would now see the same man again fixing his eyes upon him and remembering the impression he had made. I would imagine that he would have a brand new temptation, and his prayer might be: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men -- proud, self-righteous, self-deceived -- as this Pharisee. I admit that I have been unjust; I have been an extortioner and adulterer, but at least I am honest and have freely acknowledged it. I have no misgivings about my goodness, but God be merciful to me a sinner but don't be fooled by the pious talk of the unbearable Pharisee who stands over there by the altar." I wonder if he would be all ready to hang his humility with somebody's pride? Having begun in the spirit, now he turns to walk in the flesh. How like him are many of the people today who are within the ranks of the church.

We can consider this man who has had a genuine experience of God's forgiving grace. He delights to witness to his new life wherever there is an opportunity. His joy is telling the grace of his unworthiness. He does not mean it to be so but it happens nevertheless. If in telling the story he does not fix himself upon his very self and the very self which was the object of God's grace, the Devil will succeed in turning the whole thing into a vain story of a self-centered saint. His life has been turned inward again and his upward gaze of the soul has been lost

two men were talking and one said, "Thank God I have really learned not to be proud." The other man, who was a wise Christian, said, "Well, fortunately you have nothing to be proud of." "Oh no," flared the other. "I have as much to be proud of as you do." You will find many such individuals where one must constantly turn his gaze Jesus because self will rise up and think all is satisfied. This was the problem of the Pharisee who went to church and prayed with himself. He didn't pray with God; he simply boasted to others about the good things. It was his purpose to show off before men.

When Peter was sinking in the waves, he said, "Lord save me." It was a short prayer, but it was very effective. He was not praying for the benefit of the disciples about him.

The Pharisee prayed boasting of his morality. He had never stooped to some of these immoral things, but his soul was impure. There are many today who build their hopes on getting to heaven by personal purity. They say, "My speech is clean; I do not read rotten books; I do not go to suggestive shows."

He prayed that he was honest. "I do not cheat; I pay my bills; I am honest in my dealings; I do not run up debts and never intend to pay them." All men ought to be honest in business, but here he was boasting of that.

from each other. Majoring on the minors is often a way of raising up false standards of measurement.

Surely it is a way of (grieving God) Keeping one's self from being beautiful in God's sight comes as a result of this. We are separated by this more often than by our selfish, seeking of spiritual status.

This (fellowship) leads us to maturity. The Pharisee must learn to pray that the Lord would make him humble. The Publican must learn to pray that God's mercy might lead him to be merciful.

There are critical questions about the fellowship in the church today along these lines. Do we escape one form of pride only to run headlong into another? Will self-righteousness discover new attitudes? Are some of us proud of not being proud like the Pharisee? Is it not really pride that is your particular problem? You think about your virtues! One who is tempted to be puffed up with pride is likely to find a Publican sent by God to test his humility. Christians who have grown up in the church with Christian experiences are likely to look at a new convert and think, "Well, Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." Thus they are blinded to the true nature of their own spiritual needs. They cannot appreciate the glorious experience of conversion. A new convert who enters the church with no spiritual background, whatever we may judge, may

think: How can it be that such persons have had all the spiritual privileges through the years and yet have no more zeal and love than they demonstrate. Thus we become spiritual judges and we take the place of God. We hinder the Holy Spirit; we fail to fix our eyes upon the Lord Jesus.

Donald Barnhouse once pointed out that sin began when Satan was lifted up with pride and said, "I want recognition of my work" as described in Isaiah 14. Lucifer said, "I will." That is the surest definition of sin; that is the most tragic aspect of it. Our worst possible sin is to face God in our own way. Isaiah 53: 6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." The Devil said, "I will be like the most high" (Isaiah 14:14). He wanted to be like God yet apart from God. He was saying to God, "Move over; I want to take over your throne."

How does this sound in relation to Jesus. In the book of Philippians 2:6-8: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: as a thing to be grasped but emptied himself and became obedient to the death, even the cross." The Devil fought his way up to God through pride, the Lord Jesus through humility.

This parable boils down to two things -- either there will be sovereignty of self or sovereignty of Christ.

First, sovereignty of self! We'll be just pretenders. Sin is self in rebellion against self; sin is thus willful independence from God -- the Attempt to be like God apart from God. It is striving to maintain self and to struggle against God. This is what makes us pretenders.

John Wesley was right! "But worse than all my foes, I find the enemy within." We come to the cross for pardon and cleansing and there we find it fully offered. But what about that principle from within? It is no longer our sins which need to be dealt with, but the principle of sin. It is self that seeks ever to crucify Christ in us that it might live on and on.

Augustine prayed, "Oh, Lord, that I might die lest I die." That is, he might die to self lest he should die on God.

Do we not long to turn over self to Jesus Christ? Do you not want him to come in and make your life clean? Self is the citidal of Satan in the heart and self is the one that insists on its rights, asserts its will, and sulks in quick resentment over a little phrase. It walks out of sight. It is self that applies justice to others but will not apply it to itself. Self appreciation comes in the form of pride.

It is really hard to make a self-examination For example,

Thus, the power of the cross must be applied to our lives. Jesus was saying to Peter in Matther 16:24 "It is not only I who am to be crucified but you. It is not only I who am to die but you also." That is the cost of discipleship. So it is if we are to be free to follow where Christ leads. The man must regard himself as dead. It will be a great day when we dare to believe that we have become all that it is in His power to make us. God endows man for His glory and works in and through us for his purpose and self clears the way. This exchange can only be affected in the principle of displacement, and the fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection can be a daily experience for us. This is an enabling power for us.

Andrew Murray said, "Take an oak of some 100 years growth. How was that oak born in a grave? The acorn was planted in the ground; a grave was made for it that the acorn might die. It died; it disappeared; it cast itself downward and shoots upward; now that tree has been standing 100 years. Where is it standing? In its grave. All the time in the grave where the very acorn died; it has stood and grown deeper and deeper into the earth in which its grave was made. It stood in the very grave where it had died. It has been growing higher and higher, broader and broader. Foliage has adorned it through the years. It owes to the grave in which its roots are cast and kept its life."

This is perhaps a simple illustration, but it is the con-

3 He boasted of his religious life—how that he had fasted, prayed, and read the Bible; he had gone to church. These things caused him to have a big heart; there was, however, hatred, jealousy, envy, and malice in his heart. There are some who perhaps commit no sin of the flesh but they are full of the sins of disposition. They feel that they are all right since they have never indulged in some of these open sins. But they are envious, jealous; they gossip and lie about others; and they try in every conceivable way to hurt other people. They sort of repent of their sins, but they never do much about it. They are like the man who walks down the street with a great big Bible under his arm. He wants everybody to know that he is a preacher.

4 This man boasted about his generosity; he talked about what he had given to the church. A lot of people give to the church. Are you giving for your own sake or for the sake of the church, the sake of lost humanity, or for the sake of God? Now, I know we are under the law and not under grace and may look at this man and say, "Well, he's a big tithing boaster." But should we be stingy when God has done so much for us? You will not be the Christian you ought to be until you rightly relate your money to Christ.

5 He saw flaws in the other man, but none in himself. He

divided society up; he could see the plank in the other man's eye but nothing in his own eye.

Really, in his heart he despised others. I think when he left church that day he was trusting in himself. He added all the good things up and there was only one he could trust in and that was himself. Some man died one day, and he was a very good citizen. Somebody said, "Well, I know he's gone to heaven; he was such a good citizen." But the Pharisee was a good citizen, but that didn't make him good enough to go to heaven.

He did not even acknowledge himself to be a sinner. In his prayer he did not even tell God that he was a sinner. D. L. Moody said that he could always tell when a man was a great way away from God. This man would always talk about himself and how good and spiritual he was. Proverbs 28:13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."

There was no cry for mercy. He did not want God's mercy; he just wanted God to admire him. He did not tell him how sinful he was nor how mean he was.

The second great thing I see in this is the sovereignty of Christ. The Pharisee gives us the sovereignty of self; now the Publican helps us see the sovereignty of Christ. Here is a most majestic truth! We know that our old self was

crucified with Him (Romans 6:6) that is our old self. Paul says in Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ." And in II Corinthians 5:15 "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

We need to emphasize this great truth about Calvary--that Jesus died for me. The death He died He died to sin once for all, but the life he lives he lives for God. So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to Jesus.

When Christ died, I died. My independent self died; it was nailed to the cross with Him. This is the point where we get our deliverance from sin.

In Galatians 5:24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, but far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." In dying to sin, Christ conquered sin. While I cannot die for sin, I can and must die to sin even as He did. Here it is that we Christians must plant our feet and stand by faith. The delight of the bride ought to be the moment when she loses her name and self-dependence at the marriage altar, taking her husband's name instead of her own and merging her life in his. The most blissful moment in our life ought to be that by taking up our cross we renounce our right to self ownership and recognize self dead to sin and to the world.

dition of life when a person places his all in Jesus Christ.

There is a (throne) (a cross) and whoever occupies the throne
determines who is on the cross. And whosoever is on the cross
determines who is on the throne. If self is on the throne, the
Lord Jesus Christ is on the cross; but if self is on the cross,
then the Lord Jesus is on the throne. This you must decide.

The Publican went down to church. He stood off and there
very humbly before God he offered his prayer.

He came in a penitent fashion with the full weight of
his sins. Why did he beat his breast? Because his sin was
there in (his heart) and he wanted to be cleansed of it. "Give
me a clean heart, Oh Lord. Take away my heart of stone and
give me a heart of flesh." You have met this man going into
church. You've probably said, "I never expected to see this
man in church." "Why, I've never been to church in years,"
the man might say. "I'm in trouble now, and I must have help."
He does not look around and see you there; he does not talk about
his own goodness; he does not think of all the old hypocrites
on the front row. His thoughts are on his (own sin) and his own
needs; there are only two persons in all the world that he is
concerned about—his (needy self) and the forgiveness of God.

He came to confess his sin. "I have sinned," like the
Prodigal cried. No man will get to heaven until he confesses
his sin. There are some who will spend eternity in Hell because

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they won't admit that they are sinners.

V.14
This man went away from church that day saved--justified.

He had confessed and cried for the mercy of God; he made Christ sovereign in his life.

Another thing about him is that he set an example. Can a sinner pray? Yes!! Here is his prayer: "God, be merciful unto me a sinner." That's a prayer you can pray. After you have prayed this prayer and have come into the right relationship with God, you are then ready to claim all of His other promises. If you will just pray this prayer tonight God will hear it and will meet you halfway to transform your life and bless you forever.

I read a story about some of the cemeteries of France. Some of the graves are marked by a simple cross. Some of the women of France have volunteered to take care of these graves and a record of their willingness to accept this responsibility is written in two words on the cross--I accept. This is on the cross and then they sign their name.

I would have you look at another cross. Upon that cross hangs the very dying form of the one who gave Himself for us. Won't you say today, "I accept Him; I take Him as my Saviour." I beg you to follow the Publican and make that the cry of your heart. If you will do this, you will go down to your house

justified and you will go away from wherever you are tonight fit for heaven even as this man was.