

Lesson 1: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Reference: **Please Read:** Luke 18:9-14

Theme: Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, whoever humbles himself will be exalted

Context: Jesus was confronting the religious elite concerning self-righteousness

Introduction:

We tend to pick on the Pharisees, but they really do represent fallen man's propensity to justify themselves through the religion of pride. "I'm a pretty good person, I pay my taxes and provide for my family. At least I'm not like other criminals or drug addicts!"

Isaiah 64:6, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."

- The law in the hands of sinful man breeds pride- "Look at me and what I've done"
- Problem, break just one commandment = same as breaking them all- **James 2:8-11**
- The purpose of the law was to identify sin, that we're sinners and in need of a Savior

The allure of self-righteousness is strong for saint and sinner. The temptation to fall into the trap of legalism and religion is an ever present danger for us. There is only one way to be reconciled back to God and that's through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:21, "I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus."

- But Repentance inherently is humiliating; admitting we are wrong and have a problem
- Pride resists the notion of humbling oneself and submitting- is obstinate and stubborn
- **Please Read:** **Hebrews 3:7-19; Romans 9:30-33 – 10:4**

Romans 10:21, "But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

Obstinate definition: Stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or chosen course of action, despite attempts to persuade one to do so.

- There's only one way and that's God's way through Jesus- the way, the truth and the life
- Jude 11, "*Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain...*" - doing it their own way!
- Remember Frank Sinatra's song, "I did it my way"

"For what is a man, what has he got? If not himself, then he has naught. To say the things he truly feels; and not the words of one who kneels. The record shows I took the blows - And did it my way! Yes, it was my way. "- And in hell in torment and flames prideful man still stands defiant with upraised gaze and declares definitely again, 'I did it my way'"

Facilitator Discussion Notes:

Question: “For the Christian, what do you think godly repentance looks like in our lives?”

- **Please Read: 2 Corinthians 7:8-13**
- Context: concerning the brother who fell into immorality- **1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:1-11**
- Repentance: a change of heart, so as to change direction, resulting in changed behavior

Hebrews 6:1

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.

The continual act of humility, expressed in our need and dependence on God’s grace continues beyond our initial salvation experience & into the rest of our Christian lives on earth

Question: “When a Christian sins and is disobedient, what are they supposed to do?”

- **Please Read: 1 John 1:5- 2:2**
- Note, the apostle John was writing to Christians here; not about unbelievers
- When first saved, our sins are remitted; after Jesus’ resurrection, He declared that...

Luke 24:47, “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

- Remitted sins are blotted out like they never existed and we become children of God
- When Christians sin, their relationship is still intact; it’s their fellowship that’s broken
- When we confess our sins to God, our fellowship and communion with God is restored
- In case Christians think they can use grace as a license for sin according to Jude 4
- Christians will still give an account for actions good or bad at the judgment seat of Christ
 - o **Ro. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Heb. 4:13**

Question: “How can we protect ourselves from false condemnation?”

- If the devil can’t get us into pride he’ll go to the other extreme of sin consciousness
- **Please Read: 1 John 3:19-24** - if our hearts don’t condemn us- nothing to confess
- When we sin, we confess it to God, then forget it and move on in God’s grace and love
- To beat ourselves over past failures is to discredit the power of God’s forgiveness
- **Please Read: Philippians 3:12-16**
- Let’s learn from our mistakes, but let’s not relive them over again in our memories

Please Pray For One Another In Closing