

The Pharisee Who Exalted Himself

Luke 18:9-14

November 27, 2022

Well, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Luke 18, as we look to some very, very important instruction from our Lord. It's hard to overstate the importance of the section that we're getting into here in Luke 18, words do fail me to emphasize it. I'm stuck with my own meager gifts and my own understanding of the English language to try to explain this to you, but I really do want you to get. And I hope that this week and next, as we go through this parable, that you'll start to see what's hidden there in what is really a simple, simple story.

Last week we finished a parable on prayer, which ended a section on, of teaching on eschatology and the point there in that whole section was to prepare Christ's disciples for his return and to help them to wait well in the anticipation of a, of a longer wait for his return. But in today's parable, Luke

18:9 to 14, we see that prayer is the theme there again. But two men are praying; but this is not a parable about prayer per se.

We're entering into a new section of teaching on soteriology, which is the doctrine of salvation. And what Jesus is doing in this section and in the sections to come, he's preparing the disciples for his death. He's preparing them and preparing us really to discern the difference between true salvation and false salvation. Between true salvation and then any man-made counterfeit. And the way we're going to discern the difference is through the lens of humility.

Through the lens of humility or you might say, even the contrast between pride and humility. This is the story that we all know. We've read many times. We've read it to our children. It's the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector, who went up to the temple to pray. It's a very simple story, but it is staggeringly profound. The seeds of, you might say, the seeds of all Pauline theology come out of this parable. It's not that Pauline theology, or even the seeds of that Pauline theology, are anything new. But they are a fulfillment of everything that

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the Old Testament wrote about, spoke about, predicted, and prophesied, that is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So there is some staggeringly profound theology in this simple, simple story. In fact, it's such an important part of Luke's gospel that I won't be able to help understating its significance. I just don't have what it takes to bring out its significance, its relevance, its impact. Words do fail me. So the best I can do is to stop talking with my own words and read the text.

So let's do that together this morning, Luke 18, starting in verse 9, "Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself prayed thus: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God be

merciful to me, a Sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.'"

The distinction there between pride and humility; it's all summarized in that final axiomatic saying, which is going to be an abiding theme from this point forward, all the way to the gates of Jerusalem and beyond. All the way to our own day.

This is, but this is really how the travel section of Luke's gospel comes to an end, with this distinction, that Jesus makes, a sharp contrast between pride and humility. Pride versus humility, religious pride in particular, which is particularly reprehensible. Religious pride and true humility.

We don't know the exact time or the actual occasion for this account. We, we, know that Luke has been following a pretty strict chronological development of his Gospel and telling the narrative. So we can kind of safely assume that this is about the same time, probably about the same occasion as the previous

section, which we saw spanned chapter 17 verse 20 through 18 verse 8. But as we're entering a new section in this final portion of the travel narrative, it does seem to be connected with that previous section, but it is clear that it is something new and we are entering into a new section.

Still, Luke wants to knit these two parables together in some way and woven them together in a literary, and grammatical, and thematic structure. So we can see by the literary structure, that Luke has provided in both verse 1 and verse 9 of those two parables; he's provided introductions to both of these parables. So in a literary sense, he's joined them together. By the grammatical structure, we could see what the ESV, how it's done a good job in translating the Greek text, "He also told". The word "also" is a connective, connective conjunction there. It's showing a coordinating conjunction. So "he also told" or "now he also told" this parable, like akin to the last one. So Luke connects the second parable to the first grammatically.

We also see in the thematic structure here in the text, that the connecting theme is prayer. But, as I said, in this parable

prayer is, it's not about our praying per se, but it is that, prayer opens a window into the heart. Prayer in this parable reveals what people think, how people think. That's the service that prayer plays in this parable. Jesus calls his disciples to self-examination, that they would look at their own hearts, and look to their own hearts, and reflect on the nature and the reality of their faith, as it's revealed in prayer.

Remember last time we, you could just look at one verse earlier, in the previous section, that Jesus concluded that section with a question, didn't he? He was provoking this kind of self-reflection, this self-examination. Nevertheless, verse 8, "When the son of man comes, will he find faith on Earth?" Will he find not just faith, but the faith on Earth? That is, will he find the kind of faith we saw in the widows persistent petitioning? Will he find that kind of faithfulness in us? The, the kind of faithfulness that's demonstrated by always praying, on all kinds of occasions, for all kinds of things, while we wait for him to return.

So he asked that question. He's prompting his disciples and all of us who read this text. He's prompting us to look at ourselves, to consider ourselves and consider our hearts. And what does our prayer say about our hearts? Leaves Jesus' audience and us, the readers, with a call to examine ourselves, examine the nature of our faith. We are the subject of the examination. So this is a call to subjective self-examination. What is the nature of our faith? What is the nature of it? Especially as faith is reflected in our praying. What's the nature of it? What does it really look like? What does it reveal to you as you look at it? How do we answer this question for ourselves?

The two men that the Lord puts before us, here in the text, in this parable. On the surface, maybe from a 35,000 foot viewpoint, they look similar. Both men, both human beings, they go up to the temple, attend the hour of prayer. They both go there for the purpose of prayer. Both men stood while they prayed. Both men prayed. Both men went down to their homes after attending the hour of prayer. From a long distance they look about the same. Both men may have looked righteous on the outside. Looked religious to the casual observer. But truly, we

know, not just because of biblical theology, but also because of what's revealed in the text, both men were sinners.

They may have looked by all appearances to be righteous, but really they are, "well we know ourselves to be", they are sinners in need of salvation. They're in need of a righteousness, not their own, but a righteousness that comes to them by faith in Jesus Christ. So the telltale sign and the objective difference between them, between the one who, if you were in the temple that day, the one who appeared to be righteous versus the one whom God declared to be righteous, what's the difference between them? Humility.

What's the difference: Pride versus humility. The one seemed soaked in pride, super saturated in pride, five uses of the first person singular in his own prayer. I thank you God that I, I, I, I, I. It's not so in the prayer of the penitent tax collector. First man: It's pretty much a caricature of religious pride. Religious pride is an absolutely blinding thing. It always attends man-made religions of human achievement.

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And that's why it's so disastrous to emphasize your own personal role in your salvation. Sure, you make a decision, but who makes the first decision? God makes a decision about you. God makes a decision about his people, his elect. And in time and space he comes and visits you with his regenerating grace in the personal presence of his Holy Spirit, to cause you to be born again, to grant you and give you a new nature. It's a miracle of regeneration. He does all the work. And all you've done in your own salvation is to breathe.

It's like the baby that came out this morning, early this morning. She had nothing to do with her own birth. She was taken from her mother and brought into the world and all she did was breathe. Do what her lungs were designed to do. And in the same way, that's what happens when we are born again. What do we do? I mean, do we have anything to boast in and of our own? No. All we've done with that new nature that God has granted us is breathe. And breathe means repenting of our sin and putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That's what the new nature does. God's done all the work. He is the savior of all who believe.

So this man, this Pharisee, he's a caricature of religious pride. He is the very epitome of what man-made religion produces. Any religion and every religion except biblical Christianity, what's revealed in Scripture, every religion, is man made. It is an attempt to get to God on our own merits. It's an attempt at providing human achievement that will make someone acceptable or maintain their acceptance before God. And it's damning. Any subjective call to self-examination, for that kind of a man, it's going to be undermined by his soul damning pride. He's never going to see himself clearly.

The result of that man's subjective self-examination, what is it going to be as he looks at his own heart? Well, it comes out in this prayer. As he follows Jesus' call to self-examination, he takes a look inside, He says, I'm pretty darn good. Wow, amazing. I thank you God that I'm so amazing to you. What judgment does he come to about himself? I am justified. I am righteous. I'm doing just fine before God and man. Thank you very much.

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The other man, the second man in the parable, he really is the one who sees clearly, doesn't he? The result of his self-examination is fruitful. The result of him looking inside, taking a look at his heart, he sees himself clearly, as he really is. He sees God clearly too, as he really is. And as he stands before this absolutely holy perfectly righteous God as a guilty Sinner, he knows he stands condemned. He knows that the sentence which could be passed at any moment, is eternal death. And so what is he left to do? Cry out for mercy. It's all he can do. There's no hope in himself. He knows what sins he's committed. He knows he has nothing to offer to God except his sin. No merit of his own. So he abandons any hope in a man-made religion of human achievement. And he seeks atonement in the revealed religion of divine accomplishment. That's where he will anchor his soul; is in what God has done.

And listen, that's why the mortification of pride and this presence by the Holy Spirit; the abiding, the growth of the virtue of humility, meekness, these are the objective evidences of those who have been justified by God. Those who have not been justified by God, their hearts are filled with blinding pride.

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Those who've been justified, they're humble people. They have found the only salvation that there is.

And so, salvation by divine grace, it comes through the vehicle, the channel, or the conduit of their own faith. But it's a faith that God has granted them. He's opened their eyes. He's given them eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to respond. And so they're humbled before him and they rest in the finished atoning work of Christ Jesus himself. What could they add to that perfect work?

Now, as I said, we're not going to be able to finish the whole parable today, unfortunately. But today we will consider the Pharisee. It's actually not a pleasant sermon to preach. Probably not a pleasant sermon to listen to, but I commend it to you because it is important for us to hear about pride. It's important for us to see it portrayed on the pages of Scripture, in black and white, so that we might look at ourselves and say, is it there?

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We're going to consider this Pharisee, a man lost in his pride, his religious pride. Next week, after going, enduring what we have to endure this week, we will look forward to the rejoicing of next week, as we rejoice in the salvation of sinners, as we look at the tax collector in his humility and his contrition.

So abide with me, just one week, just an hour. Four points for today and here's the first, number one: The damnation of religious pride. The damnation of religious pride. Religious pride is damning. To whom does Jesus tell this parable? Well, Luke tells us in verse 9, that it's to some who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous and corresponding to that, they treated others with contempt. Luke is really preparing us, isn't he, for this portrayal of a truly despicable human being, in, in this Pharisee.

It's not the, the, despicable human being before us that we see so clearly printed on the pages of Scripture. As Jesus started to tell this parable, the audience would not see the despicable human being as the same one we see as despicable. They would see the Pharisee as the hero and the tax collector as the villain.

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They would see this thing inverted, because that's the way they were accustomed to seeing the world. We have the advantage of hindsight, the advantage of a Canon, of finished Canon, completed Canon of the New Testament to where we see that pride is really bad and people whose use 'I' a lot and make themselves a hero of their own stories. That's not good.

And people who are humble, they are to be the ones who are regarded and respected. We see that has washed through the entire Western world, hasn't it? Humility is a virtue. But for those who first listened to Jesus on this occasion, which sinner in the parable is the most despicable, which one is the most reprehensible? The Pharisee, the tax collector? Now it's the Pharisee who is the hero outwardly, externally, he's the one who is the most put together. He is the one who is most moral. He's the one who is raised with good morals, surrounded by good morals, all the moral teaching, and the ethical teaching of his religion. He's been practicing them since childhood, and he looks really, really good on paper.

On paper, he is the obvious choice. He is the one that everybody wants to tell their children, be like that guy. Tax collector, in the eyes of the audience that Jesus is speaking to, he seems to be the most despicable one. He is the self-centered traitor to the Jews, his own people, for his own personal enrichment, for money, filthy lucre. He purchased a tax franchise from the Pagan invaders of the land, the Romans, who had persecuted and oppressed the people. They'd been oppressing the Jews for years. Rubbing their noses in their pagan idolatry and been cruel.

And so this tax collector really sold his birthright for a pot of stew like Esau. He sold his people for money. Something as trivial as money. So for the people listening, the tax collector is the great villain. The Pharisee, he's our man. And that's why Luke prepares us to see that the truly despicable ones among us, they are those who trusted in themselves and treat others with contempt. That term there, trust in themselves, the verb is *peitho*. *Peitho* means, to bring about a convinced state of mind about something, and in this case it's to bring about a convinced state of mind, about one spiritual condition: that they are namely, that they are righteous.

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They're convinced about that. They are confident that they are fine, that they are righteous, that they're good with God. How many people do you run into that say, I don't know, it's OK. I understand you're trying to do good things for your church and spread the good news of salvation, but I'm good. Me and the big guy, we've got the thing and I'm good. I know where I'm going. Everything's fine. I'm going to heaven. I'm righteous. The verb here is in the perfect tense, which portrays this self-assessment on this guy's part as a, as a, settled certainty is in his mind.

They've answered that question. In fact, their faith, it's not really in anything objective. Their faith is in their own faith. Their confidence is in their own confidence, and when they lack any confidence, they just double down on their confidence. So the ultimate, pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps, kind of religion, no matter what the evidence says, no matter what their doctrine is, no matter what they believe or don't believe, no matter what their lifestyle looks like, waa, no matter what their priorities are. They never question whether that term, righteous, just, is rightly applied to themselves. It is, just ask them.

The commentator Ellis says, "This is the fatal misunderstanding of all merit religion. Believing that one has attained inevitably, leads one to despise those who have not and thus the religionist, so very sincerely, cuts himself off from God and from the love of God." End Quote. Those who trust in themselves, those who are taught to have faith in their own faith, sadly, these people remain blind and unable to see their own true spiritual condition.

There are churches, by the way, many many who call themselves evangelical churches that are infected with this man centered view of salvation. They claim that they preach a gospel of grace, but they've infused it with their own works and their own merit, and their own righteousness. And they teach people never question your own salvation. Never ever question that decision you made. That's the devil's work. Never question your baptism. Never question the reality of your salvation, that's the devil trying to tempt you to doubt.

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I remember hearing about a family who left our church long ago, very early in my ministry here, because their teenagers who sat with them in the service, they actually started to wake up in the service and actually started to hear the word preached and they were going home and asking their parents about their salvation, concerned that they may not be saved. It's a good thing, right? Well, rather than help their teenagers answer those vital questions about their souls, the parents chose to find a church that would lay their children gently back to sleep. They left. They didn't like the trouble that really the word of God caused. They didn't like how the word of God was stirring things up.

Listen. That's what the word of God does. It's like Interpreter in, *the Pilgrims Progress*, that brings Christian into a, a dusty, dusty room and starts to take the Word of God and sweep the room, and dust fills the air. And what happens when dust fills the air? Christian starts choking. He's very uncomfortable. He can't breathe anymore. Why? Because the Word of God has that effect on us, to discomfort us, to make us rightly ill at ease, uncomfortable, to make us provoked, that we would do something about it. And that Interpreter graciously

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took out water and started sprinkling water throughout the room that the dust would settle. We need the water of the Word of God to wash over us.

Listen, there is a, a need to churn things up. As the Prophet said, to plow up fallowed ground that we might see ourselves truly. This concern couldn't be more pertinent at any time for any people in any part of the world, but especially considering what Jesus has just taught, what's right around the corner, he's just taught them how few will there be believing when the Son of Man comes, very, very few. It'll be like the days of Noah when only eight were saved from the flood. It will be like the days of Lot when only three were saved from the fire.

Jesus is speaking here to an audience, and get this, most of them think he's not talking about them. And these are his disciples. These are those who claim, I follow Jesus. And when he preaches and listen, this is the, this is every preacher's concern, every true gospel preacher's concern is that they preach and they pour their hearts out week after week and month after month and year after year and people come in, and they

listen, and they like sermons, and they go out, and nothing changes.

My great burden, my great concern is that people will go from this church, die, stand before God and find a porthole to hell from the gates of heaven, because they have not actually dealt with their hearts. My friend, let that not be you. He speaks to an audience here, most of them thinking they're fine. These warnings, he issues to them, are not really for them. They're for somebody else. And they consider themselves to be righteous. Not in any need of any warning. I've been going to this church for a long, long time. I'm good.

The warning is not just for the most obvious examples of religious pride like this Pharisee in the parable. Remember he's given this warning to his own disciples, even from among the twelve. Remember two of his closest disciples, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, at the beginning of this journey to Jerusalem, at the beginning of this section that started in Luke 9:51, James and John, they in the prideful zeal, they suggested,

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you remember that, incinerating an entire village. Lord, give us the word, we'll call down fire from heaven. Nuke 'em.

They didn't see, that Samaritan village's, need for grace, the same grace that they so desperately needed themselves. At the end of his journey, you think they got it, these two? Kind of. But at the end of the journey, they ask their mom to go talk to Jesus and ask him to give those two the best seats in the kingdom. One on his right hand, one on his left. They're not getting it fully, are they? The other apostles find out about this, and they're indignant. Are they indignant because they've spotted religious pride? No, they're indignant because they didn't get there first.

Man, what gives you the? Indignant over their cleverness. You got your mom to do that. Think about this: if the warning about pride and religious pride is valid For those who are perceived as the most religious of Jesus' day, if it's valid for those who actually followed Jesus, valid for his closest disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, and two of those three in the inner circle, if it, if the warning is valid for all of them; let me

ask you, are you ever concerned that there is a heart of pride in you?

Grace Church, I wanna say this with love in my heart, with the deepest, sincerest affection that I have for all of you. With the sobriety of one who's examined his own heart, and I often find it wanting. We may in our church be among those in the greatest need about Jesus' warning about pride. Why do I say that? Is it because I see a bunch of Pharisees here? No. I think we do have a good and godly desire to know the Word of God and what it really says. To know what it truly means by what it says. Which means we're always striving for biblical precision. We want to understand the lexical and the grammatical and the syntactical details, precisely, that are in the text, so that we can be accurate and get to the right interpretation of Scripture. But you know who else was like that in the Bible? The scribes and the Pharisees, teachers of the law.

Listen when the desire for biblical precision interpretive accuracy is, is joined to a humble heart, one that longs to know God, one that longs to love and worship him, one that yearns to

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obey him. That is a very, very good thing. Not to be despised at all, not to be corrected. But how often that ancient sin, the one that cropped up in the Garden of Eden, sneaky and insidious, how often the poison of pride seeps into our hearts and minds and makes us think that we are somehow better than others. We think that by learning more Bible, and maybe greater comparatively, relatively greater depth, by understanding more doctrine than others, by stitching together the different doctrines and understanding theology, that we are righteous.

Woe be to us, if we think that way? Woe be to us, if we look down on others and treat them with some level of contempt. Don't misunderstand me here, I, I, am not commending ignorance.

Ignorance never shielded anyone from pride, because ignorance and pride go hand in hand. In fact, biblical ignorance insulates people from the penetrating power of the truth, and it's the truth of God in God's Word that actually can give clarity, which can confront and rebuke pride and promote true humility.

Biblical ignorance, doctrinal imprecision, that actually has the effect of steeling people in religious pride and making them

stubborn and stiff necked. The hardest people that I have ever dealt with are those who think they know way more than they actually know. Unteachable. Unlearnable. They're inoculated against the humble reception of doctrine. They don't have a teachable spirit at all. They only want to have a conversation with you to argue their point. So when our hearts are pursuing biblical truth and understanding, combined with humility, oh, God does great things with that.

But be on your guard against the insinuation of pride, because it's in every single one of us. Every single one. When our hearts are zealous for the truth, when we are motivated by the love of God and a longing to know him more fully, we desire to obey him more wholly, more fully, we want to please our Lord and Savior by following him in obedient faith, then we have a good and godly desire for righteousness, don't we?

But again, righteousness, it's a good thing to long for, and yet once again we find that principle: that evil is present in us, those who wish to do good, Romans 7:21. And so that insidious sin of pride, chief among the culprits in our hearts,

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leads us into the sin of trusting in ourselves, that we are righteous. And even post cross, we forget about the cross. We fail to look back at it and we think we have no need of self-examination.

So, beloved, you who are beloved members of Grace Church, can I just encourage you, please to listen carefully to what Jesus has to teach us here and not just listen to understand it, to be precise, to get accurate interpretation; unless you go away, unaffected, that you receive it and you look to be affected. You seek to be changed by the text. You seek to be discomforted by the Word and let it penetrate into your heart.

Listen with a view to obeying what you learn. Listen with a view to humility and contrition before God. So Grace Church, listen, God will not, he will not bless us if we carry around a heart of pride in our chests. He cannot do that. The principle that Jesus lays down in verse 14, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." That is a rule as inviolable as the law of gravity. You break it at great cost to yourself and unfortunately to others around you.

Know what happens when we fail to mortify pride in our hearts. Want to know why God withholds grace from us? Again, back to verse 9, "he told the parable to some who trusted themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt." Listen, those two, go hand in hand. Very strong verb there for contempt, *exoutheneo*, which means, to regard as a nobody. That's a literal translation. The construction of the verb preposition, *Ek*, "out of" or "from". It's joined to the adjective *oudeis* or *outheis*. So literally, out of, or from, nothing.

We hear people express hatred to others in that way, don't we? You're nothing to me. You're nothing. You're a nobody, means to treat someone with utter contempt. To treat someone as having no merit, no worth, to reject them utterly, disdain them completely. And for those whose hearts are filled with pride and controlled by pride, rejoicing in their own righteousness, thinking that they have no room to grow or change or repent.

Listen, that is not a believer; for people who are filled with a heart like that, pride is the telltale sign of soul damning

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unbelief. James and Peter tell us, both tell us exactly the same way "God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble."

We want God to give grace to Grace Church, don't we? We want his blessing on our church, on our lives, on our families. So listen, let's not be stubborn people. Let's not allow ourselves to be blinded by pride, thinking that we're above it. As, one of my seminary professors used to say, "It's not whether we have pride, but where is it and how much." That's true.

So with that introduction, let's get into the parable. Number two. My point number two: The location of religious pride. The location of religious pride. In one sense, we can say the location of religious pride is within every fallen human heart, right? And for those who are believers, it's in all the sinful flesh, isn't it? That's the location.

But listen, externally as we walk around and see it for ourselves: Where is pride located? Where do we see it? Where do we see religious pride on display? Religious pride is often in very, very close proximity to true religion. The truer the better. Look at verse 10, just the first part. "Two men went up

into the temple to pray." The temple at that time it was the closest representation on Earth for true religion, in contrast to every false Pagan religion all over the world.

There was the Temple of God, the place where he chose for his name to dwell, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, and the Ark of the Covenant, and the Mercy Seat, with the two cherubim touching wings and the place between them called the Mercy Seat. The place where the sacrifices are made. The place where atonement is made. Only one place on Earth like that, and it was this temple. And so this temple itself became a stage for religious pride. And religious pride always needs a stage, because it's performative in nature.

"Going up to the temple to pray." And Jesus refers to that, it's synonymous for attending public worship. Every Jew knows exactly what that meant. These two men are going up to the temple to attend a corporate public worship service at the temple, is a very important aspect of the setting of the parable and Jesus' original audience understood this very well. Every day at the temple, public worship is conducted at the morning and evening

sacrifices when the priest lit the incense on the altar of incense and they sacrificed morning and evening one lamb in the morning at about 9:00 AM to atone for the sins of the people, another at 3:00 PM in the afternoon.

It's Alfred Edersheim and his amazing work, *The Temple, its Ministry and Services*. You can find that online for free, download it, but he describes the scene in detail in that book. Daily sacrifices offered morning and evening were there to prepare the people for prayer. So the Jewish people would come morning or evening, and in the middle especially, they came to pray.

Edersheim says, "The sacrifices were in no sense prayers, but rather the preparation for prayer. The Tabernacle was the place of meeting between God and Israel; in the temple, likewise. The sacrificial service, that which made such a meeting possible, and hence prayer could only follow after the sacrifice. Its appropriate symbol and time for prayer was the burning of incense." End Quote.

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So much to do for these priests that work back then. I mean, my job seems tame by comparison when I think about the hard, hard, work of being a priest, who officiated morning and evening at the temple over those sacrifices. It started with filling the bronze Laver with water for washing, then cleansing the altar and cleansing all the instruments and accoutrements of worship. They prepared fires for the altar and prepared from the altar, they took those fires to the Menorah, the golden lamp stand, in the holy place.

They prepared the lamb for sacrifice on the altar. They bound the lamb. They fastened the lamb to rings that were on the north side of the altar. And they readied that lamb as a sacrifice to be slain for the people. And with everything ready; all these preparations started very early in the morning. In the morning, the signal was finally given. With everything ready, the lamb prepared, given to open the temple gates and let the people come in.

All the worshippers hanging outside the gates, thinking, praying, wondering how they're going to come before God.

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Preparing their hearts to offer their prayers of worship. Those gates open and they rush in. While the people entered into the courtyard to draw near in prayer, that sacrificial lamb at the same time was slain by the priest, its blood captured in a Golden Bowl. At the same time that's going on, two priests enter into the Holy Place in order to cleanse the altar of incense and dress up the Menorah, the golden candlestick, and they're preparing to offer incense to the Lord. And that incense represents, as it goes up, it represents the prayers of God's people.

Edersheim says, "These preparations are being made while the lamb is being slain, while the blood of the lamb is being drained, some to be sprinkled across the altar and the rest of it poured out at its base. Meantime," Edersheim says, "in the court of the priests, the sacrifice had to be hung on one of the hooks, and then flayed and cut up according to the rules. Cleaned, handed to the six priests, who were successively to carry up the pieces to the rise of the altar, where they were salted and then deposited on the altar, in order to be burned.

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"At the same time that's going on, in the Holy Place, the priests offering the incense approached the altar of burnt offering." And again according to Edersheim's description, "one priest filled with incense the Golden Sensor held in a silver vessel, while another placed in a Golden Bowl, burning coals from the altar. And as they passed from the court to the Holy Place, they struck a large instrument called the *Magrephah*, at the sound of which priests hastened from all parts of the temple complex to come and worship, to occupy their places in the service of song.

"Slowly, the incensing priest, he ascended the steps to the Holy Place, and one of the assistants reverently spread out the coals on the golden altar. The other arranged the incense, and then the chief officiating priest left alone within the Holy Place, he awaits the signal of the president, before burning the incense."

You may remember that this is pictured actually in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, as Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, says, "according to the custom of the priesthood, he

was chosen by lot to enter the Temple of the Lord and burn incense." That's this scene here. And Luke 1:10 says, "That while he's in there carrying out his duties, the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense."

Edersheim says, "The word was given that the time of incense had come. The whole multitude of the people withdrew from the inner court, fell down before the Lord, and spread out their hands in silent prayer." Praying people. Prepared for prayer by the sacrifice of a lamb, an innocent lamb prepared for that moment, so that they can pray. I don't know if you've ever thought about your prayers in that way and what it cost for you to be able to pray. It costs the sacrifice of another lamb; unblemished, unspotted, shedding of the perfect blood of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here we see such a beautiful scene, reminder of God's intention that his temple be a house of prayer for all the nations. It's a place that people can come. All people can come. You know what that means? Does God know that they're sinners? Does God know that they're pagans? Does God know that they're involved in all

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manner of sin and evil and wickedness? Yes, he does. And yet he calls them to come and confess their sins before him in prayer. So it's a place to come and worship God in prayer, unburden hearts, expressing gratitude that is always due to God, always appropriate to God, and then petitioning him for each and every need in life.

While the people prayed, ministry continued for the priests. The priests offered prayers for the people, pronounce blessings over them, like the Aaronic blessing Gary Odey read from numbers Chapter 6, the other, the other night; pronounced blessings over the people. They. Other offerings were brought including meat, grain, drink offerings priests brought to the Lord. After the offerings, priests and Levites entered into another form of service. It's the service of singing, singing psalms from the Psalter. It's important to remember here, it is because lambs were slain that the faithful could approach God in prayer.

The morning and evening sacrifices atoning for the sins of the people opened the way to God. As Bailey says, "Any private prayers were, as it were, sandwiched in between the two daily

atonement sacrifices." And "so, these public prayers and corporate worship, private prayers" that were "spoken to God, those coming after morning and evening sacrifices, atoning for the sins of the people."

The humble are there, and they know that they need atonement. They know that they cannot come to God on their own. They realize, and they're reminded as one author describes it. "They're reminded by the smell of the pungent incense, by hearing the loud clash of symbols, and by seeing the great cloud of dense smoke rising from the burnt offering. All their physical senses are testifying to the humble, that they need God's atoning sacrifice."

So we just, Gentiles living 2000 years past these events, don't ever despise Israel's worship. Don't ever look down upon the vis, upon the visible, upon the physical. Understand that that, this is a blessing. That every sense is engaged as they come and join their hearts to what their senses are testifying to. And they join their hearts in prayer.

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They're always reminded, as they go to that temple, of what's required to draw near to God. And then in walks the Pharisee bringing his pride with him into the heart of the temple. He's not looking for atonement. He's looking for a stage, so that he can parade his own righteousness, so that he can proclaim his own self-sufficiency, so he can preach the gospel of self-righteousness to his fellow man.

Brings us to a third point in our outline, number three: The presentation of religious pride. The presentation of religious pride. Jesus said, "Two men went up in the temple to pray," one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector, in verse 11, the Pharisee takes his place. He takes his stand. Pharisee standing by himself prayed in this way. Why is he standing by himself? Is it wrong to stand in prayer? Well no. Standing was a typical posture for prayer.

Edersheim writes this, "The worshipper was to stand, turning towards the Holy Place. He was to compose his body and his clothes and draw his feet close together, so he's to look put together. Draw his feet close together and cast down his eyes,

at least at the beginning of his prayer, and cross his hands, over his chest and to stand as a servant before his master with all reverence and fear.”

That was the posture of prayer. And so the Pharisee, he's got that posture down pat. Since other people are there, and other people around him and other people are surrounding him and possibly pressing up against him, well now, he's caught into a bit of a dilemma here, because on the one hand he needs to keep up this appearance of righteousness, that he is a good worshipper and a prayer, but that also means he's got to avoid touching these common, unclean, ritually impure people.

Common people worshipping and praying, they're lower than he is. He knows that they're lower. He refers to them with disdain as the *Am Ha'aretz*, literally the people of the land. They're a lower caste of people who might contaminate his perfect purity. So he needs to avoid, actually, literally avoid brushing up against one of them. That's literally how he's thinking. Bailey tells us, “There was a particular type of uncleanness that was

contracted by sitting, riding, or even leaning against something unclean," which was called *midras-uncleanness*.

So according to the Mishnah, Mishnah here specifically states that for Pharisees, the clothes of an *Am Ha'aretz*, those people of the land, the common people, their clothing count as suffering a *midras-uncleanness*. So he treats these people like they're all lepers. He refers, they're referred to in verse 9, as, "the rest", *tos loipos*, the others. It's the same way he speaks about them in his prayer, by the way, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men." The *Hoiloipos*, the rest of those men.

On the other hand, though, the rest of men are exactly who can appreciate his amazingness. Won't do any good for his religious pride if he isolates himself completely, cuts himself all off from all visibility. Sticking to the outskirts of the temple complex won't work. He's just got to be there, in there, in the heart of the place, where the people are, so they can all see how righteous he is. They can all hear the holiness of his prayers so they can all gain instruction from his wise words,

ineffable, and unutterable before men. But made known to them because they've overheard his pious prayer spoken to God.

Since his religion is external and performative by nature, he's trapped here on the horns, as a were, of a dilemma. He's got to stay away from the people to maintain his ritual purity, but not so far away that the people can't see and appreciate how hard he works to maintain his purity. Isn't religious pride exhausting? Absolutely exhausting and annoying. Who wants to be around a guy like that?

Pharisee takes his place. Now we hear him state his case before God. Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get." That's his prayer. Thanking God, for how great I art.

For Jews, prayer had two basic elements, praise or thanksgiving to God and then supplication or petition. So praising God for who he is and what he's done, and then asking him for help.

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Pharisee, you notice, makes no petition of his own, makes no supplication for anybody else. He says thank you, it's the verb, *eucharisteo*, but it's so out of place because everything else that comes out of his mouth is self-congratulatory, self-promotion in the extreme. It's Alfred Plummer who says, "There is no prayer, even in form. He asked God for nothing, being thoroughly satisfied with his present condition and only in form is this utterance. That Thanksgiving, it's self-congratulation. He glances at God but contemplates himself." End Quote.

So Jesus' portrayal of this guy is true to form. This history provides us with so much evidence of prayers that sound a lot like this one recorded by famous rabbis. And not only are these rabbis unashamed, they're actually proud of the way they sound. Joachim Jeremiah, who gives us a first century prayer of a Pharisee, he says, "I thank you, Lord my God, that you have set my portion with those who sit in the sanctuary and not with those who sit on street corners. I rise early. When they rise early, I rise to attend to the word of Torah, they to attend to feudal things. I exert myself and they exert themselves. I exert myself and receive a reward. They exert themselves, receive no reward. I run and they run. I run to life in the world to come,

and they run into the pit of destruction. Oh, what a great man am I."

Ellis Records another example. He says in the Talmud, "One rabbi was reported to be so confident that his righteousness was sufficient to exempt his whole generation from judgment. He said if the save numbered only 100, I and my son are among them, and if only two, they are I and my son. He thinks his righteousness can save his people."

And so in this spirit of the Pharisee, this is how he prays, as he thanks God for his great virtue. And notice while he's thanking God for how great he is, he's insulting everyone else around him. He doesn't see his words though, he doesn't see them as an insult, even though he knows they can hear him. In fact, he is praying so they can hear him. He fancies himself here as blessing his fellow man. He's teaching them with his words.

Habit of Jewish prayer was to pray even in public, out loud. Not loudly, not in an obnoxious loud way or, you know, self-centered manner, but only, the only truly obnoxious thing about this

guy's prayer are the words themselves. But other than that, he's praying in a normal tone of voice. Not too loudly, probably even in a pleasant tone, maybe even in a, in a confident, self-assured, rather eloquent way.

And he takes an educated guess at all the riffraff that are around him, that they fall into one or more categories of these sins and wickedness. Even if they're not, they need to hear this and be warned about how not to be. So firstly he says, "I thank you God, that I'm not like other men, extortioners," *arpax*; rapacious and greedy, that I'm not like swindlers, thieves, and robbers. And you can imagine, after saying that he's checking his distance and checking his wallet, getting away from these robbers.

Second, "I thank you I'm not like other men," I'm not unjust like they are. It's a polar opposite of what he considers himself to be, righteous. He represents the just, verse 9, the *dikaios*, the righteous, but they the unjust, the *adikos*, the unrighteous, the lawless, the wicked. Thirdly, he says, "I thank you that I'm not like other men, adulterers." Adulterers being

more of a broad term, covering all manner of sexual sin is a figurative use of the word, referring to sin of spiritual adultery, going after other gods.

He's probably not using it in that way, but using it in the literal sense. He's proclaiming, proclaiming himself, by contrast, to be a happily married man, champion of all family values, not engaged in any kind of sexual sin. He's spotless on that account. And then in his final word of self-exoneration and condemnation of everybody else around him, he delivers a genius stroke. He broad brushes the entire crowd of worshippers, saying, I thank that I'm not like all of them, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and let me wrap them all into one picture; one perfect illustration of what I'm not, not like this tax collector. This guy, ta, just drop the mic, right?

Oh, but wait, not so fast. Pick up the mic, because he's got more to say. He's not done praying yet. He hasn't trotted out all his positive virtues. Verse 12, he reminds God about those. He also educates his fellow man about what true righteousness looks like. Here it is: "I fast twice a week. I give tithes of

all that I get." Isn't this guy annoying? It's not just the pride, it's his sanctimonious attitude. His shameless self-promotion, this sense of moral superiority.

He's always ready to talk about his giving and his fasting and his acts of righteousness. And now we see why he doesn't petition God. Why he has no prayer requests. He doesn't think he has any needs. He's good to go. He's perfectly sufficient, perfectly capable, perfectly happy, good to go. Beware of that Christian, when it comes to prayer request time in the prayer meeting, that you don't fail to ask for prayer. Making requests of God is virtuous. It treats him as he really is, as God, high above. The infinite supplier of all of our needs, and our needs are many. So don't be proud in your heart and think I'm not going to say anything.

Let your request be made known before God and man. Humble yourself and acknowledge you have needs. Join the rest of the human race. We all have needs. Never making requests before God, that's not a good thing. It's not a good thing to think that you're good to go. Moses stipulated a tithe that was levied on

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grain, wine, and oil, those three agricultural produce giving 10% of the produce. You read about that in Leviticus 27:30, Numbers 18:27, Deuteronomy 12:17, Deuteronomy 14:23.

This opportunity to give this 10th of the produce was intended as a joy. It was to prompt constant gratitude, a reminder of gratitude, to see God's provision and not only a joy in God's abundant provision, but in this opportunity to give of yourself and give of your offerings, to provide for the temple priests and the Levites. You had a part in that. This man had turned the privilege of tithing into a way to parade his virtue. But since everyone tithed, he had to one up them all, he had to go beyond Scripture and do more than God had said. So he tithed not only the produce but, "of all that I get," *ptaomai*. Whatever I procure.

So Matthew 23:23, table condiments like mint, dill, and cumin that was on the list. Smallest of little seeds and herbs and all that, relatively irrelevant stuff. Luke 11:42, Jesus condemned them because he says, "you tithe, mint and rue, and every herb,"

good for you. How much time of your day does that take, and how much do you lose, the whole sense of what this is about.

Fasting, might surprise you to know, that Moses prescribed just one fast for the Jews every single year. It was 10 Tishri, the day of atonement. One day in the year in which you shall, Leviticus 16:29. Leviticus 16:31, "one day in the year when which you shall afflict yourselves." That's the term used. "There you shall afflict yourselves." And you might think, well that means self-flagellation, or some kind of a pain, or something like that to the body.

No, in light of Leviticus 23:27, this affliction was understood as fasting, going without the meal; "It shall be for you," it says, "a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the Lord." So the meal that they would have eaten on the day of atonement, that meal is set aside and presented to the Lord as a food offering. God takes out of this normal meal, and he imbues it with significant meaning, and he teaches Israel to express gratitude for the most profound gift ever, the gift of their atonement.

So if one day of fasting per year is good, says the Pharisee, two days a week of fasting, wow. The scribes and the Pharisees, they fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. Why those days? Plummer says that Moses was supposed to have ascended the mount on the fifth day, that's the Thursday, and to have come down on the second day, that's the Monday. Sounds pretty noble. Biblical justification for adding to God's prescribed fast.

But Edersheim sees right through it when he writes this. "We should not forget that Mondays and Thursdays we're also the regular market days where the country people came to the towns and there were special services in the synagogues and the local Sanhedrin met, so that these saints in Israel would at the same time attract and receive special notice for their fasts." End Quote.

So why has this Pharisee, why did all the Pharisees bastardize the joy of meaning that God gave them in true fasting, in true tithing? Why would they do this? Because they lack a heart of gratitude. Why would they lack a heart of gratitude? Because

they haven't received atonement. This Pharisee would consider himself a temple insider, but in all truth, he's an outsider.

He's actually a stranger to the profound spiritual significance of everything that's going on in front of him: Temple, it's worship, Israel's religion. He is an unbeliever in their midst. Masking himself as the highest and the holiest of believers. That's the presentation of religious pride, and it's pretty sickening, isn't it? It's also profoundly sad, because you realized this guy just, he's not getting it. And how many people are there in our churches, they're not getting that? They're just not getting it. Week after week, they sit and listen to sermons and they go home unchanged and unaffected. And their hearts just as hard as they were when they walked in.

This is why Jesus warns us about this. This pride gets right into the heart of true religion because it's endemic to the heart of every man and every woman with a fallen nature. Everyone born into this life has a sin nature. And that's why ugly religious pride enters into the most holy of places, into our local churches. It taints our service of worship. It stains

some of our best efforts. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be anything like that, Pharisee. Ohh, but I can see the same tendency in myself toward pride. Can you see it in you? The same prideful self-estimation, the same self-congratulatory spirit, same, that same temptability afflicts us all. Guard your heart with all diligence for from it flow the issues of life.

One more nail in the coffin as we try to endeavor to mortify our pride is a shorter one, point number four: The condemnation of religious pride. Condemnation of religious pride. I'll just make several points here, help us to go out on a seek and destroy mission, to kill, find, kill all vestiges of religious pride in ourselves. And I just simply want to draw out some observations about the Pharisee in Jesus' story and this will help us condemn, see, and maybe condemn religious pride in ourselves, mortify it.

First, let's say this, that religious pride distorts your spiritual perception. Religious pride distorts your spiritual perception. When the Pharisee said in verse 11, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men extortioners, unjust,

adulterers." Listen, from what we have already studied throughout Luke's Gospel, we know that's not true. I mean, it's not just our theology that tells us that we're all sinners. It's not just our theology, understanding total depravity. It's not just what Paul said in summary, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Though it is all those things.

But we've studied this throughout Luke's Gospel. He says, I'm not an extortioner, *harpagē*. But Jesus says in Luke 11:39 ohh yes you are. "You Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." Greed, that's the same word, *harpagē*. He says I'm not unjust, *adikos*. Jesus said, Ohh yeah you are. Luke 11:42, "You tithe the mint and the rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God." Oh yeah, you're *adikos* in ways you don't even understand.

He says I'm not an adulterer. Remember back in Luke 16, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for that very sin, Luke 16:18 "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

Man, these Pharisees were serial adulterers. They thought that by moving from one woman to the next, they're good to go, as long as they provide her, Deuteronomy 24, with a certificate of divorce and sent her on her way. What law abiding citizens we are. As they rip the heart out of that woman and they pollute and adulterate every other that they come into contact with.

Backing up a couple of verses, Jesus provided a summary of the condemnation of the Pharisees in Luke 16:15. He says, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what's exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Religious pride distorts your perception of yourself.

Second, religious pride masks your true spiritual condition. Religious pride masks your true spiritual condition. Sounds like I may be saying the same thing, but I actually intend to take this to a level deeper and look at the condition of the heart here. Pharisees or the Pharisee that Jesus portrays here, like many Pharisees of his day. The stereotype, by the way, existed because there were so many who acted just like this. But like

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all proud people, they failed to see their true condition before God, which keeps them from seeking the salvation they so desperately need in a manner completely inappropriate and completely unfitting.

When we consider this man's true spiritual condition as an unsaved man, this man is here in the temple and he's fancying himself as everybody else's teacher. The religiously proud are like that. They think they dare to teach everybody else. I have nothing to learn. I've arrived. Might as well just pass it along. Pay it forward. Bless you all.

He would have done well just to keep his mouth shut in the temple complex, and even better to sit there and make good observation and watching this penitent publican before him take good notes and prayerfully consider his own art. He's not ready to do that because he's blind. Pride masks your true spiritual condition. He doesn't think he has any need.

He has no room for that, of course, because he didn't have a drop of humility. His pride had him hard at work. His pride was

a taskmaster, driving him to perform every external observable service. Congratulating himself to God. Preparing his prayer sermon for the rest of those men around him, who imagined, he imagined they were, they were hanging on every word of his.

So this self-appointed instructor of the ignorant, I want you to listen to this, turn there if you'd like to, in Romans chapter 2 and just hear what Paul says to this self-appointed instructor of the ignorant masses. Paul writes this in Romans 2:17 and following; he says, "But if you call yourselves," now, remember he has just written Romans 1:18 through 32, condemning all mankind as under the wrath of God because of their unrighteousness. And then he turns his attention to those who fancy themselves, as above all the *Hoiloipos*, they're above the *Am Ha'aretz*, they're above all those common sinners, and they themselves are enlightened people.

And so in chapter 2, he turns his, he turns his guns and puts the sights on the enlightened ones. And here specifically in Chapter 2, verse 17, he starts turning his intention to the Jews themselves. "But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law

and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you're instructed from the law; and if you're sure that you are, you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, "You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law," you, "dishonor God by breaking the law. For, it is written, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'"" You Jews. They truly were.

You can go back to Luke 18. They truly were the Jews. They, they, had revealed religion from God. They were above all Pagan philosophy, above Plato, above Aristotle, above Socrates, above all, all systems of knowledge and religion, all the learning and the wisdom of the Chaldeans, everything from ancient times. None of that could hold a candle to what God revealed in the Torah and in the prophets. They truly did have a revealed religion and for them and yet no humility to receive it. What a shame. If perchance one sliver of humility can slice through this man's

pride and cut to the heart, perhaps God will grant eyes to see a true spiritual condition.

There's one more. Here that third, just observation. We can make that third thing to say, that religious pride robs you of God's gift of blessed salvation. Religious pride robs you of God's gift of blessed salvation. No time to develop this point fully. Just take one example here though. Remember how the Pharisees fasted twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays. They thought that Thursday represented Moses going up and Monday Moses coming down from the mountain to receive the law. And in their sin of adding to God's word, the law said once a year fast. Now they could add their own personal private fasting. But to parade some public fasting and make it a standard of righteousness, that's sinful. They were doing more than what God commanded, as if God's command was not enough. They did more than what God had commanded, and in so doing they missed out on the true meaning and the blessing of God's command.

Listen, when Moses commanded that one annual feast written in Leviticus 16:29 to 31, tucked into that command is the hope of

all Israel, and they missed it. Of all sinners in Israel, they had hope in Leviticus 16:29 to 31, that prescribed that fast: The extortioners, the unjust, the adulterers, even these tax collectors.

Moses says it shall be a statute for you forever, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves, and shall do no work, neither the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. And then this, "For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you, you shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins. It is the Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves. It is a statute forever."

Because they're blind to the meaning of that text. All their self-righteous, religiously proud hearts can focus on are the duties to afflict themselves to fast. They think that that's what righteousness looks like, and they missed the middle. Atonement made for you to cleanse you. You should be clean before the Lord. Do you not long for cleanness for the Lord? Cleansing from all your sin, to wash you cleaner than any

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performance-based religion, can cleanse you. It gets down to the core of the matter: it purifies the heart, itself. It cleanses the conscience, it sets the sinner free, and anything in your past, no matter how ugly, no matter a shameful, no matter how embarrassing. You'd be mortified if, if, anybody knew about it.

God eclipses all of that garbage. And the grace of his atonement, it shines with glorious beauty. And that light washes away everything else. The hope of every extortioner, every unjust person, every adulterer, every tax collector, and every Pharisee, as well, is bound up in that promise.

There's another man we have yet to look at. He got the promise. He claimed the promise for himself. He cried out for it. When he left the temple and when he went home, Jesus says "This man, rather than the other, this man went down to his house justified." We're going to find out more about that next time. That's the good stuff. Let's pray.

Our Father, we're so grateful for your graciousness to us. By providing the atonement in the blood of Jesus Christ, our lamb.

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You sacrificed him on the cross for all the sins of all those who would ever believe, and then by putting faith in his name and his name alone, we'll find salvation and rest. Oh Father, if there be among us any Pharisee, anyone who, whose heart has not been changed and repented of this religious pride, we ask for your saving grace to penetrate a hard heart and to grant the humility and contrition that they might believe.

We know that that would come by a new nature or regenerating a work of your regenerating grace, a miracle. We asked for that miracle to take place according to your will. And Father, if there be any tax collectors among us. Those who know what their sin looks like, know how ugly it is, know what they've done, how they've hurt people, how shameful it is. I pray, Father, that you would grant them assurance of true salvation as they put their faith in Jesus Christ as well.

And Father, as we look ahead to this tax collector and his prayer, I pray that all of us here within the hearing of my voice, that we all would call that man brother, because we truly do share a spiritual kinship with him. Father, you've been so

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gracious to us, and we thank you in the name of Jesus Christ,
our Savior; our penal substitutionary atoning sacrifice. It's in
his name we pray. Amen.