

Which Jesus do we See and Preach? VI

“Jesus friend of sinners”

Luke 18:9-14 tax collectors and Pharisee

NLT Luke 18:9 Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: ¹⁰ “**Two men** went to the Temple to pray. One was a **Pharisee**, and the other was a **despised tax collector**. ¹¹ **The Pharisee** stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! ¹² I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’” ¹³ “**But the tax collector** stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ ¹⁴ **I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee**, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Is this a simple story about prayer? *Vs 10*

Is this a story about righteousness? *Vs 9*

Righteousness sadaqa (righteousness) is the standard not only for man’s relationship to God, but also for man’s relationships to his fellows.

Righteousness is even the standard for man’s relationship to the animals and to his natural environment.

The righteous person is not the one who observes a particular code of ethics but rather a person or community granted a special relationship of acceptance in the presence of God.

Righteousness is a relationship maintained by acting in loyalty to the giver of the unearned status.

Israel celebrated Yahweh as the one who bestowed on his people the all-embracing gift of his righteousness.

Righteousness šēdāqâ (righteousness) bestowed on Israel is always a saving gift.

ESV Micah 6:3 “O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. ⁵ O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the **righteous acts** of the LORD.”

Righteous could be translated saving acts.

God’s gracious gifts of saving acts (righteousness) calls for a reflective response to that grace.

ESV Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but **to do justice, and to love kindness, for and to walk humbly with your God?**

I

Our *stance* in prayer is observed.

The Pharisee stand by himself to avoid ceremonial defiled.

The Pharisee lifts his voice to heaven. *Vs 11-12*

The tax collector stands afar off. *Vs 13*

The tax collector bows his head and is sorrowful.

The tax collector prays for grace, a gift of mercy from God.

II

Our substance in prayer is heard and evaluated. *Vs 9-10*

Middle eastern prayer included.

Confession of sin.

Thanks for God's bounty.

Petitions for self and others.

The Pharisee's prayer was comparisons with others.

The Pharisee's prayer was a proud review of his righteous and virtuous practices.

The Pharisee believes he has earned righteousness.

III

The sincere prayer of the tax collector.

The tax collector's prayer is earnest.

The tax collector's prayer is honest.

The tax collector knows he needed God to justify him.

The tax collector prays for grace, a gift of mercy from God. *Vs 14*

IV

The summary assessment of prayer is from the Lord.

The tax collector goes down justified. *Vs 14*

The other, the Pharisee, does not receive justification.

- What do we learn about prayer?
- What do we learn about righteousness?
- Where are you in the story?

Take aways...

We cannot earn righteousness.

We can receive His grace and free gift of righteousness.

God's offered grace through sacrifice, cannot be received by the worshiper who is arrogant, judgmental and self-satisfied.

Self-righteousness distorts visions of self, God and the neighbor.

- A humble yearning for God's unearned grace is an authentic aspect of genuine prayer.

Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes Kenneth E. Bailey