

10/27/2019

TAKE A HUMBLE LOOK AT YOURSELF TODAY

SIRACH 35:12-14, 16-18

2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8, 16-18

LUKE 18:9-14

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who went to the temple to pray invites us to reflect on the virtue of humility. It admonishes us not to look down against looking down on others or being judgmental. One of them, a tax collector, would not even dare to raise his eyes to God; he 'bends down, and takes a look at his own wretched soul', beat his breast and says: "O God be merciful to me a sinner". In the quiet of his conscience, he discovers how his own choices have left him broken and wretched. He calls out to God for mercy and he truly receives his forgiveness and peace. This man's capacity to search his soul, acknowledge his wrongdoings and ask for forgiveness is what Jesus invites us to emulate.

The Pharisee on the other hand, is unable to gaze into his soul and acknowledge his wrongs and his need of God's mercy. He prays in a proud manner, boasting of all his religious practices. Beneath all his outward piety is a man consumed by pride; he is judgmental of his friends whom he thought was such a bad sinner. Oh how easy it is to see 'the speck in our brother's eye, but fail to notice the beam in our own' (Luke 6:41). This Pharisee is even proud before God. He leaves the temple even worse than before. Whom is he praying to... God or himself? God's word reminds us about the pride which is capable of blinding our own eyes from realizing what our true state is. That is called self-righteousness.

Does this story ring a bell in our minds? When do we act like the Pharisee or the tax collector we hear about today? The tax collector gets praise not for his sins and cheating which he probably did on a regular basis but his humility to acknowledge his own wretchedness and lack of claim to any goodness; his capacity to ask God for mercy. Sometimes it's really difficult to admit it when we are wrong. We will say everything to justify ourselves. Life is a journey, it's a race, it's a fight. Let us not hide our punches and wounds, but rather, let us expose them to the mercy and the healing power of God. Let us take a humble gaze at ourselves today!