TALE OF TWO MEN

The first man lives a good life, goes to church, accumulated riches, has stature in society, is well known by many, and considers himself worthy and deserving of status. He keeps an account of all good things he has done. We all know this man, he has crossed our path at some time in our lives.

The second man barely gets by, has nothing to show for himself, is consider a low life in society, hardly known, unworthy of anything and deserves nothing. He has no account of any good deed ever done, only doing wrong in life. He considers himself a sinner. We all know this man, he has crossed our path at some time in our lives.

Which one of these two men are seen as the better man? Which one of these two men would seem to be closer to God?

The Bible has many parables and stories of this scenario.

Luke 18:10-14 shows the story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Our faith is based upon understanding and relying on God's mercy, not our own, personal doings or merit. Admitting we are sinners and not worthy, that we are humble in our doings, allows God to justify our gift of salvation, rather than a reward for religious performance.

So, reflect on this story during the week to know who you are in Christ, know that you are saved, loved, and reconciled of your sins through him. Humble ourselves in our doings, so we can receive the grace of God.

Amen.