Parable of the Pharisee and The Publican

**Luke 18.9-14**

Introduction: Not all “prayers” are acceptable to God. Some prayers are not really prayers: some sermons aimed at an audience, some announcements, etc. This parable illustrates this. Two extremes of Jewish social and religious life are seen here. Why was it the Pharisee with so many good deeds to his credit, was so odious to God, and man. Why was it, the Publican with so much evil against him, found the rich blessings of God? The basis of the parable is seen in verse 9.

**I) The Prayers**

**A) The Pharisee’s**

1. Went into the temple to pray – 9:00 and 3:00 regular hours of prayer.

2. “Stood and prayed thus within himself” – self-congratulations. He was patting himself on the back.

3. Shows his pride—mentions God in a complimentary way only.

4. He recounts his good deeds. Listing all his accomplishments, his good deeds.

a. What he was not

b. What he was

5. Note the use of the word “I”. Reminds me of the foolish farmer in **Luke 12**. He uses this word in a very selfish way.

6. Better than “rest of men” better than the demands of the law.

a. The law required one fast a year (**Lev. 16.27,30**) he fasted twice a week.

b. The law required for a tithing of grain, wine, oil, cattle; he gave a tithe of all he had, **Matthew 23.23**.

7. Trusted self and despised all others.

**B) The Publican**

1. “Standing afar off” --- shows his humility,

2. “Would not life up so much as his eyes up to heaven” . Unworthiness.

3. “Smote or beat his breast” – as if to remind himself of the strokes of God which he so much deserved,  **Luke 23.48**.

4. “God, be thou merciful to me a sinner” asked for mercy, **1 Timothy 1.15.**

a. He spoke the beatitudes, **Matthew 5.3-6.**

b. This quality became an open door through which God entered.

**II) Lessons From This Parable**

**A) Should have a deep consciousness of our needs, and that all is supplied by the loving Father, James 1.17.**

1. Some people are not thankful and humble because they think they really don’t need God.

2. What has God done for me? Why should I obey the Gospel?

**B) We are unworthy of His blessings, Genesis 32.9,10.**

**C) Prayer reveals character- it is the greatest window into the heart.**

1. Not just the public prayers but the silent prayers shows the true character of the heart.

2.Jesus contrasted characters while they prayed.

3. The Pharisees of the first Century, throws light upon the Pharisees of the 20th Century.

4. It is prayer vs bragging.

**D) Earnest – “I believe, help thou mine unbelief” Mark 9.24.**

**E) Praying with self vs praying to God, Luke 18.11; Acts 12.5.**

**F) Not to use prayer as a weapon against others.**

1. Can’t pray while gazing at the faults of our neighbors, Pharisee sight of the Publican while praying. We are to pray for others but not about others.

2. He made the record of the Publican the back ground on which to display his own character; for which he was thankful.

3. Got to be neighborly in our prayers, **Matt. 6.12-15; Luke 23.34.**

**G) The self-satisfied can never pray – it blights the real need of prayer.**

**H) Desire is the essence of prayer --- our hearts desire, Romans 10.1**

1. Jesus used words such as: asking, seeking, knocking, **Matthew 7.7-11**

2. What we ask for in prayer says a lot about us.

Conclusion: The power of prayer is not in our words but in our thoughts. God knows what we need but tells us to pray.