**April 25, 2021**

**Going deeper in Luke 18:9-14**

**INTRODUCTION –** The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector is a continuation of Jesus’ response to being questioned by the Pharisees about when the kingdom of God would come. It is a parable of two prayers. In those prayers appear two kinds of hearts, which are set-apart from one another not only by the way they make their request, but also by the way they approach God.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.*

**The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

**9**To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10**“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12**I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

**13**“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.’

**14**“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. How would people in Jesus’ day view the two characters in this parable?

2. Why do you think the Pharisee acted the way he did? The tax collector?

3. Why did the tax collector go home justified rather than the Pharisee?

4. What lesson about our prayer attitude and how we approach God is Jesus teaching here?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Praise and honor God for His majesty, power and faithfulness.

\*Ask the Holy Spirit to form in you a genuinely humble heart.

\*Ask for and receive forgiveness for times when pride has caused you to sin.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

This week prayerfully consider where your sense of self-worth and self-confidence come from. Pay attention to how you compare yourself to others. Pay careful attention to how you compare yourself to God! And, please remember that God’s love for you is not based on what other people think of you or on how your deeds compare to the deeds of others.

Like the tax collector (and the Pharisee) we are all sinners in desperate need of grace. You are also fearfully and wonderfully made by a Creator who holds you to be of immense value! Will you humbly receive His love and forgiveness?