

Adult Sunday School – The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
Small Group Questions for August 20, 2023

1. Read Genesis 3:12-13 and then reflect on this comment by Episcopal priest and writer, Fleming Rutledge: "Whenever possible, blame someone else. The first consequence of the first disobedience by the first couple is that the human being habitually turns to implicate another person as a way of 'dodging judgment'" (The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ, page 306)
2. Is it fair or helpful to think of the Pharisee's attitude toward Tax Collector as representing the impulse Rutledge names above? Does it make sense that the Pharisee might be 'dodging judgment' upon himself by judging the Tax Collector? What do you make of Rutledge's insight?
3. Why do so many non-believers and religiously unaffiliated North Americans today think of the church being filled with people like the Pharisee more than people like the Tax Collector? What has contributed to this image in the past years?
4. A key theme for this lesson has been that "we become what we look at." Can you identify particular areas in our personal and cultural life where what we are encouraged to look at or focus on forms a false sense of identity?
5. In one sentence, can you say why Jesus invites us to be like the Tax Collector?