

## Side By Side – The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Icebreaker: Tell about an experience that you have had with a prideful or arrogant person. How did it make you feel?

**The Pharisee and Tax Collector – a story for the arrogant and self-righteous...** *To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable. (Luke 18:9)*

**The Characters...** *“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (v.10)*

- **The Pharisee-society’s golden boy.**
- **The Tax Collector-society’s traitor**

Who in today’s society do you think each of these two people represents?

**The problem (or progression) with pride...**

- **It starts with selfishness** – *“The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself.” (v.11a)*
- **It leads to judgmentalism** – *“God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers- or even like this tax collector.” (v. 11b)*
- **It ends with a works-based righteousness**- *“I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.” (v. 12)*

Which stage of the pride progression do you struggle with most often? In what situation do you tend to judge others more harshly than you do the sin in your own life? How often do you compare yourself to others and not to the real standard, God Himself? Describe a time you have fallen back into a works-based mentality even though you have been saved by grace.

**Just because the outside appears right doesn’t mean the inside is right** – *“In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” (Matthew 23:28)*

**The value (and progression) of humility...**

- **It starts with God** – *“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to Heaven...” (v. 13a)*

For personal reflection, maybe the most important question of this lesson is have you started a relationship with Jesus? If not what is keeping you from it today?

- **It leads to repentance** – (...but beat his breast and said, ‘God have mercy on me, a sinner.’” (v. 13b)
- **It ends with grace based righteousness** – *“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.” (v. 14a)*

How does Jesus’ surprise ending to the story encourage you?

*...He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy...so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.  
(Titus 3:5a, 7)*

*“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14b)*

