SLIDE 1: HEARING THE PARABLE DIFFERENTLY (side by side if possible)

Modern Christians often assume:
• The Pharisee is the problem.
• The tax collector is the hero.

Jesus' first audience may have assumed:
• The Pharisee was faithful and respected.
• The tax collector was corrupt and unworthy.

The ending would have shocked them.

SLIDE 2: THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLE

"To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable."

Luke 18:9

Self-righteousness causes us to trust ourselves and look down on others.

SLIDE 3: THE DANGER OF COMPARISON

When we compare ourselves with others, pride quickly becomes condemnation.

We exaggerate their failures.

We overlook our own sin.

SLIDE 4: TWO MEN ENTER THE TEMPLE (side by side if possible)

THE PHARISEE

• Religious
• Respected
• Disciplined
• Seen as the good man

THE TAX COLLECTOR

• Despised
• Distrusted
• Connected to Rome
• Seen as the sinner

They stood at opposite ends of the social and religious spectrum.

SLIDE 5: A PRAYER ABOUT HIMSELF

“God, I thank you that I am not like other people…”

Luke 18:11

• He compares himself with others.
• He lists his religious accomplishments.
• He asks God for nothing.
• His prayer is centered on himself.

He is thankful for his own goodness, not for God’s mercy.

SLIDE 6: A PRAYER FOR MERCY

“God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Luke 18:13

• Distance
• Shame
• Repentance
• Mercy

He offers no excuses, no comparison, and no religious résumé.

SLIDE 7: TWO VERY DIFFERENT PRAYERS (side by side if possible)

THE PHARISEE

• Looked at others
• Boasted
• Listed his achievements
• Trusted his goodness
• Felt spiritually rich

THE TAX COLLECTOR

• Looked at himself
• Begged
• Confessed his sin
• Trusted God’s mercy
• Knew he was spiritually poor

One man came full of himself.

The other came empty-handed.

SLIDE 8: THE GREAT REVERSAL

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.”

Luke 18:14

The rejected man was accepted.

The respected man was not.

God’s verdict was the opposite of what the crowd expected.

SLIDE 9: TWO WAYS TO APPROACH GOD (side by side if possible)

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

- I am good enough.
- I have done enough.
- I am better than others.
- God should accept me.

DIVINE ACCOMPLISHMENT

- I am a sinner.
- I cannot save myself.
- I need mercy.
- Christ has done what I could not do.

Entrance into God’s kingdom depends not on our merit, but on God’s mercy.

SLIDE 10: HOW DO WE RESPOND?

1. HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD

Stop comparing your life with the lives of others.

2. BEGIN WITH CONFESSION

Come honestly before God instead of defending yourself.

3. DO NOT LEAVE WITHOUT BEING JUSTIFIED

Admit your sin and trust in Jesus as your Savior and substitute.

God helps those who know they are helpless.