

# Bridging the Gap: Reconciled to God

December 6, 2020

**Scriptures:** Luke 18:9-14; 2 Cor. 5:18-21

**Bottom Line:** God came near at Christmas to bridge the gap

To be human is to be born into a world in which there are personal, relational, economic, and social divisions. But we also believe that God is working out a plan to bridge every gap: between us and God, and with each other.

The Christmas story, at its core, is a reconciliation story—peace on earth! And God gives us, the Church, the task of reconciliation.

## Luke 18:8-14 (The Story of Two Pray-ers)

### The Pharisee

- He thought his ability to be made right with God was found in his following the rules (justification of comparable performance)
- The problem with self-righteousness and pride is that we rarely see it in ourselves

### The Tax Collector

- He sees the gap between him and God and knows he's stuck. "O God, have mercy on me"

*Jesus is the saviour that the self-righteous Pharisee and the un-righteous Tax Collector so desperately need. God's primary concern is not your behaviour but your heart. The greatest threat to our relationship with God is not un-righteous, but self-righteousness.*

## Ways to Respond

- Stop judging others and learn to give grace to them instead
- Trust in the forgiveness of Jesus and you will be made right with God
- Tell someone that Jesus loves them, and so do you

# LISTENING

Have someone in your group share something about their week. They could answer one of the following questions:

- What was a big challenge or problem you faced this week? How did you handle it?
- Where did you experience God this week? Or where do you wish you had experienced God this week?
- Based on your life experience this week, what do you think God is trying to teach you right now? What is He trying to build in you?

After the person shares, the group can respond. Make sure you let them know you heard them: tell them what you heard, offer wise advice where it's asked for, share from your own experience as well.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Review Sunday's message. What stood out to you? What challenged you? Are there any lingering questions?
2. Read **2 Corinthians 5:16-21**. What could be the "ministry of reconciliation" look like in our everyday lives? In your small group?
3. How can we, as followers of Jesus, prevent ourselves from passively becoming self-righteous "do-gooders" and rather seek to actively become grace-giving ambassadors to those around us?