

- Out of the many parables Jesus gives, this is one of the more popular ... Personally, this is one of my favorites ... A parable that stings in a few different directions ... **1)** “Jesus speaks up for the marginalized” ... **2)** “Jesus speaks out against the religious” ... **3)** Jesus warns against self-justification across the board ... This parable intends for every listener to conduct a self-check ... Not only, “Which person am I,” but more, **“Whose righteousness defines me?”**
 - 1st century – Pharisees highly respected; known for faithfulness in following God ... Tax Collector were traitors; favored Rome and took advantage of their own people ... One was to stay away from them – even if they were family members ... **Jesus presents two extremes** – good vs bad ... **Who’s more righteous** ... Not before our eyes, but before the eyes of God – which person gives us an example to follow ... Those listening to Jesus are left wide-eyed when He tells them **vs14** ... Why? – Because they’re focusing on the outward appearance of the person, and failing to see what’s being revealed within
- What’s going on with the Pharisee – it’s not that his merits are bad, in of themselves ... The issue is the weight of importance that he places on his merits ... The Pharisee assumes all is good between him and God because of the good things he’s doing ... Because of the bad things he avoids ... Because of his strict devotion ... The Pharisee acknowledges the grace of God but seems to view this grace as merits-based – “I deserve God’s grace because of all the good I do” ... **SCHREINER: DO WE SECRETLY CONGRATULATE OURSELVES BECAUSE WE DO OUR DEVOTIONS AND LEAD A MORAL LIFE ... DO WE THINK OF OURSELVES AS SPECIALLY FAVORED BY GOD AND PART OF AN ELITE GROUP BECAUSE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD?**
 - The Pharisee focuses on the sin he doesn’t commit – quick to point out the sin of others, while remaining blind to his own depravity ... Some people can be so dogmatic about certain issues, chastising others who fail to be doing what they think others should be doing ... People like this take-up for themselves the role of the Holy Spirit ... They take it upon themselves to tell everyone how they should be living, how they should be following God, while ignoring their own shortfalls ... “My bad isn’t that bad” ... “Good outweighs the bad”
 - Wrong to assume you’re good is good enough, meaning there’s no need for you to grow beyond where you are in life ... Some avoid well-meaning advice or encouragement ... A person like this presents a demeanor like “who are you to tell me how I should be living” ... A growing Christian is one who’s both a teacher and a student ... It’s not an either/or but a both/and means of growing in faith ... The younger needs the older and the older needs the younger equally ... Attitude of “my way is better than your way,” which comes across as “I don’t need you,” is arrogant, and therefore sinful (see **Rm12:3, Gl6:3, Ph2:3-5**) ...
 - Looking down on people because they don’t measure up to your lofty standard, and living as if your good is good enough, that your good outweighs the bad, all of it is about you elevating your own goodness – your own righteousness ... And what you’re broadcasting is “I’m good before the eyes of God because of all the good I do for God” ... This is what the Pharisee is doing ... He bets everything on his own righteousness
- What makes the tax collector an example to follow is the inward posture he takes ... He is aware of who he is ... More, he’s aware of who God is and his position before the eyes of God ... **Mercy = propitiation** – “remove Your wrath from me,” “reconcile me back to You” ... A man who knows he’s a sinner before a holy, righteous God ... A sinner who calls upon God to cover him with God’s own righteousness ... And this God does **as He justifies him**
 - Take our cue from Paul – **1Tm1:15-16** ... Any good in our life is due to God and His grace ... And all that’s good in our life is meant to broadcast the glorious grace of God ... Our goodness, our righteousness, is found in Christ alone ... You stand before God justified and favored, not because of your good works and commitment to Him ... But because of Jesus’ commitment in justifying and sanctifying you by His own life ... **The righteousness that defines you will powerfully influence the type of person you are**