

Looking at Ourselves

Scripture Reading — Luke 18:9-14

“The tax collector ... would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’” —

—Luke 18:13

The people to whom Jesus told this story were very familiar with Pharisees and tax collectors. Here Jesus teaches that we do not get right with God on our own merits. There’s no room for confidence based on what we have done, no looking down on anyone. It’s always by grace—based on God’s mercy.

The Pharisee, at prayer, proclaimed his good deeds and then pointed his finger, saying, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people ... —or even like this tax collector.” He was full of himself! By his way of thinking, he didn’t even need God’s mercy.

Then Jesus described the vastly different prayer of a person who saw that he needed mercy. Tax collectors were seen as traitors, leeches on society, people to be avoided. And this was not someone claiming any self-earned righteousness! Without pretensions and with an aching heart, the man pleaded for God’s mercy.

Pride sees no room for mercy, no need for forgiveness. Grace has no place when we’re full of ourselves. Jesus declared the tax collector justified.

Jesus’ parables make us look at ourselves. With whom do we identify—the Pharisee or the tax collector?

What does Jesus hear when we pray?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for making us look at ourselves. Help us also to see how we pretend to be better than some of our neighbors. We need your grace. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Life of Jesus](#), [Christianity](#), [Doctrine](#), [Forgiveness](#), [Discipleship](#), [Grace](#)

Written by George Vink — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/george-vink>

<https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/looking-at-ourselves-2013-03-15>

Printed on August 5, 2020

