

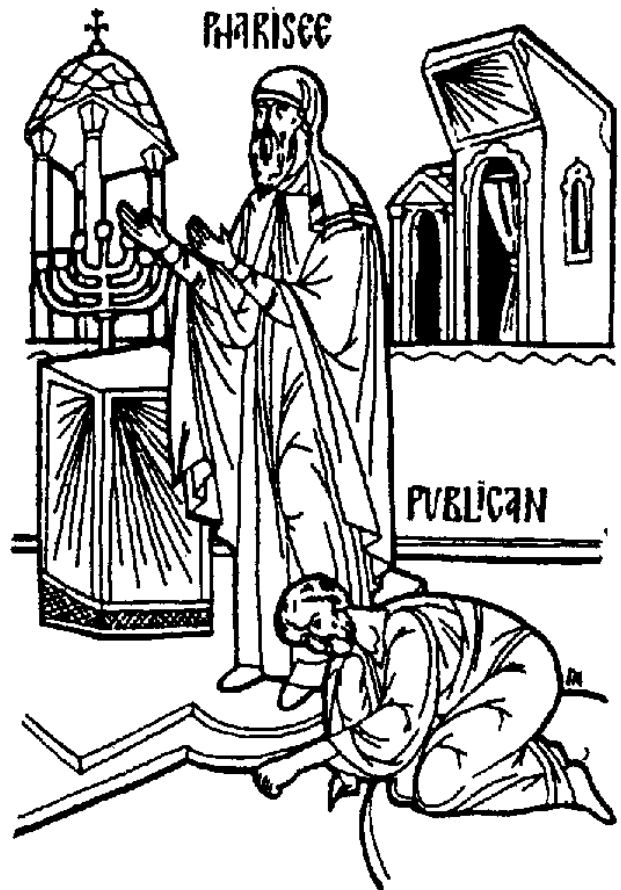
BE HUMBLE LIKE THE TAX COLLECTOR

Jesus told this story. “Two men went to pray in the temple. One was a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. Pharisees thought they were better than anyone else. People thought tax collectors cheated when they collected the taxes.

The Pharisee was proud. He raised himself up tall when he prayed. He said, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men who are thieves, cheaters, and bullies. I fast as I should and I give money to the temple.’

The tax collector’s prayer was very different. He did not even look up to heaven, when he prayed. He was very lowly and humble, and he spoke quietly. He said, ‘God, be merciful, and forgiving, as I am a sinner.’

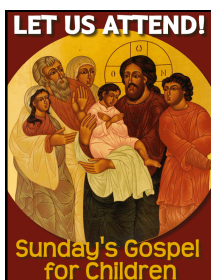
Jesus then told the lesson of the story. He said, “I tell you, the Pharisee, the proud one, does not please God. Now, the tax collector--the one who was lowly and humble and asked for God’s forgiveness--he is the one who pleases God. Everyone who is proud and raises himself up, God will make humble and low. And the one who is lowly and humble, God will raise up.”



Icon courtesy of Iconographics (www.theologic.com)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. People can talk with their bodies.
2. In the picture, both men are worshipping God. One is standing and the other is doing a prostration.
3. The standing man bragged about how good he was. Listen to this sentence: “The Pharisee was proud.” What word means he bragged about himself?
4. The second man was not proud. He showed this by a prostration.
5. We are not to think we are better than anyone else. God wants us to be like the second man.



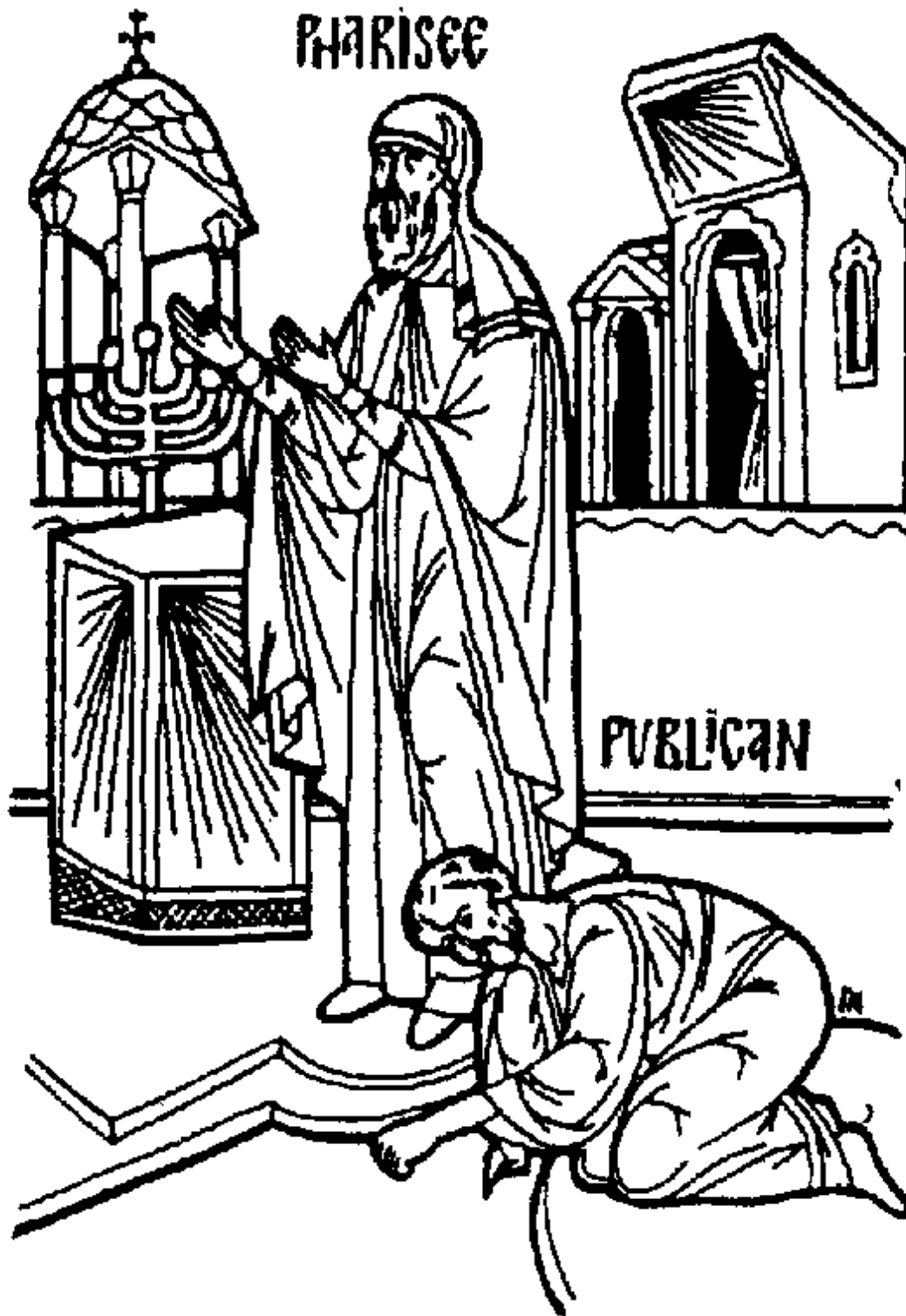
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Pre-12



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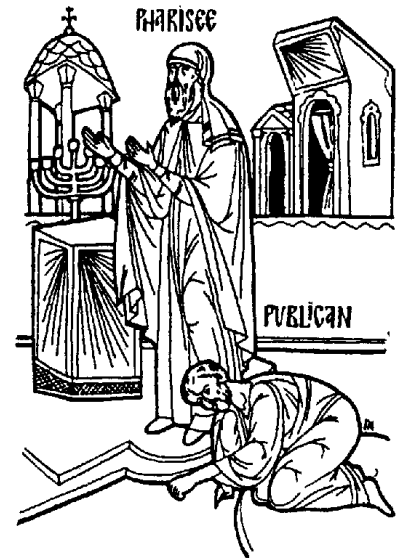
One day, our Lord Jesus Christ told this parable. (A parable is a story with a special meaning.) He wanted people to learn something from His story.

He told about two men who went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. In those days, Pharisees were people who tried very hard to follow God's laws, but often did it just to show off or brag. And in those days, people did not like tax collectors because they often cheated people out of their money.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed proudly, "Thank you, God, that I'm not like other men who disobey You and hurt others. Thank you that I'm not like this tax collector. I fast like I am supposed to, and I give money to the temple like I should."

Meanwhile the tax collector was so sad that he could not even look up towards Heaven. He showed how sorry he was as he sadly prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

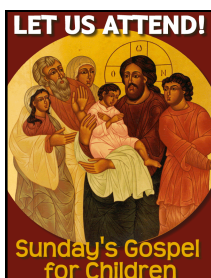
Our Lord Jesus said that the tax collector was forgiven, but the Pharisee was not. He reminded the people of the lesson in this story: People who are proud and brag, God will humble. But people who are humble, God will lift up.



Icon courtesy of Iconographics (www.theologic.com)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Who went to the temple to pray?
2. Was the Pharisee proud or humble? How does his prayer tell you that?
3. What about the tax collector? Was he proud or humble? How do you know?
4. Who was forgiven—the Pharisee or the tax collector?
5. Our Lord Jesus wants us to learn the lesson in this story, too. We should not think we are better than anyone else. Like the tax collector, we need to be sorry for our sins and ask God for mercy.



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THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

The Lord spoke this parable: “Two men went into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’

“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

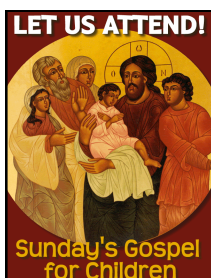
“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”



Image courtesy of Teaching Pics

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. In this parable, who was praying?
2. Why do you think the Lord said the Pharisee was “praying with himself”? How did he pray?
3. What does the Pharisee’s prayer (and the way that he prayed) say about him?
4. Which prayer was pleasing to God? Why?
5. What kind of prayer would you like to say? Why?
6. What would your prayer tell God about who you are?



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Characters: Narrator, Jesus, Pharisee,
Tax Collector

Narrator: The Lord spoke this parable:

Jesus: Two men went into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,

Pharisee: God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.

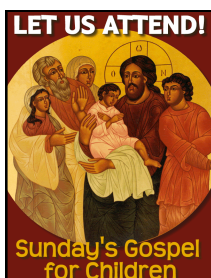
Jesus: But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying,

Tax Collector: God, be merciful to me a sinner!

Jesus: I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.



Image courtesy of Teaching Pics



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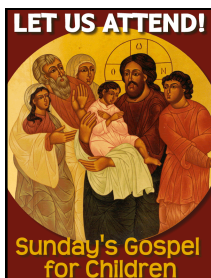
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Image courtesy of Teaching Pics

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. How many days a week do we normally fast?
2. How often does the Pharisee fast?
3. Does he say why he fasts? Why do you think he does?
4. Why do you think we fast?
5. What prayer does the tax collector say?
6. Why do you think he says this prayer?
7. Do we say this prayer regularly?
8. Why do you think we say it?
9. Do you think this prayer and fasting contradict each other or compliment each other? Why?



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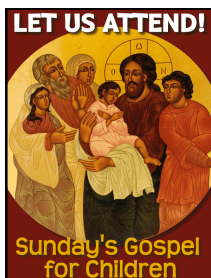
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Image courtesy of *Teaching Pics*

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Where was the Pharisee standing?
2. What does this tell us about him?
3. What was his prayer?
4. How is the way he is standing related to his prayer?
5. Why would standing by himself to pray be a negative thing to do?
6. Where is the tax collector standing?
7. What does this tell us about him?
8. How is this related to his prayer?
9. Why is the way he is standing better than the way the Pharisee is standing?
10. What does this suggest about prayer? Is how or where we stand to pray important? Why or why not?



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