



## Today's Message

Date: December 26, 2021  
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas  
Title: *Two Men Went Up to Pray*

Text: Luke 18:9–14 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup> 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!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Introduction: At the end of chapter 17, Jesus explained that he will come again some day and his coming will be a time of judgment (17:20-37). In 18:1-8, he instructed his disciples to pray for that coming, and so we still pray, “Thy kingdom come.” In v. 8, he said that the real question is not, “will God do what he has promised,” but “will the Son of Man find faith on the earth?” Who will long for his coming and, thus, enter the kingdom? In the current sermon text, Jesus offers another parable about pray but this one explains the faith (or faithfulness) that he requires of those who enter the kingdom at his return.

**I. Many trust their own ability to enter the kingdom. 9**

- A. They count themselves righteous . . .
- B. because they compare themselves with others.

**II. So, Jesus told a story to show that God does not evaluate people using our standards. 10-14a**

A. Two men very different men went up to the temple to pray . . . 10

- 1. One man was a Pharisee.
- 2. The other man was a tax collector.

B. and offered two very different prayers . . . 11-13

- 1. With great pride, the Pharisee rehearsed his righteous deeds. 11-12
- 2. With great shame, the tax collector pled for mercy. 13

C. that yielded two very different results. 14a

- 1. God justified the tax collector . . .
- 2. but He did not justify the Pharisee.

**III. The point of Jesus' story (our "take-home truth") is that God humbles the proud and exalts the humble. 14b**

- A. This means that Christ will exclude from his kingdom those trust themselves.
- B. But Christ will welcome into his kingdom those who seek his mercy.