The Parables of Jesus – KBC SS Class Fall 2026

Week 4 – PHARISEE AND TAX COLLECTOR

Luke 18:9-14

Exploring the Meaning of the Parable

1. Observations from the passage:

Audience – trusted self-righteousness, contempt for others – Pharisees

Prayers – one proud, one humble

Main subject – Justification – we know because Jesus confirmed at end

2. The Cast: Pharisee – then and now

Now – hypocrite, self-righteous, enemy of Christ

Then – respected, religious, studious, disciplined, obedient, fast, tithe, pure, insider, man of God

3. The Cast: Tax Collector – then and now

Now – government employee, bureaucrat

Then – despised, Jew, worked for hated Rome, cheated people for money, thieves, collaborators, traitors, outcast

4. Pharisee Prayer – Observations

Jesus doesn't accuse him of moral failures

Boasting in his works, no confession, no requests, not mercy, not grace, not forgiveness, no spiritual need, no help at all, doesn't need God to save him

5. Pharisee – Standard for Righteousness

His standard – his self-righteousness - better than other men

Views God as diminished – doesn't need anything from Him

Looking SIDEWAYS and only sees worse men

Concludes he looks good – stands in god's presence and admires himself

Eternally catastrophic mistake – his standard diminishes God – too low

True standard is God's perfection – he is lost

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6. Tax Collector Prayer – Observations

Cringing, shame, humble, feels unworthy

Short prayer – "be merciful" is "Mercy Seat me"

THE SINNER

Views God as sovereign and supreme

He looks UPWARD and sees only his sin and guilt

He knows he needs a savior

7. Why did Jesus declare the Tax Collector "went home Justified"?

He recognized he had empty hands – nothing to show the Lord

He was guilty, he confessed his sins, repented, expressed need for atonement/savior, appealed to God "Mercy Seat me"

He abandoned all hope except Jesus

He is "poor in Spirit" and his is the "kingdom of heaven"

8. Why does the diagram below mean and why is it so important in this parable?

OUR SIN → CHRIST
CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS → US

This is the Great Exchange – the very heart of the Gospel

Jesus takes on our sin and satisfies God's justice by his shed blood

Our sins are forgiven

The righteousness of Jesus is imputed to us

We are able to live in the presence of the Lord forever

9. How is Paul's life connected to this Parable?

Paul lived the first portion of his life as that Pharisee

Respected, Self-righteous, contemptuous, needed nothing from God

Then, after Damascus Road, he lived life similar to Tax Collector

Despised, persecuted, not trusted, humble, surrendered to Christ