

The parable we share today is commonly known as the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. To correctly interpret this parable, we must understand it in the context of the surrounding verses. Verses 9 and 14 show us that the parable is about receiving righteousness before God. Jesus declares that the Pharisee, who appeared most devout, was not accepted by God, while the despised tax collector was declared righteous. Why?

- **Common Perceptions of Pharisees and Tax Collectors in Jesus' Time**

First, we must understand how people saw Pharisees in Jesus' time. In the Gospels, Pharisees appear frequently. In Jewish society of that era, Pharisees were seen as devout and moral examples of faith. In contrast, tax collectors were traitors, collaborating with Rome to collect taxes.

Jesus says the one who was seen as a sinner and despised by society—the tax collector—was more righteous before God than the outwardly righteous Pharisee. What was wrong with the Pharisee?

- **The Pharisee's Faith Problem: Self-Righteousness**

The Pharisee believed he was righteous and looked down on others. Pharisees were unmatched in their outward religiosity. They focused heavily on appearances—on visible acts and behaviors. As a result, their concept of righteousness was superficial. They often covered up their inner sin with religious acts.

They showed their “righteousness” in two ways: through their external behavior and by comparing themselves to others.

- **We Cannot Make Ourselves Righteous - Why We Need God's Righteousness**

The Bible repeatedly declares that everyone is a sinner before God. “There is no one righteous” (Rom 3:10; Jer 17:9; Isa 64:6). Our actions and religious appearances cannot cover the sin that flows from our hearts and souls.

We cannot be righteous before God by comparing ourselves to others. God judges according to His standards, not human comparisons (Lev 19:2; Matt 5:48).

God demands perfect righteousness according to the law (James 2:10; Gal 3:10). We can never attain God's righteousness through our efforts or devotion. God is perfect and does not tolerate even a little sin. We have nothing to boast about before Him.

- **How Can a Sinner Be Righteous Before God? - Christ's Righteousness Is Imputed**

So who can be considered righteous before God? The gospel's answer is grace. God justifies the ungodly freely (Rom 4:5). He declares sinners righteous “without works” (v.6). Those who try to be righteous by their own will always fail and end up condemning themselves. Only God can declare us righteous.

Because He is just, God ensures the price for sin is paid and perfect righteousness is given to us. He paid the price through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross in our place. Through Christ's perfect sacrifice, God accomplished full atonement. He then imputed Christ's righteousness to those who believe.

- **How Can We Receive God's Righteousness Through Jesus?**

In verse 13, the tax collector stands “at a distance,” “would not even look up to heaven,” “beat his chest,” and prayed, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” He admitted and confessed that he was unworthy to stand before God or even look at Him, and he asked for God's mercy. This is true repentance. To the one who truly repents, Christ's perfect righteousness is given. That is the power of the gospel. May we all not be merely religious, but be people of the gospel. In Jesus' name, I bless you.

**Bible
Memorization**

A VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

**Bible
Reading**

6/23(Mon)	6/24(Tue)	6/25(Wed)	6/26(Thur)	6/27(Fri)	6/28(Sat)	6/29(Sun)
Job 32-36	Job 37-41	Job 42, Psalms 1-7	Psalms 8-16	Psalms 17-21	Psalms 22-27	Psalms 28-34

QT

Quiet Time Passage

6/23(Mon)	6/24(Tue)	6/25(Wed)	6/26(Thur)	6/27(Fri)	6/28(Sat)	6/29(Sun)
Psalms 78:40-55	Psalms 78:56-72	Psalms 79:1-13	Psalms 80:1-19	Psalms 81:1-16	Psalms 82:1-8	Psalms 83:1-18

**Sharing
Questions**

1. Share any grace you experienced in your life through last week's sermon or your weekly devotion.

2. Share any new insights or blessings you received from today's message.

3. Reflect: Am I living like the Pharisee, comparing myself to others and believing I am righteous, or am I beating my chest in repentance and clinging to the cross of Jesus? Share and pray together.