

100 Bible Stories

77. The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18 (NKJV)

⁹ Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

How are the self-righteous characterized? What does it mean to be self-righteous?

How are these characteristics confessed by the Pharisee?

Characterize the tax collector over and against those who are self-righteous. Is the man merely sorry for his sin or is he a believer? How can you tell?

Does “justified” denote that the man is “just” or someone has made him “just.” What is justification? How does that last clause of the sentence divide Law and Gospel? How does it reflect the first Commandment? How does it reflect the Gospel, Christ’s death for sinners and the justification of sinners?