

Prayer Is A Time For Penitence

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus spoke a parable about self-righteousness. The parable was about how two men prayed, a Pharisee and a publican. The publican was penitent, but the Pharisee boasted about his own goodness. In conclusion, Jesus said, *"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"* (Luke 18:14).

Was the Pharisee justified at all? He did not ask forgiveness or express any sort of lack or need. Since he confessed no sin and did not ask forgiveness, how could he have been justified or forgiven? God would not force forgiveness upon him unasked, or grant it to him unrepentant. Why did the Pharisee bother to come up and pray?

As a model for our attitude in prayer, consider the heartfelt expressions of David: *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest"* (Psalm 51:1-4)

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