

Part 2 – June 20, 2010

## The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

### Intro

- Great question: “Is repentance the key to grace?” (Sam Z.)
- *A Few Good Men*: “You can’t handle the truth!”
- Excuses are our specialty

“It is not a pleasant thing to contemplate, but it is real: this self-justifying mechanism, this denial system, this hidden factor that makes me quick to judge others for infractions against me or my view of morality, but which equally quickly grants allowances, justifications, rationale for my own failings, errors, or wrong doings”

–Stuart McAllister, *Facing Reality, Slice of Infinity*, 6/17/2010

### Saints or Sinners?

*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”*  
(*Jeremiah 17:9*)

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

**Romans 6:14**

- Part of sanctification is a renewal of our minds to hate sin as God hates sin.

### Christian Pharisaism: The Art or Game of Favorable Comparisons

- Ask yourself: Am I more prone to have difficulty seeing my sin; or, am I more prone to wallow in my sin and be immobilized by guilt?

**Luke 8:9-14** (The Pharisee and the Tax Collector)

- What is your personal definition of a Pharisee?

*"It is possible to become self-satisfied with our own personal Christian life, and that is **not** a good thing."*

"He is not presented as a legalist--one who tries to earn his salvation. That is not the issue. One thing is the issue: This man was morally upright. He was religiously devout. He believed God had made him so. He gave thanks for it. And that [**his own righteousness, morality, devotion**] is what he looked to and trusted in for his justifying righteousness before God--for his justification. And he was dead wrong to do so."

"He was looking at the wrong person and the wrong righteousness. *He was looking to his own righteousness--and it was his, not because he created it, but because he acted it*"  
-**John Piper**, *Together for the Gospel*, 4/18/2010

**Q. How does this happen to us, how do we fall into this trap? Do you play the game, practice the art, of "favorable comparisons"?**

#### **Luke 5:11-32**

- Are you guilty, at all, of the practice of "favorable comparisons"-if so, with what or whom do you compare yourself when you engage in this practice?
- What was the fatal flaw of the Pharisee in Luke 18?
- What do we know about the older son's attitude, and what if anything was wrong about his attitude?
- Can you see yourself, at all, in the older brother in Luke 15?

### **Refined Sins—Respectable Sins**

**"Sins we can commit regularly and still retain our religious position"**

- Sins of the tongue, Gossip, Corrupting and unwholesome talk
- A critical spirit, Judgmentalism, Lack of forgiveness
- Boasting or pride
- Resentment, Impatience, Irritability
- Being easily offended
- Lack of concern for the weaker brother or sister
- Materialism or stinginess, lack of a generous, giving heart

**Luke 17:1-4**

**The Seriousness of Sin**

**"Are we too comfortable with the whole concept of sin?"**

**God's view of sin:**

**Leviticus 16:21** = "rebellion"

**2 Samuel 12:9-10** = "despising"

**1 Kings 13:21-22** = "defiance"

**Positive Character Traits—How Do We Score?**

**Ephesians 4:22-24**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-5**

Take the following test to see how you are doing in the implementation of 1 Corinthians 13:4-5. Take the listed positive aspects of practicing love towards the person in your life--fill in the blank--that you think you love the very most (we won't worry about loving enemies for the moment). Ask yourself, on each of these positive action- steps-of-loving how you are doing in putting that action step into practice. Rank yourself from 1-5 on each of these statements. Circle the number 1 if your answer is "not at all". Circle the number 2 if your answer is "sometimes". Circle the number 3 if your answer is "about half the time". Circle the number 4 if your answer is "most of the time". And, finally, (if you are very brave and are well grounded against lightning striking) circle the number 5 if your answer is "always".

I am patient with because I love (him)(her) and want to forgive (him)(her)

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

I am kind to \_\_\_\_\_ because I love (him)(her) and want to help (him)(her)

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

I do not envy's possessions or gifts because I love \_\_\_\_\_ and want \_\_\_\_\_ to have the best

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

I am not insist on my own way because I love \_\_\_\_\_ and want to meet (his)(her) needs

1 2 3 4 5  
I do not boast about my attainments because I love \_\_\_\_\_ and want to hear about (his)(hers)

1 2 3 4 5  
I am not arrogant because I love \_\_\_\_\_ and want to esteem (him)(her) before myself

1 2 3 4 5  
I am not rude because I love \_\_\_\_\_ and care about (his)(her) feelings

1 2 3 4 5  
I am not irritable toward (him)(her) because of (his)(her) offenses against me

1 2 3 4 5  
I do not (remember or rejoice in) (his)(her) sins to bring them up against (him)(her)

Now, take that same test for your worst enemy, and while you are at it take the same kind of test for the other twenty-six of the positive character traits Christians should be striving for, and then tell yourself, honestly, is there any room for self-righteousness in light of this kind of practical evaluation of the list of positive character traits that we are to have as Christians?

1. Compassion	14. Impartiality
2. Considerateness	15. Joy
3. Contentment	16. Kindness
4. Faith	17. Mercy
5. Faithfulness	18. Patience
6. Forbearance	19. Peace
7. Forgiving Spirit	20. Perseverance
8. Generosity	21. Purity
9. Gentleness	22. Righteousness
10. Godliness	23. Self-control
11. Goodness	24. Sincerity
12. Honesty	25. Submissiveness
13. Humility	26. Thankfulness

### Introspection or Honest, Humble Candor?

"I am this day seventy years old, a monument of Divine mercy and goodness, though on a review of my life I find much, very much, for which I ought to be humbled in the dust; my direct and positive sins are innumerable, my negligence in the Lord's work has been great, I have not promoted His cause, nor sought His glory and honour as I ought, notwithstanding all this, I am spared till now, and am still retained in His Work, and I trust I am received into the divine favour through him." -**William Carey**

"The believer is a new creation, he belongs to a holy generation and a peculiar people-the Spirit of God is in him, and in all respects he is far removed from the natural man; but for all that the Christian is still a sinner. He is so from the imperfection of his nature, and will continue so to the end of his earthly life. The black fingers of sin leave smudges upon our fairest robes. Sin mars our repentance, before the great Potter has finished it upon the wheel. [otherwise why would-He need to be faithful to complete it] Selfishness defiles our tears, and unbelief tampers with our faith. The best thing we ever did apart from the merit of Jesus only swelled the number of our sins; for when we have been most pure in our own sight; and as He charged His angels with folly, much more must He charge us with it, even in our most angelic frames of mind. The song which trills to heaven, and seeks to emulate seraphic strains, has human discords in it. The prayer which moves the arm of God is still a bruised and battered prayer, and only moves God's arm because the sinless One, the great Mediator, has stepped in to take away the sin of our supplication. The most golden faith or the purest degree of sanctification to which a Christian has ever attained on earth still has so much alloy in it as to be only worthy of the flames, considered in itself. Every night we look in the mirror we see a sinner, and we need to confess, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Oh, how precious is the blood of Christ to such hearts as ours! How priceless a gift is His perfect righteousness! And how bright the hope of perfect holiness hereafter! Even now, though sin dwells in us, its power is broken. It has no dominion; it is a broken-backed snake; we are in bitter conflict with it, but it is with a vanquished foe with which we have to deal. Yet a little while and we shall enter victoriously into the city where nothing defiles." -**Christ Spurgeon**, *Morning and Evening*, October 27

"Believers obey Christ as the one by whom our obedience is accepted by God. Believers know all their duties are weak, imperfect and unable to abide in God's presence. Therefore they look to Christ as the one who bears the iniquity of their holy things, who adds incense to their prayers, gathers out all the weeds from their duties and makes them acceptable to God." -**John Owen**

**Assignment for June 27:**

1. **Read and meditate on Romans 8:1 (in context)**
2. **Read Chapter 3 of *The Discipline of Grace***
3. **Consider your need for the gospel in light of your test results.**