

Contrasting Results for Self-Exaltation and Humility

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon contrasts the dangers of self-exaltation with the blessings of humility as taught in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

Scripture: Proverbs 30:12, Matthew 23:12, Luke 14:11, Luke 16:15, Luke 18:11, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Humility", "Pride"

Description

Bob Hoekstra preaches on the importance of humility and the dangers of self-righteousness, as illustrated in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The message emphasizes Jesus' teaching that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted, highlighting the universal principle of contrasting results for pride and humility.

Transcript

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men" . . . everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:11, 14)

The importance of Jesus' teaching in our present verse can be seen in its being repeated on various occasions (Matthew 23:12 and Luke 14:11). The instruction sets forth the universal inevitability of contrasting results for self-exaltation and humility. "Everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

This particular proclamation of the message was given in a parable that warns against self-righteousness and encourages humility. "He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18:9). The contrasting examples in the parable are the prayers of a self-assured religious leader and a repentant publican. "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector" (Luke 18:10). When the self-righteous Pharisee prayed, he was actually having a personal dialogue with himself, even though he vainly addressed his prayer to God?! "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself" (Luke 18:11a). He then appears to begin his prayer in a biblical manner, with an expression of thanksgiving. "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). However, his gratitude was based upon the ungodly assumption that he was innately better than others, particularly, this nearby publican. "God, I thank You that I am not like other men -- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this

tax collector" (Luke 18:11b). Then, he proceeded to elaborate upon his own virtues by reviewing his religious performance, which obviously seemed very impressive to him. "I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:12).

This self-righteous Pharisee was so assured of his good standing with God. Yet, he was measuring himself by his own eyes and in comparison to others. The scriptures that he would claim as his guide condemned such self-righteousness. "There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filthiness" (Proverbs 30:12). Although man may have been impressed with his external behavior, God saw the abomination of his godless heart. "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

Dear Lord, I am so grateful that the blood of Christ washes away the times when I have talked or thought -- or, even prayed -- like this self-righteousness Pharisee. Help me to humbly embrace Your perspective, not man's, in Jesus name, Amen.

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