

“Me, Myself and I” (outline)

Psalm 32; Luke 18:21-35

July 17, 2021

Intro

- Story about preaching at First Mount Holly
- Pride distorts our reality, makes us think we're doing more for God than God has done for us.
 - o Proverbs 16:18 – *“Pride goeth before the fall”*
 - o Like he should be grateful that I'm doing the right things.
- It's easy to become puffed up with pride, especially when you're following the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - o When we're prideful, we're often oblivious to reality.
 - o Sometimes, as we grow in Christ, we become outraged that the world around us hasn't done likewise. Then, we transfer ourselves from being the spiritual equivalent of the publican to that of the Pharisee.

The Two Men

- Pharisee
 - o Only about 3000 or so at a time, it's thought
 - o They were really considered to be good people, not the bad guys that we tend to conceptualize them as.
 - There is every reason to believe that the man that stands up really was the real deal.
 - o They looked at the world as it was and believed that it was only through strict adherence to God's law that the country could be saved.
 - o They held political sway as a result of their pioussness.
 - o Notice his posture
 - HE STANDS in front of everyone.
 - He looks up to heaven.
 - Everything about his bearing suggests self-involvement.
- Pride and judgment
 - o There seems to be a strong link between pride and judgment and that's shown very clearly in the Pharisee's prayer.
- The Tax Collector
 - o Or publican
 - o Roman system of collecting taxes relied on insiders who know the population to collect.
 - Tax collectors often collected far in excess of what the Romans wanted and then they kept that money for themselves.
 - People would literally cross to the other side of the street to avoid them.
 - o Look at his posture
 - Standing off, as through hiding from the full weight of God's holiness.

The Two Prayers

- Pharisee's prayer
 - o Is focused on self
 - He talks about what he does to prove he is righteous.
 - He really is going above and beyond.
 - o The tithe was only required on certain types of income.
 - o Fasting was only required once per week, doing g it twice was really adhering.
 - o Is very ego-centric, comparative and thus misses the point of Scripture
 - That we are all guilty before God.
 - **Romans 3:23** – *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
 - **Ecclesiastes 7:20** – *“Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.”*
 - **1 John 1:8** – *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*

- It is thought that this is an actual prayer that would've been used by Pharisees at the time.
- Publican's prayer
 - While brief, it's very telling.
 - Mercy is grounded in God's past acts.
 - Mercy seat – God, place me on the mercy seat
 - Mercy seat was the top of the ark where the sacrificial animal's blood would be placed on the day of atonement.
 - God's mercy is looked at as being an ongoing thing.
 - And he is super emphatic about being a sinner.
 - It isn't "a sinner" but rather, God be merciful to me THE Sinner.
 - Absolutely non-comparative
 - Takes ownership of the problem

Rundown Scripture when Meeting God

- One of these men has met God and one has not.

The point of the parable

- A word against judgment
 - Ben and I at the Columbia Zoo one day.
 - Ben was saying hello to everyone, I was silently making judgments on everyone.
 - **Luke 6:37** – *“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.”*
 - **James 4:12** – *“There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?”*
- What follows this material is Jesus talking about infants
 - Come to Christ as a child
 - What is it about a child?
 - They're totally dependent on their caregivers.
 - They can't do anything to help themselves and are entirely at the mercy of their caregivers.
 - We are entirely at God's mercy which is promised to us through Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection.

Justification

- Define justification
 - **Justification** is [God's](#) righteous act of removing the condemnation, guilt, and penalty of sin, by grace, while, at the same time, declaring the unrighteous to be righteous, through faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice.
 - But the grain of modern society is convinced us that, on our own accord, we're just fine and dandy.
 - **Kevin DeYoung writes** – “The problem today is that the "good news" is often replaced with good advice and good causes. Churches that should be talking about the work of Christ on the cross and the grace of God for sinners are stuck on recycled pop psychology, moral exhortation, or entertainment. But these fail to speak to the eternal question that haunts all of us: How do I know that I'm OK? We all want to know we are justified.
- The problem is we live in a meritocracy.
 - That is to say that in this world, you go only as far as you're willing to push.
 - Those that are more capable, better, really succeed at a higher rate than those that aren't.
 - When we import that naturally into our faith lives, we begin to see ourselves as “self-justified.”
 - Look at your own thought process.

- How often do you think something to the effect of, “I’ve got my problems, but it’s not like I’ve killed anybody?”
 - Is it just me or is that depressingly similar to the Pharisee’s prayer not to be “like other men?”
 - Comparative morality is generally a pretty good sign you’re getting something wrong.
 - If you’re first that is to do a moral comparison between yourselves and other than it is to look internally at your own sin then there could be a problem.

Notes

C.S. Lewis noted, “Pride is there when we feel our religion is making us better than the next person--and it is the work of the devil, not of God.”

J.I. Packer defines the **grace of God** as “love freely shown toward guilty sinners, contrary to their merit and indeed in defiance of their demerit. It is God showing goodness to persons who deserve only severity and had no reason to expect anything but severity.”

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Genesis 3:9-10 – “But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ And he said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’”

Job 40:4, 42:6 - “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?... therefore, I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Isaiah 6:5 – “And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’”

Habakkuk 3:16 – “Hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me.”

Luke 6:37 – “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

James 4:12 – “There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?”

Romans 5:1 – “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

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