

FAITH, NOT WORKS

Luke 18:9-14

The following are resource questions that you can use with your Care Group for discussion. They are based on the sermon preached on Sunday, May 30 2010, by Rev Bobby Lee at the Grace Baptist Church, Singapore. The sermon is available online at <http://www.gracebap.org.sg/worship/series.html>.

May 30, 2010

While the Pharisee was occupied with his self-righteousness, the tax-collector was occupied with his sinfulness.

There are people who give you the impression that they are godly when they are not. They may have the profile and appearance, and there may be things about them that give you the impression that they are close to God, but it is those who say, "I am nothing" who really know His presence. That was the tax-collector. He stood far off, couldn't even look up to heaven and beat his chest.

The straight-forward, genuine directness of the tax-collector's prayer, the perfect example of simplicity and repentance. No matter how wicked we are, all sinners need to do in order to win acceptance is repent, like the prodigal son, to acknowledge their fault and turn to the Lord.

This is precisely the difference between the two characters.

Discuss:

1. What are some of the ways whereby your prayers are tinged with pride and self-serving, where you allow yourself to dwell on what you have versus what others are lacking...in terms of physical as well as spiritual talents and gifts?
2. In what ways and on what occasions would you be tempted to stand on your works before God rather than on His grace? Job promotions...Exam results...Achievements.. Recognitions...son on and so forth...
3. When was the last time you see yourself as a sinner; asked for mercy and thanked God for reconciling you to Him? Was it days, week, months, years or even decades? What have you got to say? No time to acknowledge or no place in your life to acknowledge this?
4. Why is it that those who have been blessed (wealth, health, beauty) are more prone to turn away from God unto himself? Cf. Proverbs 30:8-10.
5. Does it mean that those who are poor will be more inclined towards God?

Remark: The Pharisee and the tax-collector were contrasted based on their concept regarding righteousness; not on their personal wealth (tax-collectors are also rich people).

Prayer: Lord, let me evaluate myself with the spotlight of You, the righteous Judge...have mercy on me...I am a sinner (past, present and future) but a sinner saved by grace. I want to live in Your grace. Hallelujah! Amen!