



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**30th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
October 26th 2025**

Theme: "For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted"

Gathering Prayer

All: Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 18:9-14

⁹ He spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else, ¹⁰ 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. ¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get."

¹³ The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner".

¹⁴ This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Gospel Focus

In this parable, Jesus is not encouraging us to live like the tax collectors of his time—who would steal from those whose taxes were collected—but in reminding us that we are all more alike than we sometimes care to admit. The Pharisee's mistake is not praying or fasting or paying tithes; it is believing that doing those things makes him different from, and better than, his fellow human beings. The tax collector is doing wrong, and Jesus does not condone his actions. However, what he gets right is his standing in relation to God. He knows he is a sinner and he knows he needs God's mercy. This is true of all of us, no matter how well we pray or how generous we are. It is always God who saves us, not ourselves.

Gospel Reflection

Jesus sometimes uses parables, like the one in today's gospel, to help his listeners identify and change behavior in themselves that is harmful.

Two characters, a Pharisee and a tax collector, go up to the temple to pray. Jesus' original audience would have instinctively compared them, thinking the first to be admirable and the latter despicable. Pharisees were known for their piety. This one fast and tithes above and beyond what is required. Surely, these actions indicate that he is righteous, that is, in right relation with God, with other human beings, and the whole of creation. The Pharisee's prayer, however, indicates otherwise. The entire prayer directs attention to himself and his accomplishments. "I thank you...I am not like...I fast...I pay." He thanked God, not for the gifts he has been given, but for not being like all the rest of humanity, which he sees as rapacious, unjust, and adulterous. His comparisons make him haughty and disconnected with others. Moreover, he appears to have no need of God, he might see how poorly he embodies divine compassion and connectedness to all other beings.

The tax collector, in contrast, beats his breast and prays for openness to divine mercy, which has the power to transform his sinfulness.

It is likely that he finds himself in this degraded position of collecting taxes because there are no alternatives. One would only stoop to such a job when no other work could be found. Tax collectors were low-level functionaries with no bargaining power. If they extorted money beyond what was their due, it was out of desperation, to keep starvation at bay. Should the tax collector try to repent, there would be no way to repay the many passersby from whom he extracted extra money, so as he prays, he offers no vow to make restitution. All he can hope for is God's merciful forgiveness.

The end of the parable is startling: it is the tax collector who is in right relation. He has sinned, but he knows and acknowledges it. He is acutely aware of his utter dependence on God. He does not compare himself to others but seeks connectedness to them, through their common bond of reliance on God's mercy.

The parable seems to invite comparison at the two characters, and we are accustomed to side with the tax collector. In the very act of making comparisons that reflect unfavorably on the Pharisee, however, we may find ourselves caught up in the very judgmental thinking we despise in him. In truth, there is something of the Pharisee in us, as we so easily make comparisons, exalting ourselves by humiliating others. There is also something of the tax collector in us, who humbly recognizes his own weaknesses while opening himself to the Source of all mercy. The parable invites us to leave aside all comparisons and to seek oneness with the incomparably Merciful One. From this stance comes right relation with all.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading – Sirach 35:15b-17, 20-22b

¹⁵ ... for the Lord is the judge, and with him is no partiality. ¹⁶ He will not show partiality in the case of a poor man; and he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged. ¹⁷ He will not ignore the supplication of the fatherless, nor the widow when she pours out her story. ... ²⁰ He whose service is pleasing to the Lord will be accepted, and his prayer will reach to the clouds. ²¹ The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and he will not be consoled until it reaches the Lord; he will not desist until the Most High visits him, ²² and does justice for the righteous, and executes judgment.

Responsorial Reading – Ps 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23

R: The Lord hears the cry of the poor. (R)

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord; the lowly will hear me and be glad. **(R)**

The Lord confronts the evildoers, to destroy remembrance of them from the earth. When the just cry out, the Lord hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them.
(R)

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. The Lord redeems the lives of his servants; no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him.
(R)

Second Reading – 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

⁶ As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. ⁷ I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; ⁸ all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

¹⁶ The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it.

¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

588. Jesus scandalized the Pharisees by eating with tax collectors and sinners as familiarly as with themselves. (Cf. [Lk 5:30; 7:36; 11:37; 14:1.](#)) Against those among them "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others", Jesus affirmed: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." ([Lk 18:9; 5:32; cf. Jn 7:49; 9:34.](#)) He went further by proclaiming before the Pharisees that, since sin is universal, those who pretend not to need salvation are blind to themselves. (Cf. [Jn 8:33-36; 9:40-41.](#))

2559. "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? ([Ps 130:1.](#)) He who humbles himself will be exalted; (Cf. [Lk 18:9-14.](#)) *humility* is the foundation of prayer, Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," ([Rom 8:26.](#)) are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."

2613. Three [principal parables on prayer are transmitted to us by St. Luke:](#)

- The first, "the importunate friend," (Cf. [Lk 11:5-13.](#)) invites us to urgent prayer: "Knock, and it will be opened to you." To the one who prays like this, the heavenly Father will "give whatever he needs," and above all the Holy Spirit who contains all gifts.
- The second, "the importunate widow," (Cf. [Lk 18:1-8.](#)) is centered on one of the qualities of prayer: it is necessary to pray always without ceasing and with the patience of faith. "And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"
- The third parable, "the Pharisee and the tax collector," ([Lk 18:9-14.](#)) concerns the humility of the heart that prays. "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" The Church continues to make this prayer its own: *Kyrie eleison!*

2631. The first movement of the prayer of petition is *asking forgiveness*, like the tax collector in the parable: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (*Lk 18:13*.) It is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another, so that "we receive from him whatever we ask." (*1 Jn 3:22; cf. 1:7-2:2*.) Asking forgiveness is the prerequisite for both the Eucharistic liturgy and personal prayer.

2839. With bold confidence, we began praying to our Father. In begging him that his name be hallowed, we were in fact asking him that we ourselves might be always made more holy. But though we are clothed with the baptismal garment, we do not cease to sin, to turn away from God. Now, in this new petition, we return to him like the prodigal son and, like the tax collector, recognize that we are sinners before him. (Cf. *Lk 15:11-32, 18:13*) Our petition begins with a "confession" of our wretchedness and his mercy. Our hope is firm because, in his Son, "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (*Col 1:14; Eph 1:7*) We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the sacraments of his Church. (Cf. *Mt 26:28; Jn 20:23*)

Sharing and Discussion

1. How do you nurture a humble heart? What helps you stay mindful that God is the Creator and you are His creation?
2. What does this story teach you about your relationship with God, and how could it change the way you live, pray, or treat others?
3. Paul trusted God even in his final days. How does his example speak to you personally, and how might it influence the way you pray or turn to God in your daily life?

Closing Prayer

All: O God, you hear the prayers of the lowly that pierce beyond our clouds of darkness. Pierce our hearts this day and may we who have heard your word become more fully your servants in the world. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.