

## The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

Luke 18:10-14

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (KJV)

The current Gospel is a lesson in the benefit of humility. The publican recognized his personal sinfulness and acknowledged it before the Lord. The publican did not praise his own goodness. He sought God's mercy.

Today is a time for honest personal self-examination. Now is the time to accurately judge and acknowledge personal sinfulness before the Lord. Great Lent is approaching. It is time to improve the condition of the soul.

Caring for the soul and seeking purity of the soul is a life-long necessity. Sinfulness enters daily life and must be fiercely addressed. The Lord God is present to help believers cleanse personal sins.

The publican is a lasting example of how to turn to the Lord and seek forgiveness. The Pharisee is an example of what not to do. The Pharisee focused on what he considered his goodness. He did not see his own sins.

Believers grow in Christ when seeing and taking responsibility for their personal sins. Growth in Jesus Christ is unlimited for those willing to vigorously root out and repel personal sin.

God's Holy Church proclaims the Gospel of the Publican and the Pharisee each year for believers to think carefully about personal sin. The soul benefits from the forgiveness possible in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ welcomes believers seriously seeking forgiveness of personal sins. Jesus Christ is present to forgive and blot out personal sins. Jesus Christ will cleanse and brighten the soul.

The Pharisee had a high opinion of himself. He was blinded to his own shortcomings. The Pharisee did not see sinfulness as a part of his life. He looked down on others including the Publican.

Each believer has sufficient work to do on his or her self. Believers do not benefit by judging others or comparing the self to others. The standards for the Christian life are clear in Jesus Christ and in Christ's teachings.

The lives of the saints and martyrs demonstrate the value of personal humility and waging war against personal sin. Wise believers heed the lessons of the present Gospel. Wise believers honestly seek to root out personal sin.

The Gospel shines light on the condition of each soul. Jesus Christ shines through the Gospel to each heart, mind and soul. God's Holy Church offers the loving environment for cleansing of the soul.

Mindful believers heed the content of the Gospel. Attentive believers apply the Gospel to personal life and seek to grow in Christ. Jesus Christ's Light and Life shines through the Gospel to those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

Each Divine Liturgy is an opportunity to grow in Jesus Christ. Each Divine Liturgy is direct experience with Jesus Christ. The Gospel provides Divine nourishment for each heart, mind and soul.

Hearers of the Gospel of the Publican and the Pharisee respond in their individual ways. Adhering to and following the teachings of Jesus Christ rests within each heart, mind and soul.

God's Holy Church proclaims the Gospel for the benefit of all willing to listen. Peace and joy await willing listeners to the Gospel. Fullness in life and eternal life awaits those heeding the Gospel teachings.

Thank God for the humility and honesty of the Publican. Thank God for the Church proclaiming the Gospel. Now is the time to seriously pray for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Thank God for mercy being available to sinners. Thank God for the opportunity to repent of sins and be renewed in Jesus Christ. Each moment is an opportunity to repent and begin anew in Christ.

Each Divine Liturgy offers newness and growth in Jesus Christ. The Church stands against the wiles of the devil and the evil of the world. The Church offers God's goodness, mercy and forgiveness.

The time of life comes only once. Moments of life are not repeated. Believers choose whether to willingly live the life in Christ. Sinfulness has no place in the life in Christ.

Each believer embraces Jesus Christ at Baptism. Following Jesus Christ is intended for the time remaining in life after exiting the Baptismal font.

It is always timely to repent of sin to follow Jesus Christ.

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The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Transfer of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom. St. Danilo of Karlovac. January 27/February 9, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic