

Précis of the sermon August 25 by the Rev. Dr. Stephen Andrews at Lake Joseph Community Church

This sermon based on Luke Chapter 18 verses 9-14 deals with our natural human impulse to compare ourselves with others. It describes a Pharisee and a tax collector going to the temple to pray. Tax collectors in Judea under the Romans were despised. The Pharisee in the parable, on the other hand, was a particularly upright man and his prayer reflects the fact that he is sure of his own goodness. In essence, he was praying a self-congratulatory prayer to himself while looking down on others. On the other hand, the tax collector expresses remorse as a sinner in his prayer and asks God to have mercy on him. Jesus concludes that the tax collector went down to his home justified but not the Pharisee. This would have shocked his listeners as it should shock us today. The parable is meant to teach us that the Kingdom of God is not built on our human effort or obedience but rather on the mercy of God.