

Dover

Daily

DEVOTIONALS

Growing
Together in
God's Word!

Dover Daily Devotionals

In Sunday's sermon, we delved into the profound Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, contrasting self-righteousness with genuine humility before God. We explored how the Pharisee's pride and self-commendation distanced him from God, while the tax collector's simple yet heartfelt plea for mercy, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner;" exemplified the humility that God honors. This message challenged us to reflect on our own hearts, to eschew the trap of comparing ourselves to others, and to approach God with a sincere acknowledgment of our need for His grace and forgiveness.

Monday: Humility Before God

"But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'" - Luke 18:13-14

Devotional:

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector tells the story of two men who went to the temple to pray. One of them was a tax collector who was not well-liked by society because of his dishonest ways, while the other was a Pharisee, a respected religious leader. The tax collector humbly admitted his sins and asked God to have mercy on him, saying, "God, please show mercy to me, a sinner!" The Pharisee, on the other hand, boasted about his righteous behavior and his religious practices.

When we are humble, we recognize that we rely on God's mercy and grace, and we acknowledge our unworthiness before Him. A humble attitude leads us to repentance and strengthens our relationship with God. In contrast, prideful behavior can lead us to destruction. It closes our eyes to our own faults and elevates us above others. It makes us forget our need for God's mercy and grace.

This story encourages us to cultivate a humble attitude towards God and others. It reminds us that our worth comes from the love and grace of God, not from our own accomplishments. When we humbly admit our need for God, we allow His love to transform our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does humility look like in our daily lives?
2. How can we guard against the temptation to judge others as the Pharisee did?

Prayer:

Lord, help us to approach You with a humble heart, recognizing our need for Your mercy. Teach us to walk in humility, always aware of Your grace that covers our sins.

Tuesday: The Danger of Self-Righteousness

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" - Proverbs 16:18

Devotional:

It's important to remain humble and repentant in life because it helps us to grow and learn from our mistakes. Pride can be dangerous as it often leads to destruction. The story of the Pharisee is a good example of how believing in our own moral superiority can be harmful and can make us blind to our need for God's help. To stay on the right path, we must be open to recognizing our flaws and weaknesses and seek guidance from God. True righteousness comes from being honest with ourselves, taking responsibility for our actions, and turning towards God. When we are humble, we can acknowledge our limitations and ask for help from others, which can lead to growth and positive change.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can self-righteousness affect our relationship with God and others?
2. In what areas of your life might you be prone to self-righteousness?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, protect us from the pride that leads to downfall. Help us to see ourselves and others through Your eyes of grace and compassion.

Wednesday: Repentance and God's Mercy

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" - Psalm 51:17

Devotional:

The Bible teaches us that God values a broken and contrite heart more than all the sacrifices and religious observances we could offer. In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, we see how the tax collector's simple, heartfelt plea for mercy captures the essence of genuine repentance. This story

invites us to examine our own hearts and consider whether our religious practices are truly motivated by a desire to please God or if they are simply an attempt to earn His favor. The tax collector's humility and recognition of his own sinfulness serve as a powerful reminder that we all fall short of God's standards and need His mercy and forgiveness. When we come before God with true repentance, seeking His grace and forgiveness, we can experience the joy and peace of being reconciled to Him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does genuine repentance look like in your life?
2. How can we cultivate a contrite heart before God?

Prayer:

Lord, grant us the grace to come before You with genuine repentance. May our hearts always seek Your mercy and forgiveness, knowing You will not despise a broken and contrite spirit.

Thursday: The Value of Genuine Prayer

"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" - Matthew 6:6

Devotional:

Prayer is a deeply personal and intimate conversation with God, where we can be completely honest and truthful with ourselves and with Him. It is a time where we can express our deepest thoughts, fears, and desires, without any fear of judgment or rejection. In the parable of the pharisee and the tax collector, Jesus tells us a story about two men who went to the temple to pray. One of them, a Pharisee, prayed in a way that was more about bragging and showing off his righteousness in front of others, rather than truly connecting with God. The other man, a tax collector, humbly prayed with sincerity, asking for God's mercy and forgiveness. This story teaches us a valuable lesson about the importance of honesty and sincerity in prayer. When we pray with a genuine heart, we are able to connect more deeply with God and receive His guidance and blessings. It is not about impressing others or seeking recognition, but about building a personal and meaningful relationship with God.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we ensure our prayers reflect sincerity and not performance?
2. What role does humility play in genuine prayer?

Prayer:

Father, teach us to pray with hearts open and honest before You, seeking not to be seen by others but to

be heard by You, in the quiet place of genuine communion.

Friday: Recognizing Our Need for Grace

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" - Ephesians 2:8-9

Devotional:

Salvation is a gift that is bestowed upon us by God's grace, and it is attained through faith. It is not something that is earned or deserved as a reward for our good deeds. The Pharisee was a very religious man who placed great emphasis on his religious actions and believed that they would justify him before God. On the other hand, the tax collector recognized his own unworthiness and relied solely on God's mercy to save him. This parable highlights an important distinction between two different approaches to salvation - one based on self-righteousness and the other based on humility and faith. We must recognize that we cannot earn our salvation through our own efforts, and that we must rely solely on God's grace to be saved. This means accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and trusting in His sacrifice on the cross as the only means of our salvation. By doing so, we can be assured of our eternal destiny with God in heaven.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does understanding grace change the way we live?
2. Why is it important to rely on God's grace rather than our own efforts?

Prayer:

Gracious God, remind us daily that our salvation comes through Your grace alone. Help us to live in the freedom and joy of this truth.

Saturday: The Joy of Salvation

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" - Romans 3:23-24

Devotional:

Every person has sinned and therefore falls short of the glory of God. However, we can receive justification freely through God's grace. This means that we can be declared righteous in the eyes of God, even though we have sinned. The joy of salvation is open to all who confess their sins and acknowledge their need for God's mercy, just like the tax collector in the parable. This message reminds us that even though we are imperfect beings, we have the opportunity to be made perfect in the eyes of God through His grace and our faith in Him. It encourages us to embrace the joy and peace that come from knowing

that we are saved, and to share that message of hope with others who may be struggling with their own sinfulness.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the joy of salvation impact our daily lives?
2. In what ways can we share the joy of salvation with others?

Prayer:

Thank You, Father, for the unspeakable joy of salvation. Help us to live in the light of Your grace, sharing the good news of Your mercy and love with all around us.