

THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER

(Why The Pharisee Was Not Heard In Prayer)

Luke 18:9-14



4 Spirits That Will Kill Our Praying

1. A "Censorship" Spirit
2. A "Critical" Spirit
3. A "Comparison" Spirit
4. A "Congratulatory" Spirit

"The Pharisee Stood And Prayed Thus With Himself, God, I Thank Thee, That I Am Not As Other Men Are... Even As This Publican" (Luke 18:11)

BILL KIRK

“WHEN PRAYER IS WASTED”

(How A Pharisee Spirit Will Steal Our Effectiveness In Prayer)
Luke 18:9-14

“I tell you, his man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (v.14)

INTRODUCTION

Fact: Jesus has just finished His parable of the unjust judge (v.1-8)

- Fact:**
- #1. How we must persevere in prayer
 - #2. How prevailing prayer still works today
 - #3. How God is not like the unjust judge

Fact: Now we come to the attitude of prayer in (v.9-14)

- #1. How we can know when prayer is wasted
- #2. How we can detect a Pharisee spirit
- #3. How we can protect ourselves from carnal attitudes
- #4. How we can live transparent before God

What A Holy Ambition

- #1. Both men went to the right place
- #2. Both men went for the right purpose
- #3. Both men expected an audience with God in prayer
- #4. Both men seem to be similar in many ways

(But Oh What A Difference)

I. Look At The Pharisee (v. 11,12)

“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” (v.11)

“I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess” (v.12)

A. The Pharisee’s Facts Are Recorded:

- #1. He stood (but with an uplifted chin)
- #2. He boasted (but in his own good works)
- #3. He prayed (but only with himself)
- #4. He thanked God (but for the wrong reasons)
- #5. He compared himself (but with the wrong person)

B. The Pharisee’s Failure Is Recorded:

- #1. He told God about all the sins he didn’t commit (thinking that God was now obligated to him on the basis of what he didn’t do)
- #2. He told God about all the good he did do (thinking that God was impressed by the observance of certain rites, rituals and ceremonies)

Question: Why did this man's praying go no further than himself?

Answer: Because it was prayed with a Pharisee Spirit.

(4 Deadly Elements Of A Self-Righteous (Pharisee) Attitude:)

#1. A Censorship Spirit

- A. He focuses on the extortioners
- B. He focuses on the unjust
- C. He focuses on the adulterers

*He is bent on looking at what everybody else is doing.

#2. A Critical Spirit

- A. "Even as this publican" reveals his corrupt heart
- B. He is bent on pointing out faults and criticizing
- C. He is quick to tattletale on the publican to God

*He disgraces his own praying by pointing out the "appeared failures" in someone else.

#3. A Comparison Spirit

- A. "I am not as other men are" is a false comparison
- B. This pharisee is measuring himself by someone else
- C. He compares himself and looks pretty good to the other man

*He is bent on appearing "better than" the publican (which smells of pride)

#4. A Congratulatory Spirit

- A. "I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all"
- B. He loves to congratulate his own importance
- C. He reminds God of all his accomplishments

*He somehow feels that God owes it to him to answer his prayer.

II. Look At The Publican (v.13)

"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" (v. 13)

(3 Noticeables From The Publican)

A. He "Stood Afar Off"

- #1. The publican refused to be "familiar" in the Holy place
- #2. The publican came in with "head low" (not chin high)
- #3. The publican approached God (but not with an inflated view of his own importance)

B. He "Smote His Breast"

- #1. Which reveals inward grief over his condition
- #2. Which is the beginning of having God's attention
- #3. Which is an attitude of humility before God

C. He said, "God Be Merciful to Me a Sinner"

- #1. The publican sensed his need of God
- #2. The publican cried out for mercy
- #3. The publican came clean and refused to pretend

(A Publican Spirit Is Detectable)

- #1. It is conscious of its own moral depravity
- #2. It knows that it needs what it does not deserve
- #3. It never entertains its own self-importance
- #4. It refuses to be harsh or condescending towards another
- #5. It throws its accomplishments at the feet of Jesus
- #6. It never feels good in comparison to others
- #7. It finds an audience with God in prayer

What A Discovery Here:

- #1. The closer that someone is to God, the more gracious they are with people
(and)
- #2. The farther that someone is from God, the less gracious they are with people
(repeat)

**(A Clear Illustration Of A Pharisee Spirit)
Luke 7:36-50**

"Now when the pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him: for she is a sinner" (v.39)

Fact: The Pharisee Lost Sight Of Some Things:

- #1. He was a bankrupt sinner like the prostitute
- #2. Jesus offers forgiveness to everyone
- #3. There is no degree of sinners in the eyes of God
- #4. He was not broken over the sin of another
- #5. His heart was polluted; he wanted to put on a "good show"

(A Pharisee Spirit Is Easily Detected)

- #1. It looks around rather than above
- #2. It depends on works instead of grace
- #3. It feels superior instead of poverty stricken
- #4. It exalts its own importance in the church
- #5. It cannot confess its shortcomings to another
- #6. It fills with pretense and wants to impress people
- #7. It fails to see the need to repent and be changed

III. Look At The Principle (v.14)

"I tell you, this man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (v.14)

Fact: The publican was justified (God heard his prayer that depended upon the grace of God)

Fact: The pharisee left the temple with the same cold heart he brought with him (he prayed only with himself)

(Why? Because...)

#1..."Everyone that exalts himself shall be abased"

#2..."Everyone that humbles himself shall be exalted"

(In Other Words)

To Have Power With God In Prayer:

- #1. I must learn to take the low road
- #2. I must refuse to pretend or seek to impress
- #3. I must die to the desire to compare with another
- #4. I must confess I am a sinner, saved by grace!

AMEN!

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