

Luke 18:9-14

9 To **some who were confident of their own righteousness** and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'**

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

INTRO - Please imagine with me a story or two men, a parable, if you will, though not quite the parable Jesus told. These two men were driving to work in Anchorage. One man worked in the office buildings in downtown Anchorage. It was early September, school had started, and this successful professional man was driving his BMW about 74 miles an hour. Usually he wouldn't have been stopped, but near Labor Day the Police were especially vigilant around the holiday. He was stopped, given a ticket, and continued in to work.

The other man was driving his hunting truck to work at one of the military bases. The truck might catch one's attention because it was muddy, and loud, and then it was speeding. The man had gotten in late from hunting and slept in a little too long. In order not to get in trouble again he was actually doing between 80 and 85 miles an hour in a truck that attracted attention. He cursed when the police stopped him. He couldn't afford the fine, and now he would be later yet.

Two men, both guilty of the same basic infraction of the law, both caught on the same day on the road from the Valley into Anchorage.

Two men caught speeding.

I. Now, before we continue with our story, let's go back to our emphasis for this Fall. We have been discussing Discipleship.

A. We have been considering what it looks like to follow Jesus in the way God would want us to.

1. Christian Discipleship means following Jesus.
2. Jesus calls disciples to be faithful, to be committed, to actually *live* their faith and to put it into action with honesty, patience, forgiveness, concern for the needy.
3. The call to discipleship is a call to the cross, to giving up ourselves and living for Jesus.

B. Often, because of the commitment, people think of discipleship as what we give to God.

1. Partly, that is true.
2. Discipleship is a response to God's amazing love.
3. Discipleship, properly understood is always returning to God for His grace to us.

C. But, sometimes there are misunderstandings about our call to follow Jesus.

1. Discipleship NEVER starts with what we do for the Lord.
2. In fact, discipleship NEVER saves, not the response part, that is.
3. Discipleship never starts with us, it starts with Jesus.
4. When people think that discipleship starts with our gifts to God, well, they can be like the Pharisee, who trusted himself. They, or we, can be Christians whose mistaken thought makes them not so much fun to be around.

II. Back to our story, the two men had a different reaction to their traffic stop.

A week later the men were driving to work in Anchorage again. The man in the BMW was thinking about his traffic stop. The police may have caught going fast, but he was a good driver. The policeman probably hadn't realized that. Because he was a good driver he could deal with speed. In fact, he worked in an important office and he was an important man with lots to do, sometimes needed to speed in order to make his appointments. If anyone was wrong that day, it was actually the police, for not realizing who they were stopping.

The man on the way to the base had actually washed his pickup. He had figured out how he could use some permanent fund he had intended for a new 4 wheeler to instead pay his traffic fine. But, he was thinking about the fact that he often was speeding, because he was often late. Sometimes he wasn't as responsible as he could be because he was more likely to do outdoor things, fun things, instead of get ready. Sometimes his family suffered because of his lack of attention to his job. He needed to change.

A. Discipleship includes Commitment, service, what we have to offer God,

1. But, DISCIPLESHIP NEVER STARTS WITH OUR COMMITMENT.
2. Real discipleship, Godly discipleship, starts with our unworthiness and our need of a Savior.

B. Jesus tells the parable in today's lesson to specific people, to people to people who trusted themselves, because they had not started with their sin and need for a Savior.

1. Look at verse 9 in our parable for today. This man is not only a Pharisee, whom look says in verse 9 **were confident of their own righteousness.**
2. Look at verse 11 and 12. He looked down on others. **11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'**
3. Why would someone be a Christian disciple, and follow a SAVIOR, if we trust ourselves and don't need a Savior?

C. Jesus also points to the tax collector.

1. It was not his actions Jesus encouraged. This man was a sinner.
2. But Jesus points to his attitude, to his knowledge and sorrow over his sin, his trust in God, and his desire to change.
3. Jesus says of the tax collector, **"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

III. When the man in the BMW was thinking about how the police had been wrong he hit the slick of ice going up Eklutna hill. It was the first frost of the year, there had been some rain, and there was black ice on the hill. However, there was already a car sideways in the road, and he hit the car. At 73 mph his car was totalled.

He was taken away from the accident with a back injury that would never really heal.

A. Self assurance has it's dangers.

1. In fact, self assurance in relationship to God can be deadly.
2. If people do trust themselves, then they don't trust the Lord.

B. What does discipleship look like? Admitting our sin, and our failure is the first part of discipleship.

1. A disciple first knows his sin. Secondly knows his savior, who gave His life for undeserving people like us. Finally, in repentance a disciple is always working to change their life.
2. Competance and self assurance are popular.
3. Humility is not really popular. But, discipleship starts with repentance, and always looks humble.

C. Do you know that God has a plan to help us with repentance and humility? We have seen it today. Please turn with me to Romans 6:3-4. **3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.**

1. We are baptized, not just because we do sinful, selfish, mean, actions, but because we are born sinful.
2. But in baptism, we are joined to Jesus' death. We die to sin. We are forgiven. We learn of mercy.
3. But, in baptism we are joined to Jesus' resurrection, and God helps us to live as a disciple.
 - A. We need God's help, God's guidance, his forgiveness.
 - B. One way God helps us to live as disciples is through our baptism.

CONCLUSION When came up on the flats out of Eklutna the man in the truck hit the slick of ice, but he was not talk-gating. Others were going a lot faster. And when he slid into the ditch he didn't hit other cars. Had to call for a wrecker, but not damaged, not hurt.