



## SERMON GROUP LINK

**BRADY HERBERT | "PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE & THE TAX COLLECTOR"**

*Harris Creek Baptist Church*

*June 22, 2014*

## LIFE GROUP LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

*In preparation for group discussion, take a few minutes to read through the instructions to the right.*

## PASSAGES TO STUDY

**SERMON TEXT:**

*Luke 18:9-14*

**OTHER SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:**

*Luke 6:20; 13:31*

## BEFORE LIFE GROUP

1. Spend time in prayer and studying the passage.
2. Listen to the sermon and take notes. Write down questions you had while listening to the sermon.
3. Read through all of the material.
4. Write down two or three ways to apply the passage to your daily life.

## DURING LIFE GROUP

1. Summarize the sermon in your own words. Ask other group members to do the same.
2. Ask someone to read the text for the group.
3. Lead your group through the discussion questions, asking the ones that are relevant to your group. Supplement some of the discussion with your own thoughts and follow-up questions.
4. Share how you might be able to apply the sermon to your everyday life.
5. Close with a time of prayer, asking God to increase the depth of our relationship with Him and our obedience to what we learned.

## SERMON RECAP

Many of the world's famous parables are thousands of years old and have been handed down from generation to generation. There is obviously a reason these stories stick with us, but the original meaning behind any given parable is always in danger of being lost in translation. This is the case with parables outside of Scripture as well as parables that Jesus told. If we lose the cultural context behind these stories, the natural tendency is to turn the characters in parables into caricatures of themselves. That is particularly the case with the parable found in Luke 18:9-14 called "The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector." Since Pharisees and tax collectors are not positions held within our society, it's easy to stand outside the story and experience it from a distance. However, doing so will keep us from being transformed by the parable. The only way to be transformed by a parable is to find one's self in the story, to identify with the characters. What we find when we dig beneath the surface of this particular parable is that it relates to our lives much more than we might have imagined.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luke 18:9 says Jesus addressed this parable to those "who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else." Why does this context matter and how is it different from the context leading into other parables Jesus told?
2. This is the only parable Jesus told that takes place in a worship, or "church," setting. What might that tell us about who needs to hear this parable the most?
3. It was said that religious environments are *more* susceptible to struggling with self-righteousness than those outside of a faith community. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. One of the two primary characters in this story is a Pharisee. How have we often mischaracterized Pharisees and turned them into caricatures of themselves? What would the public opinion of Pharisees have been in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century? How does that compare to the opinion of tax collectors in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century? Why were tax collectors so despised by their peers?
5. What are some similarities and some differences between the Pharisee's prayer and the tax collector's prayer? Is there anything good, or "normal," about the Pharisee's prayer? Is there anything missing from the tax collector's prayer that is troubling to you? What would have been the shocking or surprising element in this parable to the original listeners?
6. It was said that one reason Jesus told this parable was to remind us of the importance of staying in touch with our "inner poverty." What does this mean to you? Why do you think religious people tend to have such a difficult time admitting brokenness? How does staying in touch with our inner poverty help remind us regularly of the Gospel?
7. In *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, Brennan Manning says, "To be alive is to be broken. And to be broken is to stand in need of grace. Honesty keeps us in touch with our neediness and the truth that we are saved sinners." How does this relate to the parable in Luke 18:9-14? Is there anywhere you've been less than honest with yourself or others about your own brokenness?
8. What did you take away from this weekend's message? How do you feel led to respond?