

All-Age Worship

Ridley Hall, Cambridge

LESSON 3 | THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

Bible Passage | Luke 18:9-14

APPROX TIME 45 MIN

Overall Theme:

- The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector centres around themes of humility, not judging others and recognising our own need for God.

PREPARING

STUDY THE PARABLE

Read and Meditate on Luke 18:9-14

When your All-Age planning team gets together, begin by reading Luke 18:9-14 and discussing its meaning. What themes do you find there? How can those themes be best represented?

Reflect on the Bible Passage

How does this Parable reflect who God is?

What things in our lives keep us from acknowledging our need for God?

Why is it hard not to judge others?

What does it mean that the tax collector "went home justified"?

Pray

Take some time to pray about the parable and ask God to lead you in the best way to present it. Pray for those who will be at your all-age service.

PREPARING

BEFORE THE SERVICE

Things to Make and Prepare Beforehand

- You will need the help of about 5 people, plus musicians.
- Find and/or wrap boxes for opening game, 3 Jacob's Crackers, 3 small packets Chocolate Buttons
- Put together powerpoint slides for the prayer time



THE SERVICE PLAN

1. Welcome

General welcome from someone who acts as 'host' for the service.

2. Opening Song

We Lift Our Hands to the Coming King

After the song, ask everyone to sit down.

3. Introduction and Game

Welcome everyone! Today's parable is The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

When Jesus told stories, he always did it to teach us something about God and about ourselves. The story we're going to learn about today makes us think carefully about how we view ourselves and other people. Now as we think about this, I'm going to need three volunteers to come and help me at the front (*choose three children to come up*).

Each of you is going to have a choice of two things. Inside one is a lovely packet of delicious chocolate buttons, inside the other is a plain, dry Jacob's cracker. So you need to think carefully about your choice.

The first child is shown two cereal boxes – one is Tesco value bran flakes, and the other is Coco Pops – give a brief description – he chooses one, opens it, and sees what is inside. The buttons are in the bran flakes box, and the cracker is in the Coco pops box. The same thing is repeated with the second and third children. The second child has a choice between a colourful gift-wrapped box, and a smaller present wrapped in old newspaper. The third child has a choice between two Bibles – an old dusty one and a big new study bible. The children then sit back down.

Jesus knew that we often judge people by how they look, or the things that they have, or the kind of things we see them do. We think that God must like them more than other people because they seem so good. But Jesus tells us in our story today that God looks on the inside – he knows who we really are. However much we try and make ourselves look good or impress other people, it doesn't impress God, and it doesn't make him like us more. We aren't made right with God by what we do, but by what Jesus has done for us, and we're going to learn more about this in our service this evening.

4. Songs

- Man Looks At The Outside
- Our God is a Good God
- In The Sixteenth Verse (John 3:16)



6. the Drama

This script was originally written for Ridley Hall, but could easily be adapted for other settings. The key is to create two contrasting people.

Based on Luke 18: 9-14

Scene: Three chairs at the front. Monthly staff spiritual direction with Tracey and Adrian with a spiritual director, Mark.

Adrian and Tracey enter. Adrian is carrying big pile of Christian books looking very holy. Tracy follows wearing chavtastic outfit, holding a mirror and doing some makeup as she walks. Sit down.

Mark T: Well thank you for coming to your monthly staff spiritual direction - a time when we can discuss how you are doing in terms of being a Christian, how your prayer life is and such things. Tracey, lets start with you, how is your 'walk with the Lord'?

Tracey: Alright darlin'.... Well... to be honest, I'm struggling with this whole Christian thing. I mean, I'm really good at stuff like watching TV and stuff like that, but when it comes to prayer and being holy and stuff like that – I do find it a struggle... I have no idea how to pray – the car didn't start the other day so I did try some Ignition prayer, but that didn't work. And I never read the bible... I mean, I can't actually read but that's beside the point – the version I've got has still got loads of pictures in it and I don't even look at those. I find church and stuff like that sooo boring. And Sunday morning is such a rubbish time to have church services – I mean that's when the Holyoaks repeats are on E4 +1.

Mark T: Errr.. right... so err...

Tracey: It's funny cos when I was younger I really wanted to be a vicar, cos I look really good in black. But they didn't agree – said I wasn't their type. He wasn't my type either but that's neither here nor there.

Mark T: Err... yes, well...lets move on - Adrian how about you? How is your Christian life?

Adrian: Well.... I am the director of the Simeon Centre for Prayer and Spirituality and General Holiness, and I have done **Ignatian** prayer for many years I like to think of myself as the new Ignatius - and I have read, digested and memorised many books on how to be the best Christian in the whole world – but that was easy, I could have written them myself. 90% of my money I give to the church. I never watch TV, have fun or do anything so evil. When I worship, I am lost in wonder, lost in love, lost in praise forever more. And here I am in Ridley Chapel and here I am to worship and here I am to bow down. Praise God that I'm not like that woman.

Mark T: Err... right, well, thank you Adrian. OK... Tracey, tell me, how do you think you match up to God's standards?

Tracey: Well... you see I've been doing a bit of thinking, which is not something I do very much... I don't think I'm God's type either. I mean I'm just not good enough to call myself a Christian... [look very sad at this point] I never do anything I'm supposed to, I don't really see why God would like someone like me? I can't see how I will ever match up to God's standards...



Adrian: Yes you're probably right – I can't really see how you would ever match up to God's standards. In fact, I don't see why God would have anything to do with you at all... you really do need to become like me...

Mark T: Hmm... You know, you two, this really reminds me of a story I once heard.... It's a story about people who trusted in their own righteousness...would you like me to tell you the story?

[Band break in with "tell me a story oh tell me a story..."]

Mark T: Wait, wait... you're supposed to come in after I've told the story.

Band: Oh, sorry!

[parable read directly from the Bible by Mark, then band leads the song]

7. Theme Song

Tell me a story, tell me a story
A parable of the Kingdom of God
Jesus has gathered the people
together
To show them the way of the Kingdom
of God

Verse 3:

Christ told a story about two men
Who went to the temple to pray
One was a Pharisee, tall and proud,
The other a lowly Tax-collector
And the Pharisee prayed,
'Lord, I thank you
I'm not like this man at my side'
But the Tax-collector prayed,
'God, have mercy'
And he went away justified.

Verse 1:

The Kingdom is like a farmer of wheat
Who planted his wheat in a field

And late one night an enemy came
And secretly snuck in some weeds
And the workers of the field
Said to the farmer
'Should we tear out the weeds from
the wheat?'
But the Farmer said, 'No,
'Wait for the harvest.
'Wait for the harvest to come'.

Verse 2:

The Kingdom is like ten Bridesmaids
Who waited all day for the Groom
And five had oil, and five had none
For lamps that would lighten his way
And when the shout came
That the groom was coming
The girls with the oil went inside
But the ones without oil
Had to go buy some
And they were left standing outside



8. 5-Minute Homily

A short homily based on the parable.

9. Prayers

The prayer time is interactive with powerpoint slides used to show what we mean by various things we are praying for.

Confession:

We're now going to pray together. We'll begin by saying sorry to God for the times when we have boasted or judged others and forgotten our own need for God's help and mercy.

1. Can you think of a time when you have been boastful? (Slides begin - people winning medals, proudly showing new possessions, etc) Pause.

Sometimes we get carried away by our thoughts about the things we have, how we look or the things we do well.

Lord, you are the source of all truly good things. We are sorry for the times when we boast about ourselves. We forget that what we have and do is nothing compared to who you are and what you have done for us through Jesus Christ.

All: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

2. Can you think of a time when you have put someone else down? (slides begin) Pause.

We are often quick to make fun of someone or even just think mean thoughts because of what we see on the outside.

Lord, you are the only one who knows what is in everyone's heart. We are sorry for the times we put others down. Stop us in our tracks when we begin to think and say wrong things about others. Help us to love you and love others with our whole hearts.

All: God, be merciful to me a, sinner.

Prayers:

We're now going to move on to praying for the world. Here are some slides to help us pray...

Lord, we know that you love the world you have made, and every person is so precious to you. We pray for the many who are suffering through war, poverty or catastrophe. Tonight we particularly pray for those injured and those mourning the loss of loved ones in the train crash in Belgium on Monday.

All: God, be merciful to us

And finally let's pray for our community here at Ridley Hall...



Lord, we thank you for our community from the youngest person to the oldest. Help us to be kind, and caring and to say sorry and forgive each other when we fall out. We pray that we would be a group of people who love each other deeply with the love that you give us.

All: God, be merciful to us

Our Father in heaven...

10. Final Song

- My Jesus My Saviour

11. Final Blessing

By either the 'host' or the person who gave the homily

