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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1668 ~ The Pharisee and the Publican.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Today's *Bible Adventure* is about believing in wrong things. What we believe makes a big difference about where we finish up in life. A young woman prostitute thought that because she didn't steal or tell lies, God wouldn't judge her for her for her many sins. Yet she deceived herself with this type of thinking.

Many people believe that God will accept them on their terms if they're sincere in whatever beliefs they hold fast to. Such people don't seem willing to make the effort to find out exactly what their Creator God requires of them. God's requirements are written in the Bible for anyone who's interested in reading them.

The story was told many years ago about a hospital patient who died after being given the wrong medicine. When the nurse responsible for giving the wrong medicine was investigated, she said she sincerely believed that she was giving the patient the right medicine. She may have been sincere but she was also proved sincerely wrong. Our eternal future is too important to take chances with. We need to know for certain where we will spend eternity.

In today's drama, a man from the strict religious sect of Judaism we call a Pharisee believed God would accept him for his good works.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound.](#)

This parable is sometimes called the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. It follows the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke, Chapter 18, and in it, the Lord Jesus tells us how *not* to pray. People who were confident in their own righteousness looked down on everyone else.

In today's drama, when the Pharisee went up to the Temple to pray, he went to make a show of himself and be praised by other people for his apparent righteousness. He acted and spoke in a proud manner and wanted people to acknowledge him. This same attitude is something we always need to be careful of: pride wants an audience of admirers. When we do things at home or in secret, there's often no one who notices or commends our efforts. When are we tempted the most to lift ourselves in baseless pride? When we have a crowd of people watching us!

The Lord Jesus in Matthew, Chapter 6, taught that when we pray, we are to go to our room, close the door and pray to our heavenly Father in secret. Those of us who make a public show of praying to receive people's praise won't be rewarded by God. The Bible says they've already been paid in full while on earth.

Is there a difference between arrogance and pride? Pride is listed as the first of seven deadly sins and was noted in English writing during the 1300s.

Just in case you're curious about the other six deadly sins, they're anger, envy, lust, gluttony, greed and indifference toward God.

Pride can be divided into many parts: boasting, looking down on other people or despising them, contempt and arrogance, no sorrow or shame over sin and even taking pleasure from past bad things done, conceited and judging others. There are many more than this but all do harm to both the person showing pride and the victims who are treated as inferior.

Arrogant prayer is not true prayer. True prayer should be humble and bring us into God's kingdom where we love others more. We should be like little children coming to our heavenly Father and not as a manager giving a report of their achievements. If prayer doesn't bless the one praying, it isn't likely to help anybody else either.

The Pharisee and the tax collector had three things in common. They both stood to pray; they both addressed God directly and they both wanted to be heard by God, which is the purpose of prayer. There's no greater power than the power of God. In the world, some highly influential person may be able to do something for you, but such people are usually unreachable. But this is not so with God. He is easily contacted but He tells us there is a correct way to approach Him.

The Pharisee's prayer focused entirely on himself. He had no understanding of God's nature although he started off correctly by saying, "God, I thank you ..." Don't ever go to God to exalt yourself or to compare yourself favourably above someone else. When you start comparing yourself with other people, there will always be someone else who is worse than you in some way. The Pharisee compared himself to robbers, evildoers, immoral people and tax collectors.

Make no mistake about it: the Pharisee was considered an upright man. He believed in God and obeyed the law as he understood it. He wasn't evil. He not only did what the law demanded but went even further. According to the law, a man had to fast only once a year; this man fasted twice a week. According to the law, a man had to only give a tenth of certain types of income; this man gave a tenth of all his income.

What then was the Pharisee's sin? He considered himself righteous – or right with God. He didn't think of himself as a sinner needing God's forgiveness and mercy. He thought he was worthy to receive God's salvation for his many good works. He despised other lesser people and neglected to love them. In so doing, he made himself judge over them and disobeyed God. We are to leave judgment to God, who sees everything and judges every person justly.

The attitude of the tax collector, however, was totally different. He knew that he was a sinner, deserving only punishment from God. The tax collector accused himself of his sin and took responsibility for it. He stood at a distance from the Pharisee because he didn't feel worthy to go any nearer. He believed that the Pharisee was much better than himself, because everyone thought that the Pharisees were truly righteous people. Sometimes in life, you will meet people who give the impression that they are godly when really they are not. They appear to be close to God but it's only those who say, "I am nothing; God is my everything," who really know God's presence.

The tax collector dared to ask only for God's mercy. His prayer was accepted by God and the man went home forgiven and cleansed of his sin.

This parable teaches that it is the self-condemned and not the self-righteous who are justified before God. Justification before God is through the Lord Jesus Christ; the shed blood of the Lord Jesus satisfied the justice of God.

Some people think that they have done nothing that would really disqualify them from going to heaven. They don't seem to realise they are lost in their sins and need a Saviour as soon as possible.

Are they too like the Pharisee, proud and lacking in love for other people? No one can get to heaven by doing good works. We can't buy our way into there or cancel out our own sin. God's salvation is a free gift through Jesus only, so weak human beings like us can't boast about what we've done in gaining our own salvation.

The Pharisee's good works were a source of his pride. In Isaiah, Chapter 64, it says that to God: "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags." The Pharisee was lifting himself up before God when he should have been humbling himself.

The sad part for the Pharisee is that his mind was so closed to receiving the truth that he never received God's approval; he arrived at the end of his life in hell. But it didn't have to be that way. Satan has blinded so many people to their own inner condition that while on offer is the gracious free gift of forgiveness to all who turn to the Lord Jesus for the cancellation of their sin. This process starts with the person admitting their guilt of sin and becoming aware of just how wicked and impure they are in God's eyes.

When a person thinks they are a co-equal with God, they are rejected with the Lord. Their ideas and beliefs compete with God's way of doing things. The sacrificial system in the Old Testament pointed people to the cross of the Lord Jesus. It showed that people couldn't save themselves. There's no other way to heaven. Jesus is the one and only way.

There are many people who can be seen praying in temples and churches this year but won't be seen in the kingdom of heaven. What has gone wrong for them? Included in the humbling of a person before God is also the submission of their will to God's will! God gives the gift of His Son and in return, expects to receive the gift of our life completely committed to doing His will.

Judgment Day isn't spoken about much in these times but in past generations, sinners grew fearful at the thought of standing before their Creator God to answer for the things they did while here on earth. Yet Judgment Day gives meaning to life. Because God will call every deed of every person into account, everything we do DOES matter! We need to be very careful how we live, be quick to confess our mistakes and look to God for forgiveness.

The scandal of the Gospel is that seemingly righteous people will go to hell. Christ died for the ungodly; that is, everyone in the whole world at any time. When Jesus justifies them as innocent and cleansed, they will go to heaven. In Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verse 8, it says: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves. It is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."

Make sure today that you have not been deceived by trusting in yourself and your own goodness. Salvation is only through Christ.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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