

## WEEK 7

THE PHARISEE  
AND THE TAX  
COLLECTOR

VALUE  
PEACE



BIBLE TEXT LUKE 18.9–14

Jesus also told this parable to people who were sure of their own goodness and despised everybody else.

“Once there were two men who went up to the Temple to pray: one was a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood apart by himself and prayed, ‘I thank you, God, that I am not greedy, dishonest, or an adulterer, like everybody else. I thank you that I am not like that tax collector over there. I fast two days a week, and I give you one tenth of all my income.’

But the tax collector stood at a distance and would not even raise his face to heaven, but beat on his breast and said, ‘God, have pity on me, a sinner!’”

“I tell you,” said Jesus, “the tax collector, and not the Pharisee, was in the right with God when he went home. For those who make themselves great will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be made great.”

## CONTEXT

In this parable, as in many others, Jesus is turning the norms and expectations of his day on their head. Jewish tax collectors, who worked for the Romans, were seen as traitors by their own people whereas Pharisees were meant to be looked up to as spiritual teachers, respected and admired as rigorous observers of the minutiae of the religious law.

The prayer of the Pharisee is all about himself and how worthy he is. His prayer has no elements of confession or praise of God and his only thanksgiving is that he is not like other, less righteous men. The tax collector on the other hand was unable to lift his eyes to heaven, so great was his sense of unworthiness. He beats his breast in sorrow and repentance and appeals to God for mercy. It is the tax collector, says Jesus, and not the Pharisee who went home right and at **peace** with God.

WORSHIP TIME

WORSHIP TABLE

- 3 candles
- Bible open at Luke 18.9-14
- Worship cloth or table runner (colour corresponding to the Church season, see [www.imaginer.co.uk/church-year](http://www.imaginer.co.uk/church-year))
- A cut out heart shape or 3D heart

PREPARATION & RESOURCES

- Items for the worship table
- Download RaF2ppt-Term5Week7
- 2 children dressed as Bible characters to mime the story



WELCOME

*Fade the music and light 3 candles on the worship table as the opening words are spoken:*

WELCOME WORDS

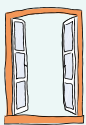
We have gathered together  
to worship God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
and to think about the  
Parable of the Two Men in the Temple.  
Today we are thinking about the value **peace**.

*Display the text from the Book of Samuel on screen and hold up the heart from the worship table.*

*God does not see as humans see.  
Humans look at outward appearances, but the Lord looks into the heart.  
1 Samuel 16:7 (New English Bible)*

This is what God said to the prophet Samuel as he was choosing who should be the new king of Israel.

What do you think the words on the screen mean?



LEARNING

*Introduce Ethan and Jacob, the two characters in today's story. The two actors present themselves dressed, if possible, in Bible style clothes.*

*Explain that the Romans were an occupying army in Israel. They ruled over the Jews. Jewish people who worked for the Romans were hated by their own community and seen as traitors.*

WORSHIP TIME

*(Enter Ethan, looking very proud and pleased with himself.)*

Meet Ethan. He is a Pharisee which means that he is an expert in Jewish religious law. Ethan goes to the temple every day and performs all the ceremonies at just the right times. He keeps the religious law in minute detail and is very proud of himself.

*(Enter Jacob, looking sheepish and a bit nervous.)*

Now meet Jacob. He is also a Jew, but he works for the Romans, collecting taxes on their behalf. He is seen as a traitor by his own people especially the Pharisees. He is hated and shunned. Ethan and Jacob are both going to the temple to pray.

*Ethan and Jacob mime as the poem is read dramatically, Ethan standing up and full of pride and Jacob kneeling with his head bowed.*

THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTION

*by Anita Dobson*

Ethan the Pharisee thinks he's such a good man,  
And he wants the world to know.  
He's so puffed up with all his plans  
He can hardly see his toes!

I'm sure God listens to all my prayers,  
I'm always there to serve,  
I know he'll forgive my small mistakes  
And give me what I deserve.

Jacob the tax man is on his knees,  
He longs to let God in.  
"O Lord have mercy on me" he cries,  
"My life is full of sin."

The Pharisee stands so tall and proud,  
His gaze is always down,  
He sneers at the little man kneeling there  
And gives him a pitying frown.

I'm sure as I do my duty each day  
God hears my every word *(Ethan sneers at Jacob)*  
But who will care for the likes of him,  
He'll get his just reward!

The tax man's prayers were heard that day  
So humble and not so loud  
For God comes close to the ones who are meek  
And turns away from the proud.

*Ethan and Jacob walk off stage, still in character.*

WORSHIP TIME



REFLECTING

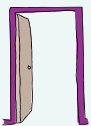
Remember the verse from the book of Samuel, that we thought about at the start of the worship, and the poem we have just heard. *(Show the verse on screen again and hold up the heart.)*

*God does not see as people see.  
People often look at outward appearances, but the Lords looks into the heart.  
1 Samuel 16:7*

What would God have seen as he looked into the heart of the Ethan, the pharisee?

What would he have seen in the heart of Jacob, the tax collector?

*Bring out the key points made in the 'Context' section as you discuss the children's ideas.*



RESPONDING

Jesus told the parable of the two men in the temple to people who were sure of their own goodness and looked down on everyone else.

Perhaps we can also sometimes think we are better than others.

*Explain that children should join in with the repeated response "Help us to see through your eyes" in the prayer.*

PRAYER

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ  
When we are tempted to look down on others  
All: **Help us to see through your eyes.**

Leader: When we are tempted to judge people by their appearance  
All: **Help us to see through your eyes.**

Leader: When we put ourselves before everyone else  
All: **Help us to see through your eyes.**

Leader: and in all that we do, may we,  
Know you more clearly,  
Follow your more nearly and  
Love you more dearly every day.

All: **Amen**