

## Proper 25

*Sunday between 23 and 29 October inclusive ·  
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

### Principal Service readings

Ecclesiasticus 35.12-17      The fairness of God  
or Jeremiah 14.7-10, 19-22      Remembering the covenant  
Psalm 84.1-7                  Yearning for God's house  
2 Timothy 4.6-8,16-18          Paul in the evening of his life  
Luke 18.9-14                  Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### ***Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector***

<sup>9</sup>Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” <sup>13</sup>But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.’

Luke 18.9-14 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

### Comments and Questions

After telling a parable to his disciples (18.1-8 – the troublesome widow), Jesus tells a parable to the Pharisees. It is a parable of reversal, like the

<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

'lost and found' parables of Luke 15.2-34. The parable speaks to something deep within the human heart. The love of God can easily turn into something like self-satisfaction, or become a personal accomplishment. Prayer can become boasting. The Pharisee adopts God's role as judge: not only does he extol his own virtues, he reminds God of the deficiencies of the tax-collector, in case God hasn't noticed.

In contrast, the tax-collector shows utter simplicity and truth. He acknowledges that he is a sinner. He knows he needs God's gift of righteousness, because he has none of his own.

It is true that the tax-collector is righteous, but he has turned it into something to boast about, and also to see himself as superior to others. Do we ever do this?

### Quotations

1

As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on thing and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you.

*Mere Christianity* / C. S. Lewis. 1942

2

The main condition for the achievement of love is the overcoming of one's narcissism. The narcissistic orientation is one in which one experiences as real only that which exists within oneself, while the phenomena in the outside world have no reality in themselves, but are experienced only from the viewpoint of their being useful or dangerous to one. The opposite pole to narcissism is objectivity; it is the faculty to see other people and things as they are, objectively, and to be able to separate this objective picture from a picture which is formed by one's desires and fears.

*The art of loving* / Erich Fromm. 1956

3

True humility does not know that it is humble. If it did, it would be proud from the contemplation of so fine a virtue.

Martin Luther, 1483–1546

2

### Related topics

*For further study:*

Morality; conversion; kingdom of God; discipleship; image of God; judgement of God

### Closing Prayer

O God,  
who alone can probe the depths of the heart,  
you hear the prayer of the humble  
and justify the repentant sinner.

As we stand before you,  
grant us the gift of humility,  
that we may see our own sins clearly  
and refrain from judging our neighbour.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

*Opening prayers* · Week 30, Year C<sup>2</sup>

CPL • LBC Year C Proper 25.odt • 2022-09-03

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2 *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.