

**October 23, 2016**  
**The Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

*Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**LOOK**

Depending on the situation we are in, boasting can be appropriate or inappropriate behavior. For instance, in a job interview it is helpful to know and list our skills and experiences. Similarly, humility is often an honorable quality and yet sometimes gets us into trouble.

1. Most of us (perhaps especially women) have been taught not to brag about ourselves. When do you feel it is okay to take pride in our personal attributes? When is it inadvisable?
2. How can we avoid false humility?

**BOOK** *Luke 18:9-14.*

Jesus uses this parable as one of several illustrations in chapter 18 about how to be in relationship with God.

1. Analyze the Pharisee's behavior, words, and deeds. Why was he not justified?
2. Do the same for the tax collector. Why was he justified?
3. What is the tax collector freed from? What is the Pharisee in bondage to?
4. What does this passage teach us about how to pray?

**TOOK**

Our faith stories are full of moments where God has freed us from some kind of burden. Praise be to God that we don't have to be perfect!

1. Share a moment in your faith journey where God freed you in some way. How did that grow your faith?
2. "What can I give? What can I leave behind?" were the words in a song we sang in church this Sunday. They are fundamental questions of stewardship. How would you answer them today?