**Sunday 9th May 2021**

**Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector - Luke 18:9-14**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable:“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**Questions:**

1. Why did the Pharisee think his prayer would be acceptable to God? Why did Jesus think otherwise?

*Note: To fast twice a week and to give a tenth of all one gets was more than the Old Testament law required. So, in that sense the Pharisee’s faith could be seen as sacrificial.*

1. How do you understand the nature of spiritual pride? Why might religious people be more vulnerable to it than others?
2. How do you understand the actions of the tax collector as Jesus describes them?
3. Why do you think the tax collector was ‘justified’ before God? What do you understand by the word ‘justified’?
4. In what ways do you think you could humble yourself before God?

**The Jesus Prayer**

This prayer, which is much used in the Eastern Orthodox churches, is inspired by such passages as the one in Luke, and takes the form:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

The history of the Jesus Prayer goes back, as far as we know, to the monks of the early sixth century who taught that repetition of the prayer leads to inner stillness. It is an example of a short "arrow" prayer – when there is no need to waste time with words.

The shortened form is “Lord have mercy”. In Greek it is the words “Kyrie eleison” (pronounced Keer-ee-ay el-ays-on)

The phrase “Lord have mercy” or “Christ have mercy” is used as a prayer and as a congregational response in the liturgies of many Christian churches. There are many sung versions of this prayer using both the English and Greek words. Here is one from Truro Anglican Church you might like to listen to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHNXM7-VzaU>