

Luke 18:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Analysis

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men—the Greek phrase *pros heauton* (πρὸς ἑαυτόν) is devastating: 'with himself' or 'to himself.' His prayer never reaches God; it's self-congratulatory monologue. *Eucharistō soi* (εὐχαριστῶ σοι) means 'I thank you,' but his thanksgiving is comparison-based: *ouk eimi hōsper hoi loipoi* (οὐκ εἰμὶ ὥσπερ οἱ λοιποί)—'I am not like the rest.'

He lists categories: *harpages* (extortioners), *adikoi* (unjust), *moichoi* (adulterers), then points: *ē kai hōs houtos ho telōnēs* (ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ τελώνης)—'or even as this tax collector.' His righteousness is comparative, not absolute. He measures himself by others, not by God's holiness, creating a religion of pride rather than grace.

Historical Context

Pharisaic prayers often included blessings thanking God for privileges. The Talmud records a prayer: 'Blessed are you, Lord, who has not made me a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.' Comparison was built into their framework. However, Jesus condemns thanksgiving based on superiority rather than grace. The Pharisee's standing position was normal for prayer (Mark 11:25), but his spiritual posture—self-exaltation through comparison—violated true worship.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does 'prayed with himself' reveal about prayer that focuses on self-comparison rather than God's character?
2. How does comparative righteousness ('I'm not like them') differ from humble dependence on God's mercy?
3. In what ways might you be tempted to measure your spiritual life by comparing yourself favorably to others?

Interlinear Text

ὁ Φαρισαῖος σταθεὶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ταῦτα προσήχετο
G3588 **The Pharisee** G5330 **stood** G2476 **with** G4314 **himself** G1438 **thus** G5023 **and prayed** G4336

Ὁ θεὸς εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὥσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ
G3588 **God** G2316 **I thank** G2168 **thee** G4671 **that** G3754 **not** G3756 **I am** G1510 **as** G5618 G3588 **other** G3062

τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἄρπαγες ἄδικοι μοιχοί ἢ καὶ ὡς
G3588 **men** G444 **are extortioners** G727 **unjust** G94 **adulterers** G3432 **or** G2228 **even** G2532 **as** G5613

οὗτος ὁ τελώνης·
this G3778 G3588 **publican** G5057

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:5 (Prayer): And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the

streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Revelation 3:17 (Parallel theme): Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Isaiah 65:5 (Parallel theme): Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Jeremiah 2:35 (Parallel theme): Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.

Mark 11:25 (Prayer): And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.