

March 11, 2010

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1-14

Jesus is a master teacher. His parables capture the truth about God and the truth about humanity. He holds up a mirror to our sin and helps us see ourselves more clearly.

This is part of the Lenten journey. As we walk with Jesus through these forty days, we let God show us the truth about our own lives. Through the solitude and silence of prayer, through the reading and reflection on Scripture, and through the self-denial of fasting and giving we grow in self-awareness. We see ourselves in the light of Christ and let the power of the Holy Spirit renew and remake us.

Jesus' parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector\* invites us to see ourselves in the role of the Pharisee -- proudly showing off how good and holy and faithful and religious we are -- when the role of tax collector might be more appropriate. Jesus is not saying that fasting or tithing are wrong, but that humility is the appropriate approach to God. He is also not saying that it is okay to exalt ourselves for being humble, as in "I'm glad I'm not like that Pharisee." He wants us to recognize how we are like tax collector -- needing God's mercy and grace -- but how we often act like the Pharisee, exalting ourselves and sitting in judgment of others.

Let Jesus' parables speak to you today. Find yourself in the parables. Better yet, let God show you yourself through the parables.

Humble yourself before God, confess your need for God's grace, and receive the blessings of forgiveness God longs to give.