



The parable of Pharisee and Publican (tax collector) in **St. Luke 18:9-14** warns against self-righteous attitudes, that is, trusting human ability toward making a person acceptable before God. This parable, as told by Jesus, also teaches a “right and wrong way to pray.” The Pharisee believes he can fulfill God’s Law by his own will power and please God making himself acceptable in God’s sight. The Publican (tax collector) confesses he is a sinful man and would not even lift his eyes toward heaven and asked that God would “be merciful to him, a sinner” (**Luke 18:13**).

People often ask, “why pray if God already knows what we are thinking anyway?” Some ask does prayer really change anything? In **St. Matthew 6:4-13** Jesus teaches His disciples “The Lord’s Prayer.” People also ask, “what is prayer?” In the introduction to “The Lord’s Prayer Jesus teaches the disciples and us to address God as “Our Father.” Jesus is God’s Son and demonstrates the fatherhood of God the Father, an important part of prayer, as the One who sends Jesus the Son to be our Savior. By God The Holy Spirit, we are enabled to see and believe God is our Father who sends Jesus to rescue us from sin, death and the devil.

Jesus also teaches what prayer is not as illustrated in the parable found in **St. Luke 18:9-14**. Prayer is not a demonstration of our righteousness or goodness before others. Prayer is not a self-promotion of our selves before others and especially before God. Rather, prayer is made in response to God for all His blessings showered on us through the merits and worthiness of Christ in His life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection. Prayer is a form of worship as we thank and praise God for His abundant blessings given to us in Christ and His cross. Prayer is communication with God who hears the prayers of believers and blessings according to His will and in His time according to His grace through Christ our Savior.

As we pray our petitions, we ask God to continue with the blessings He has given in Christ and that He would grant them for the sake of Christ and His work on the cross. We pray in faith trusting God’s “yes” to us and our prayers come from Christ and that His “no” is for our spiritual welfare while realizing at times He tells us to “wait.”

Prayer is not like asking God to be our “earthly sugar daddy,” expecting Him to grant our every earthly wish. Prayer is instead, a blessing to us that draws us closer to Christ our Savior and that we learn that it is God alone who provides for all our needs, both spiritual as well as physical. We are invited and commanded to pray, always with a repentant and grateful heart knowing that The Lord hears our prayers and answers for the sake of Christ.

We are quickly drawing the church year to a close through November, which reminds us about the importance of prayer as we live in an uncertain and difficult world today. Yet, while we face the world and its rising tensions and as many are rejecting Christianity, we are also confident because God hears our prayers and answers from His grace for us through Christ. St. Paul reminds us in **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, “**Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**”

Luther wrote that prayer is important in the life of the Christian. “For next to preaching of the Gospel, in which God speaks with and gives us all His grace and blessings, the highest and foremost work we can do is to speak with Him through prayer and receive from Him what He gives us” (Luther’s Exposition of John 16:23, 1537). The hymn writer also gives us a beautiful reminder of our prayer life trusting in Christ alone as we begin each day with prayer.

**Let each day begin with prayer,      Praise, and adoration.  
On the Lord cast every care,      He is your salvation.  
Morning, evening, and at night      Jesus will be near you,  
Save you from the tempter’s might,      With His presence cheer you.**

**LSB 869:2 “With The Lord Begin Your Task”**

In Christ, Pastor