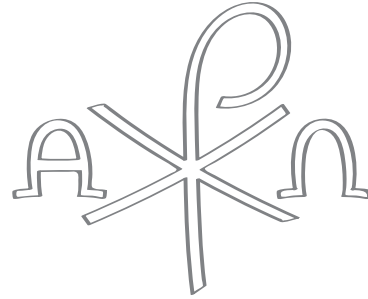


# THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Marcus Baikie



## Luke 18:9-14 ESV

### Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused Luke the physician to write the words of this Gospel around AD 55-60. In this parable, Jesus teaches about prayer and, as one author put it, “entry into the kingdom of God from a position of inferiority” (J. Noland, *Luke* 9:21–18:34, 874), as draws ever near to Jerusalem and the Cross, where He will lay down His life as an atoning sacrifice for sin.

<sup>9</sup> But [Jesus] also said this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised the rest:

- “Trusted in themselves” – lit. “persuaded themselves” (*pepoithotas*).  
– Rather the Christian’s trust is in the Lord.
- They believed that they were righteous in and of themselves before God.
- Note how “righteous”/“justified” bookends this text – at the beginning there are those who justify *themselves*, but in the end the tax collector is justified *by God*.

<sup>10</sup> “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

- Consider that among the original audience, the Pharisee would immediately be seen as the hero, and the tax collector would be seen as the villain.
- <sup>11</sup> “The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed these things: ‘O God, I thank you that I am not as the rest of mankind, robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.
- “Standing by himself” – the Pharisee, like those at the beginning of this account, “trusted in himself”, and so stood before God alone (without any Advocate, Savior, or Redeemer).
- “I thank you” – Greek: *eucharisto*. He focused solely on his sacrifice of praise rather than God’s work of propitiation for his sins.
- Consider how this Pharisee strongly resembles the older brother of Luke 15:25-30.
- “Not as the rest” – The Pharisee is setting himself apart as the only righteous man; this is ultimately an attack on Christ and His righteousness.

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- Augustine – The Pharisee had no mind to pray to God, but to laud himself. (Augustine, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. First Series, Vol. 6. [1.6].* Sermon LXV, 455)
- “He who prays for grace in this way does not rely upon God’s mercy and treats Christ with disrespect.” (*Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article V, 133*)

<sup>12</sup> **“I fast twice a week, I pay tithes on all that I obtain.’**

- These are typical acts of piety for a Jew, and yet more than what was commanded in the Old Testament.
- The Pharisee’s works are not the problem. These are fine, outward things. The problem is the Pharisee’s trust in those works.

<sup>13</sup> **“But the tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’**

- The tax collector did not trust in himself, and so he stood far off, and begged that God would propitiate him.
  - “Be merciful” – lit. “propitiate” (*hilastheti*). This means to be reconciled, to make atonement, to offer sacrifice for. Ultimately it means, “Justify me.”
- See 1 John 2:1-2.

–Term is tied to the Mercy Seat, which was sprinkled with the blood of the sin offering on the Day of the Atonement. The sprinkled blood pointed forward to Jesus’ sacrifice upon the Cross. By His death, Jesus made atonement—the justifying sacrifice—and entered the heavenly sanctuary with His blood (Hebrews 9:11-14), opening the way for believers to enter into God’s presence (Hebrews 6:20).

– Connection to the Old Testament Reading: Abel’s blood cries out for vengeance, the sprinkled blood of Christ speaks a better word (Hebrews 12:24).

- This was not simply an outward act of piety or devotion – The tax collector truly believed what he said. He was truly repentant.

<sup>14</sup> **“I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

- Rather than declaring himself righteous, like the Pharisee, the tax collector is declared righteous by God.
  - Note how those who exalt are plural; he who humbles himself is singular.
- Most notable use is in Philippians 2. See also Matthew 11.
- Only the humble would pray for and receive God’s forgiveness, rather than boasting in their own works.



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