

THE SINNER'S PRAYER

LUKE 18: 9-14

Introduction:

The familiar story told by Jesus gives us the sinner's prayer. A prayer like this one has brought many troubled souls into the kingdom of God. It has been a source of comfort to many who have been weary with the burden of their sin.

Actually there are two prayers in the story, and both offered by sinners. But only one of them was heard in heaven. Only one of them made a difference in the life of the person offering the prayer.

The Pharisee represents religion at its worst. The man's practice of his faith has nurtured in him a deadly pride that expresses itself in self-righteousness. He feels sure that he is superior to almost every one he meets, so he looks down on them. He especially looks down on those who do not follow his practices, and violate some of his moral codes.

His prayer expressed how he felt about things—He just knew that holy God would be impressed with him. Though he addressed the prayer to God, the prayer was really prayed to himself. He stood alone and mused about what a good man he was. He compared himself to the other worshipper standing at the back of the temple—the publican. Let me modernize this a bit—let

substitute the manager of the local sex club for the publican. You would probably be surprised if you saw him in church, and would probably feel yourself to be closer to God than him. You would not be that impressed with any prayer that he prayed when he came to church, but God might.

What do we learn about the sinner's prayer?

- I. IT IS HUMBLE.
 1. Where he stood.
 2. How he stood.
 3. What he said.
- II. IT IS HEART-FELT.
 1. What he did.
 2. How he said it.
- III. IT ASKS FOR MERCY.
 1. Don't give me what I deserve.
 2. Show me your compassion.
- IV. IT IS EFFECTIVE.
 1. God heard it.
 2. God answered it.