|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Who Are the Pharisees Today?**  *Promise: humble yourselves before Christ’s mercy and you will be exalted* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Proverbs 25:2-10; Psalm 131; Hebrews 13:1-17; Luke 14:1-14 (12th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 17), 8/31/25  *“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* – v. 11  **Lead In –** I often joke that I am nearing completion of a book that I have been writing, a lifetime effort, and indeed a masterpiece. The title of my book is “True Humility”, and I have subtitled it “The Ten Steps that I Alone Have Achieved to True Humility”. Some humility, huh? … Where I want to start this morning is with the question: Who are the Pharisees then and now? And I will give you a hint as to the answer. They both lack humility.   1. **Jesus Encounters the Pharisees**    1. A four-part summary of who the Pharisees were…    2. Their approach led to pride and being judgmental…    3. The traits at work that would have prevented healing…    4. Jesus does not spare the ice in denouncing them… 2. **The Proper Regard for God’s Law**    1. The owner’s manual with instructions reflects His will…    2. The three-fold function of God’s Law… 3. **Who Are the Pharisees Today?**    1. Two opposing errors in regard to God’s Law…    2. The accusation gets bandied about. That is telling…    3. A sinful tax collector in humility pleads for mercy…   **Final Word –** Friends, Jesus promises to exalt those who humble themselves. This exaltation does not fully take place in this age. It will come in its fulness at the resurrection of the body to life everlasting on the last day. It is there in God’s kingdom that the humble, baptized believer will be given a place at the Wedding Feast of Christ the Lamb. Wouldn’t you be willing to yield a place at the table of worldly honor in this age for a place at the kingdom’s banquet? Then humble yourself and say, God, be merciful to me a sinner. Otherwise, you just might be a Pharisee. Amen.  **Pharisees:** First, they believed that people had the ability to do good or evil. Second, they held that by keeping God’s Law we gain God’s favor. Third, they regarded their traditions, rituals, and regulations as surefire ways of keeping God’s Law. And finally, fourth, they avoided contact with the impure and lawless, which was pretty much everyone who did not belong to their party.  **Mt 23:1-7** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.  **Mt 23:23-24** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! | **Luke 14:1-14 ESV**  *Healing of a Man on the Sabbath*  1One Sabbath, when [Jesus] went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” 4But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” 6And they could not reply to these things.  7Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. 11For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”  12He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”  **Mt 7:3** “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”  **Lk 5:31-32** And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”  **Three Functions of the Law:** 1) as a curb; 2) as a mirror; and 3) as a guide or map.  **Lk 18:10-14** “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Who Are the Pharisees Today?**  *Promise: humble yourselves before Christ’s mercy and you will be exalted* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Proverbs 25:2-10; Psalm 131; Hebrews 13:1-17; Luke 14:1-14 (12th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 17), 8/31/25  *“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* – v. 11  **Lead In –** I often joke that I am nearing completion of a book that I have been writing, a lifetime effort, and indeed a masterpiece. The title of my book is “True Humility”, and I have subtitled it “The Ten Steps that I Alone Have Achieved to True Humility”. Some humility, huh? … Where I want to start this morning is with the question: Who are the Pharisees then and now? And I will give you a hint as to the answer. They both lack humility.   1. **Jesus Encounters the Pharisees**    1. A four-part summary of who the Pharisees were…    2. Their approach led to pride and being judgmental…    3. The traits at work that would have prevented healing…    4. Jesus does not spare the ice in denouncing them… 2. **The Proper Regard for God’s Law**    1. The owner’s manual with instructions reflects His will…    2. The three-fold function of God’s Law… 3. **Who Are the Pharisees Today?**    1. Two opposing errors in regard to God’s Law…    2. The accusation gets bandied about. That is telling…    3. A sinful tax collector in humility pleads for mercy…   **Final Word –** Friends, Jesus promises to exalt those who humble themselves. This exaltation does not fully take place in this age. It will come in its fulness at the resurrection of the body to life everlasting on the last day. It is there in God’s kingdom that the humble, baptized believer will be given a place at the Wedding Feast of Christ the Lamb. Wouldn’t you be willing to yield a place at the table of worldly honor in this age for a place at the kingdom’s banquet? Then humble yourself and say, God, be merciful to me a sinner. Otherwise, you just might be a Pharisee. Amen.  **Pharisees:** First, they believed that people had the ability to do good or evil. Second, they held that by keeping God’s Law we gain God’s favor. Third, they regarded their traditions, rituals, and regulations as surefire ways of keeping God’s Law. And finally, fourth, they avoided contact with the impure and lawless, which was pretty much everyone who did not belong to their party.  **Mt 23:1-7** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.  **Mt 23:23-24** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! | **Luke 14:1-14 ESV**  *Healing of a Man on the Sabbath*  1One Sabbath, when [Jesus] went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” 4But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” 6And they could not reply to these things.  7Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. 11For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”  12He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”  **Mt 7:3** “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”  **Lk 5:31-32** And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”  **Three Functions of the Law:** 1) as a curb; 2) as a mirror; and 3) as a guide or map.  **Lk 18:10-14** “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” |