

THANKSGIVING REJECTED BY GOD

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(editing by Kathy Boynton)

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Proper thankfulness is rare. Yet most folks would probably admit that thanksgiving is a good thing. You probably appreciate being thanked for kindnesses you render. However, Jesus once told a parable of two men who went to the temple to pray. One, supposedly, prayed a prayer of thanksgiving. The other simply begged for mercy.

In the parable, a well respected religious leader publicly acted as though he was praying to God. Jesus, however, said he actually just prayed “with himself.”

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down

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to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14)

What’s wrong with the Pharisee’s prayer? He thanked God for something that wasn’t true! Contrary to his claim, he was a sinner just like other men. He hadn’t been forgiven because he hadn’t sought God’s mercy. Instead, he relied upon his own supposed merits for a good relationship with God. His prayer was an arrogant facade by which he paraded non-existent righteousness before God and men.

God the Son, Jesus Christ, became the final and only sacrificial lamb to pay sin’s penalty. He extends mercy to all honestly seeking Him for it. But those using prayer to parade their own self-righteousness “shall be abased.” Jesus said,

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37)

Do your thanksgiving prayers bounce off the ceiling as flowery exhibits of holy sounding language? Or, do you humbly ask and then thank God for His mercy to you?

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