



■ † **Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee**

**Let Us Not Pray Poorly
Like the Pharisee!***

Epistle (II St Timothy 3: 10-15)

Son Timothy, thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Gospel (St Luke 18:10-14)

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 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.



The Gospel reading today teaches us humility, or the feeling that **we have no right to demand that our prayer be heard.**

Do not assume that you have the **right** to be heard, but approach prayer as one unworthy of any attention, allowing yourself only the boldness needed to open your mouth and raise up your prayer to God, knowing the Lord's boundless condescension toward us poor ones.

Do not even allow the thought to come to your mind, "I did such and such—so give me such and such." Consider whatever you might have done as your obligation. If you had not done it you would have been subject to punishment, and what you did is nothing deserving reward; you did not do anything special.

That Pharisee enumerated his rights to be heard, and left the temple with nothing.

The bad thing is not that he actually did as he said, for indeed he should have done it. The bad thing is that he presented it as something special; whereas, having done it he should have thought no more of it.

● **Deliver us, O Lord, from this sin of the Pharisee!**

We rarely speak like the Pharisee in words, but in the feelings of the heart we are rarely unlike him.

For why is it that people pray poorly? It is because they feel as though they are just fine in the sight of God, even without praying.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God.*