

# RAISING SAINTS



CHILDREN + FAMILY MINISTRY // WEEKLY GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

## Fifth Sunday of Great Lent - Sunday of the Judge LEVEL 1: AGES 5 - 8

Jesus told a story, called a parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee knew a great deal about God's commandments. He always went to the Temple to pray. There were others praying at the Temple too. The Pharisee went to the front of the Temple where everyone could see him. He started to pray out loud and proudly and said, "God, I thank you that I am not like the other people who are greedy, dishonest, do not act fairly, and are not faithful to you, just like that tax-collector. I always fast, and give part of what I have to the poor and I am always obedient to you. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Temple in a corner, the tax collector began to pray, lowered his eyes as he was too ashamed to even look up to heaven. Instead, he pounded his chest, saying, 'God, have mercy on me, I am a sinner!'

When the two men left the temple to return home, Jesus said that the prayer of the tax collector pleased God because he humbled himself and admitted his mistake. God

*With your teacher read the phrases in the list and draw a line to the person it describes best.*

Acts like a show-off	<b>Pharisee</b>
Is a cheater	
God forgave him	
Braggs about himself	<b>Tax Collector</b>
Is praying to God	
Is ashamed of his actions	
God did not forgive him	

Fill in the words to complete the sentence:  
**forgive    admit    mistakes**

Jesus teaches me to \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_  
and ask God to \_\_\_\_\_ me.

**I pray: Lord Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on me a sinner.**



## LEVEL 2: AGES 9 - 12



March 15 this year is Median Day of Lent. We are half way in our journey for the celebration of the Feast of Holy Resurrection. Hopefully you have spent some time with your family to do more praying and works of charity. For sure, fasting from rich foods, and reducing time spent on TV and social media is a good way to make more time to spend with God, talking and listening to him in prayer. We are looking ahead to the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent – the Sunday of the Judge on March 19. The Gospel reading for this day teaches us important attitudes for prayer. In the Gospel of **Luke 18:1-8** we hear Jesus telling a parable.

*And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; <sup>3</sup> and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Vindicate me against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup> For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.’” <sup>6</sup> **And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?”***

The judge in this parable was one of the paid magistrates appointed either by Herod or by the Romans. These judges were well known for their dishonorable practice of accepting bribes from plaintiffs in order to settle their cases. Whereas, they ignored the poor and the lowly who had no influence. The widow was able to have her case heard because she persisted.

1. In light of this information how do you read and understand verses 6-8? Is Jesus comparing the unjust judge with God, or is he contrasting them? Explain your understanding below.

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2. What do Jesus’ words in verses 7-8 say to you about prayer? How would you feel if what you’ve asked for in prayer you do not receive?

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Here’s a word which explains why we don’t always receive what we ask in prayer:

**omniscient**

We believe that God is omniscient, he is all knowing. We cannot know what will happen tomorrow or in the next hour. Our omniscient God knows what is good for us in the long run. We need to wait patiently to see what is God’s will for us. Each time you pray Lord’s Prayer pay attention to the words which express our desire for God’s will. Underline those words.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
 on earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread;  
 and forgive us our debts,  
 as we also have forgiven our debtors;  
 And lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.

## LEVEL 3: AGES 13 - 17

March 15 this year is Median Day of Lent. We are half way in our journey for the celebration of the Feast of Holy Resurrection. Hopefully you have spent some time with your family to do more praying and works of charity. March 19 is the Sunday of the Judge.

The Gospel reading for this day is from the Gospel of Luke 17:20-18:14. The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming. He answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." In other words, the reality of God's kingdom is already present to be accepted by people in their hearts. The Pharisees had in mind a kingdom bringing material benefits. Jesus invites his followers to live a life of readiness for the fulfillment of God's kingdom. Prayer is the pathway for that readiness.

In the Parable of the Unjust Judge, Luke 18:1-8, we come face to face with what happens frequently in our society. Those who are in positions of power choose to favor the wealthy or people of influence to the total disregard of the poor and powerless. The judge in this parable was one of the paid magistrates appointed either by Herod or by the Romans. These judges were well known for their dishonorable practice of accepting bribes from plaintiffs in order to settle their cases. Whereas, they ignored the poor and the lowly who had no influence.

In your Bible, read the parable. How does it touch you? In the person of the judge do you recognize similar behavior in our society or in your immediate community? Have you also witnessed people in whom you recognize the widow's attitude and behavior? Write your thoughts and share it with your small group in class, or at home with your parents.

Now read the second parable, that of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, Luke 18:9-14. Devout Jews observed three prayer times daily, 9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m. Prayer was considered to be effective if offered in the Temple. The Pharisee and the tax collector are portrayed at prayer in the Temple. How would you describe the Pharisee's attitude towards himself, others and towards God?

The tax collector was a despised character in Judaea. He collected taxes for the Roman Empire, but always collected more than the assigned amount. He kept the extra for himself. Pay attention to the tax collector's demeanor, his words, and his attitude towards God. Examine both characters. Describe your impression of both using adjectives or phrases.

Jesus comments at the end of each parable. Read the indicated verses and choose the word/words which best describe what Jesus is teaching us about prayer.

*<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"*

**Pray always      Pray when it is convenient for you**

*<sup>14</sup> I tell 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."*

**Boast about yourself      Acknowledge your faults**

**God forgives when you ask**

Make this sixth verse from St. Nersess the Graceful's *Personal Prayer of Every Christian Believer* your prayer during this Lenten period and thereafter.

***Uncreated essence, I have sinned against you in my mind, my soul and body; for the sake of your holy name forgive me the sins which I have committed until now. Have mercy on your creatures and especially on me, a great sinner.***

God bless you in your Lenten effort to get closer to God.

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