

MARCH 21, 2020
Saturday of the 3rd Week of Lent
Matthew 5: 17-19

GOD HEARS THE PRAYER OF THE HUMBLE

For us Catholic Christians, we pray everyday and ask the Lord for healing, things we need everyday, good health and job and a lot more. We attended masses weekdays and Sundays and holy days of obligation because we consider the Holy Eucharist the highest form of prayer. We miss Him already in the celebration of the Eucharist. How do we know our prayer 'pass the criteria' of God? Is it pleasing to God and satisfying to Him? Our prayer is nothing in God if doesn't spring and come from a heart of love for God and for our neighbors. God can hear our petitions and prayers only if we approach Him with love, humility and a contrite heart. From the Letter of James and from Proverbs, they reminded us: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble"¹

In our gospel for today, Jesus is warning us with a vivid story of two people at prayer. And St. Luke gives us a hint that those who despised one's neighbor closes the door to God's loving heart. "Jesus' parable speaks about the nature of prayer and our relationship with God. It does this by contrasting two very different attitudes towards prayer. The Pharisee, who represented those who take pride in their religious practices, exalted himself at the expense of others. Absorbed with his own sense of self-satisfaction and self-congratulation, his boastful prayer was centered on his good religious practices rather than on God's goodness, grace, and pardon. Rather than humbling himself before God and asking for God's mercy and help, this man praised himself while despising those he thought less worthy. The Pharisee tried to justify himself before God and before those he despised; but only God can justify us. The tax collector, who represented those despised by religious-minded people, humbled himself before God and begged for mercy.

¹ James 4: 6 & Proverbs 3: 34 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

His prayer was heard by God because he had true sorrow for his sins. He sought God with humility rather than with pride.”²

My sisters and brothers, today’s parable offers us both a chance, an opportunity and a word of warning. “Pride leads to self-deception and spiritual blindness. True humility helps us to see ourselves as we really are in God's eyes and it inclines us to seek God's help and mercy. God dwells with the humble of heart who recognize their own sinfulness and who acknowledge God's mercy and saving grace. God cannot hear us if we boast in ourselves and despise others.”³

Therefore, my sisters and brothers, let us humbly pray and don’t boast ourselves in front of God and our neighbors. We are nothing before the Lord and all our gifts, blessings or what we have are all come from God. That’s not ours, we are only caretakers of God’s abundant grace. So, let us ask the Lord in this Eucharist that we may always be humble before Him and our neighbors. Let us bow down and prostrate ourselves and ask Him to strengthen us, spare us, heal us and we may prevail over this crisis. In humble and contrite heart, hear us O Lord. Amen.

² dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org

³ *ibid*