

## =THE PARABLES=

### Lesson 5

#### The Pharisee and the Publican

##### Objects to have:

Chalkboard and chalk or poster board and marking pen

Two big poster board circles to which sticks are attached at the bottom. Each circle has a smiling face on one side and a frowning face on the other side. Above one smiling face have the word PHARISEE printed; above the frowning face on the other circle have the word PUBLICAN written.

Your Bible.

##### Introducing the lesson:

We all love a good story. Sometimes mothers have time to sit down and tell their children a story. Sometimes grandmas are with us, and they know some good stories to tell. There are some good stories that teachers tell us. There are some good story books. The very best book that is full of stories is the Bible. The very best Storyteller was Jesus.

Jesus loved to tell stories while He was on earth. Always when He told a story, the people who heard Him learned a lesson. Those stories with lessons are called parables.

We have heard some parables in Sunday school the last few Sundays. We heard the parable of the good Samaritan. (You might give the children a moment to recall some details about each of the stories that you are mentioning.) The good Samaritan parable taught us that anybody near us is our neighbor and that when they need our help, we should do what we can to help them. We heard the prodigal son parable. Even though the young man was selfish and rebellious and very wicked, still his father loved him. The father also loved the young man who was obedient and worked hard and stayed with his father. That was the young man that was by far the happier young man. In the story of the rich fool, we learned that he felt that the only important thing in life was getting all that he could get for himself. Last Sunday we heard about the parable that Jesus told about the great supper. Everybody should get an invitation to accept Jesus as Saviour.

(Pick up your chalk or marking pen.) Watch and listen. Jesus the Master Storyteller told another parable. Let's hear it.

##### Telling the story:

(Draw a line to represent a hill, shaded in a little.) See this big hill. We'll say that it is someplace close to the Jordan River and not too far away from the Sea of Galilee. (While saying the preceding, draw to the right of the hill the Jordan River and further down draw the Sea of Galilee, with the Jordan River flowing through it.)

It was a pretty day outside and a warm day, like a summer day. The people were enjoying being outside. On this particular day, however, they were not outside just to enjoy the weather; they were outside because they wanted to hear somebody and they wanted to see somebody. The people were coming from every direction. (While speaking, draw little figures of people all over the hillside.) As the people gathered on this side of the hill, they looked down toward the foot of the hill. Down there at the bottom of the hill was THE most important Person. (Draw this figure.) This most important Person was Jesus. They looked at Him, and as He started to speak, they stopped talking. They sat down on the grass, I think, and listened to what Jesus had to tell them. Jesus was answering questions, and He was looking at the crowd of people.

As Jesus looked into the faces of those people who were gathered with Him outside on that beautiful, warm day, He knew what they were thinking. That's something wonderful about Jesus—He knows everybody's thoughts. I can't know what you are thinking unless you tell me what you are thinking, but Jesus knows what you are thinking, and Jesus knew what all those people were thinking that day.

Jesus knew that some of those people were thinking, “This is the most wonderful Person I have ever seen or heard. I believe that He has come from God. I believe that He is the Son of God. I believe that what He is telling is the truth, and I trust Him.”

Jesus knew that other people were thinking, “Who does this Man think He is? He stands there and talks to all of us as if He knows it all. He stands there and talks to us as if we don’t know how to behave and as if we are not good. He should know who we are! He should know how good we are!”

Jesus knew what all these people were thinking. Jesus knew that some trusted themselves and that they did not trust God. He saw how they looked at other people in the crowd. He knew that they were thinking, “I am so good, and these other people are not.” Jesus saw their noses go in the air, and He saw them turn themselves away from other people. He knew that they were making fun of them in their minds and that they didn’t like them. So, Jesus decided to tell a story to those people who thought they were so good.

(Pick up the two faces so that the children can see the word PHARISEE and the word PUBLICAN and the smiling and sad faces. Hold them in front of you while you tell the following.) Jesus said, “Once upon a time there were two men. One man was called a Pharisee. The other man was called a publican. The Pharisee thought that by doing all the good things He could do, he would get God to think that he was a good man. The publican didn’t care what God thought about him. All he wanted to do was live his life the way he wanted to live it. The Pharisee always brought his offerings to the temple, and he thought that by bringing his offerings, God would have to think he was a good man. The publican got as much money as he could for himself—he collected taxes and told the people that they owed far more than they did so that he could keep a lot of money for himself. For two whole days out of every week, the Pharisee ate no food. Maybe he didn’t eat any food on Monday and Friday, or maybe he didn’t eat any food on Wednesday and Saturday. He thought that by eating no food for two days a week, God would think he was a good man. The publican just wanted all he could get for himself—all that he could enjoy.”

Jesus was still telling His story about the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee was thinking about himself and what kind of man he was; the publican was thinking about himself also, and what kind of man he was. The Pharisee was thinking that he was such a good man! The publican was thinking that maybe he was not such a good man. The publican was remembering how sad some of the people were as they paid their taxes and even more money to him. He remembered how sad they looked and how worried they looked. He was taking from them money that they needed for food for their families, for shoes for their children whose feet kept growing, for medicine for the sick baby, for new towels, and for paint, and for all the things that were needed around the house. He was remembering the lies that he had told. He was remembering the times that he got mad at people. He suddenly thought about how upset God must be with him.

The Pharisee decided that he would go to the temple. The publican decided that he would go to the temple, too. The Pharisee went to pray. The publican went to pray.

The Pharisee walked with strong, sure steps—with a straight back and a proud look. The publican walked with his head down. The Pharisee was proud to have people look at him. The publican felt sorry as he realized that people saw him. They both went into the temple, and they walked to certain places inside the temple. They stopped and stood there.

Jesus said, “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself....” Prayed with himself? I thought that when we prayed, we were talking with God. Jesus said this man was praying with himself. God must not have listened to his prayer. I wonder why not? Listen to what the Pharisee said, “God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are. Thank You, God, that I am so good. I am not bad like other men are. I am not even like this Publican is.

Look at all the good things I do. I fast two times a week. I am always giving of my money. I work hard. I do not steal from others. See how good I am, God?”

Jesus said, “Look at the publican. He won’t even lift up his head. His head is bowed. He is crying, and praying, ‘God, I am a sinner. I know that in me is no good thing. I need You. Please be merciful to me.’”

As Jesus was telling this parable, the people on the hillside were listening very carefully. Jesus was talking to those people who thought that they were so good. Jesus said, "I tell you. One of these men went out of the temple a saved man; the other man went out unsaved." (While saying this, turn the sticks so that the happy face now becomes a sad face and the sad face now becomes a happy face.) How quickly the Pharisee's smile faded when he died. God could not let him be in Heaven. How quickly the sad face of the publican changed. God would let him be in Heaven with Him.

You see, children, everybody is a sinner. There is no good in anybody. The ones who admit that they are sinners and trust God to wash away their sins and then live the right kind of life please God, but the ones who say they are so good and who will not admit that they are sinners and ask God to forgive them are lost.

(Open your Bible to Luke 18.) See where I found this parable in the Bible. I read it in the book of Luke, chapter 18. Verse 13 tells us what the publican prayed: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Children, don't ever think that people are good of themselves. The only good that is in anybody is the good that God gives them. Everybody has to admit that he is a sinner, and everybody has to ask God to forgive him of his sins. Always remember this.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Luke 18:13, "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."