

# GOD BE MERCIFUL

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

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.”

Many applications can be made from this simple, yet profound portion of Scripture. Jesus spoke this parable to certain ones who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9). There were two men who went to pray. The Pharisee’s prayer was thirty-four words long and consisted of recalling his good deeds, reminding God how religious he was, and thanking God that he was not as sinful as other men. Our text contains the entire prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus left no doubt as to the results of these prayers. He said it was the simple and humble prayer of the publican that resulted in his justification. The publican is a picture of a repentant sinner. He realized that he was not worthy to be forgiven. He called himself what he was, a guilty sinner. His only hope was the mercy of God. Thank God that He is a merciful Savior. None of us could ever earn or deserve God’s attention, much less His affection or acceptance. We all have violated His holiness and broken His law. We all have ignored His warnings and resisted His rule. We were altogether guilty before His holy presence. We had no hope of redemption without His mercy. But Jesus paid our sin debt and purchased our pardon when He died for our transgressions on the old rugged cross. When we, like the publican, humble ourselves before the righteous Judge of the universe and confess our guilt, asking Him for mercy, He forgives and justifies us. We are pardoned, declared to be completely forgiven, and given a place in the family of God. Oh, what a

Savior! What a great God! Thank God for His mercy. We should be reminded that we do not cease to need His mercy after we are saved. We are still dependent on the mercy of our gracious God. It is not unusual to find those who profess to be saved, yet feel as though they can never be forgiven or restored because of sins they have committed since being saved. "God be merciful to me" is still our great and comforting promise. He is ever merciful. We can come to Him with confidence, knowing that as we humble ourselves before Him and confess our sins, He is ready to forgive.