



204 Dix Road - Jefferson City, MO 65109

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. . . Heart to Heart . . .

But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'" (Luke 18:13) Have you ever given a deep consideration of what the tax collector was saying in his approach to God? If one backs up a few verses and sees the Pharisee's approach in arrogance, self-righteousness and a "pat yourself on the back" attitude, he gets nothing from God. This tax collector found something others were prevented from finding, *mercy*! When one comes into the presence of the holiness of God, seeing God for who He really is, it exposes us for who we really are. There were no excuses made, nothing said about "no one is perfect", nothing about "no one understands what I have been going through", or "my circumstances are different and difficult." He simply had nothing to say about himself other than what he is! He was sinful, knew he was sinful and in need of mercy.

Isaiah found the same thing when he found himself in the presence of God Almighty. He immediately recognizes his sinfulness and the sinfulness of God's people (Isa. 6). All he wanted was cleansing! God is holy and he wasn't, and Isaiah understood there was no relationship until holiness was imparted by the mercy of God.

We need to learn lessons from the tax collector and Isaiah, that being in the presence of a holy God creates a humble attitude and awe-inspiring worship. We find mercy through the death of Jesus, knowing nothing we have done or can do will change that. True forgiveness brings spiritual awakening and a desire stirring within the soul. Guilt is taken away, never to return because of the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:14). Until guilt is removed, there will be no awakening. We make excuses or try to show ourselves better than what we are in our relationship to God. We don't understand our holy and perfect heavenly Father. To offer us forgiveness and mercy instead of the wrath we deserve for our ungodliness is a great blessing. We speak of people deserving things but never look at what we deserve! We don't deserve mercy and forgiveness. Here comes God in the form of Jesus, offering up Himself and His blood, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and unholiness.

It's very difficult for us to appreciate the wonderful gift of forgiveness because we don't grasp the nature of our sin and the deep love God has toward us. We approach God like someone buying our lunch saying, "Thank you for lunch!" It cheats us out of recognizing His presence in which we stand. It cheats us out of awe-inspiring worship. It cheats us out of life itself! Think about it!!!

Brent