



*Seeing What Is*  
**November 6, 2022**

*Luke 18:9-14 (MSG)*

### Connect:

- “*Regrets, I’ve had a few*” sings Frank Sinatra in his famed hit, “*My Way.*” He also notes that he’s had “*too few to mention.*” What role does regret play in the human experience? Is it healthy? Have you had a few? Discuss.

### Engage

- Read *Luke 18:9-14*. In many parables, Jesus sets up the story with a natural protagonist and antagonist. His listeners would have immediately recognized which was which. The Pharisee is the protagonist and the tax collector the antagonist. And yet... Jesus always flips the script. In this case, the tax collector, clearly despised by most, comes out justified and the Pharisee (*read: good religious person*) is villainized. Why does Jesus use this tactic time and time again? Do you find it effective?
- The Pharisee essentially prays his resume. Instead of truly being grateful, he ultimately prays to God, “*You’re welcome that I’m so good.*” Discuss the idea of comparative praying – “*At least I’m not like them, as bad as them, etc.*” What do we gain from comparative praying?
- If the tax collector goes home justified, does that mean that his prayer for mercy wipes out every consequence of his behavior (*or spirit*) for which he sought mercy? Why/why not?
- What does it mean to walk in right relationship with God and right relationship with others? If direction determines destination, not intention, then what actual direction will you take to be in right relationship?
- Writer Ann Voskamp said, “*No amount of regret changes the past. No amount of anxiety changes the future. Any amount of gratitude changes the present.*” Is this compelling to you? Why/why not?

### Next Steps:

- Start each morning the humbling prayer, “*God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*” Allow it not to be a prayer of guilt but simply a reminder of your humanity. See how it opens you to the reception of others in your life. Do you have more grace for them (*and even yourself*) in light of your prayer?

### Pray:

- Share joys and concerns about your lives with one another. Lift those in prayer.
- Pray courage for yourself and our church to be the most hospitable people in Columbia!
- “*God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*”