

The boastfulness of the Pharisee is disgusting - especially so because of his state in life. He, if anybody, should have understood that to whom much has been given, from him much is expected. Instead of looking at his unworthiness and his unprofitableness, he boastfully looked upon himself as someone quite special and certainly above the rank and file of the unworthies of the world. No doubt, the Pharisee enjoyed the material securities the world of his day had to offer, and, no doubt, the comforts of his securities helped place him a cut above his fellow man.

Three of the most definite and manifest forms of wickedness the Pharisee spoke of, **in order by contrast** to set forth his **own purity**: "extortioners" were individuals who unjustly, and with venom in their hearts, forced from others their hard-earned money and goods; "The unjust" were those who dealt unfairly in the ordinary vicissitudes and workings of life; and, "adulterers" were, and always have been, estimated to be the deeper and more daring transgressors of the Divine and human law. It could well have been that the Pharisee was, in truth, a man free from personal stain in his conduct from all these vices. We certainly have no way of knowing, and the parable gives us no hint. Indeed, he might well have been quite an upright sort of person. He might well have been one, even from his earliest youth, to observe the literal letter of every law. There is nothing in the parable that forbids us from taking him at his word. Therefore, we have to take him at his word and place no judgment upon him. But instead of extending the list of vices of which he felt himself free - the Pharisee cut the matter short by a general comparison between himself and the publican. **THIS IS EXACTLY WHERE THE PHARISEE MADE HIS MISTAKE!**

If the Pharisee had only examined himself on the keeping of the spirit of the whole law of God and not singly compared himself with others who he thought worse than himself, his lot might have been different - **MUCH DIFFERENT!** When a man compares himself with robbers and adulterers, for whom the law and prison are prepared, he may seem unto himself to be no less than an angel. This is a mistake so many of us make. **WE COMPARE!** We are constantly looking around and about us and we see others - our parents, our children, our relatives, our neighbors, our political leaders, our church leaders, our Priests, and all the rest of people - and we see them cut the corners of life. We see (or think we see) their mistakes and wrongdoings. We are quick to notice how abbreviated the religious living of our family members might sometimes be (at least according to our own standards). By comparison with all such people we seem to stand a cut above them! On the other hand, how do our lives and our way of living out our responsibilities look when compared to the **LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST?** What does the comparison turn into when we look at the lives of our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph - and all the Saints who have gone before us? These are the lives that should be the basis for