

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Metanoia Required**    Third Week in Lent    Saturday, March 5, 2016    8:15 AM  
Hos 6:1-6;    **Lk 18:9-14**    (Our inward behavior: our thoughts, our feelings about others, may not be so admirable.)

**“I tell you, the later went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

Jesus here is addressing an issue that had become very central to the life of his people, that is, the issue of **the Torah and living it out**.

Now the Pharisees were actually very dedicated people. They were extremely ethical. However, as this particular teaching points out, their focus was on comportment of an external type and they ignored the inner space, which we may call the soul or the mind, which is also something very much a part of who we are. And so **whereas our external behavior might be admirable, our inward behavior: our thoughts, our feelings about others, may not be so admirable**.

Now the **Torah** does not cover the inner world, oddly enough. It does require its adherence to love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul in a way that is including the inner world, but it **doesn't really focus on the very snares and traps that exist within us**. Here we have the idea of self-exaltation. “Thank God I am not like others.” Well that is a very false attitude. It is a self-emotion. **Most self-emotions have to be very carefully dealt with because they can all get out of control**. Then we have inflation, the inflation of the self, the extraordinary and extreme love of the self overpowering everything else. Well, if you love your neighbor as yourself, then your love of self cannot be the prime working of your inner spirit. It has to be **balanced**. Here this Pharisee, in spite of his very fine ethical life was not balanced inwardly. This was often the case.

Once Jesus described this sort of very ethical life as “whitened sepulchers,” whitened because outwardly very fine, very clean, very pure, but sepulchers because inside nothing but death. He came to bring life, which requires an **inner conversion**. It requires a turning toward the center. **It requires an awareness of what is going on within, and then opening that to the Holy Spirit so that what can be produced by God's grace is a new mind—metanoia, a new mind, a new spirit, a new way of thinking, a new way of feeling, a new way of relating to others and to oneself**. This was lacking here in the Pharisee.

Now the poor tax collector didn't have it either, but he was on the way.