

CHRISTMAS for ALL

Week 5: Fix Your Focus

Psalm 121:1-2

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains-where does my help come from? ² My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

John 16:33b

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Luke 18:9-14

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector ⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable. ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a Tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people-robbers, evildoers, adulterers-or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of what I get.' ¹³ 'But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his

Parable: a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. Jesus used them all throughout the New Testament

Defined by The Oxford English Dictionary

breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' ¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

What are the hills you are tempted to focus on?

Today we participate in Communion together!

Communion is an act of remembrance that Jesus began. He instructed his first disciples and us to participate in it as we recall his broken body and shed blood on the cross. The bread and cup we drink today are reminders of his great act of rescue on the cross—expressions of his great love for us and encouragement that he has made a way for us to live in an unbroken relationship with God, others, and our purpose. As you prepare for Communion, ask:

- Am I a follower of Jesus who has been made new by Him? (If not, now is a great time to receive His gift of rescue; use the prayer included in this guide.)
- Am I holding onto a broken pattern of living or thought that is creating distance between me and my relationship with God? (Confess that and ask for God's forgiveness.)
- How is God wanting the power of Jesus' gift to be more real for me and others? (Commit to pursuing that this week.)

For further reflection:

- This week as we begin the New Year, reflect on this past 2021 year and where your focus was and listen for the Holy Spirit to guide you to your new focus in 2022

How to receive forgiveness from God:

- 1) Admit you, like everyone else, need new life in Jesus.
- 2) Ask God to forgive your sins by the sacrifice of Jesus.
- 3) Receive new life from God by trusting in Jesus as your Savior & Lord.

You can do that now by simply talking to God in a prayer like this:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. Today, I receive you as my Savior; and I put my faith in you as my LORD. Help me to live for you all the days of my life. In your name, Amen.

If you chose to follow Jesus today, text "FAITH" to 309-250-2007 to receive additional information about next steps in following Jesus.

Next week we launch 22 days of prayer and fasting in 2022!

We believe God is looking for people who are willing to have faith in His ability and desire to BREAKTHROUGH in their lives.

Let's be those people!



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