Blotches Series – Week Four

Luke 18:9-14

**Opening Activity**:

As the kids arrive hand them a 3x5 card. Ask the children to write down things about themselves without sharing a physical attribute. Once the kids have filled out their cards, collect them. As a large group, read a card and have the kids try to point out whom it is describing. At the end of the activity, ask how they figured out who to point to?

**Story**:

Review the past three weeks, being sure to point out the origin of sin, how we try to hide our sin, and how we pretend or act like we don’t sin.

Have you ever been blamed for something that you didn’t do? I have. Have you ever been the one to blame someone or let them take the blame for something that they didn’t do? Again, I have.

Today we are going to look at some accounts of people who placed blame.

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus is telling a story to some people who thought that they were righteous.

Do you know what it means to be righteous? If we say that a person is righteous, we are saying that they live in a way that they consistently do what is right. If we say that a person is self-righteous, that person sees themself as always doing the right thing. According to Romans 3:10 it says, “There is none righteous, no not one.” This verse says that there is not a perfect person. Even in thinking that we are righteous we are wrong and showing our pride. And pride is a sin.

Back to the story.

Jesus told about two men who went to the temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee and the other man a tax collector. The fact that Jesus points out these men’s jobs tells us a lot about these men. For an example, if I said that their job were a policeman, what does it tell you? Or a doctor? Or an engineer? Or a robber?

A Pharisee was a group of religious leaders that often would judge people by looking at if they lived up to the laws written by Moses or the Ten Commandments. They were similar to a political party. A political party tries to sway people on how the United States should be run. And a Pharisee tried to sway people into following their view of how to get to God.

A tax collector was a group of people who collected taxes, or what was owed to the government. Often tax collectors would collect more than the government fee and keep it for themselves. They were not liked.

So these men went to pray.

Can I ask you why do you pray? Is it because you want to talk to God or ask God for something? I hope it is because you know that you need God to help you to live your life in the right way.

The Pharisee stood in the temple and prayed to God all about himself and the good things he did for God like fast (to go without something usually food in an effort to hear from God), and give a tithe (1/10 of his money). His prayer did not end there he wanted to make sure that God knew how righteous he was so he pointed out different groups of sinners like robbers and tax collectors.

The tax collector also prayed to God but he stood at a distance. When he prayed he could not even look up to heaven and he hit his chest. This tells me that the tax collector felt humble or unworthy in the temple before God. You know that feeling that you get when you have been caught disobeying your parent and they make you stand in front of them and talk about it. When your parent wants you to look at them but you can’t because you know you have failed them. He prayed about himself also, but his prayer was for mercy. A person who stands before a judge will ask the judge for mercy, meaning that they ask the judge to give them a lighter/easier punishment for their crime. Here the tax collector was saying to God that he knew he didn’t deserve it but would God have mercy and forgive him. He knew he had done wrong, he sinned.

Jesus finished his story by pointing out that the tax collector left the temple that day feeling forgiven. While the Pharisee just left with pride and sin in his heart. He was so busy pointing out what the tax collector was like that he could not see how he was sinning.

This story is about you and me. We may not have the job of a Pharisee or a tax collector but our actions are just the same. We think, hey I am a pretty good person. I go to church, bring my offering, sing the songs, and pray. I don’t do bad stuff like other people. I don’t act up at church or get detention at school. We may even compare ourselves to someone we know that is known for being bad or in trouble all the time.

The thing is we are comparing ourselves to the wrong person. The Bible says that the only person to ever live without sin is Jesus. When we compare our life to His life we see how bad we really are. When we think about what we do that is wrong and the fact that God knows all that we do and think, we should feel unworthy. When I think about the fact that when I disobey, lie, cheat or steal, I will have to answer to God and tell Him what I have done. I should be so sad inside that I can’t look into His eyes to ask for His mercy, just like the tax collector.

The great thing is that God is our judge, not other people. God knows what we have done. And when we ask Jesus to come into our life and forgive us of all our sin. Jesus forgives. And because Jesus forgives us, He covers us with His righteousness. He takes our sin and replaces it with His perfect life. He stands as our covering. When God sees us, He sees Jesus and has mercy on us, because Jesus has already taken our punishment.

**Verse**: Titus 3:5a

**Small Group Questions**:

Tell me about a time you were blamed for something.

How do you feel when people blame you for something you didn’t do?

Jesus was telling the story to people who thought they were righteous. What does righteous mean?

How do you think the people felt after hearing the story? (I think they should have felt guilty. Like Jesus was blaming them for being full of pride and sinful.)

Share with me about a time someone showed you mercy? (Reminder, mercy is when you don’t get the punishment you deserve).

How do you feel when you receive mercy?

Who should we compare ourselves to? When you look at your life and compare it to Jesus, what do you need to change or do different?

**Activities**:

Play a type of “mother-may-I” but change the games name to Mercy. Assign tasks for the kids to do such as 20 jumping jacks. When the child asks for mercy either reduce the assigned task or do away with it all together. Show mercy to some but not all. When you reach a stopping point discuss how it felt to receive mercy, how it felt not to receive mercy, and how God offers mercy to all that come to Him.