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BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
SERMON OUTLINE

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**“PARABLE ON THE PRAYER THAT PLEASURES
GOD or
HOW TO GO TO CHURCH”**

Luke 18:9-14

Have you ever prayed a prayer that seemed kind of silly looking back? The story is told about a little girl who was praying when her dad walked into room and he heard her say over and over again, “Tokyo, Tokyo, Tokyo.”

Years ago, Garth Brooks had a pretty good song that said, **“Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers.”** At least some of us can relate to that, but here in God's Word the Lord teaches us about the kind of prayer God wants to answer. He teaches us about prayers that please God.

In the passage before us today, the Lord Jesus allows us a glimpse into the Temple as some people gathered to worship. In this parable, we will see that one man came to church that day to worship himself. The other man came to church that day to worship the Lord.

I want to take a few minutes to contrast these two men because they teach us some much-needed *lessons* about how we should come to church. So, I want to point out those *lessons* as I preach about -

HOW TO GO TO CHURCH

I. TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE

- A. A Pharisee
- B. A Publican

II. TWO KINDS OF PRAYER

- A. Haughty Prayer
- B. Humble Prayer

Let me mention a few thoughts the prayers of these two men teach us about our own praying.

- ◆ *Prayer had become nothing more than a ritual*
- ◆ *Predetermined prayers were formulated for every aspect of life*
- ◆ *Prayer was limited to preset times and occasions*
- ◆ *Long prayers were held in high regard*
- ◆ *Many prayers were comprised of meaningless repetition*
- ◆ *The desire to be seen and heard of others*

Unfortunately, many of those same problems have crept into the prayer life of the modern church. Let me make a statement or two regarding our praying.

- ◆ *God is not impressed by the length, volume and vocabulary of our prayers.*
- ◆ *Prayer is not a time to preach*
- ◆ *Prayers should be specific and to the point, rather than general and rambling*
- ◆ *Prayer is not a time to brag*

III. TWO KINDS OF PROFIT

- A. One Man Was Received by God
- B. One Man Was Refused by God

One man went to church and left with nothing. He went through the rituals. The other man went to church and left with everything. He didn't make a spiritual show. He prayed a simple prayer. He offered God honesty, confession and worship. He left that church right with the Lord. What was the difference between the two? The difference was in the attitude and condition of their hearts. One was full of himself and thought he needed nothing more. The other knew he was nothing and possessed nothing. He humbled himself before God and he was blessed.