Sermon: **The tax collector, and not the Pharisee, was in the right with God when he went home.** (Luke 18.14)

It takes a few seconds to decide whether or not you love a new house; true also when meeting new people. This is somewhat instinctive and rejection usually does not carry condemnation with it.

In this story we briefly meet two people praying in the Temple, where condemnation does occur.

We ought to have sympathy for the Pharisee. He is satisfied with his lot, is honest, faithful in marriage, and carries out all religious duties well. *Are you telling me that this is wrong*?

To collect tax = collusion with Rome – thus a tax collector was despised, earning his living by adding extra to the amount Rome wanted. Most took too much, for which they were despised even more.

After this prayer did he change his life, or just carry on? *Are you telling me this is right*?

We must applaud the Pharisee’s actions and deplore those of the Tax Collector. So why TEXT?

More important than their actions was their attitudes – this is a common Jesus’ theme.

Two major related issues - How do you see yourself and how do you see others?

Pharisee: He saw himself as able to do good without God’s help.

 He judged others without knowing anything about them.

Tax collector: He saw himself as unable to do good without God’s help.

 He only judged himself.

TEXT. Why should attitudes matter more to God than actions?

Because God’s love changes attitudes first, not actions.
Attitudes drive actions; when actions drive attitudes it usually leads to judgement.

If our hearts are not changed then no amount of activity, however good, will promote God’s Kingdom.

A parish that says to others: Come and join us for we are good people is quite different from one that says come and join us as we need you to help us try to figure life out.

Joy Cowley book: Made for Love: p82

*When we look at the world
through eyes of true love,
divisions will disappear
and God is all that we’ll see.*