



Excerpts from the the Homily by St. [Nikolai Velimirovich](#)

on the Gospel for the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican

Luke 18:10-14 - The Gospel on True and False Prayer

The proud, whose eyes are constantly raised heavenward while their hearts cleave to the earth, are not pleasing to God; it is the humble and meek, whose eyes are cast down earthward while their hearts are filled with

heaven, who please Him. The Creator of mankind prefers men to count over their sins to Him rather than their good works. For God is a physician, who comes up to the bed on which each one of us is lying, and asks: “Where is the pain?” The man who makes use of the physician’s presence to tell him about all his pain and weakness is wise, and the man who, concealing his pain, boasts of his health to the physician, is a fool. As though a physician visits men because of their health, and not their sickness! “It is evil to sin,” says wise Chrysostom, “though here help can be given; but to sin, and not to admit it—there is no help there.”

Imagine now that we are patients in this hospital of the world. The sickness that every one of us is suffering from has the same name—unrighteousness. This word includes all the passions, all lusts, all sins—all the weaknesses and enervation of our souls, our hearts and our minds. But such are the characteristics of these illnesses of the inner man that only those who are healed are aware of the terrible sickness from which they had been suffering. The sickest are the least aware of their illness. Ponder, then, on all this. If you protest: “I am righteous; this applies to the sinners around me,” then this means that your illness has reached its peak. If, though, you beat your breast in repentance and reply: “It’s true; I am sick and need a doctor,” then this means you are on the way to healing. Do not, then, be afraid; you will get well.

Source: <http://www.russianorthodox-stl.org/>