



# Vantage Point

You were made for Him – fully known and truly loved!

March 2015

## Personal Message from Eric Johnson

I teach men and women to see every life situation as an opportunity to love others for Jesus. In a letter a year ago, I mentioned how God led me at Wegmans into a conversation with an acquaintance who no longer attended church. I asked if we could meet; and we have met every week for a year. My friend recently asked if he and his wife could attend one of our meetings. We designed it specifically for an audience that has left formal church. That is no surprise. People attend and leave church for many reasons. It is important, however, to understand how merely religious people hinder the gospel message.

***Our mission seeks to extend His grace to all adults and help them explore and mature in their faith.***

## This Month's Gospel Message

Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were **righteous**, and treated others with contempt. “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee

and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.” But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” I [Jesus] tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

This parable describes two men at church in prayer, with two self-understandings, and receiving two different destinies. The Pharisee was a religious man, who boasted of his achievements. He did not mention any of his own failures. His faith consisted of externals, seeking to be good, or moralism. He thanked God that he was not like other men. He could not think of one good thing to say about his neighbor. He stood in judgment over his fellow man. Jesus taught that this man was self-righteous. He did not see himself to be in need and, in effect, rejected the gospel. He did not understand grace. He

received the judgment he had given. He was humbled.

Meanwhile, the tax collector stood in sharp contrast. He drew back in shame. He beat his chest in sorrow. He exalted God, and debased himself. He spoke of his failures, not his achievements. He acknowledged his own sin. He pleaded that he not be given what he deserved. He cried for mercy. He recognized his need for a substitute. God heard his cry, and he received grace, God’s righteousness, as a gift. Here we see the gospel at work.

Jesus did not stand at a distance looking down with contempt on others. He humbled Himself and entered our humanity. He was despised, mocked, judged, condemned, rejected, and crucified for others. On the cross He prayed, “Father forgive them for they do not know what they do.” The Apostle Paul further explained, “For our sake He [God] made Him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the **righteousness** of God.” We receive and experience the same love from the Father that Jesus knew and will, in turn, be eager and able to demonstrate that love to others in thought, word, and deed – imagine such a community!

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## **Mission Update**

*Adult Life is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit ministry relying on private support — and your generosity. Your gifts are investments in the biblical counseling, discipleship, and evangelism of people who may have little hope, and need more faith. Please consider joining us now with a monthly investment. Adult Life is now doing business as Vantage Point Ministries – Enjoying Life from the Vantage Point of God’s Grace. Use the enclosed coupon and envelope and make checks payable to “Vantage Point” or “Adult Life.”*

*Thank you! We are blessed by your friendship and support.*

*Eric Johnson, M.Div.*

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## Prayer for local mission with adults...

Eric and Jenny Johnson

Extending God’s grace to all adults and helping them explore and mature in faith

Men and Women meeting in small groups will abound in love

Counseling Clients will experience His power, love, and resurrection

Eric’s doctorate work on evangelism in the church

Thankful for your partnership in this important ministry with adults

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