



Pastor Tony Jones and his wife, Tiffany Jones, personally thank Karen Abercrombie for her message during the Fellowship Church's Mother's Day Celebration.

Photo by Timothy Ramsey

War

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room was silent." According to Abercrombie, by the time she made it home, the phone was ringing and when she answered, they offered her the role.

Abercrombie said she thought of her aunt, who was a prayer warrior, and an elderly childhood neighbor as inspiration for the part.

Abercrombie started her message by telling the story of Rahab the harlot and how she eventually became a "mother in the bloodline of the Messiah." Her message was it doesn't matter where you come from, God takes great joy in using any willing vessel to bring glory to his king-

dom." She went on to speak about the gifts that all of us have inside and said, "You are here because you were chosen, so be encouraged."

For Abercrombie, her faith in the Lord kept her strong throughout the years. She told the story of David and Goliath to tell everyone in attendance, "No matter what the giant is in your life, you have to trust in the Lord that he is what he says he is.

"You have to leave it in the father's hands because he will do what he said he will do," she said. "Be clear on who you are and what you mean to him, so much so that he gave his only begotten, perfect, and pure son because he wanted to spend an eternity with you."

Fellowship Church Pastor Tony

Jones reached out to Abercrombie through a mutual friend. "It was a no brainer when I knew she was available and to do it on Mother's Day, it just fit like a hand and glove."

Jones just finished with a series of sermons entitled "Dangerous Prayers," where he asks those to not pray safe prayers, but reach outside of their comfort zone. Jones said having Abercrombie here was a fitting end to the series because our focus has been on prayer.

Abercrombie's message was very uplifting and said prayer has to be paramount in our relationship with God. For those who do not pray as they should, she posed the question, "How can you have an intimate relationship with someone you don't spend a lot of time with?"

Lesson


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and others despicable. Case in point: the Pharisee, who observes religious ceremonies and practices, adheres to oral laws and traditions, and believes in an afterlife and the coming of the Messiah ... or a sanctimonious, self-righteous hypocrite. Then there is the one he considers despicable, the publican or tax collector who is employed by Rome and collects taxes from all who owe and is not always honest in his profession. These two go up to pray, presumably for forgiveness of sin or transgressions. In this parable Jesus is targeting a specific audience - namely those who were spiritually smug and compulsive about their pious behavior. In the parable Jesus points out how the Pharisee prays about himself out loud in the public to gain the people's applause (Luke 18:11). He wanted others to note his clean and upright lifestyle, but the prayer lacked sincerity. The Pharisee failed to understand that no matter how good he thought himself to be, he fell short of God's perfect moral standard (see Romans 3:23). The tax collector, on the other hand, had hit an emotional and spiritual low. He may have been overwhelmed by deep conviction and no doubt remorse for the greed that consumed his life. In his praying he stood away and would not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed, but bowed his head. He perhaps out of shame did not want to be heard and maybe ridiculed by

the standers-by. He rather beats his chest over his shortcomings and asks only that God grant him mercy even though he was a "sinner." He was owning up to his many transgressions and asking God to turn from them (Luke 18:13). Then who went home justified? Jesus states that the tax collector did. Why? Because he humbled himself. Humility in the Greek was thought to be a sign of weakness and lack of worth or dignity. But Jesus made humility a cornerstone of Christian character (see Matt 18:4, 23:12; Luke 18:14). Scriptural humility involves the absence of arrogance ... knowing that all we are and have we owe to God.

**For Your Consideration:** Why do you think some people are self-assured about their presumed devotion to God? What are some ways we can grow in humility? (David C. Cook, Bible Lesson Commentary, 2015-16)

**Life's Application:** We are to remain humble before God and in the way we relate to others. We should strive to see ourselves as God sees us and without pretense foster respect in our relationships to others. Just as the Pharisee needed to hear this, so do many leaders in our churches today. Whether we know it or not, leaders in church and other areas of life are role models for those they lead. Christians especially must lead as Jesus did, by example.



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