**Prelude to Prayer**

Pride prevents salvation. If we see only self, we never see our Savior. Arrogance stiffens the knee so it will not kneel, hardens the heart so it will not admit to sin. The heart of pride never confesses, never repents, never asks for forgiveness. Pride is the hidden reef that shipwrecks the soul. Max Lucado

**Luke18:9-14**

**9**To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10**“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12**I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ **13**“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ **14**“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

* Father, we all have times when we are prideful and think of ourselves as better than others. Sometimes it is a small issue and sometimes it is bigger. Please forgive us when we are the Pharisee.
* I want more often to be like the tax collector. Have mercy on me. I am a sinner, selfish and arrogant at times, moody and dismissive at times. Help me make better decisions that focus on You and Your ways. Let me act more like Christ, loving, caring and selfless.
* Lord, we have so many across the globe that are going through such hard times right now. Please protect all of our brothers and sisters that are under persecution simply for the fact that they love You. Men, women, and children that are being brutalized and killed because they follow Christ. Watch over them and give them places of refuge to wait for rescue. Then please give them the rescue.
* Please be with our Armed Forces as they try to protect those that are under attack. Protect them in every direction, give them honor and wisdom to make the best decisions possible. Be with the families that are mourning the loss of their loved ones who stepped into the breach. Give them hope and strength in Your love.
* Lord, please make our nation’s leaders honorable and trustworthy as they make decisions regarding our country. Help them to seek You first and always in every matter.
* Father, please be with each of us as we go about our week. Give those traveling, safe journeys. For those who are ill or hurting, please give healing. For those who are worried about financial matters, please give peace and good decision making. For those scared, give calm minds. And for those looking for answers, help us help them find You.

We ask all these things in Jesus’ name, Amen