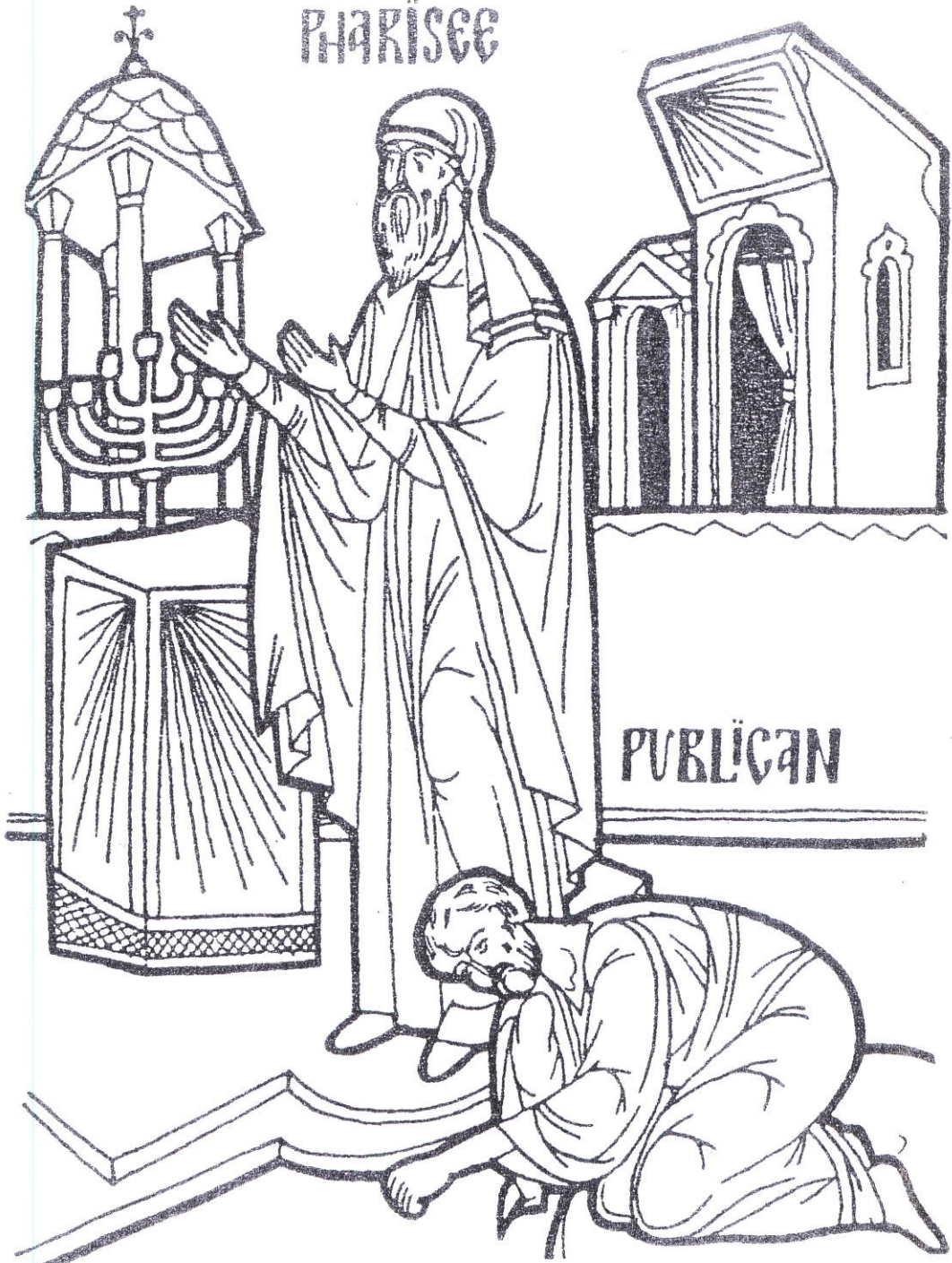


PHARISEE



PUBLICAN

# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of Pharisee and Publicaan

January 24, 2010

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Deacon Kenneth  
E. Ellis and Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and  
Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

## We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

*It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.*

## GLAD TIDINGS

+++ On Sunday, February 7, we will have our luncheon prior to the Great Fast. Everyone is invited to participate with prepared fast foods. Details will be in next Sunday's bulletin.

+++ This Saturday is the simple feast of Three Hierarchs. In anticipation, the vespereal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Friday evening at 7:30 PM. Please come and join us in worship and praise.



+++ We are very pleased to share wonderful news with our parishioners that the devoted husband, Louis, of our good parishioner, Robin Pasquino, has agreed to offer his talented services to our parish and install the ceramic tile flooring in the pantry, kitchen, and bathrooms of our existing building. He will begin this coming Saturday, January 30 and will be joined by our volunteer parishioners who appreciate his most generous contribution to our parish. The work will continue to be integrated with the schedule of renovations taking place. We pray the gracious Lord continue to bless him and loved ones along with our parish volunteers with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ Those of our faithful who would like their homes blessed are asked to inform Father and arrange an appointment when convenient.

+++ Next Sunday at 9: 15 AM, we will have a Memorial Service for the repose of the soul of beloved grandmother, +Theresa Sabol requested by Robin Pasquino on the anniversary of her death. We pray the merciful Lord continues to comfort Robin and her loved ones in their loss and grants a blessed repose and Eternal Memory to the soul of +Theresa.

+++ We are pleased to announce and thank the four additional family units who joined the previous three with increased Sunday offerings, one of which is practicing tithing, that is, offering one tenth of income to our generous God. Having the example and support of these generous souls is important to the glory of our God and the good of our parish. We pray others will pray and follow their example. We pray their generosity be blessed with good health of body and soul for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We remind our faithful that at the last Diocesan Council this past summer, the Diocesan Dues were raised, due to inflation and need, from the past \$50.00 per adult individual, eighteen years and older, to \$60.00 per year. Our envelope offering system still has the old amount on it, so please disregard that figure and make your offering according to the new mandated amount. If this offering was made in the old amount, please correct it by submitting the additional amount with a notation on the envelope because the parish must send the entire amount to the diocesan chancery.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$1,200; Candles, \$100; Food Coupons, \$100; Pennies From Heaven, \$100; Energy, \$100; Parish Dues, \$1,000; Diocesan Dues, \$1,000; Kitchen, \$100; Web Site, \$100; Birthday Offering, \$100, for a total of \$3,600. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 41 adults and 15 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: **Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, +Paul Szmada, Debra Szmada, Kent Pasquino, Anna Zacharyczuk and Pani Buletza.**

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$~~500.00~~ from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$~~2,225.00~~. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Be certain your child attends the spiritual formation classes held each Sunday following the Divine Liturgy. We make a serious attempt to share the love of our Lord with all.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$~~1,000.00~~ on this project to date!

+++ We remind our faithful only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!



PERFECTION

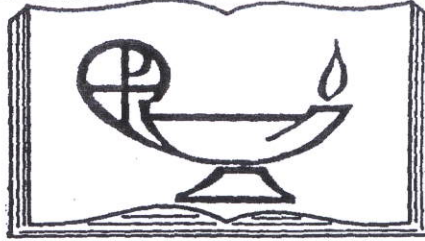
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PRAY  
AND  
FAST

AND Be Chanitable !!!



LORD



TEACH  
US

## Repentance

*O Lord, from the depths of despair I cry for your help. Hear me! Answer me! Help me! Lord, if you keep in mind our sins, then who can ever get an answer to his prayers? Psalms 130: 1 - 3.*

*O loving and kind God, have mercy on me. Have pity on me and take away the awful stain of my transgressions. Wash me, cleanse me from this guilt. Let me be pure again, for I admit my shameful deed; it haunts me day and night. It is against you and you alone I sinned, and did this terrible thing. You saw it all and your sentence against me is just. Sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be clean again. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. And after you have punished me, give me back my joy again. Do not keep looking at my sins, erase them from your sight. Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires. Do not toss me aside, banished forever from your presence. Do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to other sinners and they guilty like me, will repent and return to you. Do not sentence me to death, O my God, you alone can rescue me,, Then I will sing of your forgiveness for my lips will be unsealed, O how I will praise you. You do not want penance if you did, how gladly I would do it! You are not interested in offerings burned before you on the altar. It is a broken spirit you want, remorse and penitence. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not ignore Psalm 50.*

*O God you know how stupid I am and you know all my sins. How they scoff and mock me when I mourn and fast before the Lord Psalms 69: 5.*

*Let us examine ourselves instead and repent, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift our hearts and hands to him in heaven Lamentations 43: 40.*

# Overcome with Love

Heavenly Father, Help us remember that the jerk who cut us off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours that day and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind us, Lord, that the scary looking bum, begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to get a job!) is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savoring this moment, knowing that, based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last year that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that, of all the gifts you give us, the greatest gift is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not to just those who are close to us, but to all humanity. Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive, show patience, empathy and love.

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# The Jesus Prayer

*The Master, our Lord Jesus, taught his followers about "the necessity to pray always without becoming weary" (Luke 18:1). His advice was repeated by the apostle Paul, who wrote: "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).*

*The Lord's words and the apostolic counsel were observed by early Christians with short prayers which they recited frequently. The desert fathers and mothers of the Thebeid often used the prayer "Lord, have mercy." Using a creed: "Jesus Christ is Lord and Son of God" and augmented by the prayer of the Publican, "O God, have mercy on me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), the Kyrie eleison was expanded. The resultant prayer is known as the Jesus Prayer:*

**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*The Jesus Prayer is the foundation of the form of eastern spirituality called Hesychasm (quiet). The advocates of this form of prayer call the practitioner to move from oral prayer, through the prayer of the mind to prayer of the heart.*

*The believer begins, according to the advice of Theophan, as if he or she had never prayed properly before. Reciting the Jesus prayer slowly, gently, quietly, the believer inhales while saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son*



*of God,” deeply breathing in God’s name. Then, the believer rests slightly at “Son of God” before breathing out and saying: “have mercy on me, a sinner.”*

*Next, the believer is directed to stand or sit still and to confine his or her thoughts to the one word being uttered at that moment. The mind is to be emptied of all images, for this is not to be a meditation on Christ; instead, the believer is to become aware of the presence of Jesus. By remaining imageless, the experience of Jesus’ presence is not one of the imagination. The believer works to bring scattered thoughts back to the words of the prayer, recalling the advice of Saint John Climacus: “Confine your mind within the words of prayer.”*

*After recollection leads to proper breathing and then to the control of the mind, the believer must become aware of the presence of the Lord, not in the mind, but in the heart. Theophan says: “At present your thoughts of God are in your head. And God Himself; as it were, outside of you.” The mind must come to concord with the heart, the inner center of each person, a place as mysterious and unknown to others as God is. By using the bodily organ, the heart, the believer pays attention to the heart beat and draws the mind to the heart, the center of one’s being. It is within the heart of each person, that mysterious center, that God and only God comes and meets us. By meeting God in the heart, the believer comes to enter the invisible world and comes to God, as Gregory of Nyssa writes, in the midst of divine darkness which is the unknowability of God.*

*The ideal is to achieve a state in which the believer prays day and night awake and asleep with the beat of the heart and thereby fulfilling the command to "pray without ceasing." The spiritual direction of the hesychasts is contained in a book called the Philokalia. An introduction to this prayer is found in the charming anonymous account of a Russian pilgrim of the 19th century, The Way of the Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way.*

*The typical edition of the Časoslov (Slavonic: Book of Hours), published in Rome in 1950 for the Ruthenian Church gives a rule of monastics using the Jesus Prayer which, when adapted, can be of use to us as well.*

*Make the sign of the cross upon yourself. Then say each of the following prayers accompanied by a prostration to the ground:*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!

O God, cleanse me of my sins, and have  
mercy on me!

O Lord, You are my Creator, have mercy on me!

O Lord, forgive me, for I have sinned  
without number.

*And then:*

O Virgin Lady, Mother of God, save me!

My holy guardian angel, protect me from all harm!

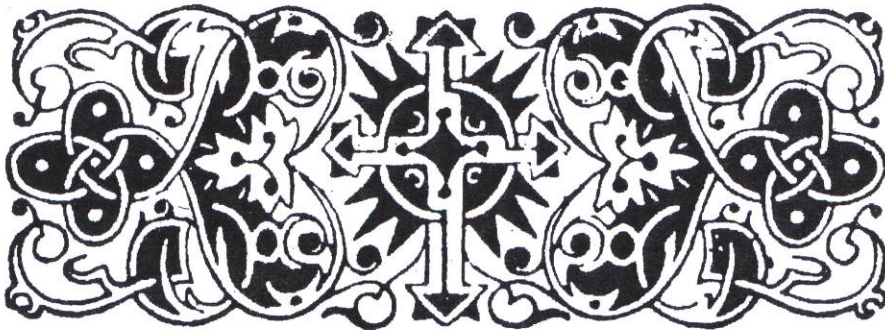
Holy (your patron saint), pray to God for me.

*Now we pray the Jesus Prayer:*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. *(One hundred times)*

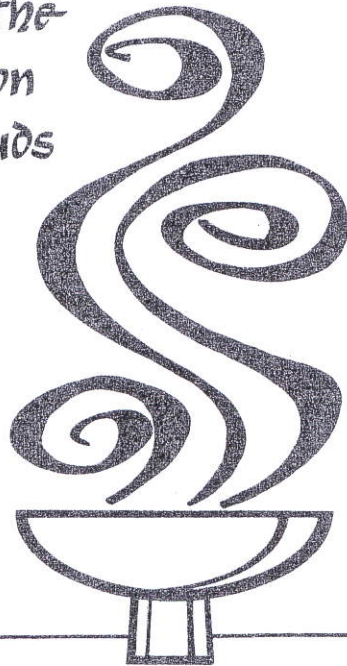
*Some believers use a rope rosary of one hundred knots with larger knots dividing them. This aid is called a chotki. On the larger knots, we pray:*

O most holy Mother of God, save us!





The prayer of the  
humble person  
pierces the clouds  
and rises  
like incense  
to the  
LORD.



## Prayer Of Saint Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life,  
keep from me the spirit of indifference  
and discouragement,  
lust of power and idle chatter.

### *Prostration*

Instead, grant to me, your servant  
the spirit of wholeness of being,  
humble-mindedness, patience, and love.

### *Prostration*

O Lord and King,  
grant me the grace to be aware of my sins  
and not to judge my brothers and sisters;  
for You are blessed, now and ever  
and forever. Amen.

### *Prostration*

*The following prayer is repeated four times while making a simple bow after each sentence of the prayer.*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.  
O God, cleanse me of my sins, and have mercy on me.  
O Lord, forgive me, for I have sinned without number.

*"Friends are those  
rare people who ask  
how we are and  
then wait to hear  
the answer."*





# WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

*Let us bring to the Lord the sighs of the Publican and as sinner let us approach the Lord. He desires the salvation of all mankind; He grants forgiveness to all who repent. For us He became man while remaining God, co-eternal with the Father. Kontakion, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican.*

*The Pharisee, overcome with his pride, and the Publican, bent down in repentance, came before You, the only Lord: the first trusted in himself and was deprived of Your blessings; the other spoke but a few words and received Your blessings in abundance. Behold my tears and strengthen me, O Christ our God, for You are indeed the Lover of mankind. Vesper Hymn, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican.*

*Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of life. As we worship in your temple this morning, teach us how to purify the temples of our bodies, and in Your compassion, purify me by the goodness of Your mercies. Matins Hymn, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican.*

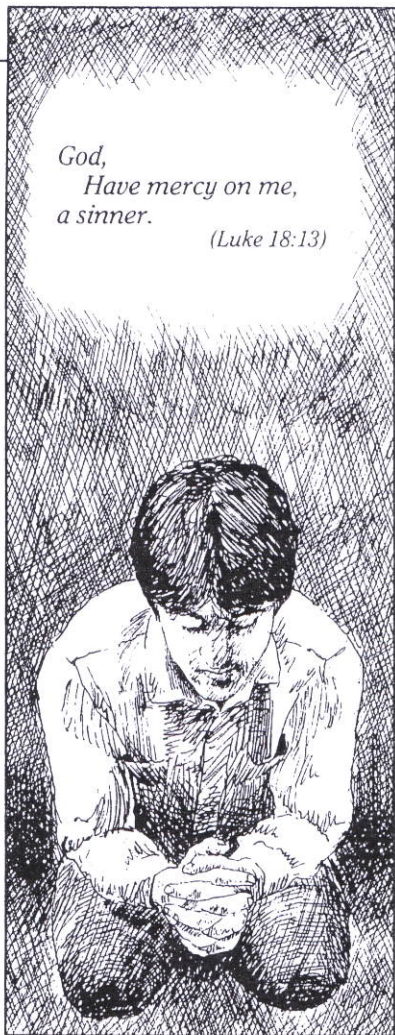
*In parables Christ invites us to correct our life. He raises up the Publican in his humility and shows us how the Pharisee was brought down by his vanity. Seeing the dignity to which the humble are raised and the deep abyss into which the proud fall, let us imitate the virtue of the Publican and despise the sins of the Pharisee. Vain pretensions deprive us of every good deed, while humility purifies us of every evil. O faithful, let us embrace the ways of humility and totally despise the ways of vainglory. Wishing to find humility in the hearts of His disciples, the King of the universe charged them to imitate the Publican and his humble sighs for pardon. I sigh as the Publican, O Lord, and my groaning does not cease. Thus do I find the path to Your heart. Have mercy on me who now seeks to live in humility. Matins Hymn, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican.*

*Vainglory brings to nothing both justice and its treasures, while humility scatters a multitude of passions. O Saviour, grant that we may imitate the Publican. O Faithful, let us vie with each other in zeal, and let us seek to do good. Let us live together in humility, and may our hearts sigh with tears and prayer so that we may obtain forgiveness from God. Matins Hymn, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican.*

*Raised up by his humility, the Publican who formerly lamented now was justified for having said: Lord be merciful to me a sinner. He is the one whom we imitate from the abyss into which our hearts have driven us. From the depth of our heart we say, Spare us for we are sinners, O Saviour, Who alone loves mankind, The Word has shown us the best path to exaltation; it is the way of humility. For He Himself was lowered to take the form of a servant. By following His humility, we shall be exalted. Matins Hymn, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican*

God,  
Have mercy on me,  
a sinner.

(Luke 18:13)



God,

I thank You that I am  
not like all other men –  
robbers, evildoers, adul-  
terers . . . I fast twice a  
week and give a tenth of  
all I get.

(Luke 18:11-12)



**H**

**E**

**R**

**O**

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**S**



# The Heroes Hall of Fame

**When you think of heroes**, who do you think of? Comic book heroes like Spiderman, Superman, Wonder Woman, or the Incredible Hulk? They can spin gigantic webs, leap tall buildings, and crush vehicles in the palms of their hands. But a hero isn't always a person who can do something amazing. A hero can be someone you see every day who overcomes great odds.

The people in the Bible weren't perfect. You might not even consider them heroic, because many made huge mistakes. But they had qualities like encouragement, honesty, faithfulness, and loyalty. Read on and decide who is *your* favorite hero.

## Abraham

**Ancestor of Israel; faithful and obedient;**  
**Genesis 12:1—25:10**

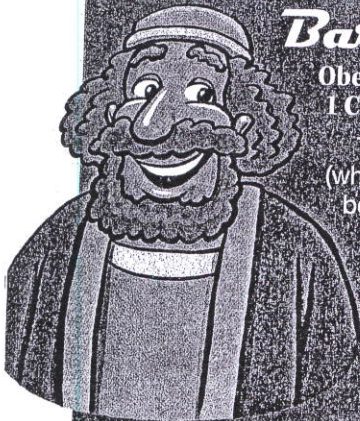
When Abraham (still called Abram) was seventy-five years old, God told him to leave his country and his family and move to the land of Canaan. God further told Abraham to count the stars in the sky; that would be the number of Abraham's many descendants. Abraham believed him and God was pleased. God fulfilled that promise to Abraham when Sarah was well past her child-bearing years. Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born (Genesis 21:5)!

God later tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on an altar of fire. Because Abraham was so obedient and willing to offer his only son, God blessed him and through Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel was born (Genesis 22:1-18).



## Barnabas

**Obedient encourager; Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-31; 11:22—15:41;**  
**1 Corinthians 9:1-7**



There were many leaders in the early church, but Barnabas (whose name means "one who encourages others") stood out because he always looked for the good in people. Because Barnabas was drawn to crowds that he could encourage many people became believers of God. But Barnabas often put himself in danger. As he visited cities to spread the gospel, he was threatened and physically attacked. Even though he was uncomfortable at times, Barnabas was obedient to God and quietly and humbly served him by encouraging others.



## Ruth

### Woman of devotion Ruth 1-4

Ruth was a woman from the land of Moab who married a man from Israel, one of the sons of Naomi. When Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died, and later both her sons (Mahlon and Chilion), Ruth made the courageous decision to leave her homeland and return with Naomi to Bethlehem. In an incredible statement of loyalty, Ruth declared, "Please don't tell me to leave you and return home! I will go where you go, I will live where you live; your people will be my people; your God will be my God" (Ruth 1:16). God rewarded Ruth's devotion and kindness to Naomi by providing her with a husband, Boaz. Their son Obed was the grandfather to David, Israel's greatest king.



### DID YOU KNOW?

**Ruth was from Moab, and the Moabites were long-time enemies of Israel. Ruth's name appears as part of Jesus' family lineage in Matthew 1:1-5.**



## Samson

### Legendary warrior Judges 13-16

You've heard of Hercules, right? Meet the original strongest man on earth—Samson. Before he was born, Samson's parents learned that he would live the life of a Nazirite. A Nazirite was set apart from others by their vow to God to abstain from strong drink, shaving or cutting their hair, and having contact with a dead body.

The Philistines were the enemies of Israel. God chose Samson to fight against these enemies. His strength enabled him to kill one thousand men with only a donkey's jawbone. But Samson was tricked by a woman named Delilah into revealing the secret of his strength: his hair. (Read about it in Judges 16:17.) Delilah immediately ran to the Philistines, and as she was cutting his hair while he napped, the Philistines captured and blinded Samson. But Samson asked for God's help once more and knocked down a Philistine temple by pushing his body against the structure's strong pillars, killing more Philistines in his death than he ever had during his life.



## Joseph

**Man of honor, interpreter of dreams**  
**Genesis 37:1-36; 39:1—50:26**

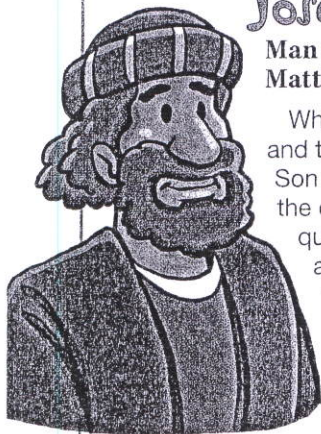
Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob and the firstborn of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel. He was Jacob's favorite of all his children since Joseph was the son of his old age. But that made his brothers extremely jealous of him. Joseph only made matters worse for himself when he told his brothers that one day they would bow and worship him. They plotted to kill him, but decided instead to sell him as a slave to a caravan of traders. Joseph's journey into Egypt is a remarkable account of God's care and protection.

God gave Joseph an amazing ability to interpret dreams. Through a series of circumstances, this ability was brought to the attention of the Egyptian king, who had a puzzling dream about cows and grain. Joseph told the king the dream meant there would be seven years of plenty and seven years of starvation. He also told the king a plan that would save his people. The Pharaoh, liking his plan and thinking highly of him, made Joseph a governor of Egypt. Joseph was eventually reunited with his brothers and father when they traveled to Egypt, seeking food. As Joseph had predicted years before, his brothers did, in fact, bow to him when they first approached him, not knowing it was Joseph. At first, his brothers were afraid when they realized who he was. But Joseph reassured them. Read what he said in Genesis 50:20-21.



## Joseph, Husband of Mary

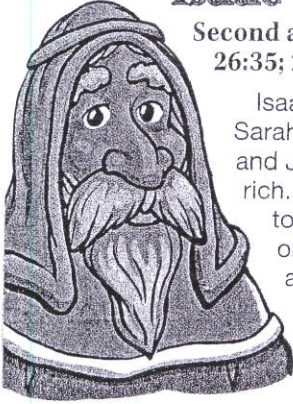
**Man of integrity**  
**Matthew 1:16-2:23; Luke 1:26-2:52**



While Joseph was engaged to Mary, an angel appeared to Mary and told her that she was going to have a baby, who would be God's Son (Luke 1:26-38). Mary was to name this child Jesus. Joseph knew the child could not be his. But he was a good man and decided to quietly break off the engagement (Matthew 1:18-19). An angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that Mary's baby was from the Holy Spirit and that Joseph should marry her. Trusting God, he did. Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem and was with her when she gave birth to Jesus. Through another dream, Joseph was told to leave Bethlehem and escape to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill his son. Joseph led his family to safety until the death of King Herod.



## Isaac



**Second ancestor of Israel; faithful and obedient; Genesis 24; 25:19–26:35; 27:1–28:5; 35:27–29**

Isaac was the promised son from God to his parents, Abraham and Sarah. Later in life, Isaac married Rebekah; they had two twin sons, Esau and Jacob. God blessed Isaac. He was successful and became very rich. King Abimelech told Isaac to leave their country because he was too powerful. Isaac left and settled in Gerar Valley. When Isaac went on to Beersheba, God appeared to him and told him not to be afraid and that he would bless him with many descendants. Isaac believed God, so he built an altar to worship God. At age one hundred and eighty, Isaac died at Hebron, also called Mamre. His sons buried him there in the land where their grandfather, Abraham, lived as a foreigner.

## Jacob

**Third ancestor of Israel; scheming, but faithful; Genesis 25:19–34; 27:1–35:29; 37; 42:1–50:14**

Jacob was the father of twelve sons who later became the twelve tribes of Israel. God later changed Jacob's name to *Israel*, so he was considered the founding father of the ancient people of Israel. His older twin brother, Esau, was supposed to receive his father's blessing, but Jacob tricked his father into giving it to him instead. In Genesis 28:3–4, Isaac prayed that God would bless Jacob with many descendants and let him become a great nation. He also asked that Jacob would be blessed with the land once given to Abraham. God appeared to Jacob one night. Jacob promised God he would follow him as long as God never left his side.



## Daniel

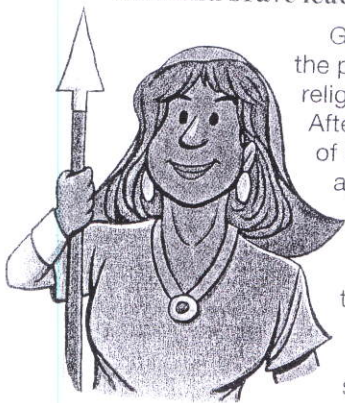
### Wise and faithful; Daniel 1-12

In his youth, Daniel, from the tribe of Judah, was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel, renamed *Belteshazzar* (meaning "may Bel [god] protect his life"), was trained for court service. He quickly established a reputation for intelligence and absolute devotion to his God. After three years of training, Daniel began a career in the king's court that lasted seventy years and through three kings. During his service, Daniel proved his faithfulness to God by refusing to eat the rich food from the king's table, instead eating vegetables and water, and in the process, proving himself to be healthier and superior to the other young men. Later he interpreted the king's dream when the king's other wise men and magicians failed. Under the reign of Darius the Mede, Daniel was thrown into a pit of lions for praying to his God instead of Darius. Again, God protected him and Daniel was rescued.



## Deborah

### Wise and brave leader; Judges 4-5



God chose special leaders known as judges. Their job was to lead the people of Israel into battle, decide legal cases, and often perform religious duties. Deborah was the only woman chosen as a judge. After twenty years of oppression under the Canaanite King Jabin of Hazor, God told Deborah to lead the people into battle. She appointed Barak to lead an army of ten thousand men against the Canaanites. But he was afraid to go without Deborah. She agreed to go, but not before telling Barak that he would receive no honor in battle and that God would allow a woman to defeat Sisera, the Canaanite general. (Read about how this happened in Judges 4:11-21.) The people of Israel defeated the Canaanites in a rout, and together Deborah and Barak sang a victory song to God. (See Judges 5.)



## Jonathan

**Loyal and brave friend**

**1 Samuel 13:16—14:46; 18:1-5; 19:1-8; 20:1-42; 23:14-18; 31:1-13.**

Jonathan was the son of Saul, king of Israel. He also was a soldier in his father's army. Having faith that God would help him win a battle, he snuck out of camp with another soldier to attack the Philistines. Jonathan's plan to sneak up on the Philistine army from behind worked. The Philistines panicked and became confused. They even killed each other in the confusion. Later, when King Saul invited David to live in his home and work for him, David and Jonathan became best friends. Even when his father plotted to kill David because Saul was jealous of his battlefield successes, Jonathan remained loyal to his friend. Even though Jonathan was rightly next in line to be king, he knew that God had anointed David as the next king and pledged his loyalty to David. (See 1 Samuel 23:14-18.)



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

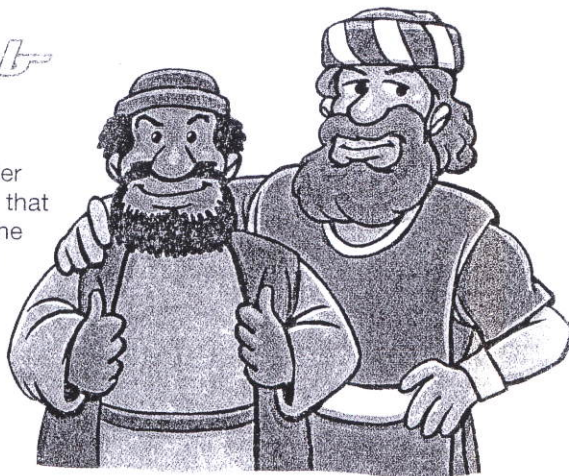
**Jonathan and his brothers were killed in a battle against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31:1-2). Saul, however, took his own life. In 2 Samuel 1:17-27, David sings a song in memory of both Saul and Jonathan, paying tribute to his loyal friend.**



## *Joshua and Caleb*

**A truthful and courageous duo**  
**Numbers 13-14**

When the Hebrew people left Egypt under Moses' leadership, God had assured them that he would lead them into Canaan, the land he promised to Abraham. Before they entered Canaan, Moses chose twelve men—each one a leader of a tribe of Israel—to explore the land and report back on what they discovered. When the men returned, all spoke highly of the land, "a land rich with milk and honey"; but ten also reported that the land was strongly defended and filled with people so big "we felt as small as grasshoppers" (Numbers 13:31-33).



Only Joshua and Caleb urged the people to go forward and enter the land, saying "The LORD is on our side, and they won't stand a chance against us." But the people refused to listen, and because of their disobedience, God sent them back into the wilderness to wander for forty years. Not one of those people—with the exception of Caleb and Joshua—ever stepped foot in Canaan. Eventually, Joshua was chosen to succeed Moses as leader of the Israelites and he led them into battle, defeating the Amalekites and claiming Canaan as their home.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Joshua was Moses' assistant. Moses invited Joshua to accompany him up to Mount Sinai where he received the law from God (Exodus 24:12-18). Joshua later was chosen to replace Moses as leader (Deuteronomy 31).**

## Esther

### Courageous and clever queen; Esther 1-10

When the queen of Persia, Vashti, disobeyed her husband, King Xerxes, he ordered that she never see him again. Then he selected officers in every province to bring beautiful women to the capital city of Susa in Persia, where he kept his wives. The woman who pleased him the most would become his queen. He fell in love with Esther and made her his queen. Even as queen, Esther had to obey the law that said anyone who visited the king without getting his invitation first would be put to death. Esther's uncle, Mordecai, one of the Jewish leaders in the land, would not bow down to Haman, the king's palace official. Infuriated, Haman suggested to the king that the Jewish people in Persia be killed and their property taken. Mordecai asked Esther to protect her people. She risked death by appearing before the king without invitation and asked him to reconsider (Esther 5:1-3). (See the bio on Mordecai for the rest of the story, p. 111.)



## Gideon

### Skeptical, but obedient servant; Judges 6:1-8:35

Gideon was secretly threshing wheat at night for fear of the Midianites stealing his food when God's angel appeared to him. The angel told Gideon to rescue the people of Israel from the Midianites, desert nomads who frequently attacked the country's land and livestock. Gideon was hesitant at first, but then he started to follow God's instructions. Even so, Gideon always asked God to prove himself. To show Gideon and the people that the victory belonged to him, God had Gideon reduce his army from thirty-two thousand men to three hundred. Following God's instructions carefully, Gideon and his small band of men were able to defeat the mighty Midianites by first confusing them with trumpets and torch lights! (Read about this amazing battle in Judges 7:1-25.)

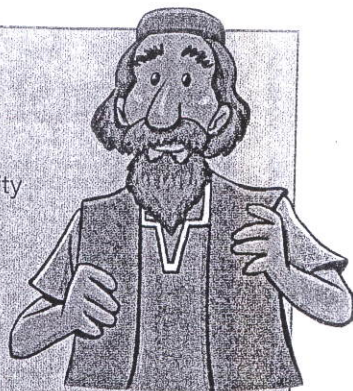




## Mordecai

**Faithful servant and positive influence**  
**Esther 1–10**

Mordecai was an acknowledged leader during the captivity of the Jewish people in Persia. His cousin, Esther, whom he adopted after her parents died, had become queen to the Persian King Xerxes following a nationwide search and beauty contest. When Mordecai overheard two palace guards plotting to kill the king, he immediately alerted Esther and the king was saved. Later, when the king's prime minister, Haman, plotted to destroy the Jewish people because Mordecai had not bowed to him, Mordecai persuaded Esther to intervene for her people. Just as Mordecai was to be hanged for his disobedience, the king remembered how this man had saved his life and vowed to honor him. Esther exposed Haman's evil plot, revealing her own Jewish identity, and the king ordered Haman to be hanged instead and honored Mordecai by naming him one of the highest officials in the land.



## Moses

**Deliverer and law-giver**  
**Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy**

The man whose name in Hebrew means "He Who Draws Out" was drawn out of a people enslaved by the king of Egypt. The Egyptian king tried to decrease the Hebrew population by ordering the deaths of all Hebrew boys (Exodus 1:15–22). But Moses' mother, Jochebed (Exodus 6:20), hid and later set Moses afloat on the Nile River under the watchful eye of his sister, Miriam (Exodus 2:1–4). He was found and adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh, who also named him.

Moses' life can be divided into three periods of forty years:

*First forty years:* Prince of Egypt, learning military and civil law. But after murdering an Egyptian in a misguided attempt to help the Hebrews (Exodus 2:11–14), Moses fled to Midian to escape punishment.

*Second forty years:* Shepherd and husband of Zipporah, the daughter of the priest Reuel (also known as Jethro) (Exodus 2:16–25).

*Last forty years:* Shepherd of a new flock, the people of Israel—a task assigned by the God who called himself Yahweh (Exodus 3:14). After a long confrontation with the new king (or pharaoh), Moses drew the people out of slavery. But their disbelief in God's ability to grant them the promised land earned them a forty-year trip through the wilderness (Numbers 13–14). Because of his own disobedience, Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land. (Check out Numbers 20:1–13 for that story.) Still, Moses is considered one of Israel's greatest leaders.

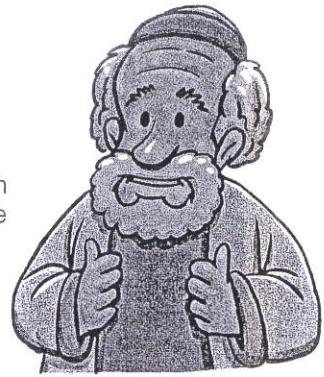




# Silas

**Faithful missionary**  
**Acts 15:22–17:33**

Silas was a leader in the Jerusalem church who traveled with Peter and Paul on separate missionary journeys. Once when he accompanied Paul on a trip to Philippi, they met a slave girl, who was possessed by a spirit that gave her the power to tell the future. When Paul and Silas cast the spirit out of her body, the owner complained that he had lost his source of income. So Paul and Silas were thrown into jail. While in jail, the two prayed and sang praises to God. Suddenly a strong earthquake shook the jail and the doors opened and the prisoners' chains fell off. The jailer thought all the prisoners had escaped and was about to kill himself, when Paul stopped him and told him that all the prisoners were still there. Immediately, the jailer fell down in front of Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The next day Silas and Paul were released from jail. (Check out Acts 16 for the whole story.)



## Stephen

**First Christian martyr and dynamic speaker**  
**Acts 6–7**

Stephen was highly respected by the apostles because he had great faith in God, so they chose him as a leader of the church. God gave Stephen the ability to perform great miracles among the people. Some men lied about Stephen, spreading rumors that he was telling terrible stories against Moses and God. Then they arrested him and presented him before the council. When the high priest asked if the rumors were true, Stephen gave an impressive speech (the longest in the book of Acts) that not only defended his ancestors (Abraham, Joseph, and Moses), but also helped to spread the gospel of Jesus. The council members became angry, so they stoned him to death. Saul, who would later be known as the apostle Paul, was present when Stephen was killed.

## Timothy

**Respected missionary**  
**Acts 16:1-5; Philippians 2:19-30; 1 and 2 Timothy**

Timothy, a native of Lystra, learned about the Scriptures from his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). His father was Greek. When Paul made his second trip to Lystra, Timothy was already a well-respected disciple. Paul asked Timothy to join him on his journey. Often, Paul would send Timothy to represent him in places like Corinth and Philippi. Paul also gave Timothy some good advice: "Don't let anyone make fun of you, just because you are young. Set an example for other followers by what you say and do, as well as by your love, faith, and purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

