

Last week in the Gospel we heard – Jesus say that when all is said and done – the thing that matters most in the Jewish law---- and therefore in life – is not how well we keep the rules and regulations – but how much we love God – and how much we love one another . . .

But the scribes and the Pharisees?

1-they certainly preach this --- but they don't practice it.

2-they tie up heavy burdens hard to carry – those 613 commandments of the Law -- but don't lift a finger to help others observe them.

3-all their works are performed to be seen. . .

4-they widen the bindings on their wrists symbolizing they are willing to observe all the law.

5-they love places of honor at banquets and seats of honor in synagogues.

6-they love themselves so much – they have neither the time nor the energy to love God or their neighbor.

And because they are so full of themselves – so puffed up with their own importance --- so high upon the pedestal – there's only one way to go ---

---- POP – down.....

Even the great Pharisee – St. Paul – had to get knocked off his horse. . . before he could become a saint  
Whoever exalts themselves will be humbled.

But whoever humbles themselves – will be exalted!

As the Pharisees were – so also might we be:

We sometimes get puffed up with our own importance.

2)We think we are great and we expect everyone else to think so, too.

3)Maybe because we are so good looking.

4)Or maybe it is because we are so smart.

5)Maybe we are really good at sports.

6)Or perhaps we are the best singer in the choir.

We can get so full of ourselves – so puffed up with our own importance – so high up on the pedestal -- that there is only one way for us to go ----

UNLESS: We remember that God created us.

Remember that we all have one Father.

Remember to be faithful to one another.

Remember not to violate the covenant of our ancestors. . .

Remember that only in the Lord will we find peace.

And remember the wisdom of Paul once he became a saint: I must decrease – as Christ increases within me. . .

Whoever exalts themselves will be humbled – but whoever humbles themselves will be exalted. . .

Loving God, help us not to become too puffed up with our own importance.

Help us remember it is only in humbling ourselves, that we will truly be exalted forever with you in heaven.

Remind us that whatever abilities we have are a gift from you and that you are the one who deserves the praise!

Help to accept each day as your gift – and to use it to the best of our abilities to build your kingdom in our midst.

This we ask, through Christ our Lord. AMEN!