To those who think themselves as righteous

Verse
To those who think themselves as righteous
and look down on contemptuous,
who think themselves as above others
be it their foes or their neighbors;
take heed this story from the Lord
as told in the inscripted word.

Verse
A preacher went into the temple
looked at the sinners as evil.
And spoke to God in pride and boastful
proclaimed his deeds as wonderful:
“Behold all the works that I've done,
I'm better than this sinful one.”

Verse
“I follow your Law and commandments,
going above requirements.
I am not like the other ones here:
thieves, lustful, or this Collector.
Behold my righteousness and see
I'm more pure than any can be.”

Verse
The tax collector also did pray,
but standing far out of the way.
Not even looking unto heaven,
an image of guilt, contrition.
No long speech, no bold echoing,
but spoke to God while whispering.

Verse
“I cannot keep your word and your Law.
No matter how I try, I fall.
I have no works that bring you pleasure.
My righteousness cannot measure
to your perfection. Please Father,
have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Verse
The preacher trusted in his own deeds,
the Collector in God's mercy.
The preacher trusted in his favor,
the Collector in the Savior.
The one went home with naught inside
while the other left justified. Amen!

Verse
Text: Luke 18:9-14
Tune: by grace I'm saved