

Horatio and Eric

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Once upon a time there were two men. The first man was called Horatio Mergatroid- Wise. He was a very very very posh man. He wore a very expensive suit. He lived in a very very expensive, and very big, house. He had servants to do his cleaning and his washing and his cooking and his gardening. He travelled around in a very posh car, a Rolls Royce of course, and of course, he had a chauffeur.

Horatio Mergatroid-Wise had many posh friends. They would meet and talk about their posh cars, their posh homes, their expensive pictures and their diamond watches.

Horatio Mergatroid- Wise knew that he was posh. He knew he was a great person . He knew that he was better than anyone else. So, when he went around, he expected people to bow down to him, to open doors for him, to carry his bags for him, to call him sir and always serve him first no matter how many other people were waiting. If anyone else got in his way or upset him, he would push them, or kick them, or say something nasty to them. Or try and swindle them out of all their money.

"Other people," thought Horatio Mergatroid -Wise, "apart that is from some of my posh friends, are all so nasty, so smelly, so dirty, so yuck!"

The second man was called Eric Smith. Eric lived in a little house. He drove around in a dented old car. His clothes were a bit scruffy and he didn't have much money. He had done some quite bad things in his life . He'd had fights, he'd stolen things, he'd cheated people, he'd even been in prison for his crimes. Eric knew that he was a bad person. He didn't have many friends and those friends he did have were people just like him - not very nice either.

One day Horatio Mergatroid-Wise decided to go to church. "After all that is what posh people do," he thought, "and I'm sure that God will be pleased to see someone like me!" But on the same day Eric was walking around the streets with nowhere to go when he decided to go and sit in the church as well.

Eric got there first, and sat in the very very back row. When Horatio Mergatroid -Wise came in he thought to himself: "Oh what a disgrace! What a terrible disgrace! What's this dirty, smelly, nasty little man doing in Church. I'm sure that God wouldn't want him in here at all! Oh thank you God," said Horatio, "that I am posh and I'm rich. I give money to charity, I have nice friends, I like good wine and eat good food. But most of all, thank you God that I'm not like that nasty little man in the corner there. It would be much better if he was taken away and locked up for ever!"

Meanwhile Eric sat quietly and started to talk to God as well:

"God, I'm sorry I'm not like that posh man. I'm sorry I've done lots of things wrong. I'm sorry I've hurt other people. I'm not like that posh man who is obviously kind to everyone. I know God that you don't want to know me but I would like to be a better person, so if you can, please help me."

Up in heaven, God was listening to Horatio and to Eric, but which one do you think he listened to the most?

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