

SATB, Solo Voice, and Piano

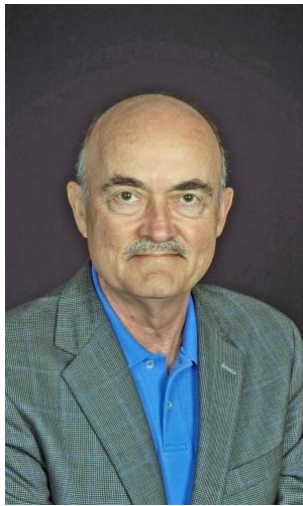
Duration: 3:00

Better Than You

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Words by Dave Baldwin

Music by Kerry Lewis



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Program/Performance Notes

In this anthem, my lyricist colleague Dave Baldwin and I present our take on Jesus's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector from Luke chapter 18. The tone of the music and the lyrics is deliberately snarky and "over the top" as the Pharisee (the vocal soloist) lists his many pious virtues that (obviously, in his mind) make him superior to everyone else. The choir enthusiastically backs him up with "Lord knows he's better than you!"

So why, you might ask, would we present this sacred theme – the very words of Jesus! – in a style that suggests a show tune with a rinky-dink piano part? Well, in order to emphasize with humor and sarcasm the point that God doesn't like it at all when we are (in Jesus' words) "confident of our own righteousness and look down on everyone else." This is important! The sanctimonious jerk portrayed in the parable lives on in many guises in churches and other houses of worship around the world. "Of course God loves me: I obey all the rules!" is a tempting and enduring bit of really bad theology!

A few suggestions for performance: If the Luke 18 text isn't already one of the scripture readings for the day, someone should read it aloud before the anthem is sung. I encourage the soloist to ham it up in the style of a show tune. And I strongly suggest that someone portray the penitent tax collector, coming into view at about bar 69 as the Pharisee begins his "prayer" so the Pharisee has something to point at. This person should just stand quietly, with the breast-beating and downcast gaze described in the parable.

Better Than You

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Dave Baldwin
Luke 18:9-14

Kerry Lewis

Slowly

Brisk tempo ♩ = 120

Pharisee

Piano

mf freely *f* Ped.

4

I'm feel-ing spec-ial_

mp

8

stand-ing in the tem-ple. I'm such a sight to see!_ I lift my words to

Better Than You

12

you my Lord. Be-hold: take a look at me!___ In - deed, I have ris - en___

16

___ a - bove the rest. Lord, you know it's true. ___ Un - like these fools,

20

I mind your rules. My bear - ing says, "Bet - ter than you." ___

mf Yes, he is bet - ter than you,
Bet - ter than you,
f Bet - ter than you, yes he is

24

bet-ter than you. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you. Bet-ter than you, _

bet-ter than you. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you. Bet-ter than you, _

Red.

28

rit. **A tempo**

bet-ter than you. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you. Bet-ter than you, unis.

bet-ter than you, unis. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you. Bet-ter than you,

gliss.

31

mf

Who needs to ask? I tithed and fast. My

p

so much bet-ter than you.

p

mp

p

35

pi-e ty's be-yond com- pare.

It makes me proud to show the crowd

Be-yond com-pare.

The piano accompaniment for measures 35-38 consists of two staves. The right hand features a series of chords and melodic fragments, including a prominent chord with a sharp sign in the fifth measure. The left hand provides a steady bass line with eighth and quarter notes, supporting the harmonic structure.

39

how to strike a right-eous air. — unis. *p* My pub-lic look_ is

A ver - y right - eous air. —

This system contains the vocal and piano parts for measures 39-41. The vocal line starts with the lyrics 'how to strike a right-eous air.' followed by a rest, then 'My pub-lic look_ is'. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present above the piano part.

mp

This system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 39-41. It consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. A dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) is placed above the right-hand part.

42

by the book. My face_ is pale and wan, — and I raise my hands at the

Bass *mp* lugubrious!

So sad! —

This system contains the vocal and piano parts for measures 42-43. The vocal line continues with 'by the book. My face_ is pale and wan, — and I raise my hands at the'. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) and the instruction 'Bass *mp* lugubrious!' above the bass line.

This system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 42-43, featuring a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line.

46

prop - er times. I show the peo-ple how it's done. —

unis.
mf

He is so much

unis.
mf

He is so much

49

Yes, I am bet-ter, bet-ter,

bet-ter than you, — bet-ter than you, — be-lieve it. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you.

you.

bet-ter than you, — be-lieve it, bet-ter than you. — Lord knows he's bet-ter than you.

Ped. —

52

I'm so much bet-ter, so much bet-ter. Bet-ter than you, bet-ter than you. So much bet-ter, he is bet-ter than you, bet-ter than you.

Ped.

55

rit.

Lord knows he's bet-ter, much bet-ter than you. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you! unis. Lord knows he's bet-ter, much bet-ter than you. Lord knows he's bet-ter than you!

59 **A tempo**

The tem-ple is blessed to wit-ness the best; it's

mp

Yes, it's blessed with

mf

63

all a - bout the show. — I'll close my hour on the tem-ple floor with

him. —

mp unis.

We're ver-y blessed with him. —

67

rit.

Slower, freely

this, a tru-ly grate-ful prayer:— Thank you, Lord, that I— am spared from
 with a grate - ful prayer. Ah Ah
 double choir if necessary

71

Tempo I ♩ = 120

liv-ing a life of sin like that tax col-lect - or— ov-er there— and all the oth-ers in this room.

Better Than You

76

I am much bet-ter, so much

You bet he's bet-ter than you, bet-ter than you, Bet-ter than you, bet-ter than you.

p *f* *f*

Ped. _____

79

bet-ter, so much bet-ter than you. I am

He's so much bet-ter than you. Bet-ter than you, He's so much bet-ter than you. bet-ter than you.

f *rit.*

Ped. _____ Ped. _____

A tempo

82

bet - ter than you. unis.
bet - ter than you, Lord knows he's bet - ter, bet - ter, bet - ter,
bet - ter than you, unis. Lord knows he's bet - ter, bet - ter, bet - ter,

bet - ter than you, Lord knows he's bet - ter, bet - ter, bet - ter,

6
Ped.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 82 through 84. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a melodic phrase in measure 82, followed by a rest in measure 83 and a continuation in measure 84. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A sixteenth-note triplet is marked with a '6' and 'Ped.' in measure 82. The lyrics are: 'bet - ter than you. unis.', 'bet - ter than you, Lord knows he's bet - ter, bet - ter, bet - ter, unis.', and 'bet - ter than you, Lord knows he's bet - ter, bet - ter, bet - ter,'.

85

Much bet - ter than you!
Much bet - ter than you!
Much bet - ter than you!

gliss.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 85 through 87. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a melodic phrase in measure 85, followed by rests in measures 86 and 87. The piano accompaniment includes triplets in the right hand and chords in the left hand. A glissando is marked in measure 87. The lyrics are: 'Much bet - ter than you!', 'Much bet - ter than you!', and 'Much bet - ter than you!'.

Kerry Lewis Music

www.jwpepper.com/myscore/kerrylewis