

# “WHEN GOOD ISN’T GOOD ENOUGH”

## THE KEY QUESTION

## HOW CAN I BE RIGHT WITH GOD?

### OUR TEXT: LUKE 18:9-14

“I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified**, rather than the other.”

This story is about two people.

**GOD IS LOOKING AT ONE OF THEM AND DECLARING HIM RIGHTEOUS AND LOOKING AT THE OTHER AND NOT CONSIDERING HIM RIGHTEOUS.**

*Jesus is telling this story to help us evaluate ourselves.*

Which one of these two individuals are we like? Are we the kind of person God considers righteous or are we the kind of person He doesn’t?

### THAT’S WHAT THIS WHOLE CHAPTER IS ABOUT:

“Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” 18:17

“Those who heard it said, ‘Then who can be saved?’” 18:26

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Recover your sight, your faith has made you well.’ 18:42

“Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.” 19:9



**THIS IS  
CLEARLY AN  
IMPORTANT  
SUBJECT**

**NOT EVERYONE  
IS RIGHT WITH  
GOD**

**AND THOSE WHO  
AREN’T WILL BE  
JUDGED FOREVER**



YOU MIGHT THINK THIS IS  
THE QUESTION **EVERYONE**  
WOULD BE ASKING



**BUT IT IS REALLY  
HARD TO GET  
ANYONE TO ASK IT**

# THE PHARISEES ARE A CLASSIC ILLUSTRATION

*THEY ARE SO SURE THEY ARE READY FOR JUDGMENT THEY ARE NOT EVEN THINKING IT MIGHT BE SCARY FOR THEM WHEN JUDGMENT COMES*



THERE STILL ARE MANY PEOPLE THAT NEVER ASK WHO IS RIGHT WITH GOD **BECAUSE THEY ARE SO SURE THEY ALREADY ARE** THAT IS WHY JESUS TELLS THIS STORY!

**“HE ALSO TOLD THIS PARABLE TO SOME WHO TRUSTED IN THEMSELVES THAT THEY WERE RIGHTEOUS AND TREATED OTHERS WITH CONTEMPT.”**

**EVERY ONE OF US HAS TO DEAL WITH THIS...**

*Bad people, good people, by nature, we are all tempted to trust in ourselves, that we are righteous and doing that is EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.*

*That is what makes this story so important.*

**IT IS HERE TO SHAKE UP THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS!**

## SO LET'S COMPARE

### A GOOD GUY

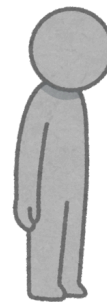
- ZEALOUS
- OBEDIENT
- RELIGIOUS



*The ultimate lawkeeper*

### A BAD GUY

- A THIEF
- A TRAITOR
- THE SINNER



*The ultimate lawbreaker*

**Which person goes home right before God?**

*Jesus' answer is the opposite of what you'd expect...*



The one who is declared righteous is the  
**SINNER** and the one who isn't is the one you  
think is A SAINT.

## ...WHAT IS GOING ON?

*Jesus is NOT telling this story because he wants us to think obedience doesn't matter.*

*HE IS TELLING US THIS STORY BECAUSE HE WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND THE DANGER OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOW IMPORTANT FAITH PRODUCED HUMILITY IS TO GOD.*



**WE THINK OUR GOOD IS BETTER THAN IT REALLY IS.**

**HOW CAN WE BE SO EASILY FOOLED INTO TRUSTING WE ARE BETTER THAN WE ACTUALLY ARE?**

- 1. We focus on externals and ignore the heart.*
- 2. We define righteousness differently than God does.*
- 3. We look down to decide how good we are rather than looking up.*

**IF YOU ARE GOING TO EVALUATE YOURSELF** ..... ➡ **YOU NEED TO EVALUATE YOURSELF IN LIGHT OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.**

*When you begin to do that, this question of who is right with God suddenly becomes very urgent. You understand the problem, you are ready to enjoy the solution.*

# The 'ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL NO DOUBT ABOUT IT' starting point for the Christian life.

*"FOR EVERYONE WHO EXALTS HIMSELF WILL BE HUMBLLED, BUT THE ONE WHO HUMBLLES HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED."*

**IF YOU COME TO GOD WITHOUT ANYTHING TO OFFER, RECOGNIZING YOU DESERVE HIS JUDGMENT AND CRYING OUT FOR HIS FORGIVENESS, HE FREELY GIVES IT AND THE REST OF THE BIBLE TELLS US HOW HE CAN!**

THIS IS WHY JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD.

*"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

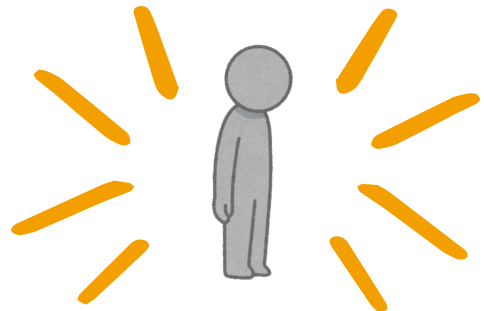
**That's God's answer to the question.**



**WHO DOES GOD CONSIDER RIGHTEOUS?**



IT'S **NOT** THE PERSON WHO COMES TRUSTING IN THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS NO MATTER HOW GOOD THEY LOOK.



**IT IS THE PERSON COMING TRUSTING IN JESUS' RIGHTEOUSNESS NO MATTER HOW BAD THEY SEEM.**



**THINK ABOUT IT! ...**

**THERE IS SO MUCH GOOD IN JESUS! SO MUCH FORGIVENESS!  
EVERYTHING WE NEED!**

**BUT GOD ONLY GIVES THAT GOOD TO THOSE WHO KNOW THEY  
NEED IT!**



**DO YOU KNOW YOU NEED IT?**

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

*Self-righteousness is a huge obstacle that keeps people from truly hearing and enjoying what Jesus says about how to be right with God.*



**WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT FOR US TO RECOGNIZE SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OURSELVES?  
WHAT IMPACT DOES FAILING TO TAKE SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS SERIOUSLY HAVE ON US  
SPIRITUALLY?**

*Jesus' story shockingly reveals that the tax collector went home justified rather than the other.*

**WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUMAN AND DIVINE  
EVALUATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS? WHY IS SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS SUCH A TERRIBLE  
SIN? WHAT IS THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NEEDING TO BEING DECLARED RIGHT  
BY GOD WHEN WE HAVE NO RIGHTEOUSNESS TO OFFER OF OUR OWN?**

*God only gives that grace to those who know they need it.*

**IS YOUR SENSE OF DEPENDENCE ON JESUS MORE LIKE THE PHARISEE OR TAX  
COLLECTOR? WHAT CAN YOU DO THIS WEEK TO GROW IN YOUR HUMILITY? HOW  
MIGHT FEELING A DEEP SENSE OF NEED FOR FORGIVENESS AND AN ASSURANCE THAT  
YOU ARE BECAUSE OF JESUS IMPACT THE WAY WE RELATE TO GOD AND OTHERS?**

# WHAT IS YOUR TAKEAWAY?

---

