

Crossroad of Truth Ministry

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The Publican's Prayer

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Luke 18:9-14

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“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

The Publican's Prayer

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9 To some who were confident of their own **righteousness** and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable:

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Spiritual teaching against the self-righteous

We are to go church with a specific task

Only God declares/judges who is righteousness:
Rom 3:10; 3:23

This prayer is directed towards boasting of himself for his works of doing “good”: Eph 2: 8-9

The Publican's Prayer

Luke 18:9-14

13 “But the tax collector **stood at a distance**. He would not even **look up to heaven**, but **beat his breast** and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home **justified** before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Fear of the Lord; humility

The burden of his sin was far too great.

Why beat the chest? He knew that his sin lay within his heart.

The Pharisee, a teacher of the Word, is rejected by God, and the sinner (tax collector) is exalted by Jesus.

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen - Matt 20:16

“But the tax collector, standing at a distance”

The tax collector knows he doesn't deserve to be in the presence of God or even the presence of those who are righteous. He is rejected. He is a traitor. But more than that, he is a sinner.

He has no right to draw near to God and he knows that. This is humility. His sense of alienation is revealed by his “standing at a distance”

“He would not even look up to heaven”

Here we have a contrast between two men:

- The tax collector is unwilling to look upward to God, while the Pharisee has no reservation, being fully convinced of his piety and righteousness before God.
- We saw earlier the man's humility of standing off to a distance from others, and now this posture showing his overwhelming sense of guilt and shame.

To find salvation you must admit to yourself and God Himself that you are spiritually lost. The tax collector's unwillingness to lift his eyes (to heaven and God) shows his understanding of his desperate spiritual condition.

It is this poverty of spirit which made him open to God's message. *

“...but beat his breast”

Represents the man's

1. Sorrow for something done and a gesture of repentance *
2. A gesture of indignation and loathing of himself
 - Luke 23:47, “And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.” **
3. An internal battle with the heart for deluding, flattering, seducing, and enticing of sin ***

“God be merciful to me a sinner”

The publican teaches us what we should go to the house of God to do and to say. There should be, in God's presence, confession of sin.

He does not give a full account of his confession but simply acknowledges that he is a sinner.

Each one of us should, when we draw near to the Lord, bow down in his presence with reverent awe.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

“God be merciful to me a sinner”

What reason did the Publican expect that God would have any mercy on him?

The Greek explains more to us than the English translation, and the original word here can be translated: "God be propitiated to me a sinner". In other words, this was a distinct reference to the doctrine of atonement.

If we come before God with our confessions, we must take care that we plead the blood of Christ. There is no hope for a poor sinner apart from the cross of Jesus.

The moment that man prayed this prayer, every sin he had ever done was blotted out of God's book, so that it did not stand on the record against him. More importantly, the moment that prayer was heard in heaven, the man was reckoned to be a righteous man (Rom 2:12-13, Rom 5:1)

“God be merciful to me a sinner”

Rom 2: 12-13

For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

“God be merciful to me a sinner”

All his sins were wiped away: the crimes of many years, extortions, adulteries, and even murder, wiped away in an instant;

Notice that God did not say to the man—“Now you must go and perform good works, and then I will give set you free.” He did not say as the Pope does, “Now you must sit awhile in the fires of Purgatory, and then I will let you out.” No, he justified him there and then; the pardon was given as soon as the sin was confessed.

Micah 7:9

“Go, my son, in peace; I have not a charge against thee; thou art a sinner in thine own estimation, but thou art none in mine; I have taken all thy sins away, and cast them into the depth of the sea, and they shall be mentioned against thee no more forever.”

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

To be justified by God is to be right with God: character AND actions.

The righteousness of God is as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He approves, and all that He provides through Christ

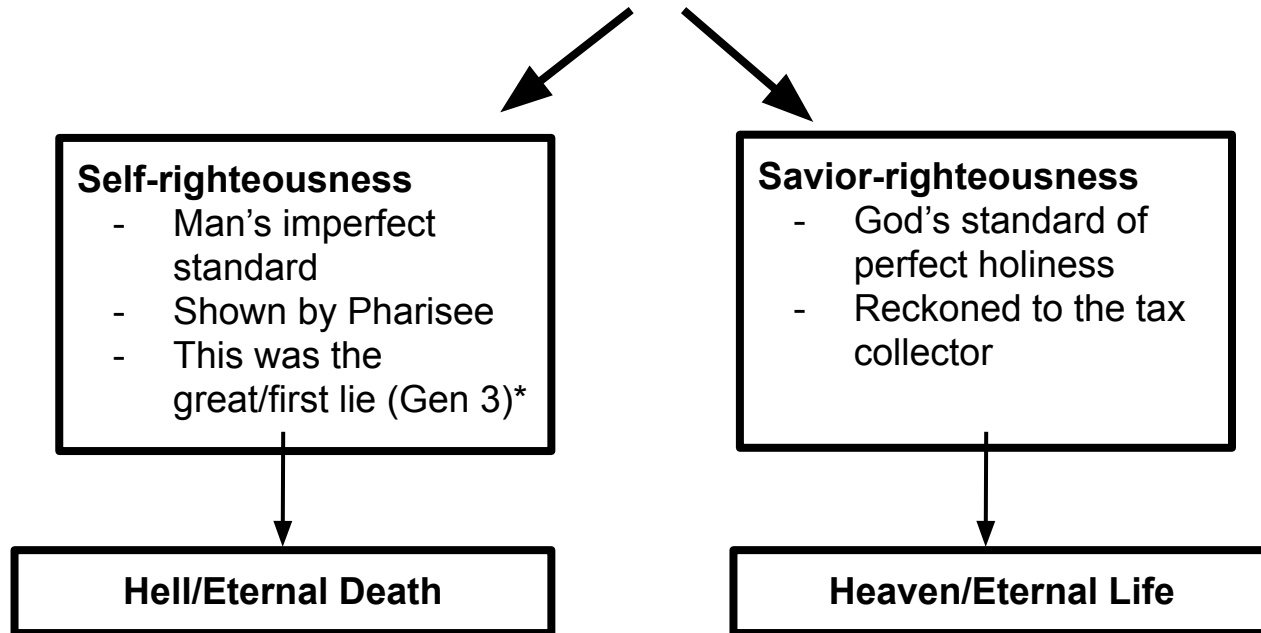
Self-righteousness is righteousness before men - to be noticed by others

EVERY religion in the world (other than Christianity) attempts to be right with God by human efforts of one form or another. While there are many false religions, they all converge at this one point - human attempts (wors) to attain self-righteousness.

[How Do you Get To Heaven](#)

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

**Justification =
To be declared righteousness by God**



Righteousness of God = Justice = Law

THE Most Important Question of Humanity is, “How Do I Get Right with God”

- Righteous = is a legal standing that we are judged “Right” with God – God’s perfect character is the standard by which everyone is measured (which is expressed in the Mosaic Law). It’s right living in accordance with God’s standards and laws (in **Word, Deed and Thought**).
- On our own, it’s impossible to meet the righteousness demanded by God on judgement day since it’s impossible for us to obey all the commandments in the Bible without sinning – the standard of God’s perfection is too high for us to attain.
- The penalty of sin is spiritual death and eternity in hell, separated from God (Ez. 18:20; Rom. 6:23)
- So, how can we ensure that when we die, we are judged “right” with God in order to avoid the punishment ? This is the big question. The bible says there will be a judgement (Rev. 20: 11-15) and Jesus Christ is the judge (John 5:16-30; Rev. 7:17). Only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Rev. 21:27) will avoid hell (the lake of fire).
- How can a sinner be justified (“declared righteous”) before a holy and righteous God and avoid his wrath? The good news of the Gospel is that God, through His grace (an undeserved gift), reconciles us to Himself and judges us legally righteous based on nothing more than Faith in His Son, who He sacrificed on the cross out of love for all mankind.
- **The Righteousness of God is only found in Christ and is Imputed to those who Trust in the crucified Jesus Christ.**

An Analogy of Righteousness

The arbitrary requirement made by the Calgary Police Force (=highest level of righteousness on earth) is that all new officers must be at least 7 feet tall to be accepted as a Police officer.

7' Tall = Righteous Requirement of Law = Glory of God

All
FALL
SHORT

4'8"



5'9" Tall



6'11"

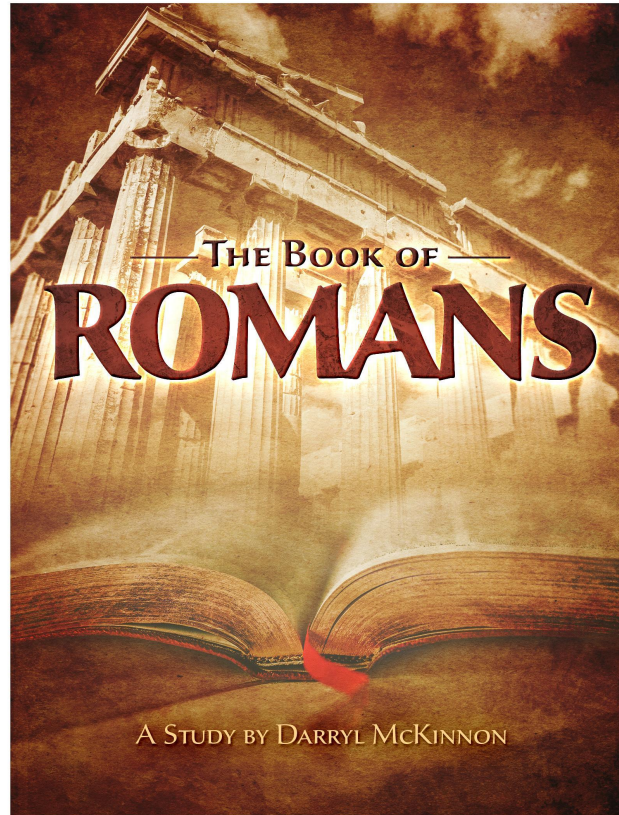


Jesus Christ Fulfills Righteous Requirement for all

“For there is NO difference (drug addict, morally good, self-righteous) for ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23; 6:23)

Don't measure yourself by judging others (works)

No one will ever measure up to the acceptable standard of becoming a police officer on the Calgary Police Force (Rom 3:10). Nothing we do on our own can make us tall enough. **The Righteousness of God (Salvation) is found only through faith in Christ.**



Chapter 3

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Most Important Truth of Christianity

“But now the **righteousness of God** apart from the law is revealed...**through faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on all who believe”

Romans 3:21-22

Romans 3:21

But now the **righteousness** of God apart from the law is **revealed**, being witnessed by the Law and the **Prophets**,

7 Feet Tall = Righteous Requirement of Law = Glory of God

6'11 – FALLS SHORT

5'9 Tall

4'8 Tall

Jesus Christ Fulfills the Righteous Requirement (Rom. 3:21-22; Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:17)

“For there is no difference (drug addict, morally nice person, self-righteous person) for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23; 6:23)

No one will ever measure up to the acceptable standard of 7 Feet Tall (Rom 3:10). Nothing we do on our own can make us tall enough. **The Righteousness of God (Salvation) is found only through faith in Christ.**

1



Isaiah 53
Psalm 22
etc....(300
prophesies of
Christ, the
Redeemer)

Romans 3:22

even the righteousness of God, through **faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on **all who believe**.



Romans 3:23

For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

7 Feet Tall = Righteous Requirement of Law = Glory of God

4'8 Tall

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Romans 3:24

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:



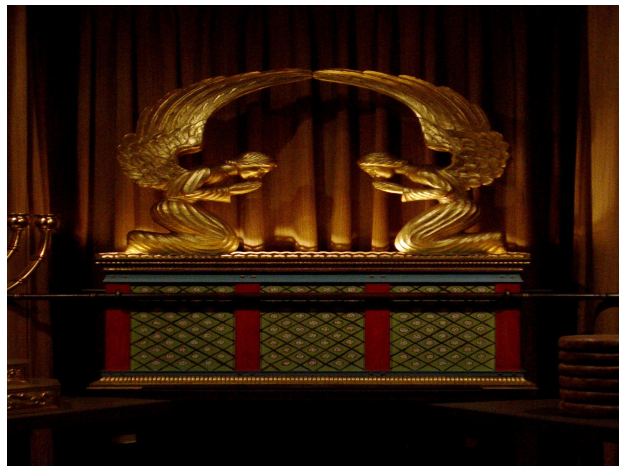
Ransom: The price paid to buy someone back (the price of redemption – Mark 10:45 – we had a debt that we could not pay, and we did not deserve it, but Jesus paid the ransom price for us through His blood)



Ransom: Referred to the price of a slave in Jesus' time

Romans 3:25

whom God set forth as a **propitiation** by His **blood**, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,



Propitiation means the **Mercy Seat** which was the [lid of the Arc of the Covenant](#).

(blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat was the satisfactory sacrifice to appease God's Wrath)

Romans 3:26

To declare, I say, at this time **His righteousness**: that he might be **just**, and the **justifier** of him which **believeth in Jesus**.



Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A14THPoc4-4>

- the Bible Project on Justice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kS9fAWCuYU>

- what is righteousness from a Jew's perspective?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLzRsj0IxMc>

- Romans 3 summary

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I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

“For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled”

The Greek word translated “humility” is “lowliness of mind.” Humility is a heart attitude, not just an outward behaviour. We may have an outward show of humility but still have a heart full of pride and arrogance.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:3). Being poor in spirit entails that only those who admit that they are spiritually bankrupt will inherit eternal life. Therefore, humility is a prerequisite for a Christian.

- **2 Cor 12:9**

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

- We should gladly boast in our weakness so that the power of Christ may rest upon us. *

“For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled”

Before honor comes humility (Proverbs 15:33).

God wants us humble.

We came into this world humbled. We're no more worthy of salvation now than before when God saved us. We're only worthy because God chose to cover us by the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for our sins.

When God brings things into our life that humble us, and push us down, and break us, and shatter our self-confidence, things we can't fix, we can't make right, we can't undo. These are all to humble us, so that we may have honor through Him.

“For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled”

Biblical humility is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven and for us to be great in the kingdom

Matthew 20:26-27

Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave

Jesus is our example *. Just as He did not come to be served, but to serve (Matt 20:28, Mark 10:45), so must we commit ourselves to serving others, considering their interests above our own (Philippians 2:3). Jesus was not ashamed to humble Himself as a servant (John 13:1-16), even to death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). In His humility, He was always obedient to the Father and so should the humble Christian be willing to put aside all selfishness and submit in obedience to God and His Word.

Philippians 3:3-9

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

“For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled”

What is true humility?

We recognize our lack of merit and our complete inability to save ourselves. Then when Jesus offers the grace and mercy of God, we accept it in humble gratitude and commit our lives to Him and to others.

We “die to self” (John 3:3-7) so that we can live as new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). We should never forget that He has exchanged our worthlessness for His infinite worth, and our sin for His righteousness. The life we now live, we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20).

Pride vs Humility

Proud

- Think they're good
- Believe the Kingdom of God is for those worthy of it
- Eternal life is earned
- Seek God's praise

Humble

- Know they're wicked
- KofG is for those who know they're unworthy
- Eternal life is a gift
- Seek His forgiveness

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“and those who humbles himself will be exalted.”

“Exalted” here is a synonym for salvation/righteousness.

In OT, only God is exalted and only God can exalt men. Men can't exalt themselves. This refers to spiritual salvation, reconciliation, righteousness, justification, and being in the Kingdom of God.

Everyone who exalts himself (tries to save himself or make himself righteous) shall be humbled in the severest sense of the word, crushed in eternal loss and punishment. The path of self-exaltation leads to eternal judgment.

God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5). All who humble themselves, confessing they cannot do anything to save themselves, will be lifted high into eternal glory (James 4:10)