



Can We
Be
Too Good
To
Be Saved?

Can we be too good to be saved? When I talk to people, many people struggle with this question. They do not want to be saved. They are not interested in the subject. They do not believe that God has any special purpose for their lives. They feel no sense of responsibility to God. In fact, they believe that God owes them a favor. And why are they not interested in being saved? Because they feel they are quite good enough!

This is a great, great danger. Let me read to you from the Bible -- from Luke's Gospel, Chapter 18, beginning at verse 9:

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this story. He said two men went up to the temple to pray -- one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself. "God," he said, "I thank you that I am not like other men -- robbers, evil-doers, and adulterers -- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and I give tenth of all my income." 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." "Now," said Jesus, "I tell you, this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Look at these two men. Each man goes to church and each man prays. However, the Bible says one man prayed about himself. He told God about how good he was. He finds talking about himself very easy. He always tells himself how good he is . . . tells his neighbors how good he is . . . criticizes the government . . . criticizes the church . . . criticizes everybody all around him . . . and he always justifies himself. So, when he thinks about the subject of religion, he just keeps doing what he always does . . . he justifies himself.

We speak -- or try to speak -- to people. We want to speak about their souls, about eternity, about God, and about sin. We speak to them on doorsteps or at our open air meetings in the town . . . or perhaps just one neighbor speaking to another. However, when we speak, we find time and time and time again, they begin to tell us how good they are! They tell us they have never harmed anybody. They tell us that if there is any salvation and if there is any heaven, they feel quite sure they will be there. Remember what the Lord Jesus says in this story? He says everyone that exalts himself shall be brought low and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

I wonder which of the two men you are? Do you always defend yourself? Do you speak about never having done anybody any harm? Do you realize we have all

broken the Ten Commandments? I have broken the Ten Commandments. You have broken the Ten Commandments. Oh, you may not have broken all of the Ten Commandments. And you may not have broken some of the commandments that I have broken . . . but we have all broken some of them. Because we have broken commandments, we have harmed God. We have broken God's law. God says if we continue to justify ourselves, we will be brought low. He will bring us to judgment . . . and judgment is an awful thing!

There is salvation for sinners. However some people believe they are too good to be saved. They think that salvation is for murderers or for special kinds of adulterers or maybe people who shoot others or whatever. And these people have a special view of particular sins. The Bible teaches that we must look at our own hearts. It reminds us of this Bible truth: *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*

The Bible also says that *'all our righteousness are as filthy rags.'* Do you understand that? In the eyes of a Holy God, all our goodness are as filthy rags. If you and I really believe this, we will come to God and ask Him for mercy. Because, if all our righteousness are as filthy rags, what about our unrighteousness? What about all those things we have done wrong? It is a terrible thing to believe that we are too good to be saved . . . that we do not need to be saved. Sometimes people say to us, *"Oh, that is for old people."* Or others say, *"Oh, that is for young people."* Sometimes people say, *"You should go to Northern Ireland and take that message."* In other words, take that message somewhere else. Remember the story that Jesus told. One man said, *"Lord, I thank you that I have done this...and I have done that...and I have done the other."*

And then it says, the tax collector . . . he stood afar off. He would not so much as lift his eyes unto heaven, but beat upon his breast and this is what he said, *"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."* What a short prayer! What a short prayer! But it is a marvelous prayer! I commend it to you. Can you remember the words? Perhaps you already know them? Maybe you would like to pray them today? Begin to seek after God today, in this humble manner. Here are the words again, *"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."* God says such people who come to Him, He will receive.

Let me conclude with these words from a hymn:

*Come, guilty souls and flee away
To Christ and heal your wounds.
This is the welcome gospel day,
Wherein free grace abounds.*