

# Self Righteousness Exposed

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord God, we come before you this day and we humble ourselves once more before you, understanding that we come before you, the only true and living God.

We come before you, the God who sees all and who knows all. That all of creation is in your full control. As we hear just now, even the wind hitting this building, we see that in that aspect of creation, in the weather itself, we see just a small part of your wider creation.

And the whole creation itself is just the smallest of glimpses at your eternal power. We come just now bowing down before that power, bowing down before that glory, before that majesty.

Lord, we ask you to remind us just who you are. We come before a God who sees all, who knows all, who understands all. A God who is not tricked, who is not deceived.

A God who sees the heart of all who are here today. We come just now to a God who is holy, holy, holy. And in sight of that holiness, we see ourselves.

[ 1 : 25 ] And we look at ourselves and we see that for all your holiness, we see nothing of that holiness in ourselves. For all your light and all your glory and all your perfection, we see the lack of all of these things in ourselves.

We see our sin. We see our shortcomings. We see our backslidings at times. We see all that we have and all that we can offer. And it amounts to so very little.

We see our own self-righteousness this day. We come before you asking, Lord, if we have not yet seen that self-righteousness, you would show it to us. If as of yet we still think we have some holiness or some perfection in of ourselves, we ask, Lord, you would show us that not to be the case.

You would show us that in comparison to your perfection, that we have no righteousness, none whatsoever. We come today confessing that we often have such a poor and such a wrong view of who you are.

We even come to these times of worship, just now these times of gathering with our hearts and our minds not engaged. We come to this place with so many things distracting us, so many things seeking to pull us away, both in our minds and also in our hearts.

[ 2 : 42 ] We ask for a short time together, for this hour and a bit together, Lord, you'd help us to fully engage our minds, fully engage our thoughts just now, to understand that we come before a holy God who is worthy of our time, who is worthy of our understanding, who is worthy of our full undivided attention.

We come just now bringing to you the prayers of your people here today. We give you praise that we come just now as a gathering of your people, as those who know and who love our Saviour, as those who can know for certain that if we can call him our Lord and Saviour, and he calls us his own, sanctified and saved, beloved of him, eternally safe, eternally loved.

Lord, help us understand that. We come just now not as those who are unsure, not as those who are uncertain, whether we have a Saviour who loves or cares for us. But if we come today as your people, then we know for certain that we have a Saviour who loves us so much that he gave himself for us.

We come to you just now, a God who cares for his people, a God who loves his people, and we bring before you the burdens of our hearts just now. We know that we come just now to the throne of grace, and we come just now with so many worries, so many pains, so many heartbreaks perhaps of this past week, things public and things private, things which are known about and things which only we and you perhaps know about together.

who bring these things before you just now, the concerns and cares, the responsibilities, the anxieties, the burdens of our hearts, and we leave them at the throne of grace.

[ 4 : 35 ] We leave these things which may keep us awake at night with you, the God who does not sleep, who does not slumber, the God who keeps and who watches, the God who holds.

We take perhaps also the responsibilities that lie ahead this coming week, the burdens which may assail us in the next few days, our family worries and family burdens, financial worries and financial burdens, perhaps health worries, worries of our own island, worries of this wider world.

We bring these many things to you. We bring just now the unspoken worries, the things which we struggle to put words to, the things which cause us such great anxiety and darkness at times.

We bring all of these things to you just now. We cannot bear them. We cannot solve these problems. We cannot often even begin to work through them. But you can.

You are the God who sees all and who knows all. All things belong to your full sovereign power. So we lay bare our hearts before you.

[ 5 : 47 ] All the things which hurt us and which trouble us. We bring them to a saviour who is closer than any brother. We bring them to a saviour who became like us in all ways apart from sin.

Who understands what it is to live as his created creatures. To feel the pain, to feel the worry, to feel the burden. To bring all these things to him.

A saviour who is not just able to hear and understand. Who is not just able to take on our burdens. Who is not just able to walk alongside us. We come to a saviour who is God.

Who is sovereign in his power. Who is complete in his full reality of all that he is and all that he does. As we come to a saviour who lives and lives eternally.

A saviour who intercedes for his people. A saviour who commands the word of a whole host of heaven. As to him we come today. As we come to him we also ask for the ongoing protection and keeping of us as a family gathering.

[ 6 : 56 ] Of us as a congregation of your people in this place. Help us Lord to serve you well. Help us to live lives that are glowing witnesses as to who you are and what you have done for us.

Help us Lord in this place to see one another as brothers and sisters. To grow in that family unity. To grow in that family love one another. Help us Lord we ask in our witness at home here in our village in our places of work in our places of study.

Help us to be faithful witnesses. To boldly proclaim that we love and are loved by the Lord Jesus. Doing so gently doing so carefully and we're doing so full of understanding that we are witnessing to a dying world.

We're witnessing to a world that is headed to lost eternity. Give us a passion give us a zeal for our own community we ask. Help us Lord in the plans we have in the months ahead that you be glorified through all these plans.

Your name will be praised. All we seek to do will be for your namesake and for your glory. We pray as we said for our own presbytery. We pray just now for the vacant congregation.

[ 8 : 10 ] We remember Lord the hard work going on in North U.S. We thank you for them. Thank you Lord for that faithful gathering of your people who work so hard week by week to serve you and to strive to be a good witness where you place them.

We pray for them in our vacancy that you bless them and look after them and keep them united together. We ask you enable them to call one who would lead them and guide them who would be an under-shepherd over them.

We pray for a wider presbytery for all the denominations of the congregations which are part of it here. All the work that's going on all the good work Lord we ask you bless it all the work that is glorifying to you and which is seeking to advance the gospel.

We pray Lord for the presbytery meeting on Tuesday that you would be glorified in all the decisions and all the discussions. Lord you would humble us and keep us relying on you for all that we seek to do.

We pray Lord as always for our friends and brothers and sisters next door we pray for them in their time of vacancy that you would keep them and look after them. We pray for our joint witness in this village.

[ 9 : 22 ] We do pray for this village we pray for many homes who do not and who will not pray for themselves. We bring them before you. Some homes here perhaps who we have no contact with whatsoever we bring them before you.

Homes here who we have some understanding and some interaction with Lord we bring them before you. We ask you would use us as witnesses use us as shining lights in this place to glorify your name to be bold witnesses but to be gentle also.

Pray Lord for any who are questioning any who are seeking any who are wanting to become one of your people but have questions of worries who are being held back by their own doubt by their own worry perhaps even those today who are being held back by their own self-righteousness Lord we ask you would cut these things away from them they would come with open arms to a saviour who has done all things for them.

We thank you for our friends who gather here week by week Lord you bless them you bless them today by perhaps not just listening but truly hearing your word for the first time as it transforms them.

We thank you once more for the boys and the girls in Sunday school we thank you for them Lord we thank you for boys and girls who seem so comfortable to come to this place so comfortable Lord to interact so comfortable to learn and to grow Lord that they would know that we care for them they would know that we love them they would know that more than important than that that you know them that you care for them that you love them we thank you once more for those involved in Sunday school Lord for the often perhaps thankless work we pray Lord for those involved over many years in this congregation those who have given years of our life to Sunday school work we thank you Lord for that we know that as your word goes out it does not return to your void that was both their hope and our hope today we come just now confessing to live in a broken world Lord we cannot even begin to number all the many issues and worries and burdens of this world we come to know especially praying the ongoing conflict the ongoing confusing and complicated and almost unknowable situation in Israel and in

[ 11 : 34 ] Palestine Lord you know the details you know what is taking place we pray Lord for those suffering today we pray for those mourning Lord of the loss of loved ones on all sides Lord we know that when it comes to grief and comes to death there is no boundary there is no border Lord we grieve the loss of loved ones together Lord now for your people on both sides of that conflict your people in Palestine and your people in Israel those who seek to serve you and love you despite almost impossible situation Lord remember our friends and our brothers and sisters in Russia and Ukraine to pray for your church in these countries to carry on their warfare remember especially our friend and also our brother Sergei in Kiev the minister there as he begins his work as a chaplain for the army in Ukraine Lord be with him today and look after him as he goes out to the front keep him safe and keep him serving you

Lord we ask help us to come together just now forgiving us Lord for our sins when we confess we have sinned before you this day this week in our thoughts our words our actions but knowing that we come to a God who has given his son so that all who come to him would know true and full forgiveness of all of our sins it's in his name and it's for his sake ask all of these things Amen let's turn to read in God's word the gospel of Mark we're carrying on in Mark Mark chapter 7 Gospel of Mark Mark chapter 7 that's on page 791 of the church bibles Gospel of Mark chapter 7 page 791 Mark 7 we can read verses 1 down to verse 23 of the chapter

Mark 7 let's hear the word of God now when the Pharisees gathered to him with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem they saw that some of the disciples ate with hands that were defiled that is unwashed for the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly holding to the tradition of the elders when they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash and there are many other traditions that they observe such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches and the Pharisees and the scribes asked him why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands and he said to them well did Isaiah prophecy of you hypocrites as it's written this people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me in vain do they worship me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men you leave the commandment of

God and hold to the tradition of men and he said to them you have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition for Moses said honor your father and your mother and whoever reviles father or mother must surely die but you say the man tells his father of his mother whatever you would have gain from me is corbin that is given to God then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down and many such things you do and he called the people to him again and said to them hear me all of you and understand there is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him but the things that come out of a person are what defile him and when it entered the house and left the people his disciples asked him about the parable and he said to them then are you also the outside cannot defile him since it enters not with his heart but his stomach and is expelled thus he declared all foods clean and he said what comes out of a person is what defiles him for from within out of the heart of man comes evil thoughts sexual immorality theft murder adultery coveting wickedness deceit sensuality envy slander pride foolishness all these evil things come from within and they defile a person and then a good praise to

God for his holy and his perfect word let's again sing to God's praise this time from sing psalms sing psalms and psalm 49 sing psalms psalm 49 it's on page 65 of the blue psalm books psalm 49 on page 65 and sing verses 7 down to verse 11 there is no one who is able to redeem a soul from death none can pay to God the ransom to prolong another's breath to redeem a life is costly none sufficient price can pay so that one should live immortal free forever from decay psalm 49 verses 7 to 11 to

[ 17 : 39 ] God's praise how come you to To redeem our life is costly, non-sufficient Christ can pay, so that one should live immortal, before ever long decay.

For we all can see thy ending, wise and foolish of mankind, they must give the wealth to others, none can destiny and be kind.

So for endless generations, in their truths they will remain, though they don't quite ever be, that's to which they give their name.

Let's for a short time turn back to the chapter we had, Mark chapter 7. Again looking at verses 1 down to verse 23, but taking for a text, the solemn words of verse 8, where Jesus says, you leave the commandment of God, and hold to the tradition of men.

So we're carrying on our series. Now, I hope if you've been observing enough, you think, well, we've skipped some bits here. I know we're taking our time, but we definitely didn't jump from chapter 6 to chapter 7.

[ 20 : 03 ] Well, we finished off last time together, halfway through chapter 6, but we recently, the last few months, covered Jesus feeding of 5,000.

And I want to cover it again in a different series in a few weeks' time. So we'll just skip the end of chapter 6, and we'll come back to it, these three sections, God willing, early next year, according to the plans anyway.

So we'll move on to chapter 7. Again, Jesus has done his miracles. We see he's been feeding of 55,000. He's walked on water. He's been healing the sick. He's traveling all the time.

He's moving all the time. And now we stop once more. And we see a discussion taking place today between Jesus and the disciples, the scribes and the Pharisees.

Now, we've seen them crop up so many times before. And we've said that as we go through the book, we'll see them come up again and again and again. And you note one thing.

[ 21 : 05 ] Perhaps you've seen this already. Every time they crop up in Mark, as Christ goes on his journey, as he serves, as he leads, as he goes about his exact plan, they become a lot more bold.

They become a lot more vicious. They become a lot more determined to try and catch Jesus out somehow. As Jesus heals more, as he proclaims the gospel more, as more and more people believe that he is truly the Messiah, he is truly the Son of God.

The scribes and the Pharisees become far more vicious. They become far more nasty in their attacks on Jesus. And we see that they become far more precise in how they try and destroy him.

So much so now, they're now watching, as it were, the hand-washing patterns of his disciples. When you think of how just devious they are.

They've tried so many other times, and Jesus each time has managed to destroy their arguments. So now the disciples are having food. They've had food, and they're walking and eating perhaps.

[ 22 : 17 ] And the scribes and the Pharisees, they are watching. Now, even note verse 1. The Pharisees are there, but also some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem.

We don't know for certain the wording is. They've come for this reason. The scribes have called in, as it were, reinforcements. And bear in mind, the scribes and the Pharisees weren't exactly the best of friends.

Politically, it's very complicated. Theologically, it's complicated. They often didn't see eye to eye. But in this issue, they're happy to work together.

Against Jesus, they're happy to work together to try and catch this heretic out. And they watch the disciples eat, and they watch what they do afterwards.

Verse 2. They saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. If we could give a title to today's sermon in a word, or maybe two words, two words of a hyphen.

[ 23 : 26 ] It's self-righteousness exposed. Self-righteousness exposed. Friends, it's easy, like those in Jesus' day, to sit back and to relax and to, as we are, watch the miracles take place.

The miracles are fun. The miracles are easy. You sit back and you see Jesus doing miracles and you think, wow, that's amazing. He fed 5,000 people. He healed people.

He goes around doing these amazing things. That must be incredible to be part of that, to see that. But then we come to his teaching.

And in Jesus' teaching, we see us today, perhaps, much like those around him then. They get very uncomfortable very quickly. They're happy to follow him for the miracles.

Follow him as it were for the food. When it comes to the gospel, when it comes to their lives being put under the microscope, they get very uneasy very quickly. Friends, brothers and sisters, we come to a God who knows our heart, who sees our heart, who sees and knows all that we are and all that we do.

[ 24 : 41 ] And today we see Jesus pointing out, quite simply but quite solemnly also, the self-righteousness of those who are in front of him. I assure you, it's no, perhaps, enjoyable sermon to come back from a holiday and start preaching about self-righteousness.

But it's in the text. It's there. So we preach it. But more than that, because it affects every single one of us, we must preach it. The sin of self-righteousness wasn't just found in the scribes and the Pharisees.

It was found and is found in every generation up to ourselves today. Brothers and sisters, this is true for us. Those of us who know and who love the Lord, we still find ourselves, do we know, at times, looking to ourselves to solve situations.

Looking to our own righteousness, our own goodness. Even though we know and worship a Saviour who has clothed us in his righteousness. And friends, those who as of yet cannot say that you know or love Jesus, and I say this very carefully, and I say it humanly speaking with so much trepidation.

But I don't think it's wrong if I say and I make the statement that your self-righteousness, your believing that you can do things by yourself, that you think you can impress God by yourself, is perhaps one off, if not the main reasons, humanly speaking, you as of yet have not come to even begin to acknowledge Jesus as Saviour.

[ 26 : 18 ] It's hard listening, but friends, it's essential listening. Just three broad areas.

First of all, seeing the lengths of self-righteousness. How far it goes. The length of the length of self-righteousness. Then seeing the failure of self-righteousness.

And then briefly the anecdote to self-righteousness. So the length of self-righteousness. Roughly verses one down to verse four.

Again, we saw that, that the scribes and Pharisees, they're becoming more pedantic, they're becoming more minijoch, they're becoming more careful in watching everything the disciples are doing.

And we see the issue. What's the issue they bring up to Jesus? Well, the scribes and the Pharisees, of course, they taught that your hands had to be washed in a very specific way.

[ 27 : 21 ] A very specific way. The exact method of that is somewhat lost to us. But it's interesting here. See what it says, your hands, they wash with hands defiled.

They wash their hands unwashed. Literally, it's, they don't use a fist. That's what's being said there in the Greek. They don't use a fist. Somehow, there's some precise way of washing your hands properly.

The scribes and the Pharisees taught every good Jewish person should be doing. And not to follow their exact hand washing style meant you were so unclean.

It meant you jeopardized your place before God if you didn't wash your hands or your pots or your pans or your eating couches like they thought, like they taught, like they said that you should.

And it wasn't just the Pharisees. Note the brackets there. For the Pharisees, verse 3, and all the Jews. In other words, their teaching had spread. It was so popular, their teaching, that all, a good number at least of the Jews of the area, were doing the hand washing technique that they believed you had to do to be right with God.

[ 28 : 37 ] Brothers and sisters, we're not talking here about cleanliness. We weren't worried about the disciples having dirty hands. They didn't care about that.

But no, they weren't washing their hands the way they knew and they taught and they knew God wanted you to wash your hands. Why? Because that's the way the fathers taught them to do it. We weren't doing it properly, we see in verse 3.

Now, in God's word and the law, there is, in the Old Testament, there is hand washing instructions. But who does that apply to?

Who did God give very specific hand washing instructions to? The priests. And the priests alone, why? They were in the temple. They were handling the holy things of God.

They were there, and they were supposed to be always immaculate in their person and immaculate in their presentation and as clean as humanly possible before the Lord.

[ 29 : 39 ] They were there as representation of the people. So the priests in the temple were to wash their hands in a specific way. But note that the scribes and the Pharisees took that instruction and applied it and made it a burden to everyone.

They followed, as Jesus says, the law of the elders, as they themselves say, following the law of the elders. The way it was done before us.

The way it was always done. The way their parents and grandparents did it. They followed that way rather than following what God had clearly said and told them to do.

The question is why? Why are the scribes and Pharisees so caught up with how to wash their hands properly? It sounds almost comedic for us, doesn't it? There are two reasons.

And these two reasons are two innate, two inbuilt truths, not just in scribes and Pharisees, dear friends, but in all of us today.

[ 30 : 42 ] Two simple truths that link us to the scribes and the Pharisees. The first truth is we know that we need to be clean. We know that to appear before God we need to be righteous.

God is holy, we are not. We do bad things, God does not. To put really childlike language to it. It's that basic, it's that simple. We know we have to be clean.

We have to be righteous before God. God can't see sin. God can't behold. God can't be in the presence of sin. First truth.

Then a second truth. We know that we're not clean. That we're not righteous. We know we have to be, but we know that we're not. So as humans we do anything and everything to try and make ourselves righteous.

Try and make ourselves right with God. Whether that's cleaning our hands a certain way. Or for us perhaps, trying to clean up our lives and live our lives in a certain way.

[ 31 : 48 ] We think if we do this or do that, we'll impress God just enough to let us into heaven. If we go to church enough times in a year. If we try and be nice people.

If we try and be good community minded people. Try and be kind to others. All good things. All God given good things. But if we do them to try and impress God.

Then we're just the same as the scribes and the Pharisees. With their hand washing rules. To try and make themselves somehow more appealing to God. My friends.

Again, as we said, this is not a fun, as it were, discussion. But it's in God's word we must have it. Do you perhaps see yourself somewhere in this account today?

Do you try and be good? In fact you work really hard to be good. Do you try and be the best husband or wife or father or mother or son or daughter.

[ 32 : 52 ] Whatever else you might be. Do you try your best in every sphere of life. At home, in the community, at work. With friends, with family. You try your best to be good.

You live a commendable life. And you think, well maybe, surely that should do the job. Surely I live a good enough life that's good enough for God.

My friends, if that is you. If that's even close to you. If you see yourself being described in how Jesus describes the scribes and the Pharisees here.

I have one question. A simple question. What permits entry for anyone to glory?

What gets us through the door? What lets us in? How do we know and know for certain we're going to glory after we die?

[ 33 : 50 ] How do we know and know for certain that God, that he's going to let you in? If you think perhaps, if your mindset tells you that well on the final day God will, not literally of course.

Not literally, but if in your actions you think that on the final day God will have a list. Good deeds and bad deeds. Good things and bad things. And if a good side is bigger than the bad side, then he has to let me in.

If that's your theology, then dear friends, there is someone else in the island and somewhere else in the island that is being taught this week.

That's not a Christian church, no. That's the theology of our Muslim friends. That is not Christian theology. That's not biblical theology. That's pagan theology.

You can somehow impress God. Do enough good things to get you into heaven. If the good things that way the bad things, then that's enough. Our good deeds, and you've heard this before, but our good deeds, they don't save us.

[ 35 : 02 ] We can't impress God enough to let us in. There is one way to glory. And we know this. There is one way of salvation. It's not through clean hands.

It's not through trying to do good acts. It's not through living a good life or being a good person. All these things are good things. That does not save. You must have, not clean hands.

You must have a clean heart. And dear friends, you cannot clean your own heart. Only the work and the finished work of Jesus.

By trusting in that, can your heart be cleaned. So that's the length of self-righteousness. Then we see very quickly the failure take place of self-righteousness.

So we see the complaint. The complaint is the disciples aren't washing their hands. They aren't doing what we know they should be doing. What the elders have done before us. We live good lives. Our fathers live good lives.

[ 36 : 03 ] Our grandfathers live good lives. And your disciples, they are doing it wrong. And Jesus speaks back in verse 6.

And he, Jesus said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy off you hypocrites. As it's written and so on. Down to verse 12.

What a harsh response Jesus gives the scribes and Pharisees. What a harsh response.

In verse 6 and verse 7 as Jesus responds and he quotes Isaiah to them. We see that self-righteousness is all just for show.



It's all about the outward appearance. It's got nothing to do with the heart. And friends, Christians are guilty of this too. Brothers and sisters, we're just guilty of this, aren't we?

[ 37 : 07 ] At times. It's very easy to dress the part in church. It's very easy to look the part. Trust me, I know. It's very easy to sound right. To look good.

To just look like the ideal perfect example it is to be a Christian. It's almost quite easy to be that way and to do that. At the same time, our hearts can be so cold.

Our hearts can be so distant. Our hearts can be so far away from serving our Saviour. We're all guilty of it. In various degrees at various times.

Self-righteousness is all about the outward appearance. It's all about trying to layer over the wound with plaster after plaster. Plaster after plaster, whilst the wound below is rotting and infected.

But plaster after plaster, hide the damage. Hide the spread of the rot. More plasters. More good works. The rot is growing. More plasters. More good works. Until you're too late.

[ 38 : 04 ] I mentioned the scribes and the Pharisees. Their whole lives dedicated. And they were dedicated people.

They meant well most of the time. We can assume perhaps they worked hard. Their whole lives studying and trying to be the best possible version of themselves they can be.

All for Jesus to call them nothing more than hypocrites. Mantra your whole life trying as hard as you can.

Just to be called a deceiver. Just to be called a hypocrite by the one who sees the heart. Friends, has this thing ever entered your mind perhaps?

Have you ever wondered what if it's all not worth it in the end? I try so hard to impress God. What if it's all not worth it in the end? I try so hard to live a good life. What if it's all means nothing in the end?

[ 39 : 07 ] What if after all I've done, the saviour, whose instructions, my friend, you've ignored, says, your whole life, your whole good works, all your self-righteousness is all just hypocrisy.

It all meant nothing. Because you didn't do the one thing required of you. The one thing required. To trust in him. That's it.

And I don't know what other sermons we have heard years ago. What advice you heard from Christians years ago. And to our shame as Christians, we often complicate the gospel so badly.

And we really do. And we really have. And time's gone by. And we still do it now. And we have often heard preached, even for our own pulpits, not saying here, but our pulpits in Scotland. Even years ago, this gospel which was so mixed with humanity.

A gospel which said, trust in Jesus, but live a good life too. A good life means nothing until you come to Jesus first.

[ 40 : 14 ] The good deeds are important, but they're important only for Christians to try and serve our saviour well. Until you become a Christian, they mean absolutely nothing. Nothing at all.

Zero. Because when you're saved, you get a clean slate. And then good deeds are for Christians. Not to impress God, but just to show our love of our saviour.

That's an in-house discussion for the believers. But friends, until you're saved, all your good deeds mean nothing. Jesus is clear.

And Jesus is honest. He carries on with the words of verse 8 and verse 9. As he drills down to the very heart of the issue.

You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.

[ 41 : 16 ] Friends, again, God has called you to do one thing. To trust in his Son. To believe in his Son.

To follow the Son. Until you do that, nothing else matters. Nothing else matters.

And you've heard it before. And I have no apology to say you'll hear it again for as long as I'm here. As long as you have, we hope, faithful gospel ministers in this congregation.

The same gospel you'll hear again and again and again. Yes, live good lives. Yes, be kind to your family and love and serve the community. Good things do and things we should be doing because we're called to love the place we are.

Yes, try and be a good person. Three things are fine. But don't do that in order to be saved. All your goodness, do it to be a good person.

[ 42 : 22 ] Do it to be nice to your family. Be a kind person. All that. Perfect. We praise the Lord for that goodness. But don't confuse that with being saved. That does not equal over here at all.

There's a chasm here, a gap in the middle here that these things do not go together. If you want to be saved, truly if you want to be saved, as the scribes, the Pharisees, just do not understand and never become, never again understanding off to the end of Scripture.

We see you have to abandon your own self-righteousness. You have to. And say in the most simple words you can match to the Lord in prayer, Lord, I cannot do it.

I cannot save myself. I can't be good enough. I know I never will. Lord, will you give me Christ's righteousness?

Will you clothe me in his perfection? What does God say to those who keep on trusting in their own self-righteousness? The words of Isaiah. Not here. We see Isaiah 64.

[ 43 : 33 ] The heartbreaking words. Where Isaiah looks around and sees his people and he says, All of us have become like one who is unclean.

And all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. The heartbreaking words, to live in and of heaven, endless, for the most wonderful incidents. Why? ■■■inscât or ■■■ú estc Würste estas' counselors.

Dear friends, until you come to Christ, it all means nothing. As long as you try and be right with God, you never will be.

As long as you trust in your own Righteousness, you will never be Righteous. As long as you think you'll get to heaven by yourself, you will never get there.

So what then, finally, is the anecdote to our self-righteousness? What is the answer to the self-righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees?

[ 44 : 35 ] What's the one who is speaking to them? It's not about washing their hands properly. It's not about looking good or sounding good. No, they are talking to the very Son of God.

The very one who can save them. And they're arguing with him about hand washing. Just the insanity of the situation.

Friends, often on Sunday, you do the same. And the Christians here before you, we all do the same. You come face to face with Jesus, who says, Trust in me and be saved.

Find alone your salvation in him and me. I say, okay, fine. But what about X, Y, and Z? Everything I can do, everything I've done.

What about me? What about me? What about me? And Jesus is there saying it's all about him. So what's the anecdote to our self-righteousness?

[ 45 : 38 ] If Jesus says our self-righteousness won't save us, then what will? There's one verse as we conclude. There's one verse I want you to have in your minds as you perhaps go home today.

A verse we covered before a few times in the prayer meeting, but just for ourselves today. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21. For our sake, speaking of Jesus.

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

Dear friends, to save you, to show his care for you, the son became what?

He became sin. He made him sin. Jesus, on that cross, he took on the full wrath of all the self-righteousness, all the good deeds, all the nonsense we try and show him.

[ 47 : 00 ] It all became sin and was placed on his shoulders on the cross. The horror, the misery, the need for that to happen for our salvation.

The length of love our Saviour has for his people to die on that cross for us, to become sin for us.

And the heartbreaking thing is, the Saviour who showed this amount of love for his people, who's hanging on that cross, who has taken on himself the full wrath of all the sin of all his people, who is being poured out for his people.

You look at that Saviour and you say, I'd rather do it my own way instead. I know better than that suffering Saviour.

I see that, I hear that, but Lord, what about me? My good works, my good deeds. My friends, there is no salvation to be found in any of the rules that were of the elders.

[ 48 : 19 ] There is no salvation to be found in the lifestyle of the scribes and the Pharisees. You either come to Jesus for your salvation and abandon all self-righteousness, or you hold on to your self-righteousness and you go to the grave with it and you never see Christ.

You never see him at the right hand of the Father. You never see him face to face. You never spend eternity with him. That is the simple choice, the simple reality we have from God's Word even this day.

You've heard it before, you'll hear it again. It's said it of so much love, I assure you. So much love. Dear friends, I have no shame in saying I love you.

As a minister, I know I'm a wee boy from Graver, but I love you. I've been called to love you. I've been called to serve you.

Out of love, I genuinely say to you, please, please abandon your self-righteousness. It cannot save you. Stop looking to yourself.

[ 49 : 25 ] It cannot save you. You worry you're a hypocrite, come to Christ. You worry you're not good enough, come to Christ. You worry you're too far gone, come to Christ.

And you will find in him a friend, a king, a saviour who is so ready, who is so willing to show that he has died and raised again, that he lives eternally for you.

Your self-righteousness takes you to the grave. Your self-righteousness takes you to the pit itself, to hell itself. Only in his righteousness do you find salvation.

And his righteousness costs him everything. But dear friends, it is free for you today. Take it. It's there. The free gift offered by our saviour for all to come to him.

No longer trust in yourselves, but trust in him instead. Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we come before you. We thank you, Lord, for the gift of your word.

[ 50 : 33 ] Thank you for the promises we find in it. The reminder, and at times, the painful reminder that in Jesus and him alone we have our salvation. The glory of that makes it the pain of a reminder that we ourselves have nothing to offer.

That we ourselves have no goodness. that we ourselves have no righteousness. But in him we have our full righteousness, our full hope. As the word goes out, Lord, it's gone out today that you would cause it to at least begin to move some people here, Lord.

They would know not just, Lord, that their minister loves them or their elders love them, Lord. They would know that there is a saviour who has set his love on them. So much that he gave himself for them.

So much that he on that cross faced the agony of physical death but also the agony of the eternal punishment of their sins so that he would save them from that self-righteousness, save them from sin and they would see the simple gospel.

All we must do is come and believe and be saved. We will relieve that. We know that we in our preaching, we in our efforts cannot save anyone.

[ 51 : 47 ] You work in their hearts and You work in their minds and You work in their souls. Lord, we ask You to bring that salvation to Your people even this day. Help us, we come to sing our final item of praise. We give You praise, Lord, for the voice to do it.

We give You praise, Lord, for those who week by week lead Your sung praise, who lead the sung elements of worship. Lord, help us never to undervalue it. We sing Your word back to You knowing we do so that it pleases You.

Do so, Lord, with the perfection of the words themselves. For we, Lord, perhaps are lacking in our own individual singing quality. Lord, as we sing, we sing of hearts full of understanding and full of love.

Ask all of these things, asking for the ongoing preservation of our Saviour as He keeps us and loves us and looks after us and leads us home. In His name and for His sake.

Amen. Let's bring our time to a conclusion. We sing together and sing psalms. Sing psalms.

[ 52 : 50 ] Sing psalms. Sing psalm 130. Sing psalms.

Psalm 130. That's on page 173 off of the psalm books. This psalm, of course, of salvation.

Lord, from the depths I call to You. Lord, hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry. Lord, in Your presence who can stand if Your sins record?

But yet, dear friends, but yet forgiveness is with You that we may fear You, Lord. Psalm 130, the whole psalm, to God's grace. Lord, from the depths I call to You.

Lord, hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I come to Thine.

[ 54 : 15 ] Lord, give Your blessings God's Word. And we are Give it today to Christ's Porch wait.

This is Mary's Sharon. The miracle chains And bless you and heard you a parm orn. But yet, forgiveness is with You that we make vir■. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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