

**Welcome friends to another broadcast of “Morsels for Zion’s Poor”**

The natural thought of man is to equate righteousness and morality. Thus, it is quite common for men to make various judgments of the suitability of the behaviors of other men, based upon what they judge to be righteous conduct. When they discover this moral acceptability, then they consider that such men are “righteous” and where they don’t, they deem such to be “unrighteous”. The Pharisees were just such a people. They were the epitome of religious men, who consider righteousness to be what they can see in themselves and others who follow their “moral code.” To say that the scriptures do not set forth a basis or standard of “morality”, which men imperil themselves to disregard, would be an error. Yet to consider that a man could be deemed “righteous” by an adherence to this standard of “morality”, would be a more egregious error than to disregard this standard and live unto his own lusts. A man may be delivered from the wicked works of his mind which sets him at odds with his CREATOR, but there is no deliverance for the man who considers his own or others conduct to be found pleasing unto the LORD. No where is this anymore vividly illustrated than in the LORD’s parable concerning the two men who went up to the temple to pray, one being a Pharisee and the other being a Publican. *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”*

He reeled off, quite an impressive list of accomplishments and seemed (in his own mind at least) to have avoided many of the pitfalls which befell those less “righteous” than himself. We have no reason to believe that he was not perfectly satisfied with the moral standing which he claimed. Such men are sure that they have done what is required of them, and therefore, in their own mind, do stand in a place of “righteousness”, at least when compared with others.

The Publican, on the other hand, could not escape the knowledge that he had fallen woefully short of all that was required of him, and could find no place of standing before the LORD. *“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”* The LORD said that he was “justified” (i.e.; judged as accepted) while the Pharisee was not. Thus, we learn that “righteousness” and “morality” are not synonymous nor can one define the other. The LORD alone can judge a man to be righteous. The basis upon which HE does so is by imputing the perfect “RIGHTEOUSNESS” of JESUS CHRIST to those whom HE loves. The faithfulness of the LORD to convince HIS own of their sin and shortcomings is seen in the lament of this Publican.

Saul of Tarsus was a man full of his own righteousness and in his own mind was zealous in his service to the LORD. It was only as the LORD stripped away his self-glorying that he was caused to cry out *“Who art thou LORD”*. When the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST is revealed, a man can make no claims of his own righteousness and must as the Publican cry out for mercy.

Paul looked upon that which he once rejoiced in and counted it all as garbage. *“Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”* The work of the law is a necessary one, due to the innate sin of men, but it cannot minister hope or help to the sons of GOD. The purpose of the law is in bringing repentance, which is not an end in itself, but rather has its perfect work in bringing the sons of GOD to rejoice in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST. HE is our SALVATION.

Such rejoicing is meant to occur in the *“tabernacles of the RIGHTEOUS”*. Those “dwelling places” of the LORD are indeed temples of joy. Thus, Paul exhorted the Thessalonians, *“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”* Where else can the JOY of GOD’s people be found but in HIM who has *“brought LIFE and IMMORTALITY to LIGHT in the gospel.”* *“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”* Cannot all of the sons of GOD now say, *“the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.”* *“Salvation is of the LORD.”* *“We will rejoice and be glad in it.”* Is the LORD your righteousness?

*Thy free grace alone,”#11* **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at [forthe poor@windstream.net](mailto:forthe poor@windstream.net)**