

The Wednesday Word, August 26, 2026: Hands up all ye Self-Righteous Part 2

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We are considering three types of one of the great enemies of the Gospel - Self-Righteousness.

In the previous Wednesday Word, I was telling of how some years ago I had taken over as pastor of a Bible Believing Church and the Gospel exposed that a number of the congregants qualified for the I'm not sure that I'm really a sinner self-righteous person. The Gospel exposed this error but then the second type of self-righteous, the, "Trying Harder' Self –Righteous Sinner," raised its ugly head. However, as the Gospel was expounded week after week, God began to slowly change hearts. Some of my antagonists began to discover that their hearts were indeed evil, sinful and deceitful. The Lord began to graciously show them that, in themselves, there was nothing to commend them to Him. But the human heart is a remarkable thing. Even after having been touched by grace, it continues to harbor opposition to God. It is a wonderful thing to behold how self-righteous people will do their best to preserve their self-righteousness as long as they are able.

Some of my one-time opponents began to come to me saying things such as, "We accept we are not saved by our righteousness, but we are still going to try the best we can to get into Heaven." To completely rest in Christ alone seemed foolish and perhaps even dangerous to them. They still looked for something within themselves to recommend themselves to God. They reminded me of the old Irish farmer who wore suspenders (*braces*) and a belt on his trousers "to be sure to be sure!"

The Gospel exposes the sheer folly of self-righteousness. If our righteousness can save us, then we don't need Christ's. Conversely, if Christ's righteousness alone saves, it is aggravated foolishness for us to attempt to contribute our righteousness to the equation. So, I continued to reason with them that to trust in ourselves or in any religious ceremony, as a means to make us safer than we already are in Christ Jesus, is madness. Did we expect to be accepted in Heaven, I reasoned, because of something we had done? If that was the case, then Christ Jesus was the biggest time waster in history. What was He thinking? Did He not know that we could save ourselves by being good church people?

Bit by bit as Christ was continually shown to be our ONLY hope, these dear church folk began to see that there really is nothing we can bring to God to commend us other than the doing and dying of Jesus Christ. They slowly began to see that the salvation of God does not rest on human works; rather it stands on the sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus.

And that's the Gospel Truth!
To be continued.