

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)

March 21, 2010

My own righteousness

by David King

"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" (Phil. 3:8-9).

"Righteousness" is defined as the state of being right before God. Here Paul identifies two possible routes to righteousness. The first is "my own," which is derived "from the law" (no definite article, literally, "law" — any law of God). The second is "through faith in Christ . . . from God." A failure to grasp the difference between the two is the difference between reaching heaven and falling short.

The difference lies in who we view as the **source** of righteousness. One sees righteousness as the product of **my own** performance, reinforced by a comparison with other men; the other sees righteousness as the product of **God's** forgiveness, trusting Him to save us despite our shortcomings and defects.

The first approach honors God's law as the standard and strives to obey it. One who takes this approach studies God's word carefully, and seeks to apply what he learns. As he becomes more proficient in living God's truth, he recognizes a widening gap between himself and others. His study and hard work clearly makes him a better person; he is righteous — praise God!

The second approach also honors God's law as the standard and strives to obey it. But

unlike the first approach, one who follows this path remains conscious of his own imperfections. No matter how good he becomes, he knows that he still has a long way to go to be perfect. He is looking at the gap between himself and God, not other men. By that measure, he still comes up short.

The classic illustration of these two paths to righteousness is the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (Lk. 18:9-14). The Pharisee represented those who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (v. 9). His self-congratulatory prayer ("God, I thank you that I am not like other men") turned the spotlight on himself — **his** self-discipline, **his** strong character, **his** devotion to duty. His approach to righteousness was characterized by pride in his own performance.

His error is exposed by the prayer of the tax collector, who begged, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (v. 13). Here is a man who knew the real score. No matter what good he accomplished in his life, in the end he was still a sinner in need of God's grace. He had nothing of which to boast. Both men were sinners, but only one had the humility to admit it.

Like the Pharisee, Christians today struggle to keep the right perspective. By comparing ourselves to the sinners around us, we thump our chests at our moral superiority. But such boasting over our own righteousness does not bring us closer to God. In fact, it drives us further away. Our mistake is not in respecting the details of God's word, but in failing to realize how far we still fall short and need His mercy.