

## Why Being Good Isn't Good Enough

By Pastor Greg  
August 3, 2008

Matthew 16:21-23

Bunkertown COB

During a flood, a godly man heads to the roof of his house for safety. As the waters rise, along comes the sheriff in a boat. "No thanks," says the man. "My God will save me". As the waters rise even higher, the National Guard appears in a helicopter. Again, the man refuses, declaring that his God will surely save him. Eventually the waters engulf the house and the man drowns. In heaven, he is indignant. "God, I thought you would save me!" God's simple reply is "I sent you a boat and a helicopter".

If you'll recall, we recently looked at a passage from Matthew's gospel where Peter makes an incredible statement about Jesus being the Messiah and the Son of God. And Jesus commends him for making this giant leap of understanding. But I want you to see what happens shortly after Peter's proclamation.

<sup>21</sup> From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. <sup>22</sup> But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!" <sup>23</sup> Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."<sup>1</sup> (Matthew 16:21-23)

Now chances are that Peter didn't like the idea of these bad things happening to his friend Jesus. I mean, who would like to see any thing like this happening to someone we love. But behind his words, Jesus heard the voice of Satan once again; a reminder of the time he tempted Him in the wilderness.

Shortly after Jesus was baptized, He heads out into the desert for 40 days. While there, Satan makes Jesus an offer. <sup>8</sup> Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

---

<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>9</sup>“I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.” <sup>2</sup>

(Matthew 4:8-9) Satan whispers into the ear of Jesus “If you give up this silly notion of dying for them, I’ll let you and your religion have dominion in this world.”

Christianity could have had free reign. It could have been the most popular religion in the world if Christ would have just agreed with Satan. But Jesus did not come to start a religion. He came to be our Savior. However, what Jesus could resist, Adam and Eve could not.

Essentially, what Satan did with Adam and Eve was to get them to turn away from God. And it is the understanding that by doing this, Satan was given dominion over all the earth. And that which God had created perfectly became stained and defiled. All of creation fell from its original state of glory, including all humans. Death entered into a world that was not created to die. And our first ancestors became sinful. They became less than what God had originally created.

Every generation from that point until now has had that sinful nature passed down. It’s how we are wired, or part of our genetic code. We are sinful because the first humans, through who all humans have descended, became sinful. And what I mean by sinful is that we struggle with doing what is right. We are at conflict with what our human nature wants to do and with what we learn is right and Godly (see Paul’s confession in Romans 7:19 – “I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.” <sup>3</sup>). Ask any parent. They will tell you that it takes a lot of work to teach a child to act in a respectable and godly manner.

So from a Christian perspective, to be saved is to recognize you are in peril, and accept the help of the Man God sent to save you. But see, most people don’t really think they need saved, just forgiven. Most of the people I talk with basically think they are a good person. The only problem is that they mess up from time to time. So they come to Jesus, confess their sin, and figure all is forgiven. But that’s not good enough because they still have not accepted the fact that they need Jesus to be their Savior. Getting Him to forgive something we’ve done is not the same as having Him pay the penalty for who we are.

---

<sup>2</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation* Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

What I'm trying to teach you this morning is called the biblical doctrine of original sin; the fact that all of us, from the time we are born, are sinful. And typically, some people get all bent out of shape when the topic of original sin comes up. These people are ready to accept Jesus as Messiah and the Son of God, but not as Savior. According to John the Apostle "If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth."<sup>4</sup> (1 John 1:8). And he is not talking about an individual who claims to never sin, but the person who will not admit that they are sinful; that they are a person in peril in need of a savior.

To call Jesus Savior is to admit that something is wrong between ourselves and God. Something happened in the past that broke God's heart. And nothing we can do will ever change that. But what we believe and accept can make a difference. That's why Jesus scolded Peter, because if Jesus would not die and if Jesus would not pay the penalty for our sinfulness, then Jesus would have accomplished nothing. Our Savior knew this, which is why he reacted so harshly to the suggestion.

Jesus comes along and says "Thank you for recognizing Me as Messiah and Lord. Now let Me do this one thing for you. Let Me be your Savior. Let Me be the One to restore that which was broken. I can do that, you know, but only if you're willing to admit you need saved in the first place."

A restored relationship with God does not come in living a perfect life; none of us can do that. It's beyond our nature to live perfectly. But a restored relationship with God comes through our acceptance of the Man God sent to save. And I suppose the real question for you is whether or not you'll accept His help.

---

<sup>4</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (1 Jn 1:8). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.