

0 (3s):

Well, good morning. Hey everyone. I'm so glad that you guys are here online and in person, my name's Matt Wolf. I'm the lead pastor here today. Hopefully more than just today, but I'm glad that you guys are here. If you haven't filled out one of those forms of rise, [number.com/connect](https://number.com/connect), please do it. I would love to reach out to you and say, hi, your story, and get you connected to our church. So we are in week two, two of our series, unexpected examples. If you missed last week, it's okay. It's okay. You'll catch up pretty quickly, but you can find a video, the audio and the transcripts of every message@[arisenumber.com](mailto:arisenumber.com) slash media. You can even subscribe to the, like any podcast app, any on YouTube. You can subscribe and make sure you don't miss any of the messages because we're talking about unexpected examples, things that Jesus pointed to you. It's like, no, no, no.

0 (43s):

Don't look over there. Look at the unexpected examples. And today we're going to look at the sinner. We should imitate. Yes. There is a sinner that Jesus is going to say, look at that center. You like that guy. So if you're like, all right, finally, a message for me. Yes. But a little different than maybe what you think right off the bat, but the sinner that we should imitate. So I had a pretty crazy Friday afternoon. It was pretty crazy because someone pointed in 15 at me. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. It got my attention too. Let me back up a little bit. So one of my neighbors rang my doorbell, right? We were getting down to have lunch and he said, Hey, someone crashed into your Jeep.

0 (1m 27s):

You got to come out. So I come out to check out what's going on. And someone had driven a pickup, a Chevy Silverado. Must've been going pretty fast into my Jeep. My Jeep had the e-brake on and it had gone back at least eight feet hit the car behind it. And that went back. You could see the skid marks, another five feet, the airbag deployed. And the driver, he had walked around for a second. So this was before I came out, had paced around, back and forth and

1 (1m 51s):

Then fled on foot. So

0 (1m 54s):

No plates on the truck. Pretty sure it's a stolen vehicle. And we're just trying to figure out what's going on, looking around my Jeep, probably totaled. Right. And just trying to figure out what is going on. And, and as we're waiting for the police come it's, it's me and five of my neighbors, you know, a few of them were witnesses to all this stuff. And right then another pickup comes up right next to the first and they start grabbing all the stuff out of the crash pickup. There's all sorts of tools in there. There's a Jack, there's a whole, all sorts of bags of equipment. They're taking everything, throwing it into this. Yup. That just pulled up. And I get out my phone to record this right. As, as you do nowadays, but as doing it, one of the guys says, don't do that back off, back off, don't do something stupid.

0 (2m 39s):

And I noticed that the Jack that he was holding was actually in AR 15. So he, cause he, he takes it over the, you know, the back of the pickup got a pointed in my direction. So I immediately put down the phone back off. Right. I'm outta here. I'm not stupid. As he, as he said, right, they drive off the cops show up like just after that. And so if you were in central park, north on Friday, you know why the entire neighborhood was shut down with lots of cop cars. So I'm saying that not only because I've been getting a bunch of questions, people are like, Matt, what happened? What's going on? What happened? It's probably totaled. But it, it made me. And so I'm telling you guys just that in case anybody's wondering I'm okay.

0 (3m 19s):

My Jeep is not, but I'm okay. Right. But that's the thing, like, it was an eye-opener because right when I got back in and I talked with Melissa, she said, what were we fighting about this morning? Who cares? Right. It doesn't matter anymore. Like we realized even just from a few minutes earlier, like I'm angry because my car is ruined. And then a moment after that, I don't care at all. Right. Because I'm just grateful to be alive. One of my neighbors who, as far as I know is a believer. He said, Hey, Matt, you got your sermon for Sunday. And I was like, what? He's like, oh yeah, that changes your attitude. Right? Like the attitude gratitude right there. And I'm like, yes, he does it. It didn't change my message. But, but it does open us up because when you're that close to dying and you realize, wow, I could have died very quickly with just to pull the trigger that I'm so grateful that it was just my car that was damaged.

0 (4m 8s):

I'm so grateful that the 18 kids that live on our courtyards, that none of them were outside grateful that my own twins were not outside because you know, they like running everywhere even into the street. Right. Just so grateful. Even though just a moment before I was like, ah, man, my, my Jeep, right? Who cares about the Jeep at this point? And we have these moments in our life. Some of you have had them, there's been like a car accident. Someone dies, maybe you come close to death and it, it really shakes things up in your life and it should. So I'm hoping that that moment from my life will help you guys sober up and think about your life. Because what we're going to talk about today is one of the most important things. It's actually probably the central doctrine, the central belief that we have as followers of Jesus.

0 (4m 50s):

So as we look at this, as Jesus teaches us, what's at the very center of our faith. I hope it will be important to you guys because what we're going to talk about today is how are we to get right with God? Are we right with God? Are you right with God? Am I right with God? And, and how do we know? So that's what we're going to look at, because that is the most important question. Because whether you believe in God or not, doesn't matter because on the last day you will stand before him and I have to give an account and the question will be like, won't be, are you real or not? It'll be, you know, are you right with God? So how do we get there so that we are ready for the last, because to be honest, it doesn't matter how you feel about God. Some people are like, oh, I just don't like the fact that they're suffering children in Africa and, and hurricanes.

0 (5m 36s):

Like, it doesn't matter how you feel about God. What matters is how God feels, right? What's what's reality. Is he there? And are you right with him? So I hope that you guys will sober up focus today. As I have as sobered up on Friday to really think about it. If I were to die today, because one day all of us will die. Whether it's from, you know, automatic semi-automatic weapon in our neighborhood or something, you know, years, decades from now, all of us will die. Are we ready to stand before the judgment seat and to know, are we right with God? So that's what we're going to look at today. So this central doctrine that we're going to learn today is called justification, justification. So important.

0 (6m 16s):

We're going to get a theology lesson from Jesus himself, but it's so important. And this doctrine is so important. This is what Martin Luther, the German theologian said about it. He said the article justification by which the church stands or falls. We as followers of Jesus, this is where we stand or fall. This is our entire belief centered around this one doctrine. The second thing, John, Calvin, the French theologian says wherever. The knowledge of it, justification is taken away. The glory of Christ is extinguished, religion, abolished the church destroyed and the love of salvation, utterly overthrown. So this is pretty a big deal, right? That we're talking about justice today. It's not like how many angels are there, which is interesting, but who cares? Right?

0 (6m 56s):

What matters justification? Because what justification is is, is, are you right with God justification, as we're going to learn today is actually a declaration from God himself. That you're right. That you're righteous.

1 (7m 9s):

And therefore you don't have anything to fear on the judgment seat.

0 (7m 12s):

So we're going to learn today. So how are we going to do that? And, and we're going to start today because Jesus is going to say, there's, you know, there's really two different types of people. So as we look at a story that Jesus teaches us today, there are two different dudes that Jesus talks about. And I want you to think about and be completely honest yourself, about which of these two dudes you are. And yes, ladies, think about what you dude, you are in this story. Okay. So are you the first one? The first one is the Pharisee. He's a religious person. He is spiritual. He knows the Bible. He goes to church. He does what he's supposed to be served. He gives he's an upright person. He's probably a leader in the community, in his family. So, so that person, if you're like, Hey, that's kind of like me.

0 (7m 52s):

Most of us, if we are church goers fit into that camp, I as a pastor fit into that camp as the Pharisee. So just

think of that are honest. Are you that person, do you identify more with that person? The second person we're going to see is a guy that's a tax collector tax collector. Now we're like, okay, what's wrong with the IRS? I mean, we don't like them, but how does this fit into it? Well, in Jesus's day, a tax collector would have been someone who not only collected taxes for the Roman empire, but he would have taken a little bit more. So the Roman empire who ruled over Israel, where Jesus and the rest of the Jewish nation lived, they ruled over them and they would tell the Jews, okay, we need someone to bring us this amount of money. Here's your quota.

0 (8m 33s):

And the tax collectors, who were Jews themselves were saying, okay, well, I've got to get that. So I'm going to take those from my neighbors, my friends, my family member, but in order for them to get paid, they could request whatever they want. So there was not an IRS statement that you got and you had your accountant, the tax collector would come and say, you owe this money. So they were notorious for taking way more than they needed. So these guys robbed from their own friends and family member. They were rich, but people despise them and you saw them and they think you're Jewish. Why aren't you part of us? Why are you, you know, a trader to our cause and friends with the Roman empire. So everybody hated them. They were the worst of sinners. Nobody wanted to go with him. So when Jesus introduces the tax collector, I want you to see a worldly sinner.

0 (9m 16s):

So they are just going along with what the Roman empire says. So some of you in here are going to identify with that and that's okay, too. Let's be honest. And you're saying, yeah, I am a sinner. I do some wrong things. I probably have taken money from people. I probably have sinned against people. And yeah, maybe people don't like me for it, but that's what I do. So if you're like, which one of those two you are, as we get into the story, you'll see the different details. Jesus lays out. I want you to be honest, completely honest. Am I more like the Pharisee? Or am I more like the tax collector? Be honest. And let's see what Jesus says about these two guys in Luke 18, starting in verse nine. So open up your Bibles with me.

0 (9m 56s):

Smartphone, get out YouTube, get the, I'm sorry. The YouVersion Bible app. You can find our event under a rice church, Denver online, get your Bible open up another browser, whatever it is. And in verse nine, it says to some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else. Jesus told this parable, okay. So he's just up front. He's like, he's talking about the people that are like the Pharisee. You're confident of your own righteousness. You're confident that you're doing what you're supposed to do. That you're a pretty good person that God looks at you and say, wow, you're doing pretty good for yourself. So those people who are confident of their own righteousness, Jesus to that says, Hey, here are these two men who went up to the temple to pray one, a Pharisee and the other, a tax collector.

0 (10m 43s):

So first Jesus is really talking to these, these people that identify with the Pharisees. First thing he says is that they're confident of their own righteousness. Did you see that

1 (10m 53s):

Righteousness?

0 (10m 54s):

I think a simple way to remember it is, are you right with God? Okay. We use the term righteousness. And even now commons has like bad connotations in our country. Like, oh, that person is so righteous. You know, you know, maybe Ferris, Bueller, righteous dude. Right. But okay. Most of the time we think of it as not a good term, but it's a very good term. Are you right with God? But this guy is saying, I'm right on my own. So for those people who says, I've got it going on, and what they're doing is they're looking at themselves. And I think, and I have found some of these people say I'm doing pretty good now, because look at how I used to do. Be Pharisees will say, you know, I used to not be a good person back in high school. I did some stuff.

0 (11m 35s):

Right. But now look at me like I may have messed around it. And some dumb things when I was younger, but look, how much work I've got. I've improved a lot. So, so they look at themselves as the standard. And then they look down on everyone else and they compare themselves to others because it is very easy for us to find pretty bad sinners around us. Right. People who have done some bad stuff, read the news, okay. Run into some criminals with assault rifles. Okay. Maybe you guys, hopefully you won't do that. Right. But there's some people around us that have done some bad things. You read the news, you see it on social media. Someone sends you that text at 3:00 AM and you're like, they were drunk. At least I'm not that guy.

1 (12m 15s):

Right. And we have people

0 (12m 17s):

Around us. It's very easy. When we compare ourselves to others to think I'm doing pretty good for me.

1 (12m 25s):

So Jesus addresses us who were like fiercely that way. Right? And

0 (12m 31s):

This is what he says about the Pharisee in verse 11, look at this. It says the Pharisee stood by himself and prayed

1 (12m 38s):

God, I thank you.

0 (12m 40s):

I am not like other people robbers, evildoers adulterers or even like this as collector, I fast twice a week and give a 10th of all. I, yeah, look at this prayer that he prays. He's basically be like, God, you're welcome. Seriously. Look what all I've done for you. I tie them all, everything in the old Testament, they were all only even supposed to tie from their, their crops, from their produce, from their animals. And he's like, I tied everything. A lot of the Pharisees in that day would even tie from their like herb garden. Like I'm, I'm making sure I'm doing everything right. And he says, you know, I fast twice a week.

0 (13m 21s):

It was actually only required in the law to fast one day a year. It's just fasting twice a week. That is impressive. Religiously. Okay. Some of you guys can't even fast for like four hours before getting hungry, right. That's me. That's me. Okay. Sorry, honey. Yeah, this guy's impressive. Right? Spiritually. He's got to go on. He's doing some good stuff and nothing. He says, as far as we know is false. Did you notice that God, this is what I do for you. This is how faithful I am. This is how religious look at me. I am righteous. I am right with you.

1 (13m 56s):

You're welcome.

0 (13m 57s):

And notice too, in this little verse in these two sentences, this I'm sorry. It's little like one sentence in these, in these two verses he, he says, I thank you that I am not like other people. And that verse 12, I fast twice a week. And I give a 10th of all. I get in those two verses, he says talks about himself five times. Did you notice that pretty selfish? Yeah. This is like, you want to talk about me? You want to talk about my right to God?

1 (14m 25s):

Like, look at me. I'm doing pretty well. And it's

0 (14m 28s):

Maybe like I said, because he's comparing himself to his own past, but he's also comparing himself really to others, look at how bad they are. We are very good at grading ourselves compared to others. There are some awful people in centers in the world and we see them and we know them.

1 (14m 46s):

We look down on them and raise ourselves up. We were,

0 (14m 50s):

This is what self-righteousness right. Self-righteousness and I think it's such a fascinating thing. There's even some psychological studies that they're doing now. And there's been a lot of studies that have proven this is that when we look at other people at what they do, we judge them pretty harshly. In fact, we assigned to them pretty bad motives. Someone did that. It's because they're hateful and they were racist. We judge their motives. But when we do the exact same thing, studies are showing this. We say, oh, you know, that's not what I intended. I didn't mean to hurt their feelings. I meant better. So we rationalize about ourselves, justifying ourselves. When we condemn others for sometimes the exact same actions we do this.

0 (15m 36s):

And we, we look at their actions and we see things like there are adulterers around us, man. You can hear some great stories about some of the awful stuff. You just read any people magazine, or you just talk with anybody in Douglas. If they'll tell you, and you're like, this is what we do. This is what we do. We judge their sin and we rationalize our own. So we say, oh, I can't believe anyone would cheat on their spouse like that. But then we look at ourselves, that's just a little bit of porn. We judge them and they say, I can't believe they stole all that money, but I'm just fudging the numbers a little bit on my taxes. This is what we do. And that's why it's very easy to look down on other people and find all the other centers around us, how awful they are, how could they do that?

0 (16m 20s):

And we come up with all sorts of self justification for it. I didn't have a dad growing up. So didn't have a role model, I guess like,

1 (16m 28s):

You know, I got a reason for it.

0 (16m 29s):

I didn't, I didn't have parents that taught me Christianity. So of course, I didn't know that that's right or wrong. I meant psychology now. Okay. A lot of it is just like blaming your parents for the bad things you're doing now, blaming our genetics. Now, too. I saw a study that came out a couple of weeks ago that said based on your genes, people are more likely to have premarital sex. I don't think it's problem with their genes. It's something going on in their genes, right?

1 (16m 55s):

Honest. We blame

0 (16m 58s):

It, everybody else, even for our sin. And we, we elevate ourselves. I'm not that bad. At least I'm not like him. I'm least. I'm not like her. Even when we do something terrible. Well, I haven't done it twice. Okay. All you

have to do is go to prison. You'll find people that have been way worse than you. Right? I just did a little crime, right? It was just white collar. Now. No big deal. Like it is easy for us to justify ourselves. And that's why most of us fall into the identification with the Pharisee and the problem with it is not just the sins that we overlook in our own life. But the pride we have in it, it's our pride and pride is maybe the worst of all. Since he has pride leads to all the other sins, combined, Augustine theologian, he said, and it's gets translated from the Latin a little differently.

0 (17m 42s):

But basically he said that pride is pregnant with all other sins, pregnant, all the other sins come out of that because we, I should lie to get out of this situation because it's really not that big of a deal. Like I should be able to get out of this, this bad mess that I've gotten in. So I'll just, it's not that big of a deal or, you know, make everything relative. I'm amazed. I remember my freshman year of college, our professors, like who thinks truth is universal. And I raised my hand. I'm the only one in there who thinks truth is relative. Everyone raises their hand because what we do when we get in trouble, we're like, you know, the 10 commandments, they don't really apply to me right here because my situation is unique.

0 (18m 23s):

Everybody says that my situation, you don't know what I had to deal with. What? I've struggled. We do this. And it's all pride. It's pride. And God hates pride because worst of all, we put ourselves in the place of God. I don't have to follow what he says because it doesn't apply to me. Pride is pregnant with all the other sins. And that's why even this religious person who from the outside people look at him and think, wow, look how much he fast. Look how much he ties. Look how much good he does. He's an upright person. He's there for his family. And we'd look at that person. And God sees a person whose heart is filled with pride and that sin and that sin, even this guy, this is the crazy thing because God sees our hearts.

0 (19m 15s):

And even for this, the Pharisee and like us, we were identifying with Pharisees. A lot of us, when we do good things, we do them to make ourselves look good,

1 (19m 24s):

Right? We do this. It's

0 (19m 27s):

A fascinating verse in Isaiah 64, where God speaking through the prophet says, all of us have become like one who is unclean. So what Isaiah says, all of us are unclean. And all our righteous acts, the good things we do to get right to make ourselves look right, are like filthy rags, like filthy rags. And that word filthy rags in the Hebrew. Men are menstrual rag. God is saying that the best things you do serving giving you think, oh, I'm so great. It's like a discarded had



1 (20m 4s):

To God because you're doing it to make yourself look good to justify yourself. Self-righteousness but there is a better way. There is a

0 (20m 16s):

Better way. And God says, okay, better way. Jesus says, there's the Pharisee, but there's a better way because there's another man there at the temple that day, verse 13. But the tax collector stood at a distance. The F the Pharisee is praying by himself because he doesn't want to be contaminated by all those sinners out there don't want them to rub off on me. But, but this tax collector, this sinner, he stands at a distance because he doesn't want to contaminate people. Is that he, since I love this, because I talked to a lot of people and maybe some of you here, you slink in a little late to service. You sit in the back. Maybe you're watching online for the 10th week in a row.

0 (20m 58s):

You still are like, I don't know if I can go in there yet. I have people I talk to. They're like, man, I, sorry, I can't go to church. If I went in there, the police would burn to the ground. Cause they know what they've done.

1 (21m 7s):

They know their sin. They're honest with themselves. They know their past. They know they're present. They look at themselves

0 (21m 18s):

And it says that he would not even look up to heaven. He can't look God on the eye,

1 (21m 23s):

But

0 (21m 23s):

Beat his breast and said, God have mercy on me. A sinner. He's beating his breast because this is like just the natural response. If you've ever seen someone that that immediately is in the throws of grief, they'll do this. I've seen it as a pastor. I've seen people it's just like so much sorrow, so much grief

1 (21m 47s):

That it leads to

0 (21m 47s):

A physical response. This man is so emotional because he is coming into the temple and knows he needs mercy. He needs compassion for God from God, because he has done something wrong. It says a sinner, but there's actually the article in the Greek. This could be this man saying, God have mercy on me. The

sinner.

1 (22m 6s):

I'm the center that, that guy's talking about in his prayer.

0 (22m 9s):

I'm the center in town. Everybody knows that I am the awful guy. Who's done all sorts of bad death.

1 (22m 14s):

So some of you identify with the tax collector that way,

0 (22m 19s):

I'm the sinner I need help. I have messed up again and again. And I keep doing the same dumb things. This addiction has gotten me. Why did I do this again? Yeah. Ms. Tech Kutcher tries out for mercy. That word mercy was, it was a term tied to the temple. Was it tied to the temple? Because in the temple, what would happen was the animals would be sacrificed to bring mercy to sinners,

1 (22m 48s):

Bring mercy.

0 (22m 50s):

So let me explain how the temple works. So it kind of makes sense with this. And then we'll explain what that, that word mercy means. So in the temple, in the very center of the temple there in Jerusalem, there's one temple for God's people. The Jews in the center was the holy of Holies. The inner sanctuary, where only the high priest was allowed to go in. And then outside of that was the sanctuary, the holy place where all the priests could go in and offer sacrifices on behalf of the sinful people outside of that was a court where Jews who were believers in God could go and they would go and offer a sacrifice on their behalf. So probably the Pharisee is in that inner court. But then beyond that, that's where the, the believing men would be.

0 (23m 31s):

And I'm just telling you the way it was. Then there was a court of women outside of that for believing women. But then outside of that was the court of the Gentiles. Because if people were not part of the people that got, they couldn't get anywhere near the holy holy God, distant upon distant upon distance. So probably we don't know exactly, but this, this tax collector was probably in the court of the Gentiles at a distance. He's seeing all this going on, he's crying out for mercy because they're in the center of the temple, the holy places where animals were sacrificed and animals were sacrificed because there had to be bloodshed. There had to be some cost, a payment for the sins of the people.

0 (24m 13s):

Did you know what, when you owe a debt, somebody has to pay it. This is a news flash for some people, okay. If you owe money, somebody has to pay it. There's a lot of new stories going around right now about like forgiving student loans. Like let's just cancel all of that. Like there's people marching for that kind of stuff, but somebody has got to pay it. I read this one story about a guy and I'm fudging a little bit in the details, but it gives a general sense. This guy who had gotten his master's degree in something like medieval literature, right? Oh, it was like over \$180,000 for his education. And he's making a big steam because he wants his student loan to be forgiven because he has figured out that now that he's working at the, you know, the convenience store down the street, cause he can't get a job in medieval literature and he's making less than \$40,000 a year that he calculated based on what it costs to live and the other debt, he has it, you know, I was on the car.

0 (25m 6s):

I was on a cell phone and all that other stuff that it's going to take him over 120 years to pay back the \$180,000. CEO's I'm making some of the details, but you guys have heard these stories, right? Sadly, some of you guys are like, yeah, that's me. Okay. So this guy owes a lot of money and people are like, we should forgive their debt. But if some debt is forgiven, somebody has to pay it. If someone owed you a thousand dollars and they said, why don't you forgive it? You're like, well then I'm out a thousand dollars. So whether it's the bank or the institution or a friend or the federal government, somebody's got to pay it. And if it's the federal government, guess what? It's us, right? The taxpayer somebody's paying for a debt to be canceled. Now I'm not making a political statement one way or the other, whether we should forgive debts or whatever.

0 (25m 48s):

I'm just saying, somebody pays when a debt is forgiven. And in the same way this man is saying, I owe a debt and he calculates his salary and he's like, okay, I've done this. And I've done that. And I've done this woof. That was a bad thing. Yeah. When I was 16,

1 (26m 8s):

I got into some real trouble when I was 25, I got into some real trouble. Oh. When I was 30 and I, oh yeah.

0 (26m 15s):

So he's, he's calculating his, what he owes. Right. I owe God all this. And then he's like, well, and this is how much I make. And this is, if I serve here, if I give money back, it's going to take me 46,000 years to pay off my debt. That's what he's calculating in that moment. So he, when we, when he's crying out for mercy, he says, there is nothing I could ever do in thousands of lifetimes to payback God for that, I have fallen short of his glory. I have sinned against the God of the universe. I deserve judgment and retribution rightfully so for my sin. But he cries out for mercy because he said, God, would you please pay?

0 (26m 59s):

Would you please offer me mercy? Would you have some sacrifice that maybe could atone for my sins? So

when he cries out for mercy, he says, God, I can't bring anything here. I need to do everything. So I have this great quote from the American theologian. Now Jonathan Edwards, if we can jump to that, you contribute nothing to your salvation, but the sin that it necessary,

1 (27m 32s):

Did you know that

0 (27m 34s):

When we're coming to God, if we're honest, we can do nothing to become right with God, we can't do enough in this lifetime because we sin and we keep sending. And even when we do the right things, we're like the Pharisee and we do them so that we can look good. And they're like filthy rags that's before God. The only thing that you contribute to your salvation is the sin that made it necessary and where the Pharisee looks at himself and thinks I'm doing pretty good compared to all

1 (28m 1s):

Those, the tax collector is honest, he's truthful.

0 (28m 9s):

And he says, I need mercy. I need mercy. And that's why Jesus says imitate. This sinner's example. He's the one we should be like, not the Pharisee. Don't imitate his sin. That's not what Jesus is saying, but he's saying in his sin, he admitted his need for mercy, for a savior, for someone to help him up. Cause he had nothing left, you know, in alcoholics anonymous. It's one of the most, it's probably the most powerful organization for behavior change. People study at left and right, because it is able to help people that are alcoholics recover when no other organizations are. And one of the fascinating things about it, you have to like declare a bunch of different things in the steps in one of them is that we admit that we are powerless to do anything to change and that our lives are unmanageable.

1 (29m 1s):

How was it

0 (29m 2s):

That the people that are actually changing their life for the people who say I can't change well, it's because one of the other steps that come later, when you at mid that you need a higher power,

1 (29m 14s):

Do you know that?

0 (29m 16s):

Okay, sociologists study this and they have the darndest time trying to figure out why AA works because you

can't measure God,

1 (29m 23s):

You just can't figure it out. But, but

0 (29m 25s):

They see it again and again and again. And it was, it was a follower of Jesus who started Alcoholics Anonymous. And we have two groups that meet here. Some of you are part of that. I'd love you guys because you are admitting the truth that we all should, that we are sinners and we can do nothing to save ourselves. We can't change our behavior. We need help. Because even when I do good things, it's for bad motives to promote myself and make myself righteous. I need Jesus to save me. I need mercy. Have mercy on me, Lord. That's how we should all be

1 (29m 52s):

Like this center, like this tax collector, mercy on me. Cause there's nothing

0 (29m 60s):

I can contribute to my salvation. And what's amazing is the conclusion Jesus gives us in verse 14. Jesus says, I tell you that this man, the tax collector, the sinner who had wronged his own people who had wronged God broken commandments, that this man, rather than the other, that Pharisee, the upright Christian, the pastor, the guy who serving in Sunday school,

1 (30m 32s):

That sinner went home justified before God

0 (30m 37s):

That we're justified is so important here. The word justified, it means to be declared, right? It was a legal term when there was a judge in those days. So these days, if you go to court, the judge will either declare guilty or not guilty. But in those days there was also a declaration of righteousness of innocence, of your right. Like it was the positive version. Like you, didn't not just do something wrong, but you actually are in the right. And a judge would declare that you are justified. God is the judge of all is the one we should care about. It doesn't matter what we think. Am I right? Yes. It doesn't even matter if I'm more righteous than other people around me because guaranteed, you can find people more sinful than you.

0 (31m 19s):

We know that matters is what God, the judge of all who we will stand before on the last day, whether he says we're right or not. And what Jesus tells us, who knows the heart of God, who was with God from the beginning, says that the sinner who cried out for mercy was the one who was justified.

1 (31m 38s):

See, this

0 (31m 39s):

Is the central belief to Christianity justification. One way to remember it is, this is real simple. It's just as if I'd never sinned, okay, you're declared, right? You can see this in a place like acts chapter 13. If we have that verse acts chapter 13, verse 39 says through Jesus, everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification, you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses by doing all the commandments, doing everything right. You couldn't get that, but you can be justified. You can be set free from sin. It can be just as if I'd never sinned. If you believe in Jesus

1 (32m 13s):

Christ, because

0 (32m 15s):

Here is the amazing thing that we believe at the center of our faith is that Jesus was the only person, the only human being who ever lived, who did not sin and never did anything wrong. He followed all of God's commandments and not just to impress others because he didn't care about what they thought of him. He did everything right? Because he God, with all his heart, mind, soul and strength. And he showed that by loving others, by serving, by being obedient every single moment of every day. And yet still he was punished as if he had done something wrong. He was rejected by his friends. He was betrayed by someone. He loved, he was spit on mocked.

0 (32m 56s):

And then they took him after they beat him and gave him a false trial. They took him outside of the city because in those days, if you're going to be executed for a crime for sins, that you committed it, you couldn't even just be like in the outer courts of the temple. You couldn't even be in the city of Jerusalem. You had to be outside the city limits because you were so awful. We'll send you out there. And that's what they did to Jesus. They made him carry a cross, but he was too weak to carry it. So another man helped him carry it to a hill outside the city where they nailed Jesus to the cross. And he died

1 (33m 28s):

Sinners punishment in

0 (33m 30s):

Execution for crimes. He did not commit. But the amazing thing about our faith is justification. I wanted, I saw this image when I was in college and it helped me understand this, this theological doctrine. So I want you guys to get it. So over here on the left is you on the right? Is Jesus. And guess what? Jesus is a hundred percent human. Just like us. That's why he looks the same. Okay. Okay. But you have sin. And what

happens on the cross is that all of our sin, the punishment we deserve for the crimes that we have committed, the sin that we have sinned against God, all of that actually gets put on Jesus

1 (34m 7s):

On the cross. But

0 (34m 9s):

If we believe in faith, in what Jesus did his righteousness given to us, do you see that? And what do you see in the middle there?

1 (34m 20s):

It's the cross

0 (34m 22s):

Martin Luther called this the great exchange our sin went on Jesus. His righteousness is given to us. That's what happens in faith. The belief because Jesus, with the final sacrifice, the son of God, the perfect spotless lamb who was killed, not in the temple, but on the cross, outside the city. And when Jesus, the son of God died, all of that sin was transferred upon him and the righteousness that he earned because he was right before God and his life is given to us through faith. And God proves that this happens by raising Jesus from the dead on third day saying, yeah, I have the power to conquer sin death. And the devil just proved it.

0 (35m 4s):

So as I have a quote from Charles Spurgeon, it says, you sit, you stand before God as if you were Christ, because Christ stood before God is, if he were you, that's what we believe in justification. The heart of what we believe. That's what the cross is so important. That's why people all over the world have crosses tattooed and on their necklaces. And you see them on buildings because that's what happened on the cross justification. Just as if you'd never sinned, you were declared, right? But the only judge, whoever mattered. And therefore when you die, whether it's today or a hundred years from now, you can stand before the judgment seat of Christ say, I believe, and it will be counted to you as righteousness.

0 (35m 51s):

That's justification. So some of you here, you identify more

2 (36m 1s):

With the Pharisee, the religious guy, you've done

0 (36m 5s):

Some good stuff. Maybe you've even reformed. You look in the past and you're like, look, I'm doing pretty good for myself now. Not perfect. Sure. But you know, you should have heard my mouth back then Sandoz,

pretty bad jokes. I

2 (36m 15s):

Don't cuss anymore. Like, look at me, I'm doing a good job. If

0 (36m 18s):

You're the Pharisee, do you know what the solution is to humble yourself, to cry out for mercy saying, I have sinned. I have committed the sin of pride and self-righteousness I need your mercy. God forgive me. But if you're here today and you identify with the sinner and you're like,

2 (36m 39s):

I've done a lot of bad stuff. I don't even feel comfortable to go to church.

0 (36m 44s):

I'm not in church. I'm watching online. I'm listening to this because I'm too much of a sinner. If that's you, do you know what the solution is?

2 (36m 51s):

Humble yourself and cry out for mercy to people, same solution, right? Jesus gives us the big idea for my message. At the very end. He he's, he's real good at this. Even to have to make up one this week, look at the end of verse 14, which uses this for all those who exalt themselves will be humbled. And those who humble themselves will be exalted. That's the truth. If you lift up yourself, you look at yourself and you say I'm justified. I'm righteous in my own eyes compared to everybody else, there will be a day where you will be humbled before the judgment seat, because it's not about what you do.

2 (37m 35s):

You bring nothing to your salvation except your own sin. But if you are like the tax collector, you imitate him and you say, I will confess my sins. I will humble myself and say, I have sinned again. And again and again. And I keep sending when I know better now, and you cry out for mercy, God will lift you up. That's how it works. That's justification. So we're going to take a moment right now, chase and the band are going to lead us in a song. And I want us to repent. I want us to confess our sins. If you need you to beat your breasts, you can do whatever you want. You can kneel on the ground because we are the people that should be the most humble of all we are as Christians. We're the self-confessed sinners.

2 (38m 16s):

I tell you, I'm the lead pastor here, but I'm also the lead sinner in his church. I have sinned against you. I've sinned against my wife has sinned against my kids. I've sinned against God in heaven, and I need his mercy today. And everyday, sometimes the worst thing is when you've made some progress, then you become more and more like the Pharisee. Even if you were the tax collector, the beginning, we need mercy. We need



to cry out to God in repentance and true repentance. And if you're the center, maybe today for the first time, you can find mercy because Jesus Christ died on the cross for you. All that you have to do is bring your sin and lay it down. Say, have mercy on me, have mercy on me, sinner. You know this prayer.

2 (38m 56s):

I prayed all the time. It's a breath bear. I write whenever I like breathing in a lot of times, I'll I'll remember it. When I'm stressed, I'll say have mercy on me, a sinner. I want this to become your prayer. That this is the way we walk. That we admit that we are sinners that we have done what is wrong. We can't judge other people. We confess our sins so that we can receive the mercy from God. So please stand up right now and I'm gonna lead us into worship. Lord, God, we cry out to you like that. Tax collector, would we be like him? Would we be like that sinner? That is honest enough to admit our faults and our sin, whether it is self-righteousness or an awful sin that everybody knows about, maybe it's something hidden.

2 (39m 39s):

Maybe it's something that nobody knows about, but you God, but we have sinned against you. So we come to you and we confess that sin. We admit that we are sinners, have mercy on us. God have mercy on us. Have mercy on us. VI sinners. We come to you honest before you, and we need your heart, your heart of mercy and love and compassion to come and forgive us of our sins, justify us and your eyes and not ours. Let us be humbled before you, God, that you may exalt us. You might lift us up and do time. Amen.

2 (40m 20s):

So right now, chasing the band are gonna lead us into the song. We're going to sing some of it. We're going to have a little bit of moment of repentance, but make sure you stay, don't leave during the song because we have something really special at the end of the service you guys got to stick around for.