

IN HUMILITY AND LOVE

“For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.” —JOHN 12:47

Most of us would agree that it is much easier to judge other people's sins than to judge our own. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3) The reality is the things we are critical of in others are usually true of ourselves. That's why we're quick to pick up on them, and sometimes too quick to criticize.

The Pharisees were experts in this. They were the strict fundamentalists of their day and kept all the rules, but their standing before God was merely an outward display for self-gratification, and did nothing to win favour with God. Good works, like keeping the rules, will never equip anyone to become a Christian. They are not a prerequisite for coming to Christ, but it is once we have come to Christ and are indwelt by His Spirit that we begin to do good works which Jesus had planned for us long ago.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, taught that if you behave like God's people, you would become one of His people. When Jesus was eating with Zacchaeus, a tax collector, this teaching rubbed off on the people, and they began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner” (Luke 19:7). It was because Jesus knew who Zacchaeus was that he stayed at his home and ate with him. Zacchaeus was a wealthy man who climbed a tree so that he could see Jesus in the crowd. He offered half his possessions to the poor, and to pay restitution four times the amount to anyone he may have cheated. Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has

come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9).

The Pharisees had it backwards. When you become one of God’s people, then you behave like God’s people. Sadly, there are many today who believe they’re not worthy to come to Jesus because they think they’re too immersed in sin and are afraid to be judged. Jesus doesn’t judge, nor condemn us for our sin, but comes alongside us to save us from our sin. He steps into our broken world, forgives, heals and brings new life.

Evangelism does not include presenting preconditions for people to meet with Jesus. We all have sawdust, if not planks in our eyes, but as true ambassadors of Christ, we don’t judge anyone. We come as Jesus did to Zacchaeus – in humility and love, because all around us people need saving.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times I have judged others. Grant me a heart that sees everyone with love and compassion. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I have a tendency to judge people, and if so, how can I best overcome it?