

1-21-2024, COTR Texarkana

Title: Sinful or Righteous? Generous or Stingy?

Purpose: Provoke people to live a righteous and generous life as followers of Jesus.

Truth for Today: Righteousness and generosity are 2 primary values of committed Christians.

Text: Psalm 1, Proverbs 11:24-25

Topic: New Year, Sin, Righteousness, Generosity, Stinginess

Series Title: The Man in the Mirror... What kind of person will I be in 2024?

Series purpose: Provoke people to prioritize their lives around Biblical values and imperatives in 2024.

Sinful or Righteous? Generous or Stingy?

I. Introduction

- A. **Conclude Series: The Man in the Mirror**, What kind of **person will I be in 2024**? As the **New Year unfolds**, spiritual priorities must be deliberate choices, or they get lost in the busyness of life and we miss opportunities that will affect us for eternity. We've talked about (1) **living each day with eternity in mind**, (2) **how to simplify Christian life**, 2 **great commandments, Love God and love people**, (3) **Who will be in heaven because of me**?
- B. Today we'll ask ourselves 2 questions about 2 of the **most important character traits committed Christians possess**. (2 mini sermons on **Christian values**.)
 - 1. Will I walk on the path of sin or righteousness?
 - 2. Will I be generous or stingy?
- C. Title: **Sinful or Righteous? Generous or Stingy?**

II. In 2024, Will I walk on the path of sin or righteousness?

- A. **Two paths** [Psalm 1 (NCV) **Happy (ESV blessed) are those who don't listen to the wicked, who don't go where sinners go, who don't do what evil people do.** ² They love the Lord's teachings...] There are 2 paths in life, and we get to **choose** which one we walk on. One follows **God's ways** and seeks to **please Him**. It's called the **path of righteousness**. The other path **rejects God's ways** and chooses the **path of sin, worldliness, and selfishness**. It's called the **path of the wicked/ evil**. One path is **blessed** by God and 1 will be **judged**.
- B. Noah was **righteous** and God **blessed him**, [Ge 6:5-9 (NLT) The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that **everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil**... And the Lord said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth...⁸ But **Noah found favor (NKJV grace) with the Lord**... **Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.** Genesis 7:1 (ESV) Then the Lord said to Noah, "**Go into the ark, you and all your household**, for I have seen that you are **righteous** before me in this generation.] Those who **ignored God's ways** were **destroyed** but **Noah was saved**. Noah wasn't **perfect**. He **understood the need for sacrifices to atone for sin** but **tried** to be **righteous**

1. Def. righteous: (1) To conform to God's ethical or moral standard.¹ How we behave, **E.G.** (2) To be declared righteous, right with God, because the blood of Jesus Christ washes away sin. Spiritual standing before God. **E.G.**
 2. * **Caveat...** We can't be good enough to be righteous and earn salvation. The problem of sin, [Isaiah 64:6 (NLT) **We are all infected and impure with sin.** When we display **our righteous deeds**, they are nothing but **filthy rags**. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and **our sins** sweep us away like the wind.] Jesus is the source of our righteousness, [Romans 3:22 (NLT) We are **made right with God (ESV righteous)** by placing our faith in Jesus Christ...] When we believe in Jesus, our sins are forgiven we are **declared/ pronounced righteous** because of the **blood of Jesus**. ***After salvation, God expects us to live a righteous life, not to be saved but because we are saved.
- C. The process of changing from bad to good, unrighteous to righteous and unholy to holy is called sanctification.
1. Def. sanctification: to make holy or consecrate ourselves to God.² When we are sanctified we **get rid of sinful behavior** and **replace** it with **godly behavior**. Sanctification is a **lifelong process**.
 - a. [Psalm 51:5 (NLT) For **I was born a sinner**— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.] Sin is in our **DNA inherited** from **Adam**. Sin **separates** us from **God**. That's **why** we **need forgiveness** and the **cross of Christ**. Once we are **forgiven**, God wants to 'clean us up'; He wants us to **replace sinful, evil thoughts** and actions with **righteous ones**. God wants our 'positional righteousness' to be **lived out** in our **daily lives**.³
 2. **Romans 6:17–19 (NLT)**... **Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.** ¹⁸ Now you are free from your **slavery to sin**, and you have become **slaves to righteous living**.... Previously, **you let yourselves** be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever **deeper into sin**. **Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.** **E.g.**, Instead of lying, tell the truth; Instead of hurting people, help people; Instead of pursuing sexual sin, pursue purity and be **faithful** to your spouse; Instead of laziness, work hard, etc.
 - D. **Why** should we live **righteous lives in 2024?** (1) It's our way to say thank you to God for salvation; (2) It makes God happy; (3) Righteous living protects us from God's discipline and wrath. (4) God blesses us when we walk on the righteous path.
 - E. **Response/ Prayer:** Confess and repent. Ask HS to help us **live a righteous life** in 2024.
- III. In 2024, will I be generous or stingy?
- A. The Bible attaches a blessing to generosity,
 - B. **1 Timothy 6:17–19 (NLT)** Tell them (*the rich*) to **use their money to do good**. They should be rich in good works and **generous to those in need**, always **being ready to share with others**. ¹⁹ By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future ...] [Proverbs 11:24–25 (NLT) **Give freely** and become more wealthy; **be stingy** and lose everything. ²⁵ **The generous will prosper**; (NCV) **those who help others will themselves be helped**. Def. generous: willingly and

joyfully give and share with others. Def. stingy: unwilling to give or share with others.⁴ God takes notice of our generosity and will bless us now and in eternity. He also sees when we are stingy and selfish. We may accumulate money and stuff now but will lose it in eternity.

1. ***This is not an appeal for more money for the church. We have plenty because people are generous and we're using the money you give investing it in the Great Commission and helping people in Texarkana and around the world. But the church offers lots of ministry opportunities you can invest, E.g. help feed and educate poor children, we have partners in Kenya, India, Haiti...reaching Jews in Israel... supporting underground church in Middle East...
 2. Generosity isn't a gimmick to get God to make us rich. It's a character trait of committed Christians. Paul, [Acts 20:35 (NLT) I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"]
- C. Dorcas, a generous woman, [Acts 9:36–42 (NLT) ...Dorcas...was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor.³⁷ About this time she became ill and died...³⁸...Peter was nearby...so they sent two men to beg him, "Please come as soon as possible!"³⁹...they took him to the upstairs room...filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them.⁴⁰ But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, "Get up, Tabitha (Gk. *Dorcas*)."] And she opened her eyes!...]
1. Dorcas shows us that generosity is more than giving in church; helping people in the name of Christ is a way of life. [James 1:27 (NCV) Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence.]
- D. Generosity fights the spirit of our age: materialism (bigger better-more will make me happier), hedonism (prioritizing pleasure above everything). America has more storage buildings than rest of world combined.
1. [2 Timothy 3:1–4 (NLT)...in the last days...²...For people will love only themselves and their money...⁴ They will...love pleasure rather than God.]
 2. Pers. test. I replaced 2 Lazy Boy recliners at Christmas and was convicted that if I spend money for nice things for me, I should help others, too. So, I made a significant offering to help a pastor in India build a house. John Baptist, [Luke 3:11 (NLT) "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."}] Let's decide now to be generous in 2024.
- E. Response/ Prayer: Lord, help me be a generous person in 2024.

IV. Souls

- A. Only Jesus offers forgiveness of sins so we can receive righteousness from God. How do I receive God's forgiveness and begin living a righteous life? Believe and follow Jesus.

V. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Strongs, Hebrew #6662
2. Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [*Harper's Bible dictionary*](#) (1st ed., p. 904). Harper & Row.
3. Witmer, J. A. (1985). [*Romans*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 464). Victor Books.
4. Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). In [*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*](#). (Eleventh ed.). Merriam-Webster, Inc.

VI. Supplemental Material

- A. Matthew 6:19–24 (NLT) **“Don’t store up treasures here on earth...”**²⁴ “No one can serve two masters... **You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.**
- B. 1 Peter 1:13–19 (NLT) ¹⁴ So you must live as God’s obedient children. **Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires.** You didn’t know any better then. ¹⁵ But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. ¹⁶ For the Scriptures say, **“You must be holy because I am holy.”** ¹⁷ And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. **He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as “temporary residents.”** ¹⁸ For you know that **God paid a ransom to save you** from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. ¹⁹ **It was the precious blood of Christ**, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.
- C. Ephesians 4:17–32 (NLT) With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸ Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. ¹⁹ They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. ²¹ **Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,** ²² **throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life**, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ **Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.** ²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil. ²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. ³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

- D. Colossians 3:1–17 (NLT) Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, **set your sights on the realities of heaven**, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For **you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God**. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. ⁵ So **put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you**. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. ⁶ **Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming**. ⁷ **You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world**. ⁸ But **now is the time to get rid of** anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ **Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him**. ¹¹ In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. ¹² Since **God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves** with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.
- E. 2 Corinthians 6:14–18 (NLT) Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what union can there be between God’s temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: “I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹⁷ Therefore, **come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don’t touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you**. ¹⁸ And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”
- F. [1 John 3:2–3 (NLT)...we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like **when Christ appears**. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. ³ And **all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.**] How will we be living when Jesus returns? **E.g.**
- G. We don’t have to be rich to be generous. Context offering Jerusalem famine. [2 Cor. 8:1–5 (NLT) Now I want you to know...what God...has done through the churches in Macedonia. ² They are being tested by many troubles, and **they are very poor. But**

they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. ³

For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. ⁴ They begged us again and again for the **privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.**]

1. Why are poor people generous?

H. 2 Cor. 9 ¹⁰ For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. ¹¹ Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous...¹³...For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.

I. God blesses generosity, Context, [2 Cor. 9:1–13 (NLT)...this **ministry of giving** for the believers in Jerusalem...⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." ⁸ And **God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others...**]

1. When I give it sets in motion the spiritual principle of sowing and reaping. It's not a gimmick or a way to manipulate God but when we invest in what's important to God, He blesses us in return.