

# I Came Not to Call Righteous

by Welcome Detweiler

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding that salvation comes through faith in Christ's finished work, not through good living or self-righteousness.*

**Duration:** 10:54

**Scripture:** Mark 1:15, Luke 5:32, John 14:6, Romans 3:20, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, Revelation 5:9

**Topics:** "Sinners"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing the truth of God's word and acknowledging our own wrong thinking. He urges listeners to be open to God's message and to repent of their sins. The preacher highlights that salvation can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice. He emphasizes that relying on good deeds or personal efforts will not lead to salvation. The sermon concludes with an invitation to accept Jesus as Savior and to turn away from the wrong path towards the eternal destiny that God intended for humanity.

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## Transcript

The story is told of a Christian nurse who was trying to cheer one of her patients who was rather discouraged by his slow recovery. The conversation drifted into the spiritual realm, and the discouraged patient said, maybe my time has come to die. The nurse assured him that there was no such indication, but added, it is nice to be prepared for death if and when it does happen.

The man agreed and said, I have always tried to do what is right, and I have never done anything wrong in my life. The nurse astonished him by saying, I am very sorry to hear that, for according to my Bible, if what you say is true, you don't have a chance in this world of going to heaven. The Lord Jesus himself said, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repent.

And according to your testimony, you are righteous, and God has nothing to offer to you, not even heaven. If you are not a sinner, you cannot be saved. After quoting a number of scriptures, the patient finally admitted that he was a sinner, and that his plea of doing no harm or wrong was untrue.

Like many others, this man had somehow been under the impression that if he did not commit any glaring sins, he would be eligible for heaven. A reasonable question that will arise in our minds regarding the sin question is, how many sins can a person commit and still go to heaven? Where does God draw the line? The Bible answers our question by drawing the line between one and zero. The Lord Jesus was and is the

perfect, sinless, spotless Son of God, and therefore had a perfect right to ascend into heaven.

But a sinner having just one sin to his record has no right and cannot claim to be eligible for heaven. Whether great or small, that one sin will bar the gates of heaven until a reconciliation satisfactory to heaven has been made. It is the devil who has propagated the famous idea that God overlooks small, petty sins but will not tolerate the big ones, and it is this propaganda that causes people to build their hopes for heaven on the fact that they have never done anything wrong.

And so a host of sincere people are pretending to be on the way to heaven simply because they have never been in jail or never committed a great crime. Would to God that we had more Christian nurses who could boldly tell their deceived people that if they are unwilling to take their place as lost sinners, there is no possibility of ever being saved. Heaven will be filled with sinners saved by grace, and self-righteous people who are depending upon their goodness will never be permitted to enter heaven.

Romans 3.20 Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. The redeemed in heaven never sing about their own goodness, but rather ascribe all praise and worship to the Lord Jesus, who shed his blood on Calvary to cancel sin. You will never read of big and little sins in the Bible.

It is man who has classified them according to his conscience. He has labeled some insignificant, not worth mentioning. Others he has classed as unpardonable.

According to man's theories, sin will keep a man out of heaven, certain sins, and others will not. But God has concluded all under sin, and all needing salvation. The fact that you have lived an honest, moral Christian life will never fit you for heaven.

Surely we must appreciate those who are honest and upright and moral, and it would be wonderful if we had a greater percentage who would claim such a commendation. But there is a grave danger in this class missing God's wonderful salvation by being self-satisfied and never seeing the need of taking the lost sinner's place and being saved by his matchless grace. No one can ever be good enough to merit heaven.

Let me repeat that. No one can ever be good enough to merit heaven. If you are depending upon your good life to gain an entrance into heaven, you will be sadly disappointed, for you have the wrong password.

Only those who are depending entirely on the blood of Jesus will enter heaven, and for this very reason it seems to be more difficult for religious people to be saved than for those who have gone deep into sin and tasted the bitter dregs of a Christless life. I have a deep concern over the many clean, moral, respectable people who will miss heaven because they are under the impression that only the gross sins will keep a soul out of heaven. If such an one is listening, I must be faithful to you and to God's word.

Regardless of how few sins you have committed, these few must be cancelled to God's satisfaction before you can enter heaven. The only means of forgiveness that will satisfy God's holy throne is pleading the value of Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection. If you are resting on anything but the death, burial and resurrection of Christ that cancelled your few or many sins, you are wrong, and you will miss heaven.

I ask you to be sincere about the matter, lest you shall find out too late that your ideas of meriting heaven will not pass God's inspection. It is wonderful to rest on a solid foundation, having God's approval and guarantee, but it is a dangerous thing to rest on a supposition that does not have God's approval. Those who are resting on Christ and His finished work have God's approval and shall never perish.

If salvation could be inherited from godly parents, how blessed would be your memories of the ancestors who left such a priceless heritage! Those who could not save themselves could never transmit salvation to others, and your hopes of heaven fade out completely when you consider redemption as an inheritance. If we desire a possession that wealth cannot buy, that cannot be inherited, earned, or received as a reward for good conduct, how else can we hope to achieve it? There is only one way, and that is to receive it as a gift. This is the good news, that God wants to give and pardon and give peace to all as a gift.

Then why will men not believe it? Because they are traveling the wrong way, and they are reluctant to turn around. You have to abandon your own road and destination, and reverse the direction of your supposed progress and walk God's way in His road according to His direction, and no man will voluntarily give up his own way of life and accept another unless he is first convinced that his way is wrong and the new way is better. For this reason the Bible says, Repent! You must come to a mental attitude of regret for your wrong way of living and thinking.

You must be sorry for the offenses you have committed to God. You must accept the fact that if you continue on a road away from heaven you will have to be satisfied with the ultimate destination, and you will find that it will be in a lost eternity. When you decide to do something to reverse your errors and change your direction, that mental attitude is repentance.

Adam was created with his face toward heaven and the marvelous eternal destiny, and Satan turned him around and headed him the other way. With our back to the light we struggle and grope and search for light, plunging deeper and deeper into darkness and harder and harder every day that we keep on this wrong road. We are lost.

We have only the vaguest idea in which direction home lies, the home for which we were created, nor do we have any idea or clear idea as to how we can find our way back. When a person is convinced that God's word is true and convinced from God's word that he is wrong in his thinking, he is usually ready to listen to God. The gift of God is eternal life, and I trust that you are ready to extend the empty hand of faith in order to receive the full and free salvation that Christ is offering through Christ and through his atoning sacrifice.

If God does not approve what you are resting upon, you have no salvation, and I remind you again that God will never accept your good living as a basis of salvation. Listen again to these texts. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, and after you have changed your mind, after you have come to repentance, the next step is to believe the gospel.

Believe the message that Christ Jesus came into the world to save you. He is the only one that can save you. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, you will never see the pearly gates, and you will never walk on the streets of gold.

But thank God that he saw our need, and he sent the Lord Jesus Christ to meet that deep, deep need. Christ died for you. Christ paid the price for your sin.

They may be forgiven by simple faith in him if you will turn away from everything that you have been trying to do to earn salvation, and simply receive the Lord Jesus Christ as a gift. I commend to you this wonderful Savior who has been saving sinners for many centuries, and he's waiting and ready to save you. Don't miss it.

It's the best thing in all the world. I came not to call righteous but sinners to repentance. I trust you'll change your mind, and you'll come in repentance to him this very hour, and receive him as your Lord and Savior.

And now, our gracious Father, we ask thy blessing, to rest upon thy precious word. Bless those who need to be saved. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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