



You can believe that God is not good enough and still be religious. You can go to church, sing songs of worship, listen to the Bible being read, listen to a sermon, go to Homegroup and prayer meeting, listen to sermons and worship throughout the week. You can do all that and still say that God is not good enough. Your mouth sings “O Praise the Name” whilst your heart sings “O Praise My Name.” It happens when we hear God’s word and redirect

the application onto others. We can blatantly ignore God’s wisdom because his ways confront our preferences. We refuse humility and repentance because we believe our perspective is better. We resent God’s providence because our life does not unfold as we hope. In this passage we see we can say that God is not good enough with your heart, while still sounding religious. People then and in our day today, have explanations for everything. People can justify why something that is wrong does not apply to them. The people in Jesus’s day were saying that John fasted too much and was too strict while Jesus drank too much and was too loose. God was not acceptable to them on his terms. Here are two different messengers with two different styles, but the response was the same. There is always a reason why the sermon being preached does not apply to you. There is always a reason why the application in Homegroup is something you don’t take part in. We can say that God is great and kid ourselves that we believe it. You see the truth is, by nature we do not love God. We do not love the supremacy of God. We want God to adjust himself to us, a God who fits our expectations, who never wounds our pride, but who challenges those people in Ebenezer who need to change their life; those people who are sinners but not me.

There are two types of people: those with hard hearts and those with soft hearts. There were experts on God who actually show they were enemies of God. And there were sinners who could see that they were sinners and knew that God’s way was right. Those two types of people are in this room today. There are those who justify themselves, and those who justify God. The question in Luke 7 and today is will we/they humble them/ourselves, or continue justifying them/ourselves? When confronted with God’s wisdom, will you humble yourself or will you justify yourself?

**1. The Heart Diagnosis.** Verses 29 to 30 are in parenthesis and give an overview of the two types of people that Jesus is referring to. “(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus’ words, acknowledged that God’s way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)” We read that the first lot of people acknowledged “that God’s ways are right.” As surely as you can kick a ball in the air and know that it will return to the ground is as sure that God’s ways are right. Without God working in our hearts our view of God will always be too low. The more we revel in and enjoy God, the higher, and closer to reality we see him. And we don’t view ourselves as low as we ought. The root of pride is not merely thinking highly of yourself, it is thinking highly enough of yourself to stand in judgment over God. Isaiah saw the High King of heaven with the seraphim calling out “Holy, Holy, Holy.” And in that moment he saw God for who he was, he said of himself, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips!” The greater the love and wonder, the greater the humility. Seeing God rightly is a divine work. God enabled these people of verse 29 to see his way as right and from that work of God in their hearts, they could walk in obedience and be baptised.

**2. The Hard Heart.** “The pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves because they had not been baptised by John.” (v30) The truth is, God is so glorious, wise, righteous, and gracious that resisting him is insanity. So what on earth were these guys playing at? Do we really know and love God? Or do they/we just love the culture of Christianity that we’re part of? They loved the law but rejected the law-giver. We can love our Christian tradition and yet reject the Christ whose name we bear. Jesus went on to say, “To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to

each other: “We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry.’ According to Jesus, these experts of the law were not sophisticated critics. They are immature children who refused every call. Now that is humbling. Children don’t agree on games and that is what Jesus is saying; proud hearts will always find a reason to reject what is in front of them. They weren’t just rejecting the ministry style and social habits of John and Jesus, they were rejecting God’s purpose. Their issue is not insufficient evidence or lack of instruction or doctrine. It was an unwillingness to bow. Think about us today. We can’t blame insufficient evidence for the hardness in our heart. We have to face the fact that it is our pride that leads us to criticise and complain. Sadly, there is far too much of that in our church.

Look at what God is doing and has done. This year marks the 150th year of Ebenezer having land to build a church building. We’ve recently seen 5 people baptised. Our youth ministries are thriving and we’re seeing young people join us from the community. Let’s quit our criticising and complaining and let’s look at what God is doing. Let’s praise him and rejoice in him. When confronted with God’s wisdom proud hearts will always find a reason to complain. Proud hearts will always find a reason not to bow. Don’t be one of them. I’ve been struck by Paul’s letters at how frequently he instructs believers to rejoice, praise and give thanks. Rejoicing, praising and giving thanks is the antidote of that problem of complaining.! So, I pray that God grants us at Ebenezer repentance so we can humble ourselves before him and walk in God-given humility and grace. Like the experts in the law, we can be hearing the word but not loving the word. If you’ve not paused in wonder at the glories of God, or if you’ve not been confronted by the word of God recently, then there’s a good chance you’re using Bible like a sight on a rifle. Looking through it and firing shots at those who “need the gospel.” Let us read the Bible to behold God and enjoy him so that obedience will become less burdensome and more beautiful. Our affections will come in line with his. Then we will start asking God to expose our own sin and leave others to God. The hard heart is not a case of ignorance but intentional turning your back on God’s purpose and plan. It is an unwillingness to admit our desperate need for grace. It looks subtle sometimes. We would never say that God is not good enough with our mouths, but our hearts can say it by the way we set ourselves up against God’s will and way.

**3. The Soft Heart.** Jesus is encouraging. He says, “But wisdom is proved right by all her children.” Jesus is using the word "Wisdom" as a personification of God’s divine plan as manifested in Christ and the gospel. John and Jesus were sent to carry out the divine plan, but this childish generation rejected them and therefore also rejected God's wisdom. The children of divine Wisdom, are those who listen to the message of John and Jesus and then walk in it in obedience. Those who have genuinely received God's grace will embrace both repentance and salvation, as preached by John and made possible by Jesus. We only know if a decision we make is a wise one when we see the results. Jesus is saying that wisdom is shown to be wisdom by its fruits. The fruit, the children of wisdom, are all those Christians who embrace the message of repentance and the work of salvation. The children of Wisdom see that outside of what Christ has done on the cross, there is nothing but 80 years of distraction on this earth and then an eternity of damnation. They see the joy of being united with Christ, sin paid for and delighting in, and walking with God. They fall on their knees and then live on their knees in dependence. They are the children of wisdom.

**So my question today is... is that you?** Jesus saying “Wisdom is proved right by all her children” means that the transformed life of a believer becomes evidence of divine wisdom. Wisdom is justified by her children. True humility, a true life of repentance and faith, becomes visible in a community of believers that sing with mouth and heart, “Lord be my vision”. Do you look all good and upright whilst your heart sings, “God is not good enough?” Listen to the warning from Proverbs 1, verses 20 to 33. “For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.” There’s the warning. Take heed and take heart. Wisdom’s children comprise the most unlikely people; “even the tax collectors” even sinners like you and me.