

2026-02-18 Points

Title: Beyond Self-Righteousness: The Difference Between Good Works and Knowing God

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the Book of Job, chapters 30-31, examining Job's struggle with suffering despite his righteous living. The pastor draws parallels between Job's self-righteousness and the Apostle Paul's transformation, emphasizing that good works alone don't guarantee God's favor. The central message warns against attaching strings to our good deeds or expecting rewards from God based on our accomplishments. True righteousness comes not from checking boxes of good behavior, but from humble faith in Christ and an ongoing relationship with Him. The sermon challenges believers to examine whether they're serving God for what they can get or out of genuine love, and encourages preparation for suffering as part of the Christian journey rather than being caught off guard when trials come.

Key Points:

- Job's righteousness was genuine but became tainted by expectation of reward and presumption of God's continued blessing
- We must have a plan for how to handle suffering, or suffering will handle us
- Good works done to earn God's favor or human recognition miss the mark of true righteousness
- The Apostle Paul considered all his accomplishments as "dung" compared to knowing Christ
- Maturity in faith means forgetting past accomplishments and pressing forward toward Christ
- American Christians often avoid suffering rather than embracing it as part of following Jesus
- Prayer is powerful because God can "speak the word" and bring healing or change
- True compassion means grieving for the poor, not just feeling sorry for them
- We should focus on knowing God more deeply rather than defending our

## righteousness

### Scripture Reference:

- Job 30:1-31 (Job's lament about loss of status and physical suffering)
- Job 31:1-40 (Job's defense of his righteousness and good works)
- Philippians 3:1-14 (Paul's perspective on counting everything as loss compared to knowing Christ)
- References to James regarding faith and works
- References to Jesus teaching about giving to those in need

### Stories:

- The centurion who asked Jesus to just "say the word" to heal his servant
- Steve Camp's Christian song about "tasting the salt of their tears" regarding compassion for the poor
- The pastor's personal experience with hospital visits and learning when presence is helpful versus intrusive
- The nursery rhyme "Ring Around the Rosies" as a reference to the plague and death
- Paul's transformation from Saul, the zealous Pharisee, to an apostle who gave up everything
- The pastor's observations about inviting people into our homes and how we're selective about who we trust
- Personal testimony about dealing with diverticulitis, colon surgery, and portal vein thrombosis