



ISSUE

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN
OF THE
OLSEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McNear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

“Good People”

By Kyle Pope

There is a local attorney that runs a commercial that begins with the words, “even good people can get in trouble with the law.” That might sound like a legitimate claim if it were not for the fact that on the commercial, as these words are spoken, the image in the background shows a shot glass filled with liquor setting beside a set of car keys. The reason this is used in an ad for a law office is to suggest to viewers that even if they may have been stopped by the police for driving while under the influence of alcohol they are still “good people.” They hope that this will lead viewers to believe their lawyer can help get them out of legal trouble.

I wonder how that ad would be received if they stated more directly what they are really trying to infer? That is, if they said it, “even if you drive while under the influence of alcohol, you’re still a good person!” That sounds different, doesn’t it? Do “good people” put chemicals into their bodies that impair their judgment, reflexes, and response times then get behind the wheel of a deadly vehicle? No. Do “good people” put the lives of men, women, and children in jeopardy for the sake of their buzz? No. Ask those who have been maimed, widowed, orphaned, or permanently disabled by a drunk or “buzzed” driver if those who do such things are “good people” and I think we all know what their answer would be. “No!”

The Bible teaches that drunkards will not **“inherit the kingdom of God”** (1 Cor. 6:11). Christians are not to **“keep company with”** drunkards (1 Cor. 5:11) and are commanded not to **“be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation”** (Eph. 5:18). Drunkenness, and other types of drinking of alcohol, are said to be behaviors the Christian has left behind in coming to Christ (1 Pet. 4:3). So clearly, those who engage in this behavior are not “good people.”

We might understand why a lawyer looking for clients might use such language, but really this wording simply reflects attitudes that have become common within our culture. We like to believe that just because we occasionally do things that are wrong, we are still

“good people.” To believe that, we must either change the definitions of what “good” is or accept views about God’s grace that ignore sinful behavior. Both of these approaches are nothing new.

How Is Good Defined?

In the time of Isaiah, the Holy Spirit led the prophet to rebuke the people of his day. He wrote, **“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”** (Isa. 5:20, NKJV). If we can convince ourselves that things we do that are wrong are actually “good” then our problem goes away. We are not “good people” who sometimes do wrong, we are “good people” doing “good” things!

This is at the heart of so many issues that have embroiled our culture in recent times. We say abortion isn’t the murder of a child (a sinful thing)—it is “a woman’s right to choose (a “good” thing). Homosexuality isn’t an “abomination” (a sinful thing)—it is an “alternative lifestyle” (a “good” thing). Adultery and divorce aren’t treasonous violations of a covenant (sinful things)—they are “taking a shot at happiness” (good things).

Sadly, in all of these things, we convince ourselves that things God defines as evil are actually “good,” then tell ourselves (as we do them) that we are really still “good people.” The problem is that we are not the ones who have the right to set the definitions of good and evil—God is! It is God’s word as revealed in Scripture that defines sin and equips us for **“every good work”** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In our behavior or in the things we do to worship Him,



Olsen Park Church of Christ

if God does not define something as good calling it “good” doesn’t make it so.

How Do We View God’s Grace?

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he asked, **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”** (6:1), to which he answered, **“Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”** (6:2). Paul’s question suggests that some in his day imagined that God’s willingness to forgive sins by His grace meant that it no longer mattered if they committed sin. Paul’s answer emphatically refutes this misconception. He literally says, **“may it never be!”** (NASB).

This skewed view of grace persists today and is totally contrary to what the New Testament teaches. The Bible teaches of accountable souls that **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). Because of this, on one level, **“There is none who does good, no, not one”** (Rom. 3:12b). The blood of Jesus offered by the grace of God is the only thing that can make a sinner right before God—**“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”** (Eph. 1:7). It is **“His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved”** (Eph. 1:6b). So, in this sense only Christ’s blood can make us “good” or “accepted,” but does that mean that sin no longer matters? No.

When Simon sinned, he was in danger of perishing (Acts 8:20). His heart was **“not right in the sight of God”** (8:21). He was said to be **“bound by iniquity”** (8:23) and was told to **“repent”** and **“pray”** that he **“may be for-given”** (8:22). Did it matter that he had sinned? Yes. Did God’s grace automatically and unconditionally cover his sin? No. Paul taught,

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope

and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works (Titus 2:11-14).

We note that it is the offering of Christ that *redeems us* from sin. This came by God’s grace offered to all, but we also note that His grace *teaches us* some things. It teaches us to deny **“ungodliness and worldly lusts”** and to live **“soberly, righteously, and godly.”** His redemption is intended to make us a people **“zealous for good works.”** God’s grace does not excuse sin nor change evil to good. It calls us to live in obedience to the lessons it would teach us.

It’s Not That Complicated!

The apostle John, through the Holy Spirit, had a way of expressing things with a clarity and simplicity that cuts through all efforts to complicate and confuse things. He wrote:

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He



“he who practices righteousness is righteous.” By definition, good people don’t do wrong. When I sin, I am not doing good, so I am not a “good person” while engaging in such behavior. But what does John mean when he says one **“born of God does not sin”** and **“cannot sin”**? He is not saying that sin is an impossibility. In the opening words of the same book he taught what Christians must do **“if anyone sins”** (2:1). Just as Simon was told, forgiveness comes to

is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:7-9).

the Christian who sins as he or she confesses to God (1:9) through the Advocacy of Jesus (2:1). We should note that John qualifies the conditions under which the child of God **“does not sin.”** It is when one allows **“His seed”** (i.e., the word of God, cf. Luke 8:11) to remain within him. Good people, forgiven by the blood of Jesus live their lives striving diligently to follow God’s word which they plant deep within their hearts. They do not excuse, redefine, or ignore sin when it comes into their lives but humbly learn from the grace of God to confess and turn from it quickly.



Listen to *Faithful Sayings Podcast*
<https://faithfulsayingspodcast.buzzsprout.com>

According to John, what defines those who are “good people”? He tells us,

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