



*Boils of self-righteousness

by Mario Dučić

I would like to share about one of the greatest enemies of our soul- self-righteousness. In this world, many give themselves away as being self-righteous by saying: *"I'm not like those politicians" or "I am a better man; I have better principles; just look at all the good I've done; just look at my children and how much better they are than those of others"...* Unfortunately, all of those things do not prove that we don't need God- for we are good people in our own eyes alone!

What is even worse is to see self-righteous Children of God who boast self-righteously and because of it are separated from God. Unfortunately, self-righteousness is a great stumbling block to those who truly do desire to serve God and carry out his will. Although many are honest, many are also blinded, destroyed by their own self-righteousness therefore they do not understand God's mercy.

Jonathan Edwards in connection to self-righteousness once said: *"if there be ground for you to trust in your own righteousness, then all that Christ did to purchase salvation and all that God did to prepare the way for*

it is in vain." And that is true!

In my pastoral ministry, in counseling I have found it the most difficult to work with a self-righteous person because however much he or she may seem open and desiring to serve God or hear your counsel, because of their self-righteousness they bring upon themselves fatal consequences. I will only mention a few of them.

One well-known Biblical example of self-righteousness is, believe it or not, Job.

While reading about him a while back, I believe that God showed me the reason why he allowed Job to be tested, the reason for the trouble that came upon him- and that was because of his self-righteousness.

In **Job 1:1** we read that Job was *"blameless and upright"*:

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil."

The reason for his being blameless and upright was because *he feared God and shunned evil"*. In other words he respected, worshipped and was obedient to God. He did not allow sin to come into his life. He did not allow temptation to overcome him. Job truly desired to please God. Even God himself confirmed this fact in **verse 8** when he told Satan:

"Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears

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God and shuns evil."

In other words had Job lived among us today he would have been one of the best examples of a godly, zealous Christian who desires to serve and please God. That is a good thing! It is good to love God and serve him with all that we have. However, we need to be careful that in all of our zeal and serving that we do not become self-righteous for in that we bring upon ourselves consequences that are fatal to our soul.

"As it is written: 'there is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.' "
(Romans 3:10-12)

What Apostle Paul wanted to say was that there is no one that is "innocent" in this world. In God's eyes everyone is deserving of his Love for everyone has been created in his image however, no one is righteous so, in other words that means no one deserves to stand before God. You see, even if we were worthy in His eyes, although he has given his one and only begotten Son to die for us, we have all still sinned- no one is innocent!

Job also knew that, but he had become blind. I believe that all of his trouble, although shown in the Word of God as a trial for Job, is not only shown to prove that Children of God can go through hard times. I believe that it also proves to us God's goal in placing us through trials (that is, for all who become lifted up in pride because of their self-righteousness). Job had a reason to be proud. His life was blameless and he was blessed with many

blessings; because of which he became self-righteous and lifted up with pride. Then because of his great love and favor toward him, God decided to "help him" and that in a way that is most common to him- by Fatherly discipline. The writer of Hebrews said:

"Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." (Hebrews 12:6)

So you see now, the story of Job is a story of God's loving discipline that overcomes human self-righteousness!

In **Chapter 1** we read that Job was truly blessed of God. He owned: **(Job 1:3-5)** *"Seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East...His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, 'Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' This was Job's regular custom."*

In other words Job was an extremely successful, blessed businessman, a good father and husband who wanted to serve God in purity and righteousness. He watched over his home and feared the Lord. He was an example of a godly, faithful Christian.

But as I've said before, self-righteousness can result in those who desire to please the Lord, as well. For the tendency exists in all men to think that we have

deserve our blessings because of our own righteousness and goodness (which in fact is evil in comparison to God's righteousness).

I believe that because of all his many blessings and righteous deeds, that Job became somewhat lifted up in pride and because God loved him, He disciplined his pride and arrogance and for a short while took from him everything that he had- his property, his sons and daughters. He even allowed Satan to attack his body and afflict him with boils *"From the soles of his feet to the top of his head."* (2:7)

In **Job 2:8- 10** we read:

"Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, 'Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!' He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said."

We would probably say to this, *"Well said! This man is a righteous man so faithful and strong. The perfect picture of a true servant of God!"*

One thing is certain, that those who desire to please God cannot do so without trials and troubles but that is a sermon in itself. We can say with certainty that Job was a man of God but he had one blind spot, which could have destroyed him and that was self- righteousness!

★ **Consequences of our self-righteousness are pride, which blinds us and brings upon us the judgment of God.**

From the 2nd chapter to the 32nd chapter we read about the vain counsel of Job's friends. In the 32nd chapter we finally read some true counsel from his friend Elihu who told him, as the old Pentecostals would say: *"This has happened to you because you sinned!"*

1. Consequences of our self-righteousness are pride, which blinds us and brings upon us the judgment of God.

Job despite everything that had happened to him, despite all the counsel of his friends still considered himself innocent: **(Job 32:1)** *"So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes."*

If you read the chapters before chapter 32, you will see how Job defended his righteous deeds.

For example in **Chapter 29 verses 11- 14:** *"Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist him. The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow's heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban."*

He was so proud of his righteous works that he could not understand why this was all happening to him. Instead of keeping the attitude of his former statement: *"The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord."* **(Job 1:21)** In bitterness and self- righteousness he begins numbering all of his righteous deeds as reasons why he should not be in

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his present situation. It even looks like he is complaining to God! But God brought him to that place because he loved him and desired to remove his pride and self-righteousness—the things that brought upon him the judgment of God.

* Many Christians who look upon themselves as self-righteous compare themselves heavily with others.

Unfortunately today we have many Christians who, if you try to show them their mistakes, defend themselves by their own righteousness. Most of the time they say: *“Well, I don’t know what could happen to me, since I am such a good Christian, I give everyone good counsel, I do everything that I’m supposed to do, I serve my family and society, I serve the church...”*

It is interesting to see these kinds of people always in a hurry to give testimony to their own righteousness and good deeds. However, if you want to try to teach them something or counsel them they usually say that they already know or that they are already doing whatever it is you are trying to tell them. If you need to reprimand them, they have ready one-hundred and one reasons why they were right in doing what they did!

They become blind, their foundation is their own self-righteousness. They, in fact, fall beneath the judgment of God!

If we do not admit our own mistakes and sinfulness we will have to go through the judgment of God! For God will not

give his praise to anyone and if we do not acknowledge him and give him praise for all that we are, all that we are to, by His mercy, become; he will afflict us with **boils of self-righteousness!**

All that we have delighted in will be taken from us. We will be come blinded by our own self-righteousness and lead ourselves right into destruction. We will defend ourselves to God and say as Jerusalem did in the time of Jeremiah:

“You say, ‘I am innocent; he is not angry with me.’ But I will pass judgment on you because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’” (Jeremiah 2:35)

Each time you tell God that you are righteous and have not sinned; He awaits you with His Fatherly judgment!

2. We begin comparing ourselves with others.

Many Christians who look upon themselves as self-righteous compare themselves heavily with others. These kinds of people say: *“See how much better I am in this or that area than this brother or that sister. They are always late, I’m never late; I pray out loud in prayer meetings and they can’t; I’m really trying and they are not; I give to God more than all of the others; I’m very serious and this other sister is so frivolous; I serve much better than he does...”* and so on.

However, when we do this, we are lifting ourselves higher than others in our own eyes, only so that we look more righteous than others. We begin to think that because of our ostensibly or so called, “better” ways of serving and because we have the better things of God or

maybe more of his favor, and instead of depending upon the mercy of God and His righteousness we begin depending upon our own. We comfort ourselves in this way thinking that we are better than others. Brother or sister, dear friend, if you want to compare yourselves with someone why don't you compare yourself then with the Lord Jesus Christ? If you compare yourself with him you will begin to see that you are nothing more than a sinful person full of pride. You will understand that you cannot stand before him except by his mercy. You will be thankful for who you are and for what He has done in you by His grace and not by your deeds of righteousness.

The Apostle Paul in **2nd Corinthians 10:12** says:

"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise."

Paul here criticizes false teachers who were trying to prove their own goodness comparing themselves with others instead of by God's standards.

You see, when we compare ourselves with others instead of God and His standards, we begin feeling proud and self-righteous because we begin thinking that we are better. But if we measure ourselves by God's standards, we obviously do not have basis to praise ourselves before Him. And if we do not recognize this, we will continually measure ourselves by the achievements and failures of others and our self-righteousness will bring about contempt and disdain of others. We will not see them as anyone special, of course,

compared to ourselves!

This type of spirit brings along with it dissension, competition and a spirit of unrest, which cannot depend on the almightiness of God and his mercy. The consequences of this are also the Fatherly judgment of God!

3. These kinds of people not only compare themselves with others; they are not able to accept any kind of godly counsel from anyone, not even the authorities that God has placed in their life.

★ **They become rebellious, self-willed and full of pride- in other words ready for the reprimand of God's fatherly judgment.**

In my experience as a pastor I have noticed that self-righteous people rarely ask for counsel, and if they do; they usually always come prepared with an answer to their problem (that is, an answer with which they uplift their own righteousness and goodness). All they are really seeking is for me to confirm that which they are saying. Even when you need to reprimand them for some sort of sin, bad habit or wrong attitude they always have the right solution.

Wise Solomon said: *"All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord."* (**Proverbs 16:2**)

I've basically given up trying to counsel those kinds of people and simply wait for the fatherly judgment of God to soften

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their hearts. I wait for God to destroy their so called "wise" excuses and bring upon them the boils of self-righteousness for, unfortunately, that is the only way to cause them to wake up and realize that they can not depend upon their own righteousness. They also become self-sufficient and go into spiritual and social isolation. They cease fellowshiping with "just anyone" so that they do not soil their own justification.

★ Learn to rely upon the strength and righteousness of the Lord, and not upon your own.

They always feel a little more spiritual than others and that is why these types of people usually end up in wrong marriages, wrong ministries, making wrong life decisions- for they do not want to accept counsel from those who do not meet "*their self- righteous standards*". They become rebellious, self- willed and full of pride- in other words ready for the reprimand of God's fatherly judgment.

Of these kinds of people the Bible says: "*Those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth; those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful;*"

(Proverbs 30:12-13)

They can not see around their sin and pride to notice how self- righteous they've become and because of that they think that they are pure and in fact they are unclean.

They cannot accept advice from others but they want to give it- and that without

others asking for it! Their life goal becomes, "*find a sliver in my brothers eye*". It was about them that Jesus Christ was talking when he said:

"How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

(Matthew 7:4-5)

The plank of self- righteous blinds and the only way out of this kind of situation is, my dear friend, brother or sister, for God to judge us with his fatherly judgment- his fatherly rebuke.

You know, what we do most of the time when someone falls into a trial or temptation similar to the one that Job found himself in is to give "spiritual comfort" which, by the way, cannot help that person at all! In fact, often times we wish to try and lighten the consequences of the self- righteous attitude and bad decisions that brought them into such a state. Along with being sympathetic, we sometimes need to become angry, allow our wrath to be aroused and speak the truth:

"No one is righteous before God and we all depend upon Him. We can not be proud because of ourselves rather only because of Him. Repent and turn away from your self- righteous and admit your fault! DO NOT BLAME GOD AND OTHERS FOR THE STATE THAT YOU ARE IN!"

In **Job Chapter 32** we read that Elihu became angry because of Job's self-justifying excuses:

"But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the

family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.”(Job 32:2-3)

You see if we do not allow God to judge and remove our self- righteous attitude we will begin blaming him for the bad situations we find ourselves in.

Elihu told Job that his present sufferings would not pass until he admitted his present sin— self- righteousness. If you read this chapter you will see that Elihu opposed Job’s arrogant attitude of defending his so- called “innocence”. He wanted to prove to Job that the point of his suffering was to not only punish him but also to rebuke and restore him and lead him back to the right path. That has always been and still is God’s goal in punishing us by trials- to bring us back to himself.

★ Admit your inability and God’s unlimited power!

In **Chapter 33:9 and 12**:we see that Job defends himself even to God:

“I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt.” (9)

“But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than man.” (12)

Church of the Living God, there is no one that is without sin or fault and I want to emphasize this because I want you to understand that in God’s presence you and I stand only by his goodness, faithfulness and loving kindness- not by our own self- justification which in God’s eyes has no worth, at all.

That is why we must recognize his fatherly judgment upon us, humble ourselves and say: *“Without you I can not do anything. I don’t know everything, Lord.”* Draw near to Him and he will not judge you! For if we humble ourselves and draw near to him He has his way of teaching us His holy ways.

“Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in his bones.”

(Job 33:19)

“Who has prescribed his ways for him, or said to him, ‘You have done wrong?’”

(Job 36:23)

► For this reason Number 1. – Learn to rely upon the strength and righteousness of the Lord, and not upon your own.

We cannot reach those things, which only the Lord can reach. We cannot free ourselves from sin, bad habits and attitudes by our own self- justification or our own rules. We do not have the ability to do that. It is only through His righteousness and strength!

For this reason God said to Job:

“Do you have an arm like God’s and can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at every proud man and humble him, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.” (Job 40:9- 14)

Romans 3:23-24 also says:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory

of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

No one is righteous before Him.

"Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you."

(Psalm 143:2)

This is why we need Jesus and His mercy and strength! This is why we need to surrender our sins, trials, and battles and let Him fight for us!

► **Number 2. – Admit your inability and God's unlimited power!**

Job said: **(Job 42:2)** *"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted."*

You see, when we do that we rid ourselves of our own weak self-righteousness, which cannot help us, anyway. We begin placing our trust in the power of God, which is unlimited! When we begin depending upon him more and come to know him better; we will better understand his ways.

"My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you." **(Job 42:5)**

► **Finally, Number 3. – Repent!**

Job also said: *"Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."* **(Job 42:6)**

John the Beloved said:

"If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will

forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

(1st John 1:8-9)

You know what? A life that relies on God's mercy and strength in repentance is true life! I know that when I personally experienced the mercy of God (after having been saved for three years) His ways truly did become clearer than before. When I'd tried to live by my own self-righteous regulations, I thought they had some sort of power to change me, free me from Satan's vice and bring me closer to God. Only His mercy and righteousness can help us.

That is why Paul wrote: **(Ephesians 2:8-9)** *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."*

When we repent and begin depending on His righteousness, He gives us real life, true peace and even larger blessings than before!

"The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters." **(Job 42:12-13)**

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." **(Romans 5:1-2)**

We will be like: *"A tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."* **(Psalm 1:3)**

Repent! ✨

★ **A life that relies on God's mercy and strength in repentance is true life!**

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