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Are you God's patron, or purchased pauper?

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ARE YOU GOD'S PATRON,
OR
PURCHASED PAUPER?

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(editing by Kathy Boynton)

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How do you see your relationship to God? Are you His patron, or purchased pauper? Do you patronize Him with good works in exchange for eternal salvation? Or do you, as a pauper, cast yourself on God's mercy?

I once met an elderly lady. As we discussed eternal matters, I asked if she thought she'd go to heaven when she died. She said, "Yes! I've lived a good life, I've faithfully attended church, and I've been kind and generous." Her confidence in a coming eternal reward rested upon her righteous works. Many that I meet (perhaps most) see salvation as something earned by righteous behavior.

There's only one problem: What we see as righteous behavior falls far short of God's perfection.

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

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One day, God the Son, Jesus, described two men

who went to the temple to pray. One was a proud religious leader and the other a publican despised by the people. Jesus said the religious leader prayed "with himself" as follows:

"... God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke 18:11-12)

The publican however had been humbled and was greatly ashamed. Of him Jesus said:

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13)

Only one of these two men was declared justified by Jesus. Which one? The publican! Speaking of him Jesus said,

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:14)

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