

Aim:**Refer:****Resources:** Pictures of Pilgrims Progress are available here: <http://www.bunyanministries.org/>

Open Bibles to Matthew 21:23-32 and put a marker in the page.

Here the priests and elders come to Jesus to try and trap Him.

What is their question? **Verse 23?**

Instead of answering their question, Jesus asks them another question. **Verse 25a**

Why was this a problem for them (Quietly read verse 25-26)

Since they didn't answer Jesus question, He didn't answer theirs.

Then Jesus told a story about to boys, their father asked them to go work in the vineyard.

What did the first son say and do? **Verse 29**

What did the second son say and do? **Verse 30**

Jesus then went on to explain His meaning, the Jews, like the first son, were the first people chosen as God's special people to do His work on earth. But the Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus, even though John the Baptist had been sent to prepare the way for Jesus. Instead of the Jewish leaders, it was the people who they rejected, including tax collectors, who were following Jesus.

As Seventh-day Adventist, we believe we are a special people, we know all about the Commandments, including the Sabbath, we know about the second Coming, what happens when we die and so on. The Jewish leaders knew all about the Commandments, but most of them still rejected Jesus. It is also possible for us, even though we know so much to reject Jesus, and many will. We each need to spend time with Jesus every day, like the tax collectors and poor people did.

In Pilgrims Progress: 6 weeks ago, Christian and Hopeful and me Ignorance, he'd come down a crooked lane, and when they asked him how he expected to get in at the gate, he had said it was because he lived a good life, paid what he owed, prayed, fasted, paid tithes, gave to the poor and had left all for the Celestial City. Does that sound familiar? (Like the rich young ruler in our Bible story)

Now, as Hopeful looked behind them, he saw Ignorance following, and suggested they wait for him to catch up again. When he came close enough, Christian asked Ignorance, "How stands it between God and yourself now?"

Ignorance replied, "I hope well; for I am always full of good thoughts that come into my mind to comfort me as I walk."

"What good thoughts?" Christian asked.

"I think of God and Heaven. And I desire them."

"But so do the devils, and condemned souls, and many that are never like to come there," said Christian.

"But," said Ignorance, "I think of them, and leave all for them."

"That I doubt," replied Christian, "For leaving all is a harder matter than many are aware of. But why are you convinced you have left all for God and Heaven?"

"My heart tells me so!" replied Ignorance.

"The wise man says in Proverbs 28:26, 'He that trusts his own heart is a fool.'"

Ignorance replied, "This is spoken of an evil heart, but mine is a good one. It comforts me in hopes of Heaven. My heart and life agree together, and therefore my hope is well grounded."

"Who told thee that thy heart and life agree together?" Asked Christian.

"My heart tells me so." Was Ignorance's reply again.

"Except the Word of God has witness in this matter, other testimony is of no value." Said Christian.

"But is it not a good heart that hath good thoughts? And is not that a good life that is according to God's commandments?" Asked Ignorance.

"Yea," said Christian, "But it is one thing to have these, and another to only think so."

Ignorance asked Christian to explain further, and Christian explained that good thoughts are those that agree with the Word of God.

"When we pass the same judgment upon ourselves which the Word passes. The Word of God saith, 'There is none righteous, there is none that doeth good.' It saith also, that 'every imagination of the heart of man is only evil, and that continually.' Now then, when we think thus of ourselves, then are our thoughts good ones, and agreeing with the Word of God."

"I will never believe that my heart is that bad." Protested Ignorance.

We need to realise that we can't save ourselves, and that our best isn't good enough, and that only Jesus can save us, we will be like Ignorance, and like the rich young ruler in our Bible story.

Then Ignorance asked Christian to explain good thoughts concerning God.

Again, Christian explained that our thoughts about God should agree with the Word of God. That we should realise He knows us better than we know ourselves and can see sin in us when we can see none, and all our righteousness stinks in His nostrils.

God does know us better than we know ourselves. And David had a good prayer about this. **Read Psalm 139:24.** Pray this and you will find that God does amazing thing in your life.

Ignorance protested that he was not a fool. He said, "I believe that Christ died for sinners; and that I shall be justified before God from the curse, through His gracious acceptance of my obedience to His law. Or thus, Christ makes my duties, that are religious, acceptable to His Father, by virtue of His merits; and so shall I be justified."

"Your faith is a false faith," Warned Christian, "Because it taketh justification from the personal righteousness of Christ and applies it to your own righteousness. This faith maketh not Christ a justifier of thy person, but of thy actions; and of thy person for thy actions' sake, which is false."

"What!" Asked Ignorance, "Would you have us trust to what Christ has done without us?" This would allow us to do anything we desired; for what matter how we live, if we may be justified by Christ's personal righteousness from all, when we believe it?"

"Ignorance is thy name, and as thy name is, so art thou. Yea, thou also art ignorant of the true effects of saving faith in Christ, which wins over the heart to God, to love His name, His Word, ways, and people."

Then Ignorance said, "You go so fast, I cannot keep pace with you. Do you go on before; I must stay a while behind."

Read Philippians 2:13

This is something that Ignorance had not experienced.

In Summary:

We realise we are sinners.

We ask God's forgiveness for our sins and for His help.

God forgives us and gives us the desire to do what is right.

As we spend time with God, we become more like God.