

# PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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*Thus Saith the Lord*

## AN IRONY

By Jeff Sweeten

There are really only two groups of people amongst the living and dead, from God's perspective: there are those who believe and obey and those who do not. This distinction has been articulated in Divine Writ in Luke 7:24-30 wherein Jesus praised John the Baptizer's ministry of baptizing for repentance in preparation for Christ. When the mighty prophet of God went out to prepare the way for Jesus, some obeyed his message, some did not. When Jesus arrived on the scene, He commended those who obeyed and condemned those who did not.

These same two groups, specified in vss. 29-30, exist today enjoying the same result based upon their faith and obedience or lack thereof. Luke says, *"And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."* From the top to the bottom of society, those who believed John's message and obeyed it were justified – and happy about it. Those who did not believe John's message and obey it were unhappy about Jesus's message – and they hung Him on a cross!

So, the irony: it amazes me how many times I have been called a "Pharisee" because I have believed Jesus's message and obeyed it – *"he who believes and is baptized will be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Anyone who believes Jesus's message and obeys it will be saved; those who do not believe it will not be saved – that is what Jesus said. Yet, the very ones denigrating me with that slanderous, pejorative, caustic name are the very ones who do not believe the message and/or will not obey it (and if one says he/she believes Jesus's message but will not obey it, he/she is lying or rebelling against God).

From ancient times, if *"you (do) not believe Him nor obey His voice"* you have *"rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God"* (cf. Deuteronomy 9:23); and you will be condemned. Just like the Pharisees who would not submit to John's baptism unto repentance (Matthew 3:11), many Pharisee-like-people will not submit to Jesus's baptism today for forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38) in order to be saved (1 Peter 3:21), and have *"rejected the will of God for themselves"* (Luke 7:30).

**JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!**

**SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study**

**WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130**