

# The Gospel is a Stumbling Block

The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:23  
Stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles

Theologian and author Paul Tillich reminds us:

**The danger is stumbling over the wrong thing**

**We Assume the Moral of this Story is to be Humble**

**If that is the case – We might just as well say...**

**Lord, we thank you that we are not like other people: hypocrites, overly pious, self-righteous, or even like that Pharisee**

# **Is the Pharisee lying?**

**Does he not adhere faithfully to the law?**

**Does he not meet the standards spoken of  
by Luke and by Jesus in his employment of  
the term righteous?**

**It's not that the Pharisee  
speaks falsely**

**The Pharisee misses the true  
nature of his blessing  
by trusting in himself**

**The Pharisee claims to be righteous  
...based on their own accomplishments**

**The Tax Collector...  
relies entirely on God's mercy**

**Who's in? Who's out?**

**Anytime you draw a line between  
'who's in' and 'who's out'**

**you'll find God on the other side**

**The Pharisee leaves the temple and returns home just as he came – righteous**

**The tax Collector returns home justified having done nothing to deserve it.**

**He returns home justified on the basis of God's divine declaration!**

# **The Moral of this Story...**

**We find ourselves with  
nothing to claim but our  
dependence on God's mercy.**