



Jesus said, "I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

© Outreach Media 2017. All rights reserved.

In March, 2014 the Fairfax media's weekend papers had a story about a man with an honesty problem. "I have a confession to make," said Sarwath Ahmed Gafoor. "I'm a bad guy." Gafoor was owning to being a compulsive liar. The article recounted how in one week, with the use of a clicker, he'd taken a tally of 103 lies.

But what about yourself – are you a good person? If you ask around it might be awkward. And whom can you trust to tell it like it is? And what about your own motives? Can you trust yourself to seek the opinion of an honest critic? After all, the blessings of a distant friend might be easier on the ears than the cool appraisal of a relative – especially one that you live with.

The biggest obstacle to determining our goodness is finding a way to measure it. But an encounter between Jesus and a lawyer, who approached Jesus to test him, revealed the twofold standard that matters.

"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He (Jesus) said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

A good person will love both God and their neighbour (any person they come in contact with) completely and fully. But, no honest person could ever admit to doing either. Perhaps the worst lie we could tell ourselves (and God), would be to say, 'I'm a good person'. The Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, said that, "lying to ourselves is more deeply ingrained than lying to others." And sadly, it's true. We speak of 'white lies' or justify theft with, 'well they had more than they deserve'. And on and on it goes.

The only hope is Jesus – the one, truly good person. Jesus gave his life as a payment for our badness at the cross and now he offers new life – a fresh start with God. But first we have to look honestly in the mirror and admit, like Sarwath Ahmed Gafoor, that we have a problem. Because Jesus said, 'I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners'.

Bible verse: 'I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners'. Luke 5:32

Prayer: Dear God, please help me to be honest with myself and with you. And please take the burden of my sin from my heart.