

GOSPEL PEARLS

Impossible to be saved without merit

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Jesus said: "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it." One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also." And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11: 42-

46)

The moralists of Jesus' time concentrated only on devotional acts of piety, but without loving God with all their hearts. So, there was always the risk of them giving their hearts to sin rather than to God. The burdens of suffering resulting from our own and other people's mistakes would be impossible for us to bear without Jesus' help. Sinners, therefore, must be made to face the responsibility of their own sins, and not condemn themselves but evil. They must seek the aid of God's Grace to fight evil in every way. Are we always aware that we are sinners acting against God? Since it is impossible to be saved without any merit, what are we concretely doing now to earn our salvation?