

In 1 Kings 19:10 we find Elijah saying that he is the only one left in Israel who remains faithful to God. God shows him that he did not really know the hearts of others, for there were 7000 others who, like him, had never bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah was guilty of what we all fall prey to from time to time, and that is a feeling that we are better than others because we do more good or do less evil than they do. The truth of the matter is, we are all bankrupt in the sight of God. We have no assets of our own except for the fact that we are humans, and in that sense we are no different than anyone else. We read in Romans 3:20 that 'by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.' Then in Romans 3:23 we find that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. In Romans 5:10 we find that we have the status of enemies of God at the time he chose to send a savior to us. How then can we feel that we are any better than anyone else? It is like saying that we have climbed twice as far up a bottomless pit as they.

We might well exclaim with Paul in Romans 7:24, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' There is hope, as Paul continues in verse 25, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But we must remember that it is the grace of God through our acceptance of that gift in baptism and a dedicated life. We have chosen him: it is not from any real merit of our own. We must think of ourselves in the right perspective. In Philipians 2:3 we read, 'in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.' This may be the hardest challenge that we as Christians face. But if Christ can do it, as we see further into Philipians 2, we must try our best. Let us not put ourselves above anyone.