Balancing the Scales

*Ephesians 1:7 - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.*

"Yeah, I knew Louis did a lot of things wrong," the man said to me. "But I do remember a time when he was pretty nice to me. I think a loving Lord will let Louis into heaven because that time Louis tried to do the right thing."   
  
Since then I've run into a lot of folks who feel God's requirements to get into heaven are skewed.  
  
I wish they were all here now so I could tell them about the Georgia correctional officer who passed out from the heat and the humidity. The unnamed officer was supervising some inmates who were on a work detail when he said he wasn't feeling well. A few moments later, he collapsed.  
  
At that moment, the inmates were presented with a number of choices. They could take the officer's gun and head for the hills. They could use his money and credit cards to flee the country. Those incarcerated men could have done a lot of things. What they did do was this: they took off the officer's bullet-proof vest and performed CPR on him. At the same time, they borrowed his phone to call 911. When emergency relief arrived, all the inmates were present and accounted for.  
  
Now, let me ask -- what should be done with those prisoners who did the right thing?  
  
My friends who want to open heaven up for anyone who has tried to do something right at some time, would, if they were being consistent, say, "All those fellows ought to be set at liberty."  
  
But justice and the law don't work that way, do they. These men committed crimes which, according to the law, must be punished. The fact that they, in this instance, did the right, the humanitarian thing, doesn't change the court's ruling or the judge's sentence.  
  
Similarly, because a sinner does something which is kind, or gentle, or compassionate, or caring -- that action doesn't automatically make things right with God. The Lord's scales of justice are not immediately brought into a balanced state; nor has this action paid for many, or any, sins of the past.  
  
Yes, I'm glad when a person tries to do the right thing, but not even the best of intentions can turn a condemned sinner into a saved saint.  
  
No, if heaven's doors are to be swung open for transgressors, it will have to be done by hands which are far more powerful than ours. In short, it will have to be done by the nail-pierced hands of the Savior. You see, my friends, no matter how good we try to be, we are not good enough; no matter how faithful we try to be, we are not faithful enough; no matter how often we try to do right, it is not enough.  
  
For the scales to be balanced, we need Someone to take our place: Someone who never sinned; Someone who resisted all temptation; Someone who defeated death. We need Jesus. That's what St. Paul meant when he wore: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."  
  
**THE PRAYER**: Dear Lord, I give thanks that Jesus has done all I could not do. Now, because of Him, I have forgiveness and eternal life. Make that life one of praise and thanksgiving for Christ's sacrifice of love. In His Name. Amen.