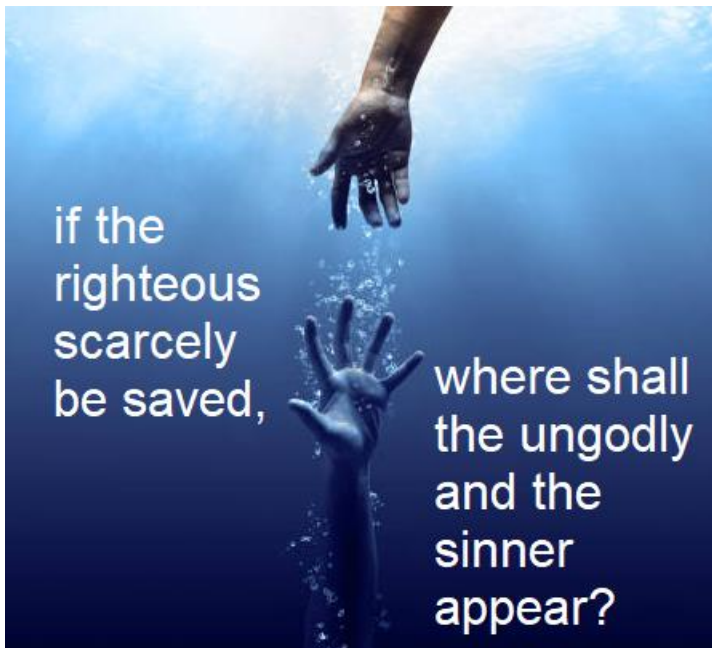


Bible Class

8th January 2026

Scarcely Be Saved

1 Peter 4:18



**Passage for consideration
Including Context:**

1 Peter 4:17-19

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

What does this mean... *if the righteous scarcely be saved?*

Does this mean that God struggles with saving people? Does it mean that God is powerful, but not quite powerful enough to save people with ease?

Well, no. That is not true. These passages say otherwise:

- Genesis 15:1: *Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*
- Deuteronomy 31:6: *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*
- Romans 1:16: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.*

- Zephaniah 3:17: *The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness.*
- Isaiah 41:10: *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*
- Isaiah 41:13-14 *For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.*

Yes – God is willing to even save worm-like people!!

Romans 8:31: *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Therefore we can be safely assured that God is well able to save! The passage does not mean there is any limitation or restraint on God...

In the words of Jonathan: *for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.* (1 Samuel 14:6)

In fact the opposite of the question is true!! God is willing and well able to save all, HE IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH! (2 Peter 3:9)

Consider the following:

- Isaiah 45:22: *Look unto me, and be ye saved, **all** the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*
- Isaiah 63:1: *Who is this that cometh from Edom, ...travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, **mighty to save.***
- John 10:29-30: *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*
- Ephesians 3:20: *Now unto him that is able to do **exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,***

- Hebrews 7:25: Wherefore **he is able also to save them to the uttermost** that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

We are led to see that – contrary to scarcely being saved, as if it is a difficulty to God – instead, God has devised a way to save to the uttermost. God has provided the best safety equipment, the best life raft, the best life-boat, God has devised a way in which it is almost impossible to sink, and that the way of salvation is designed perfectly to save lost souls, who are drowning.

But the problem is not with God. It is with the one who needs saving.

Let us then take a closer look at this verse:

The context shows that Peter was explaining to his readers the need for trials, and horrible experiences in the lives of believers. That just because the way of God has been chosen, the life does not suddenly change and be free of challenges and difficulties – in fact, things often get even worse. This is because the woman or man of God is required to be tested, and fashioned into a useful person for the Kingdom of God. Peter was also commenting on the rise of persecution, which would befall the early Christians. Such additional evil experiences would be difficult to navigate when the wicked rejoice so much seeing the suffering of those trying to live as Christians. But Peter is saying, that the wicked would suffer a worse fate – they die the death of all men, without hope. Their rejoicing will be short lived, whilst that of the Christian will be for ever – see verse 13. And Peter is remarking that if justice will be executed upon those who try to serve Him, so also will the same justice be executed upon those who do not bother, and how much harder and heavier will His justice fall upon those who are against Him, who are ungodly, and remain in their sins, and those who are disobedient. Therefore – he is saying, do not worry yourselves about the fate of those who appear to be so powerful and strong in their persecution of the righteous, God will deal with them.

In order to appreciate Peter's encouraging words even more, this passage in the Psalms is a useful endorsement of his words. See Psalms 37.

So the verse before us, is using contrasting language to explain the fate of the ungodly as to the fate of the righteous with the above message in mind.

To the verse itself: *And if the righteous scarcely be saved.* The Greek word for scarcely is μόλις *molis*. It means **with difficulty**.

It is used here:

- Act 14:18: scarce restrained they the people;
- Act 27:7: and scarce were come over against Cnidus
- Acts 27:8: And, hardly passing it
- Acts 27:16: we had much work to come by the boat
- Romans 5:7: scarcely for a righteous man will one die

The word implies that there is some difficulty, or obstruction, so that the thing came very near not to happen, or so that there was much risk about it. The sense of this verse can be seen in the passage which the Apostle Peter seems to be quoting:

Proverbs 11:31: *Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner*

Peter is admitting that the righteous are saved with difficulty, or that there are perils which jeopardy their salvation, and which are of such a kind as to make it very near not to happen.

Not difficulties caused by God, but by the one being saved.

For example:

- *The difficulty of bringing those who are to be saved to a willingness to accept salvation. There were many obstacles in the human heart, arising from pride, selfishness, unbelief, and the love of sin, which must be overcome before any would accept of the offer of mercy.*
- *The difficulty of keeping them from falling away amidst the temptations and allurements of the world. Often it seems to be wholly doubtful whether those who have been converted will be kept to eternal life. They read the Bible rarely; they yield so readily to*

temptation; they conform so much to the world; they have so little strength to bear up under trials...

There is a story often told which illustrates the obstacles and difficulties which the human and puts in the way of the offer of salvation:

A man claiming to be a Christian finds himself in the middle of a flood. As the water begins to rise around his house, a neighbour in a little rowing boat offers to take the man to safety. The man declines, saying, No thanks, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me! An hour later as the water rises further, it forces the man onto the roof. the police arrive and call out for him to get in, but again he refuses, saying, No, I have faith in God; the Lord will save me. Finally the water reaches the level of the roof, and a rescue helicopter appears overhead, lowering a ladder or rope. The pilot shouts for him to grab hold, but the man waves it away, shouting back, No thanks, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me. ...

The man drowns.

This illustrates the perversity and fickleness of human thinking. *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners* (Hebrews 11:1) provides us with all kinds of answers to our prayers. Because they do not match our expectations, we do not recognise His Gracious and merciful hand, and refuse the guidance and help. We are by nature stubborn and obstinate and refuse to change. We do not look at ourselves, and admit we are the problem. We are the obstacle and the difficulty. Laziness, indolence, maybe Facebook, Tiktok, Youtube, Instagram distract our minds too much, so that we don't have time for meditation, prayer or mutual Bible study.

God is mighty to save, and He has given us the power to change, to adjust, to repent, to just ... reach out for the life ring, the life raft that has been provided. God is not willing that any should perish. But and if we ignore His mercy, we will suffer as ungodly and foolish men and women.

Brother Terry