

All Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

October 16, 2002/October 2, 2014

# **Righteousness**

Part I

Printed for:

**HANDS FOR JESUS**

P.O. BOX 18655

MILWAUKEE, WI 53218-0655

Visit us at:

[www.handsforjesus.cc](http://www.handsforjesus.cc)

[www.handsforjesus.org](http://www.handsforjesus.org)

2002 by Merle E. Koepke

All Rights Reserved

What is righteousness? According to the Greek word “dikaiosune,” it is “equity (of character or act).” The Greek word “dikaiosune,” comes from another Greek word “dikaios,” which means, “equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy.” When we go back to the English, we find that the word “righteous” means “acting in a just, upright manner; doing what is right, or morally right; fair and just.” In the English, “equity” means “fairness; impartiality; justice, anything that is fair or equitable.”

The Bible teaches us that God is righteous. Everything that God does is righteous. Therefore, God is right and just in everything He does.

What about man, or people in general, are they righteous? Romans 3:10 says, **“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.”** “As it is written” means that God has already revealed this in His Word. Therefore we know what it says is truth. It seems that the writer of Romans is referring to what King David wrote in Psalm 14:1-3,

**The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.**

**The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.**

**They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

It seems that King David revealed something here that many religious people have not understood. It says, **“The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.”** How can anyone become righteous? Those who say there is no God are called “a fool.” The way to become righteous according to King David is to **“understand, and seek God.”** If we do not understand God, and do not seek God, we will live our lives like the rest of the world and may never walk in the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus that is ours. When we understand God and seek God we find that to become righteous we must become born again into the family of God.

To become born again we must receive Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior. John 1:12 says, **“as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”** If you have not received Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior, then you are not righteous, and this booklet will not help you in any way, **“You Must Be Born Again”** (John 3:7). Jesus said, “ask and it shall be given”! Be sincere and from your heart, say a prayer similar to this: *“Lord Jesus, forgive me for my sins, and come into my life and be my LORD and Savior. Thank You, Jesus! I now receive You as my LORD and Savior. Amen.”*

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, talking about what God has done for those who are born again in Christ Jesus, it says, **“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”** What God did through Jesus, was for the purpose, **“that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”** Therefore, without Jesus, we could not become righteous. Man, of his own ability cannot become righteous. It takes the ability of God working in man to bring a person unto righteousness.

Look at the world, and the world’s system. Wherever you look, you will find people taking advantage of others to gain for themselves wealth, honor, and worldly things. The world seeks after the things of this world, and they do not care what they do to others to gain what they want. Is that righteousness?

Yet, God is righteous in everything He does. For people to become righteous, they must become like God. Sin and all its likenesses must be done away within their lives. They must live a righteous life before God and man. How can they accomplish that?

Of our own ability, that is not possible. For true righteousness is “right standing with God.” In respect to the way God sees us, we must be like Him. We must be righteous in everything we do. How can we obtain unto that kind of righteousness? For that to happen, we must be delivered from all unrighteousness.

In Matthew 19:16 it says, **“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”** What is eternal life? Eternal life is the very life of God dwelling in us eternally, forever and ever.

This young man, who had many riches came asking Jesus, **“what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”** Somehow this man thought that he could obtain eternal life by his “good works,” by doing some good thing! That is religion, the worlds way of obtaining a position of good standing. However, Jesus’ answer was not what that young man expected.

First, Jesus said to the man, **“Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments”** (Matt. 19:17). Until we get our eyes off people and on God, we will never understand eternal life or righteousness. Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus, and walked away discouraged. Their own self-righteousness kept them from receiving the true riches of heaven.

The real answer to the young man’s question came when Jesus said to him, **“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me”** (Matt. 19:21).

Even Jesus’ disciples could not understand what Jesus meant by what He said to that young man. Jesus tried to explain to them that riches cannot get a man into heaven. All the wealth of this world cannot get a person into heaven. The more wealth we have the less likely we will enter into heaven. Therefore, Jesus said to His disciples, **“Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (Matt. 19:23). Jesus went on to say, **“And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God”** (Matt. 19:24).

Jesus tried to make it as clear as possible that riches will not get a person into heaven, they may even prevent people from entering into heaven. Not that riches are the problem, but they can become the cause of the problem.

Man has tried many ways to become worthy of eternal life. Man has tried doing many good things that would make him acceptable by God to receive eternal life. There are many religious groups today, even calling themselves Christians that do not understand “righteousness,” and how to obtain righteousness. The final question of Jesus’ disciples was, **“Who then can be saved?”** (Matt. 19:25). If a person could keep all the commandments, and still not enter into heaven, “how then can they be saved?” Jesus’ answer to His disciples was, **“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”** (Matt. 19:26).

God is the only one that can save a person and give to them eternal life. With men, this is impossible, **“but with God nothing is impossible.”** True righteousness never comes by what man does. True righteousness only comes by what Jesus did for us.

Romans 3:22 says, **“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto**

**all and upon all them that believe . . .**” We must believe the gospel of the kingdom of God if we are to obtain unto true righteousness. True righteousness is imputed unto those who believe! Romans 4:3 says, **“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”** Romans 5:17 says, **“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)”** Righteousness is “a gift of God.” It becomes ours by grace as a gift, unto all that believe . . .

Righteousness is like faith, if we do not believe, nothing happens. Every Christian has faith. It was imputed to them along with the other fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Faith is dealt to every Christian (Rom. 12:3). Therefore, every Christian has faith. It's not a question of, if we have faith or not? It's a matter of, will we use our faith? Faith without works is dead. It's still faith, but it is of no value if we don't use it.

Righteousness is the same. Christians have righteousness. They have been made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21). It's not a question of, do we have righteousness? It's, will we believe we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus? Romans 10:10 tells us we must believe in our heart unto righteousness . . .

God is only pleased when we believe unto righteousness. When we believe that Jesus became our righteousness on the Cross of Calvary, then God is pleased.

In John 13 it tells us of the night that Jesus was betrayed. It says,

**He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.**

**Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.**

**If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.** (John 13:30-32).

Jesus said, **“Now is the Son of man glorified.”** What was Jesus talking about, being glorified by His betrayal? Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8b). Through His death and resurrection, He defeated Satan. His victory over Satan is our gain. We are free because of Jesus' victory over sin and death. His righteousness purchased our freedom from the works of the devil.

Jesus then said, **“and God is glorified in him.”** How was God glorified in Jesus' death and resurrection? It was the Will of God that Jesus bare the sins of His people. In Hebrews 10:7, it says, **“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”** Jesus came according to what was written, to do the will of God. In Hebrew 10:6 it says, **“In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.”** God had no pleasure in the sacrifices of animals and fowl, for they could not take away sin forever. Hebrews 10:9 says, **“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”**

In His death, Jesus was glorified. By His death, God was glorified. For sin was defeated, all the works of the devil were destroyed.

Through the death of Jesus, He brought many sons and daughters to God. He is the firstborn from the dead. Romans 8:29 says, **“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”**

God's will is that He may have many sons and daughters with Him for all eternity. But, Romans 5:12 says, **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and**

**so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.**”Unrighteousness reigned throughout mankind. God is righteousness, and for people to become children of God and have fellowship with God, they needed also to be righteous. In Christ Jesus we are righteous. We are the righteousness of God in Christ.

Jesus was glorified when He took upon Himself all our sins, iniquities, our sickness and diseases. He bore them for us in His own body on the Cross of Calvary. By this, He became the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

When we walk by faith and not by sight, God is glorified. God is glorified every time we destroy the works of the devil. Not by our ability, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, working in us and through us.

For the Holy Spirit to manifest the power of God through us we must walk by faith. Faith works by righteousness and righteousness works by faith, they work together. It is not because of what we did, but what God did in Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary.

Because of righteousness we can come boldly before the throne of God and make our requests known (Heb. 4:16). By grace we have received righteousness that we may come to God in time of need. When we come to God, we must believe that He is God, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

It is a disgrace to God, when His children do not believe His Word. God made us the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, and when we do not live as righteous people, it is a disgrace to God.

In 1 John 3:7 it says, **“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”** Righteousness and fellowship work together. In 1 John 1:7 it says, **“if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”** Then in 1 John 1:9 it says, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

What would happen if Christians understood true righteousness? In James 5:16, it says, **“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”** What does that mean? It means that when righteous people pray, believing in their heart their prayers always get answered.

James went on to explain what he meant by example. It says, **“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.”** (James 5:17). When Elijah prayed, his prayer was answered. It did not rain for three and one-half years.

Three and one-half years later, Elijah prayed again and then what happened? It rained! Why, because Elijah was a man, just like you and I. It wasn't that Elijah was more righteous than you or I. It was that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins and iniquities and Jesus' righteousness was imputed unto Elijah when he believed God.

Now, to some that doesn't sound right, after all, Elijah wasn't born again! But, don't forget what it says in Isaiah 43:25. It says, **“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”**The works that Elijah did are no different than the works that we can do. It's all done on Jesus' righteousness, not our righteousness. It's the same God that answers prayer! It's the same Spirit that brings the Word of God into manifestation!

Elijah was no more righteous than any Christian. Every Christian is just as righteous as Elijah

was. It's not who we are, it's who will believe God and pray, effectually! **“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”**

When you pray, believe you have whatsoever you pray for and you shall have it (Mark 11:14). When Christians pray, believing in their heart and confessing with their mouth they shall have whatsoever they say . . . Satan was defeated when Jesus went to the Cross for us. He is defeated when Christians pray, knowing they are the righteousness of God in Christ. Knowing their prayer will be answered, because it is God's will that we pray in faith! Every prayer of faith will be answered. It's up to Christians to pray, and it's up to God to answer. But, God said He will answer if we will pray in faith, believing in our heart.

Righteousness comes by believing. Faith comes by believing. Everything we receive from God comes by believing . . . Therefore, believe the gospel and receive according to what God has already promised in His Word.

The Bible says in Romans 8:28, **“we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”** If it seems that all things are not working together for your good, then, maybe you do not understand righteousness the way you should. Jesus said in John 10:10, **“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”** Are you living that abundant life? Are all things working together for your good? If not, then get to understand righteousness.