

# The Righteousness of God



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"For being ignorant of **the Righteousness of God** and seeking to establish **their own righteousness**, they **did not submit** to the righteousness of God. **For the END of Law is Christ, unto Righteousness** to everyone believing." Romans 10:3-4.

In a previous study titled, "No life by the Law," we address the common error that is found in the Church, in respect to the assumption we make that Christ passed the rewards of the Law to us, having kept all its requirements. As such, we make it look as if Life is meant to be obtained by the Law, if only we were able to keep it. But that is not what Christ has done, rather He saved us from the Law, as Paul said, "**You also have been put to DEATH to the Law through the body of Christ**, for you to belong to another, to **the One having been RAISED out from the dead.**" Romans 7:4. The effect of which is that the Covenant of the Law is put aside in its ENTIRETY through the death of the Son of God. As such, there can be no benefit, NOR a curse, that comes through the Law, since we are UTTERLY cut away from that COVENANT through DEATH.

Here is the main point, if Christ had given us the Righteousness of the Law, then He would have given us the righteousness of a Man, as one who kept the Law in the flesh. Remember, the Law was given to govern Flesh Mankind, as such Paul says, "**not having my own righteousness which is of the Law,**" as well as in the main text of our study, that is the Law always points to our own righteousness. And as much as Christ is both God and Man, He was born of a woman, born under the Law. [Galatians 4:4.] The effect of which is that Christ kept the Law as a Man, so if He could impart to us the righteousness of it, it would have been that of a Man. So in the case of the Lord, the Law served as a means by which the spotless, blameless Lamb of God was to be examined, in the fulfilment of the requirements of the Law. This is NOT passed to us, because it was a means to bring an end to the previous covenant. As Paul said, "He is the **mediator of a new covenant**, so that, **death having taken place** for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant." Hebrews 9:15. That is to

say, He took away the First Covenant of the Law, to establish a Second through His blood. [Hebrews 7:18-19.] Please Note, the distinction is between **the righteousness of a man which is of the Law** and that **of the Spirit which is of God**.

So as Spirit, Christ gives us is the Righteousness of God Himself, which He does in the Person of the Holy Spirit, having put aside the Law, Flesh and Sin through the Blood of His Cross, having redeemed us from the curse of the First Death that came on the account of the Sin of Adam. So when the Lord was raised from the dead, **“He breathed on [His Disciples]** and He says to them, **‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’**” John 20:21. Through which the Lord passed His Spirit to His disciples. The Spirit of Christ, is not any different from that of the Holy Spirit. Paul said, “Now you are not in flesh but in Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you**; but if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he is not of Him.” Romans 8:9. Here Paul makes it very clear that the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God. So, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, because He has come to make His dwelling in us on the account of the Son of God. And the Lord on the night He was to be crucified said to His disciples, **“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper**, that He may be with you to the age— **the Spirit of truth.**” And then the LORD immediately follows this with, **“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.”** John 14:16-18. By saying this, the Lord associated His coming to dwell in us to be the SAME as the Holy Spirit being given to us. [John 14:23.]

The entire purpose for God in redeeming us from Sin, Flesh and the Law was that He could give Himself to us. In respect to which Paul said, **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law**, having become a curse for us—for it has been written: **“Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree”**— **so that the BLESSING of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus**, so that through faith we might **receive the PROMISE of the SPIRIT.**” Galatians 3:13-14. Please Note, the blessing of Abraham who was outside of the Law, was encapsulated in the giving of the PROMISE of the SPIRIT. That is, the blessing of Abraham can be summarised in this statement, **“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly GREAT REWARD.”** Genesis 15:1. That is, God declared to Abraham, his blessing is none other than God Himself. So on the day of Pentecost Peter stood and preached the first sermon of the New Covenant declaring, **“Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, **in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins**, and you will **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” Acts 2:38. So we can see the ultimate end purposed by God in redeeming us from sin, was to give us His Holy Spirit. And just as in the first Pentecost at Mount Sinai, the Righteousness of the Law was given to the children of Israel on tablets of stone. Now, the Righteousness of God, was first given to 120 disciples of the Lord in the Person of the Holy Spirit, also on the same day. [Acts 2.]

Now, the main issue we have is that we tend to separate Righteousness from that of the Person of the Holy Spirit. So, we make righteousness to be some type of label rather than the Righteousness of God Himself, which is given to us in the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said, **“But if Christ is in you**, the body is indeed dead on account of sin, but **the Spirit is life on account of righteousness.**” Romans 8:10. Please Note, it is Christ DWELLING in us through faith that imparts Righteousness of Life. So the distinct difference is that Christ in the FLESH, has to do with the Law, Sin and Death, which He annulled through the sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. But Christ as Spirit, being raised from the Dead by the Spirit of God, imparts to us the Righteousness of God Himself in giving to us His Life, that is the Holy Spirit. So Paul says, **“He made the One not having known sin to be sin for us**, so that **in Him we might become the righteousness of God.**” 2 Corinthians 5:21. [Romans 6:10, 1 Peter 3:18.] The GIFT of the Holy Spirit, is INSEPARABLE from the GIFT of Righteousness, so that when Paul said, **“In Him we may become the Righteousness of God,**” the

keyword is, "In Him," which is to say, in having His Spirit in us, through which we have the Nature of God's own Righteousness.

The Holy Spirit is not given to us because we are righteous, but we are righteous because He is given to us. This is where we find the thin line, which is demonstrated in the testimony of Peter about the conversion of the Gentiles saying, "And **the heart-knowing God bore witness** to them, having **given them the Holy Spirit**, as also to us. And He made no distinction between both us and them, **having purified their hearts by the faith.**" Acts 15:8-9. That is, we, having been purified from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ in the belief of the truth, are NOW given the Spirit of God in whom we have the nature of Righteousness. There is a difference between being spotless and without blame, which has to do with the DEATH of the Son of God in regard to the forgiveness of sins, and that of Righteousness which has to do with LIFE of the Son of God. As Paul says, "For if, being enemies, we were **reconciled to God through the DEATH of His Son**, much more, having been reconciled, **shall we be saved in His LIFE!**" Romans 5:10. We have to understand, Righteousness is NOT the forgiveness of sins, but the giving of the Divine Nature on the ACCOUNT we are forgiven of our sins.

However, many have the knowledge of the Son of God having been crucified for the sins of the world, but they have not quite grasped the righteousness that is imparted by the Spirit of God for the purpose of living Holy Lives. Which is the essence that is portrayed in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, that separates the foolish from the wise. So, we either stop at the cross, to live out a life of sin and forgiveness, or we perceive that righteousness is given as a label and forsake the pursuit of life in the Spirit. However, Righteousness is the tangible nature of God imparted through the Holy Spirit, which bears fruit unto Sanctification, which MUST be Practiced in Faith. As John says, "**If you know that He is righteous**, you know also that **everyone practicing righteousness has been begotten of Him.**" 1 John 2:29. The effect of which is that righteousness has progress and growth, and is NOT a static label. Which John illustrates by contrasting it against those who practice sin, in order to demonstrate the change in the manner of life. [1 John 3:9-10.] And this is what makes the practice of righteousness imperative in the life of a Christian. The word PRACTICE by definition has attached to it the idea of putting to EFFECT, and is not benign. Now this is not to be confused with the works of the flesh, but the cultivation of the life of the Spirit, through the knowledge of God.

However, the problem we have in the Church is that, when we speak about the practice of righteousness we are almost always dragged back to the issue of sin, as if the possibility of falling in sin is meant to invalidate the expectation of a life of righteousness. Thereby, the practice of righteousness is made null and void, and we are reminded that only the knowledge of the label is the important factor. But the fact is, Sin is done away with, it is FINISHED. When Christ was hanging on the cross, He prayed to His Father saying, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**" Luke 23:34. That is the Lord, raised between Heaven and Earth, His body nailed to the cross pointing to the four corners of the world, was speaking those words for the sake of everyone on earth in respect to sin, which by its very nature is something we do without knowledge. So Paul says, "**God was in Christ** reconciling the world to Himself, **NOT reckoning their trespasses to them.**" 2 Corinthians 5:19. That is to say the sins of the world were wiped away that very moment, as John says, "**He is the propitiation for our sins**, and **NOT ONLY** for ours, but **also for those of the WHOLE WORLD.**" 1 John 2:2. And this is the BASIC foundation upon which we are ALL expected to stand.

This Good News is freely and readily available to all, whether their lives show it or not, for which the parable of the sower is an expression of this truth. [Mark 4:13-20.] That is from the stony to the

thorny ground, both had accepted the joyful words of the Good News, even though the manner of their lives did not quite bear expected fruit after. The simple fact is that, if the world without knowledge is already forgiven, how much more one who calls on His name. However we still have the mindset of measuring sin be it great or small, be it in thought or deed, rather than acknowledging we are once for all forgiven. And what we were in Adam is dead and buried in Christ through the Baptism of Water. [Romans 6:3-4.] The stoney and thorny ground did not fail because they were not forgiven, but because their lives did not produce expected fruit of righteousness.

The forgiveness of sins is NOT the be all and end all of the kingdom of God, but it is its VERY beginning. The fact that we are forgiven, is meant to elevate us to live life according to the Nature of God, by the Spirit of God. This is what Paul meant when he said, “**Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy to God, well-pleasing, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, for you to prove what is the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God.**” Romans 12:1. This has NOTHING to do with keeping a set of laws. But there is an expectation for us to grow in the knowledge of God, by which we are to walk in a manner that is well pleasing to Him. As Paul says, “**You may be FILLED with the knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding **to WALK WORTHLY of the Lord: PLEASING in all, bringing forth fruit in every good work, and growing in the knowledge of God.**” Colossians 1:9-10. This has NOTHING to do with Performance, we are NOT working to obtain the forgiveness of sins, nevertheless the manner of life we live after having accepted the forgiveness of our sins, can either be pleasing or displeasing to God. And this is what we miss, the inheritance of the kingdom of God is determined by a life lived in the Spirit of God.

Nowhere is this concept better illustrated than in the description Paul gives in Philippians 3. Where Paul first establishes that he has forsaken his own righteousness, which is from the Law, in order to grab hold of the righteousness of God which comes through faith in Christ Jesus. Now, this is where we come to a dead stop, but for Paul this is the starting point of a life of righteousness in order to strive to obtain the resurrection from the dead. Paul is NOT speaking about the forgiveness of sins, but having escaped the pollution that is in the world through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he has geared his life for obtaining the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 3:9-11-14.] The point is, Paul does not assume the inheritance of the kingdom of God to be a forgone conclusion, but something that requires a diligent and faithful endeavour on his part. So, he says to the Corinthians in respect to this New Life of the Spirit, “**I batter my body and bring it into servitude, lest having preached to others, I myself might be disqualified.**” 1 Corinthians 9:27. The point is, the pursuit to obtain the inheritance of the kingdom of God is meant to be present and active. For which reason the Lord Himself exhorts us to be FAITHFUL even unto death. [Matthew 24:13, Revelation 2:10.] Now, if the inheritance of the kingdom of God was a foregone conclusion, the exhortation of the Lord would be without purpose. We have to remember we are sojourners and pilgrims and are meant to live out this life with our eyes on the prize. [1 Peter 2:11-12.]

However, because we conflict the forgiveness of sins with the walk of righteousness, we take away from what is essential for the one, with the mindset of the other. That is, we put the indispensable requirement of reading the word of God and prayer in the same category as working to obtain the forgiveness of sins, and we muddy the water. So we make empty statements like, “Prayer does not save you,” or, “Reading the Bible does not save you,” because of the mindset we have in terms of the forgiveness of sins. And, it is true that the forgiveness of sins, which is meant to apply to anyone who is in the world, CANNOT be based on these, since the world knows nothing of Him. Nonetheless, the world still needs to hear the preaching of the Good News, in the declaration of Christ Crucified, in

order to bring them out of the world in the recognition of the blanket provision, that we are all forgiven in Christ. As Paul says, “And **how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear apart from preaching?**” Romans 10:14. But this does not make void the requirement for these indispensable truths to be applied in the life of a Christian that is brought out of the world. However, by saying such things, we have greatly diminished the crucial value these practices hold in the life of Christians, in respect to the walk of righteousness.

The life of the Spirit of Righteousness has basic requirements, for which every born again believer is expected to be engaged in, which are meant to be a vital aspect for our growth. As Peter says, “Therefore having put aside all malice, and all deceit, and hypocrisy, and envies, and all evil speakings, **like newborn babies, CRAVE pure reasonable milk**, so that by it **you may GROW up in respect to SALVATION.**” 1 Peter 2:1-2. To grow in the knowledge of God, in order to exhibit His nature is the basic requirement of any child of God, as MILK is to any newborn baby. Meaning the Scriptures are meant to hold central places in our lives for us to live life according to the Nature of God. As Paul says, “**Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable** for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for **training in righteousness**, so that the man of God **may be complete, having been fully equipped toward every good work.**” 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The principle being we become more like the One we grow to know. [2 Corinthians 4:18, Ephesians 4:13-14.]

We have to understand, Forgiveness of sin is one thing, but the life of Righteousness is another. The Last Adam and the Second Man are separated by the Grave, meaning what we were in Adam is meant to be forgotten, as Paul says, “**Forgetting the things behind and reaching forward to the things ahead**, I press on toward the goal for the prize of **the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.**” Philippians 3:13-14. That is, we ought to STRIVE for what is ahead, which requires us to KNOW what is contained in the COVENANT of Grace and Righteousness. So having the word of Christ dwell in us richly, and being actively engaged in prayer and worship are indispensable to the life of righteousness, which Jude summarises saying, “You, beloved, **BUILDING up yourselves in your most holy faith, PRAYING in the Holy Spirit**, keep yourselves in the love of God, **AWAITING the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.**” Jude 1:20-21. [Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:17-19, Ephesians 6:18.]

Now, we need to bear in mind, we are all the SAME when it comes to the sin of Adam, from which we all need to be forgiven by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But when it comes to the Spirit and of Righteousness, we are all required to walk according to what we have attained. That is, the Spirit of God, is tailored to suit every child of God that comes out of the world, according to the testing of our hearts and minds. A Christian in China under oppression, holding a single page of the Bible, is not held to the same requirement as one with 20 varieties of translations in the palm of his hands. A newborn is not held to the same standard as the mature, while the failing of the newborn may be overlooked, but the indifference of the mature may incur judgment.

We have to be careful NOT to MISTAKE the fact that we are NO LONGER judged for sins, with the expectation that comes with the Gift of Righteousness. For the former there is NOTHING anyone could do, except believe in the all sufficient sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, for the latter the expectation is from what is FREELY GIVEN to us in Christ, not from what we do not have. As Paul says, “Therefore **as many as are mature should be of this mind.** And if you are minded in anything differently, even this God will reveal to you. Nevertheless, **to that which we have attained, we are to walk by the same.**” Philippians 3:15-16. This concept is best illustrated in Luke 12, where the Lord gave us an example of a cascading response according to the knowledge each believer had.

From the willful disobedience in full knowledge of the will of God, to the ignorant and stumbling, each received a corresponding reward. And the Lord said, “And **everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required**; and from him to whom **much has been committed, more will they ask of him.**” Luke 12:45-48. For which the Parables of the Talents, and Minas are an illustration of these truths. [Matthew 25:20-30, Luke 19:12-27.]

The Spirit of God works in us, according to our willingness to walk with Him, as Paul says, “**Work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling. **For God is the One working in you both to will and to work** according to His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13. This may be in terms of service to the body, or it could just mean enabling us to live holy lives, which we can accept or reject. It does not mean our sins are not forgiven, they are in Christ, not only ours but the entire world, whether they know it or not. But our willingness to live by the leading of the Spirit of God according to the working of His nature will determine our inheritance. And for those that persist in the ways of the world, to live life to the dictates of their flesh, will eventually be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, from which there is no turning back. Christ came in the flesh to save us from sins of the flesh, through death. But for those that fell as spirit, having been made a New Creation in Christ, there is no means for repentance. [Hebrews 6:4-6.] As Jude says, they are TWICE DEAD, first as flesh in Adam, but now in Christ as spirits. [Jude 1:12.] There are sins of the flesh which are according to Adam, but there are also sins of the spirit which are in respect to Christ, which Paul describes as, sinning against Christ. [1 Corinthians 8:12.]

Now, what does all this mean to us, who are living in the closing moments of the Present Age? The answer of which is illustrated in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, who went out to meet the Bridegroom with their lamps. However, only the Five Wise took Oil in their vessels. [Matthew 25:1-12.] The first important point we need to bear in mind is that they are all virgins, which is meant to signify they are all made PURE by the Word of God, which is represented in the Lamp. Meaning, they ALL know the truth of Christ Crucified in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. However, the foolish lacked the Oil in their vessels, which is meant to be a representation of the Holy Spirit, in the knowledge and practice of righteousness. The Oil is meant to be the power that gives light to the Lamp, which is meant to help us to walk according to the truth of the word of God in righteousness. As Paul says, “Now I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you should not gratify the desires of the flesh.**” Galatians 5:16. And, “For as many **as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**” Romans 8:14. The emphasis being on WALKING, the effectiveness of which is determined by the Oil in our vessels that is our body. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a continual process, so Paul exhorted the Ephesians saying, “**Instead be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:18-19.

We are forever looking back marveling at the things of the past, as a result we have neglected what is required for the present and for what is ahead. We are not under the Covenant of the Law, but of the Covenant of Grace and Righteousness. And this requires us to KNOW what is expected of us, as ones that are made a New Creation in Christ. Dwelling in what we were in Adam, which was of the flesh and sin serves no purpose, but what we have become in Christ which is the main objective. Meaning we ought to be wise in the nature of righteousness which is of God, imparted in the Holy Spirit. It is the presence of the Oil that determines who went in with the Bridegroom and who is left out. The walk by the Spirit is always by Faith through Grace, yet it requires the knowledge of the TRUTH, and the willingness of the one to put it to practice, as Paul said, “**I have believed therefore I have spoken.**” 2 Corinthians 4:13. Reading the Word of God to discover His will and being engaged in fervent Prayer is what is expected of us. The Lord said to Peter, “So, were you not able to watch with

Me one hour? **Watch and pray, that you do not enter into temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the flesh weak.**” Matthew 26:40-41. Here, the Lord reveals to us, spending time in prayer in the presence of God, is meant to be a means we draw strength to escape the temptation of the flesh.

We eat and drink to nourish our body and in no time have we ever considered this to be work, but when it comes to feeding our soul and strengthening our spirit, through the reading the word of God and of prayer, this we consider to be work. We as Christians need to be exhorted in the pursuit of the life of righteousness, but it has to be done in faith through the knowledge of God, of what is freely given to us by God. It is the pursuit of life in the Spirit, in knowing what we have of Him that enables us NOT to fulfill the lust of the flesh. Paul said to Timothy, “But you, O man of God, flee these things and **PURSUE** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. **Fight the good fight of the faith.** Lay hold of the **eternal life to which you were called**, and also did confess the good confession before many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:11-12. We are not meant to stop at the forgiveness of our sins, but are expected to **PURSUE** a life of Righteousness by faith, through prayer and the knowledge of God’s will, which are essential factors for a life Lived in the Spirit.

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