

Clothed with Christ's Righteousness

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, **and righteousness**, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

I Corinthians 1:30

Introduction:

1. The Creator of heaven and earth is a righteous God, and you stand condemned before Him by your many sins.
 - a. If you have any doubts about this, He condemned your entire race to eternal condemnation for one sin.
 - b. If you have any doubts about this, He suffocated the whole earth in water for their sins in 2386 BC.
 - c. You shall stand before God, and the books will show you have no works of righteousness (Rev 20:11-15).
 - d. Paul warned in two places about giving an account of your life to God (Romans 14:10-12; II Cor 5:9-11).
 - e. Do you know that measured by the perfect righteousness of God every single act of yours is despicable?
2. There is imagery in Scripture of men standing before God and in need of clothing to cover their nakedness.
 - a. This imagery represents our nakedness and shame and a desperate need for true righteousness to cover us.
 - b. Adam and Eve thought they could cover guilt and shame with leaves, but they needed more (Gen 3:7-11).
 - c. Isaiah 52:1 describes the church of Christ putting on beautiful garments with the promise of no unclean.
 - d. Isaiah 61:10 describes the church of God being clothed with the robe of righteousness as if for a marriage.
 - e. Isaiah 64:6 describes the efforts of self-righteousness as being unclean and clothed with filthy rags.
 - f. Zechariah 3:1-5 shows Joshua the high priest standing in filthy garments and being clothed by the LORD.
 - g. Matthew 22:11-14 describes the kingdom of heaven as a wedding feast with a guest without a garment.
 - h. II Timothy 4:8 describes a crown of righteousness given to Paul and those who love Christ's appearing.
 - i. Revelation 19:8 describes fine linen, clean and white, adorning the church for marriage to Jesus Christ.
3. You must assess your condition this day by the infallible guide of God's Word regarding righteousness.
 - a. Have you ever been guilty of sins that cannot inherit heaven (Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-6; Rev 21:8; 22:15)?
 - b. Are you still thinking highly of yourself for missing some sins? Then get a hold of this rule (James 2:10).
 - c. Read our Lord's "Sermon on the Mount" and see the true divine standard of righteousness (Matthew 5-7).

WHAT IS IT?

- A. Righteousness is uprightness, doing right, in the quantity and quality demanded by a righteous God.
- B. Righteousness is living and doing everything expected by the righteous law of God in His Scriptures.
- C. Righteousness is closely connected to judgment, faithfulness, truth, and holiness in the Word of God.
- D. The righteousness of Christ is His perfect obedience to the entire law, both penal and preceptive.
- E. It is not only the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, where our sins were charged to Him for suffering death, which is His passive obedience on the cross in satisfying the penal requirements of God's law.
- F. It is also the positive fulfillment of the law, which is His active obedience in living a perfect life of righteousness according to the preceptive requirements of God's law.
- G. Both aspects of justifying righteousness, penal and preceptive, are imputed – counted, accounted, or reckoned – to the elect in the work of justification.
- H. Justification is more than “just as if I'd never sinned.” It also requires “just as if I'd lived a perfect life in complete obedience to the whole of God's laws,” in order for God to receive you as a son!
- I. While these two aspects of justification are often blended together, there is Bible evidence for both.
 1. The reigning position we have in Christ is by the gift of righteousness in Christ (Romans 5:17).
 2. It the positive righteousness of Jesus Christ that is the basis of justification of life (Romans 5:18).
 3. It is Christ's obedience in keeping God's precepts, opposite Adam's breaking it (Romans 5:19).
 4. God sent the law to expose our terrible sinfulness, but grace brings righteousness (Rom 5:20-21).
 5. We are saved from condemnation, and we have the law's righteousness fulfilled (Romans 8:1-4).
 6. Jesus, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might have his righteousness (II Cor 5:21).
 7. Paul rejected his own righteousness and desired the righteousness by Christ's faith (Phil 3:9).
 8. Our new man is not merely acquitted – he is positively righteous (Ephesians 4:24 cp 5:25-27).
 9. The doing of righteousness from our heart is evidence of a legal righteousness (I John 3:7).

DO WE HAVE IT?

- A. There is none righteous, no, not one! We are entirely corrupt (Rom 3:10-12; Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3).
- B. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God – we are bankrupt in righteousness (Rom 3:23).
- C. You cannot find one man born of a woman that is clean and righteous before God (Job 15:14-16).
- D. Do not be deceived on this matter! Do not deny the truth! You are desperately wicked (Jer 17:9).
- E. Paul thought he was righteous, but God’s law exposed his filthiness (Rom 7:7-13; Philipians 3:6).
- F. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but God’s mercy must save us (Titus 3:5).

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

- A. Without it, we shall never see God or heaven, for nothing unrighteous at all is allowed in that place.
- B. The Bible lists sins describing those who will not see heaven (Gal 5:19-21; Rev 21:27; Matt 13:41).
- C. Anyone without Christ’s righteousness, by the Book of Life, shall go to the lake of fire (Rev 20:15).

WHAT IS CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS?

- A. It is His active obedience, faithfulness, judgment, holiness, and truth in fulfilling all the preceptive requirements of God’s righteousness, which are expressed and explained in Moses’ Law; and which is imputed to us as part of God’s work called justification: God sees us in Christ’s righteousness!
- B. It is glorious! No man ever loved righteousness and hated iniquity like Jesus (Ps 45:7; Heb 1:8-9).
- C. Read Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount” and see the true standard of God’s righteousness (Matt 5-7).
- D. Let us consider it, describe it, detail it, elaborate on it, and remember it for the comfort of our souls!
 1. In each example, we must admit, confess, and repudiate our many personal failures in these areas of righteousness; and we must admit, confess, and rejoice in the glory of His righteousness!
 2. He was tempted in all points that you are tempted – all of them; but He never sinned (Heb 4:15)!
 3. At 12 years of age, he was far more interested in God’s law than in basketball (Luke 2:46-47).
 4. As a teen, He was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51). He did all you did not do to your parents.
 5. He was humble enough to be baptized by His cousin, though greatly superior to Him (Matt 3:15).
 6. When He reached maturity, 30 years old, God testified of His performance to date (Matt 3:17).
 7. When tempted with great hunger and easy food, He chose God’s words as supreme (Luke 4:1-4).
 8. When tempted with the world’s wealth and power, He chose God’s worship supreme (Lu 4:5-8).
 9. When tempted with a dare on faith in God’s promises, He rightly divided Scripture (Lu 4:9-12).
 10. He cared about single, individual saints that could not return honor (Luke 7:11-18; Mark 16:9).
 11. He was never ashamed to be seen with the poorest or greatest of sinners (Luke 7:36-39; 19:1-9).
 12. Though women followed Him all His life, and pursued Him for forgiveness, He sinned not once.
 13. When some did not show honor for His greatness, He protected them from fire (Luke 9:51-56).
 14. He was never moved by big spenders seeking glory, but saw a little widow woman (Lu 21:1-4).
 15. He was compassionate and merciful with disciples who hardly learned anything in three years.
 16. When tempted to sedition against Roman tyranny, He trusted God’s sovereignty (Matt 12:13-17).
 17. When tempted to stand on principle that would offend, He avoided the offence (Matt 17:24-27).
 18. He humbly served the disciples in His dark night by washing their feet voluntarily (John 13:1-5).
 19. When He was reviled, which is very difficult to take, when you have unlimited power and vocabulary, He did not revile those reviling Him; He trusted God for vengeance (I Peter 2:23).
 20. When He was tortured, which is very difficult to take, when you have unlimited power to inflict revenge, He did not threaten those torturing Him; He trusted God for vengeance (I Peter 2:23).
 21. He freely forgave the men who crucified Him, though His trial was totally unfair (Luke 23:34).
 22. He took care of His mother, a widow, while suffering on the cross of Calvary (John 19:25-27).
 23. He mercifully forgave those who would not pray with, and who deserted Him (John 20:19-21).
 24. He showed infinite faith when He committed Himself to the God forsaking Him (Luke 23:46).
 25. Jesus always did those things that pleased His Father ... without numerous relapses (John 8:29).

HOW DO WE GET IT?

- A. We get it by the electing grace of God, whereby we are made acceptable in the beloved (Eph 1:3-6).
 - 1. All spiritual blessings, which surely include righteousness, are by our election in Christ (1:3).
 - 2. He chose us in Jesus Christ and views us in Jesus Christ as being holy and without blame (1:4).
 - 3. We are acceptable to God by being elected in Jesus Christ, Who is perfectly righteous (1:6).
- B. We get it by imputation, which is counting, accounting, or reckoning of us as righteous by Christ.
 - 1. Philemon was to put Onesimus's offences to Paul's account – by imputation (Philemon 1:18-19).
 - 2. The non-imputation of sin and imputation of righteousness are marvelous (Ps 32:1; Rom 4:6).
 - 3. As Adam's disobedience was charged to us, Christ's obedience is charged to us (Rom 5:12-19).
 - 4. The Lord Jesus Christ was the mighty "David" chosen out of the people to earn it (Ps 89:19-37).
 - 5. The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Melchizedek, king of righteousness (Hebrews 7:2).
 - 6. God was in Christ reconciling the world of elect both penally and preceptively (II Cor 5:18-21).
- C. We get it in regeneration, in which we are re-created with a new righteous man (Eph 2:10; 4:24).
- D. And there will be a final revelation of it by God to the universe (Psalm 17:15; Galatians 5:5).
- E. We do not get it by any works of righteousness, for God has excluded them (Titus 3:5; Eph 2:9).

HOW DO WE KNOW IT?

- A. We lay hold of it for the assurance of our hearts by the evidences God has endorsed as proving it.
- B. We believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and means of righteousness (Rom 10:1-17).
 - 1. Faith is not a condition or requirement for righteousness, but for our evidence of it (Acts 13:39).
 - 2. Faith is a gift from Jesus Christ by righteousness, not our condition for righteousness (II Pet 1:1).
 - 3. As we add to our faith, which was given by Christ, we can make our election sure (II Pet 1:5-11).
 - 4. Faith is no more a condition for eternal life than is ready distribution of money (I Tim 6:17-19).
 - 5. Faith was counted to Abraham for righteousness; it was evidence (Gen 15:6 cp Ps 106:30-31).
 - 6. The only faith that counts is the faith that believes God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5).
 - 7. Faith, and works by worth, is the evidence a man is righteous, like Abel (Heb 11:4; Jas 2:12-26).
- C. We do righteousness as righteous saints, even as He is righteous (I John 2:29; 3:7,10; Acts 10:35).
- D. We also get it practically, for a restoration of fellowship with God, by confessing sins (I John 1:9).
- F. We count all things dung, including any thoughts of righteousness, to press for Christ (Phil 3:4-14).

Conclusion:

- 1. If the giving of the law on Sinai was glorious, you ought to be affected much more today (II Corinthians 3:9)!
- 2. When David contemplated God's righteousness compared to men, he knew it was infinite (Psalm 71:15-16).