

April 1, 2019

## **The Gift of Righteousness**

There are numerous kinds of righteousness. Some are acceptable to God, and some are not. Let us consider a few.

**SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS** is self-justification. A self-righteous person is usually ready to proclaim their own righteousness. Their actions, or their belief about their personal character, are the basis of their self-justification. Jesus rebuked such, saying, *“Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts:”* Luke 16:15.

**OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS-ES:** These are the *“works of righteousness”* Titus 3:5 a person does seeking to establish, show, or prove their righteousness. With Israel it was the offering of sacrifices and keeping of holy days. With others it is their religious giving or keeping of religious ordinances. For still others it is their *“good deeds”* and *“charitable acts”* which are done without love? I Corinthians 13:3. Many people trust in such things believing these will somehow make them righteous before God. Isaiah spoke of such things, saying, *“...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...”* Isaiah 64:6.

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW:** Just as Israel has done, multitudes in every generation have trusted *“commandment keeping”* to make or show themselves to be righteous. The apostle Paul is clear; *“by the deeds of the law there shall*

*no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*" Romans 3:20. If a person understands the purpose of religious law, they will never trust in it again. Paul said, "*Knowing this, that **the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners...***" 1 Timothy 1:9. Religious law identifies "sin," but it can never take it out of the heart of a person. Those who seek to serve God by religious law are identified as sinners by the very law they serve. That is its purpose! If they were righteous, they would not need a religious law to serve God.

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH:** God considers the faith of a person who "believes and trusts" him to be a "*righteousness*" far above sacrifices, circumcision, or any other religious work. The Bible is clear, "*FAITH (believing and trusting God) was counted to Abraham for righteousness.*" Romans 4:9. This does not mean that Abraham possessed salvation as provided by Jesus Christ. It simply means that the "heart of faith" in Abraham held great value before God, and it opened the door for him to receive great and precious promises.

Religious teachers have turned this simple truth into an absurdity. Some will tell you that the moment you confess Jesus Christ, God sees you as having the righteousness of Christ, perfect, innocent, clean, etc. It is commonly taught that if you "believe God," he will consider you to be something that is not actually true. Nowhere does the scripture say such a thing.

The "*righteousness of faith*" as taught in the scripture is not the same as having the salvation and redemption that comes through Jesus Christ.

The Bible speaks of many who had this *“righteousness of faith”* before Christ came, but they *“died in faith, not having received the promises ... God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”* Hebrews 11:13, 40.

Paul gives *“the righteousness of faith”* as the basis upon which any person can come to God. The Jews believed you had to come through the *“righteousness-es”* of the Law. Paul understood that anyone who would believe the gospel of Christ could come to God, whether they were a Jew or Gentile, pious or ungodly, slave or free. Their *“righteousness of faith”* would open the door of grace Romans 5:2 unto them so they could receive the salvation that Jesus Christ provided for all.

**THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** is different than *“the righteousness of faith.”* The *“righteousness of faith”* is what we offer unto God through believing the gospel of Christ. The *“gift of righteousness”* is what God gives unto us when we receive his great salvation! This is the gift that we receive *“by grace ..., through faith”* Ephesians 2:8.

This *“gift of righteousness”* is the fulfillment of all the prophecies of redemption. It is the *“new heart”* and *“new spirit”* that God promised his people. Ezekiel 36:25-27. It is God’s law written in our heart as he said he would do. Jeremiah 31:31-34. It is the clean heart and righteous spirit that David asked for. Psalms 51:10. Those who receive this *“gift of righteousness”* dwell in the kingdom of Christ where it is said, *“Thy people also shall be all righteous:”* Isaiah 60:21.

The apostle explains the gift of righteousness in the verses below.

**“...the grace of God, and THE GIFT BY GRACE, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”** Romans 5:15. This gift of righteousness abounds to as many as believe the truth of the gospel and trust in Christ.

**“...THE FREE GIFT is of many offences unto justification.”** Romans 5:16. This gift of righteousness can take the worst of sinners with *“many offences”* and *“justify”* them into a child of God, free from all sin!

**“...they which receive abundance of grace and of THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”** Romans 5:17. Those who receive this *“gift of righteousness”* will reign in victory, IN THIS LIFE, over sin Satan and all the power of darkness. As Paul later says, *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”* Romans 6:14.

**“...by the righteousness of one THE FREE GIFT came upon all men unto justification of life.”** Romans 5:18. This free *“gift of righteousness”* does not just justify you *“in God’s sight,”* it justifies your entire life! Everything is made new. As Paul said, *“the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* Galatians 2:20.

**“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”** Romans 5:19. Just as much as Adam made us to be sinners, Jesus Christ makes us to be righteous. It is his free gift to those who believe upon him. It is *“the gift of righteousness!”*