

THE TRUTH ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS

By Sue Whisenhunt

Righteousness is one of the greatest blessings of the new creation. It is a key word in Paul's Epistles to the Church of Jesus Christ. We will see, as we journey through Paul's writings, the greatness of this gift and the benefits of this gift that He purchased for Believers. As with anything that the Lord Jesus has purchased for us, we must receive it. All of His many blessings, promises and gifts we must pursue, acknowledge, receive and in them walk.

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of **the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17 NKJ)

Righteousness is a precious gift from God. It is a gift that is bestowed upon and given to us when we believe in Jesus Christ. Romans 3.22 AMP says, "**the righteousness of God which comes by believing** *with* personal trust *and* confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). **[And it is meant] for all who believe.** For there is no distinction."

We were made righteous when we were born-again. Every child of God has the same standing with our Father God. **Righteousness means being in right standing with God. Righteousness is the ability to stand in the presence of the Father without the sense of guilt, shame, condemnation, or inferiority (as though sin had never existed).** This righteousness gives us the avenue and the availability, in which to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4.16 NKJ reads "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

It is being able to come into the Holy of Holies, where our Abba (daddy) Father and Jesus live and converse - talk with them and worship them. We can have full and open relationship with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, our Father God and our brother and co-heir Jesus. We may have sweet talks with God as Adam and Eve once did in the Garden of Eden before they sinned. We may also come boldly and freely to admit and confess our sins. 1 John 1:9 NKJ says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The Lord showed me a vision; I saw a person standing who was wearing a white robe. I saw this robe with a dark spot on it. I knew that spot was a sin that this person had committed. Now his robe was still all white except for one dark spot. Then this person confessed their sin to God; the bible doesn't say to ask for forgiveness; it says to confess your sin, in other words, name that sin-admit freely you did it. For instance, if you had lied, say, "Father, I lied and that is sin." Then receive your forgiveness. Then, I saw the spot disappear off of the robe. The spot was unrighteousness and when we confess our sin, we are forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness as it says in 1 John 1.9 NKJ.

We have already been forgiven for every sin we have already committed and every sin we ever will commit. You may ask, when? It was at the cross that the sin penalty was totally paid. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6.23 NKJ). Jesus bore the sin of all mankind on Himself and died on the cross. Everyone's forgiveness is already available for them to receive when we confess our sin. It's as though it's already at the bank, waiting for you to make a withdrawal from your account because it has already been paid.

There are many in the Body of Christ who have a sin-consciousness. They have a sense of guilt, condemnation, and inferiority as though sin had never

been paid for and carried away. "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJ). Jesus bore all sin on Himself and carried it away. Righteousness means in the Greek, "Just and the quality of being right." Broadly, the word suggests conformity to the revealed will of God in all respects. It is both judicial and gracious. God declares the believer righteous in the sense of acquitting him, and imputes righteousness to him. "For if by the one man's offense (trespass) death reigned through the one, **much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17 NKJ)

Even though, through Jesus, we have been given righteousness and grace as we read above, it needs to be received. The gift has been given, but have you taken it? Have you received it? Do you possess it? For example, on your birthday, you are given gifts, but it's up to you whether you will receive them or not: then will you open them and use them? It's easy to see this comparison in the natural, but these are spiritual gifts. How does one receive spiritual gifts? The same way you received your salvation. You take it by faith. "and be found in Him, not having my own **righteousness**, which *is* from the law, **but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith**" (Philippians 3.9 NKJ).

We must become righteous conscious to reign in life. If we continually have a sense of guilt, condemning ourselves, and inferiority, we will see ourselves only as sinners saved by grace. We were sinners and we had the nature of a sinner before we were saved; now that we are saved, we no longer have the nature of a sinner within us. We have been transformed on the inside and our nature has changed (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are called saints in the New Testament See: Ephesians 1:18 & 4:12; I Corinthians 1:2 & 14:33;

Jude 1:3; There are approximately 50 Scriptures calling Believers saints in the NT. If we do not see ourselves in and take on our new identity of a saint of God, we will never rise in life to see ourselves as Jesus has called and destined us to walk. He has called us "more than conquerors." Therefore we must "Awaken to righteousness, and do not sin: for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame" (2 Corinthians 15:34 NKJ).

There are two distinct expressions of coverings in the Bible; "the garment of salvation" and "the robe of righteousness," Isaiah 61:10 AMP speaks of this, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...." The garment of salvation is given to us when we get saved. When we receive Jesus as our savior and believe Romans 10.9-10 NKJ. God loves us and relates to and with each one of us in very different and special ways. To me, that speaks of his greatness and unsurpassing compassion and mercy towards each of us. The robe of righteousness is given to his sons and daughters, who are pursuing and hungry to know Jesus, their Father God and Holy Spirit more intimately. The bible describes this in many ways; "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added onto you." (Mathew 6.33). "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3.13-14 NKJ). "But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarded of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 10.6 NKJ) "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Mathew 5:6 NKJ). These Scriptures speak of a constant hunger and thirsting and pursuing of your God.

Now, let's substitute the definition of righteousness into this Scripture above.

I think it will assist you in seeing how powerful righteousness really is – “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after - being in right standing with God, being just and the quality of being right; standing in the presence of the Father **without** the sense of guilt, condemnation, or inferiority (as though sin had never existed) for they shall be filled.”

The word righteousness suggests conformity to the revealed will of God in all respects. So we are not only hungering and thirsting after being in right standing with God; we are hungering and thirsting after doing right. Righteousness means being right and doing right.

I believe that the robe of righteousness is placed on His children and sons and daughters when they pursue Him, past merely being saved; when they are actively seeking Him and His will for their lives. Those individuals who are obedient to what they’re reading in the Word every day and how He is leading them. The Lord works with His own all differently and is working in different areas of our lives. We must be obedient to His Word, to His promptings and His guiding us as we go through each day walking with Him.

The Amplified bible says, “Much more surely will **those who receive** (God’s) overflowing grace (unmerited favor) and **the gift of righteousness... reign as Kings in life thru Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).” Are you reigning in life as a king? Is there victory in your life? When you make **Jesus the Lord of your life** you receive the abundance of grace and the gift of Righteousness to enable you to reign in life as a son of the King! “He is the captain of your salvation” (Hebrews 2:10). When He is Lord over you, you are placed in a position of authority over your own life and your circumstances, the same as a king reigns over his kingdom. Are you reigning?? Are you on top of your circumstances or are you beneath them?**

To walk as a son, we must agree with the Word that says we are righteous. We must believe that we are righteous. We have been given the gift of righteousness. We must become righteousness minded. "We were sinners through one man's offense, but now, through our Lord and Savior we are made righteous" (Romans 6:17). The Bible calls us brethren, saints, believers and the children and sons of God. The Bible no longer calls us sinners or unrighteous. As believers, we must learn to understand what all righteousness entails. We must depend on this free gift of righteousness and by faith assimilate this Truth into our lives. A righteousness consciousness is a victory consciousness in Christ Jesus. Righteousness is the object of redemption; to place you back in fellowship with your Father, His Son Jesus, and Holy Spirit. Sonship would be worthless without righteousness; we would be cowardly instead of sons. Another element of righteousness, being the object of redemption, is our prayers begin to work. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:12).

Another aspect of righteousness is being justified; I look at this as – just as if I'd never sinned. Broadly, the word suggests conformity to the revealed will of God in all respects. I John 2.29 say's, "If you know He is righteous, you know that **everyone who practices righteousness** is born of Him." I John 3.7-10 explicitly tells us that he who walks uprightly, that is he who does what he knows to be right in the sight of the Lord, practices righteousness.

Understand that righteousness manifests itself in behavior which means righteousness will always manifest itself in righteous behavior. Practicing righteousness will always manifest as love for the brethren. Love is the great command of the New Testament. We must "Awaken to righteousness

and sin not" (I Corinthians 15:34). Jesus Himself came to the Jordon River to be baptized by John. When John the Baptist refuted Him, Jesus said, "Permit it to be so now for it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Mathew 3:15 NKJ). Jesus Himself practiced righteousness.

How do we become righteous-minded? By agreeing with the Word of Truth; and thinking like the Bible. "and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12.2).

Your foremost transformed way of thinking must include believing you are righteous. In this, John 17:23 NKJ becomes a heartfelt reality. **My Father loves me as much as He loves Jesus.** "I in them and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that **You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.**"

When I began to understand and really know about the righteousness of God, I came to a place in the Lord where I knew HE was for me, not against me. I knew that **HE IS A GOOD GOD** and not on His throne ready to punish me for anything I did wrong. He is a GOD OF LOVE and HE LOVES ME and HE LOVES YOU. He is not up there on his throne looking for things that I do wrong. No, He sees me through the Blood of Jesus. I came to a place of PEACE with my Father God, KNOWING He was ready and waiting to help me in any way that He could. I came to a place in my soul - my mind, my will, and my emotions - where there was a supernatural peace in my relationship with my Abba Father; that all was well between us.

My walk in the Lord became victorious because my mindset changed. I knew that God was hearkening to my prayers; that His ears were open to what I prayed. In knowing these Truths, my faith was able to connect with them and use them in a new exciting and fulfilling way. My joy grew

because my prayers were getting answers. There was peace in my heart between God and myself. I began to experience an assurance in my heart about the Godhead, that I am loved unconditionally.

We reign in LIFE through Jesus our Lord. Sin and death have been swallowed up in His death and in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Sin and death can no longer reign over us if we do not allow it. The choice is ours. The choice is ALWAYS ours. We can by our thoughts, our faith, our words and actions overcome the enemy. Righteousness is an active force that we can use against the devil, his demons and the kingdom of darkness.

The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17 NKJ.) These things, righteousness, peace and joy, are forces in our lives that we set in motion by firstly recognizing they are from God, given to us as a gift. Secondly by faith receiving them and recognizing they live inside of us because the Kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21 NKJ). Righteousness is a spiritual force residing within us that we stand in and use positionally in our lives.

Jesus said there is great recompense, when we do "seek Him earnestly and diligently" (Hebrews 11:6 AMP). Proverbs 12:28 say's, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in its path there is no death."

The Law of sin and death has lost its hold over us. It can no longer rule and reign over our lives. It can no longer hold us down. Romans 8:2 NKJ say's it very plain, clear and concise; "**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**"

The word **made** in this scripture means: to liberate, acquit, set free, and deliver. In the New Testament the word is used exclusively for Jesus setting believers at liberty from the dominion of sin.

Proverbs 13:6 says "Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless." That word **guards** means: To watch, protect, keep, preserve, and be hidden. I know what you are thinking, who is blameless? You and I are when we confess our sin. One of the Holy Spirit's job responsibilities is to show us where we have missed it. He is to "convict the world of sin." So listen to Him, He will show you where you have sinned. Remember, I John 1.9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness." So the key here is to be quick to confess our sins; that means when we sin, run to Jesus and confess our sins right away. The way has been made open by Jesus Christ so that we may run to Him. Do not wallow in sin, feeling bad about it and be self-condemning. That's agreeing with the enemy of your soul. We must not allow ourselves to come under condemnation from the enemy, or even condemn ourselves. When we condemn ourselves, we are agreeing with our enemy and not standing in our righteousness. We must even, at times, after we have confessed our sin and received our forgiveness and cleansing, forgive ourselves for the sin that we have committed. We are not honoring our place as sons if we do not take our place in righteousness.

You can think and say it to yourself and even out loud: "I have been made righteous; and I am in right standing with my Father. I have open access to His throne and His ears are open to my prayers, to my praise and worship.

You must carry this righteous conscious thought every day-
**I AM IN RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD; MY FATHER IN
HEAVEN LOVES ME AS MUCH AS HE LOVES HIS SON JESUS.**