

Established in Righteousness

Part 1: "What do you want me to do for you?" / Ministry of Righteousness

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Are you perfect before God right now?

Are you perfect before God RIGHT NOW?

The goal of this series is to establish you in RIGHTEOUSNESS - in being completely perfect before God ... right NOW, and always!

It takes repetition to really get the message of grace. We need reminded over and over and over about our righteous standing before God by the blood of Jesus Christ. This message changes everything! This TRUTH will set you free!

Hebrews 5 makes it clear. If you are unskilled in the word (teaching) of righteousness, you will not be able to handle the meat of the Word, but instead only milk.

Paul was clear - no other foundation can be laid than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Peter said to "earnestly desire pure spiritual milk." What's spiritual milk? A specific message - the message of righteousness. Not self-righteousness, but Christ-righteousness! The message of righteousness is the pure spiritual milk that Peter says to earnestly desire that you may grow thereby. There is NO OTHER message that causes you to grow spiritually as a foundation like the message of grace - the message of your righteousness in Christ!

Why Grace?

Romans 1:16 says "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes ...*" The gospel of grace is the POWER OF GOD for setting you free of what issue ails you! A lot of believers will talk about their problems but I don't know if they are talking to their problem about their Father! It's grace that transforms.

Our tendency is to try to address issues by speaking about the issue. But, 1 Cor. 15:34 says to awake to righteousness and sin not. When we awake to righteousness, we will stop sinning. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7) A righteousness-consciousness produces righteous living. A sin-consciousness produces sin. And the strength of sin is the law. What we are going after in this series is being ESTABLISHED in righteousness!

Established in Righteousness

Isaiah 54:11-14 says the following:

“O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones. All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.”

Hunger thru Humility

Our hunger level needs to go up. To the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet, but the satisfied soul loathes even honey sweet things).

I am encouraging you ... TURN ON YOUR HUNGER!

Jesus often asked “what do you want Me to do for you?”

I have NOT arrived. You have NOT arrived. We have NOT arrived. I want our hunger to go up. I am drawing a line in the sand. Our hunger needs to go up. We have NOT arrived.

“What do you want me to do for you?”

When blind Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus those around him told him to “shut up!” I’m looking for some people to cry out to Jesus! God the Father is more interested in the cries of one hungry one than He is in decorum. Jesus has a whole multitude with Him (more than 1000 people) and stops them all for ONE man crying out to Him!

You would think Jesus knew exactly what blind Bartimaeus wanted Jesus to do for him. Yet Jesus asks “what do you want Me to do for you?”

You have not because you ask not ... Jesus actually caused Bartimaeus to come into a place of faith. He is healed and then Jesus says “your faith has made you well.”

That’s what I am doing right now ... I am asking you “what do you want Jesus to do for you?”

You are part of a church and coming to Sunday service because you want Jesus to do something for you! I’m encouraging you to HUNGER! What is it that you are hungry for in the Lord? Jesus is asking you “what do you want Me to do for you - this year, this month?”

We have to learn the place of being satisfied yet still hungry. Humility is what keeps you there. All hunger stems from humility. Humility is an accurate view of yourself.

I would estimate that than 1/2 of the backs I pray for are healed instantly ... yet it seems like I rarely have success in praying for the flu or something like that. I am taking note of that. That's humility. It's an honest view of where I am at. I am seeing breakthrough in one area but in another area I am not seeing breakthrough. If I get hungry about that I will go after that and I will ask and I will receive.

Sometimes we get so enamored with the answers to last season's prayers that we stop praying a new season's prayers.

If we think that we've arrived, we're right. Whatever extent I think that I've arrived is the extent that I stop growing. And yet, we are always satisfied in the Lord and in His love ...

Yet the messages that used to be so sweet to a hungry soul can become something that we despise because we've become over-satisfied with breakthrough that we think we have but we don't actually fully have. We've NOT arrived.

I praise God for all the testimonies we've seen and heard! Praise God we've left! And praise God for His love that makes us content at all times and in all things, but we've not yet arrived ... there's more!

If you need breakthrough in your business ... if you need breakthrough in health ... You know, ***I'm waiting for some family in our church to get so serious about healing that you never again have a sickness in your household.*** It's just a matter of whether you want it. It's available to you. It's not a burden and it's not a work. I'm not talking about making faith a work. I'm just saying it's whether you want something or not.

John 15:4-5 says *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."* I feel like the Father is saying right now "do you want to go on an adventure with Me, or do you just want to stay here?" It's like your Father is offering a trip to Hawaii but you're like "but the mansion feels great." I feel like the Lord is offering upgrade to each person and I am challenging you to say "are you hungry for more?" Because if we think that we've arrived, we're right ... that's it ... until we get hungry again!

It's humility that brings us back to a place of hunger. Humility to say "well actually, I don't see flus healed typically ... and when am I going to see cancer disappear instantly ... and when am I going to step more fully into my gifting and calling ... and what does the Lord want to do in my heart so that I am ready to step into that destiny?"

I'm trying to stir up faith and hope in your heart right now for things that you've turned off because we have lost a sense of hope. But He is the God of all hope and He's going to give you joy and peace in believing!

Jesus continues in John 15:7-11 *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."*

In other words, this is THE walk of a disciple of Christ. To stay connected to Him and to bear a whole lot of fruit through a WHOLE LOT OF ASKING! It should be that if any member of our church family was to ask another member of our church family "what are you ASKING God for" And if something doesn't come to your mind immediately you could say "let me help you find a place of hope so that you can start asking again!"

This is the culture of our church - to receive. The righteous shall live by faith. Faith ASKS!

Jesus makes it clear in verse 11 why He has shared these things *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."* Religion asks you to follow a God who doesn't answer your prayers. If religion had a head I would kick it with my size 13 boots out of here. Religion asks you to follow a God who doesn't answer prayers. But Jesus said "I want you to be in the process of asking and receiving - producing fruit through abiding - always being in that process that your joy may be made full."

The joy in your walk with God is contingent upon your abiding and receiving in faith the fruit of your connection. Religion tries to convince you that you don't need fruit. God is saying that your joy in your walk with Him is contingent upon being fruitful. It is not even an option for our walk with Him.

Yet what we tend to do is to enjoy eating the fruit of last season and forget to do the things that produced last season's fruit. And part of the thing that you can forget to do is to ask again. To ask for the breakthrough again. What is it in this season?

I know some things are seasonal. Sometimes it is clear the Lord has brought us into a broad place, a season of rest, not a season of conquering new territory. Well good. But there is also a season for taking NEW GROUND.

I feel like I need to stir you all! What's the fruit that you are after? We have NOT arrived. Jesus is the standard. Every person that came to Him He had a prophetic word, revelation, a healing, a deliverance for. He always knew what the Father was doing and saying. If I'm not there yet, I haven't arrived yet. Oh I just want to stir faith for more in you! Just read the Gospels and say "that's me! And if I don't look like that yet, praise God He has more for me because He lives inside me!"

This grace message is what WILL EMPOWER whatever it is that you are looking for. Your connection to the Father (Heb. 8:12) is contingent upon you recognizing that He will be merciful to your unrighteousness and does not even remember your sins and lawless deeds anymore! That's what causes you to see the Father face to face for yourself. And it's out of your connection that all the abundance - all the fruitfulness - comes.

The gospel of grace is what empowers your connection. Your connection is through the gospel of grace.

"What do you want Me to do for you?" Jesus asked. "Uh, duh, I'm blind ..." But once Bartimaeus said "that I would receive my sight, Lord" then he was healed. And Jesus said "your faith, which looked like asking, has made you well!" (all paraphrases)

If you get nothing else from this message, I want to encourage you, you NEED TO ASK. If you are not asking, you are not "faith-ing."

Established in Righteousness (take 2)

Isaiah 54:11-14 says the following:

"O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones. All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you."

Unfortunately most believers are storm tossed and not comforted, but God gives a promise in verse 14 "in righteousness you shall be established ..." God wants to establish each of His children in righteousness. This is the foundational truth. It is the foundational teaching. If you ever wonder "what should I teach a new believer first?" The answer is the gospel of grace. No other foundation can be laid than that which is laid. They should be earnestly desiring pure spiritual milk and you should be giving them pure spiritual milk - which is the gospel of grace - ministering to them their righteousness in Christ.

Righteous Standing is Part of the Gift of Salvation!

Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death, but the **gift** of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eternal life (going to Heaven) is a gift. You can't earn it. Gifts are given freely; they are not given because you have earned something. If you earned it, it is a wage ... but if it is given freely, it is a gift.

Now, I want to connect this concept of the “gift of God” for you to Romans 5:17. There we read “*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.*”

When you get saved you receive the GIFT of eternal life. You don’t just receive the gift of eternal life. You received, with the gift of eternal life, another gift that’s part of that salvation gift package - the gift of righteousness! Which means to be in perfect right standing before the Father such that if someone asked you “are you perfect before God right now” you would emphatically, unequivocally, and immediately answer “yes!”

Knowing our right standing before God is absolutely essential if we are going to be one who ASKS! 1 John 3 says that if our heart condemns us we don’t have confidence before the Father. But if our heart does not condemn us we have confidence that we’ll receive what we ask! Asking is contingent upon confidence before the Father and confidence before the Father is contingent upon no condemnation.

The Ministry of Righteousness

Let’s look at John 16:7-11. The word we’re going to focus on here is the word “conviction.” For years I’ve heard believers (myself included) talk about “being convicted by Holy Spirit.” And we will see in John 16 that Holy Spirit is trying to convict you of something. Now, “con-viction” comes from two Latin root words “with - to see.” Conviction of the Holy Spirit means to see with God what He is seeing.

So if I say “Holy Spirit is convicting me of something” then I should be seeing what Holy Spirit is seeing - with Him. That’s conviction.

So let’s look at John 16:7-11 to see what Holy Spirit is convicting you of right now.

John 16:7-11 “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of **sin**, because they do not believe in Me; of **righteousness**, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of **judgment**, because the ruler of this world is judged.*”

Who is the Helper? Holy Spirit! So this is Jesus talking about the ministry of Holy Spirit in our lives.

Typically, when reading quickly we’d see “*He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*” and couple that with that with church vernacular and conclude “see, Holy Spirit is convicting me of sin; it’s right there.” But you have to keep reading!

What's this next phrase mean? "...of **sin**, because they do not believe in Me" Do you **not** believe in Jesus? If so, Holy Spirit is actually convicting you of sin. Why? So that you can receive your Savior!

Do you remember John the Baptist's ministry? Was it not empowered by the Holy Spirit? And what did He do? His message was "you all are sinners ... you need a Savior!" John was doing what he had been prophesied to do. He was sent ahead of the Lord to prepare the way of the Lord. Holy Spirit is still ministering in the same way. He is saying "I am convicting the world of sin. Why? Because they do not believe in Jesus."

So Holy Spirit is convicting "*the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of **sin**, because they do not believe in Me; of **righteousness**, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of **judgment**, because the ruler of this world is judged.*"

To unbelievers, Holy Spirit is convicting them of their need of a Savior.

To believers, He is convicting us of our righteous standing before God because of the blood of His Son Jesus which cleanses us from ALL unrighteousness.

To satan, Holy Spirit is convicting him that he (satan) has already been judged.

What's one of the names for satan? The accuser of the brethren ...

Have you ever noticed that satanic symbols are often inversions of things. For instance, a cross that is upside down, etc. Satan has no creative capacity so he only invests and perverts what exists in the Kingdom. So the accuser of the brethren will naturally say an inversion of what God is saying.

Watch how the accuser of the brethren partners with unsuspecting Christians to communicate the exact opposite (the inversion) of what Holy Spirit is actually ministering:

Holy Spirit is saying to a sinner "you need a Savior." Holy Spirit is saying to a believer "you're righteous." What's the opposite?

I remember being unsaved as a young adult. Here's the feeling I remember (and many others have experienced) "whatever that stuff about Jesus ... I'm fine." Who's telling you that? The one who once you get saved is going to accuse you of not being fine!

The accuser of the brethren is working in unbelievers' lives to say "you're fine." But then once you get saved and actually are righteous by the blood of Jesus what we say is "Holy Spirit is convicting me of being a sinner." But actually Holy Spirit is convicting you of being **RIGHTEOUS** before God! Because He became sin who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him! (2 Cor. 5:21)

So as a born-again believer, if you want to see with Holy Spirit right now, what you need to see is you are RIGHTEOUS before God! That's what Holy Spirit is ministering to you day-in and day-out, day-in and day-out! He is saying "Righteous! Righteous! Righteous!"

The accuser of the brethren on the other hand is accusing you over and over and over. And if you don't know this truth then you can fall for the lie.

Let me give you another scripture to back up what I am saying. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 3:5-19
"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

What we see above is basically 2 columns of a chart in which the New Covenant is being contrasted with the Old Covenant. You see 4 descriptors of the Old Covenant (in red) that are being used interchangeably (because they are the same) to describe the Old Covenant. Contrastingly you will also see 4 descriptors of the New Covenant (in green) being used interchangeably (because they are the same).

The letter is referring to the law for righteousness - the law of Moses. Written and engraved on the 10 commandment stones. It is the ministry of death. It is the ministry of condemnation. It was the ministry designed to imprison everything under sin. To function as a tutor or school master to bring all to Christ as they recognize their need for a Savior. It was capped with the ultimate Old Covenant prophet - John the Baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord. To baptize people into repentance - into a change of mind. To help them realize they were sinners in need of a Savior and that by works of the law no flesh will be justified!

By contrast, the new covenant is called the ministry of the Spirit and the ministry of righteousness! If the ministry of the Spirit is the New Covenant and the "ministry of the Spirit" is being used interchangeably with this phrase "the ministry of righteousness" what is Holy Spirit ministering to every believer? RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Couple that (2 Cor. 3) with John 16 and you are really going to be able to help people out! Imagine if as a believer that every time the accuser of the brethren fires an accusation my way that I presume it's from Holy Spirit! Satan walks around as an angel of light doesn't he?

The ministry of Holy Spirit is a ministry of righteousness. He's ministering your righteousness to you!

Activation to Ask

We have to get aggressive in our asking. Do you have something you are asking God for? Even if you think it is obvious to God what you want, put it into words. Answer Jesus' question "what do you want Me to do for you?"

Every part of God's Word is like a seed that carries in it the DNA of a spiritual fruit. When we get God's Word in our heart it naturally produces the fruit of God by itself! (see Mk. 4:26-29 & Prov. 4:20-23) *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."* (Jn 15:7)

Here's what I'd encourage you to do: find a scripture to stand on.

I remember when we were having to contend for a pregnancy that seemed threatened we found a scripture to stand on. It was Proverbs 11:21 "the seed of the righteous is delivered!" So I declared "this baby will be delivered and delivered healthy!" I had to get that word which is a seed itself into my heart so that it would produce the fruit of God in my life.

I want to encourage you to find a scripture to stand on! If you need a job, declare Psalms 37 *"I've been young and now am old, yet I have NEVER seen the righteous forsaken nor his children begging bread!"* If you need a business blessed, declare that "I a tither, my vine will NOT fail to bear!" (Malachi 3) If you need a car fixed and it looks like it is going to be expensive, declare "the Lord will rebuke the devourer for my sake!" (also Malachi 3). If you need physical healing declare "by His stripes I WAS healed!" (1 Pe. 2:24)

All of the promises of God are yes and amen IN HIM. And that's why we need the message of righteousness because when we step into condemnation we actually step out of faith. Faith works by love - not only our love for other people - but also knowing the love of the Father causes faith to well up in our heart. Faith is a tag-along to the love of the Father. When you get the love of the Father faith tags along with it.

So, do these 3 things:

- 1) Stir that hunger up again! We have NOT arrived!
- 2) It is all about grace and our righteous standing before Him by His works not our works. This keeps us in that place of connection! (We will pick this up next time)
- 3) Find a scripture to stand on. Find a promise to stand on. Plant it in your heart. It WILL produce fruit.

AMEN!