

Valuing what God Values

Part 2: Righteousness by Faith

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Christian Philosophy

There is no more important message than the message of righteousness by faith. This series is about valuing what God values - about Christian philosophy. Christian philosophy is to think like Christ. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is about trying to discern good and evil for ourselves. God is saying “that is going to kill you.” God has not made us to have the discernment for good and evil. His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. We therefore, are encouraged by God to simply just do what He says.

Amazingly, Jesus Himself did exactly that. He did not count equality with God something to be grasped. John 5:19-20 says that Jesus just did what He saw the Father doing. That is the start and the finish of Christian Philosophy! It’s enough that we would be like our Father - like our teacher! (Mt. 10:24-25) This is the mind of Christ - to just do what the Father is doing and say what the Father is saying. The mind of Christ is not a laundry list of facts. Of course once we know the Father, what He says, and how He is, we end up knowing “things” about Him ... but it is not coming out of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We do not want to have a “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” operating system and insert the word of God into it as just a program. God wants His Word and His Ways to be our entire operating system.

Grace

Grace is God’s willingness to use His power and ability on our behalf. “By His stripes I was healed” is an expression of grace. Jesus took on our sickness in order to give us His health. That’s grace -and we access it by faith. So, grace provides in a broad spectrum. One element that grace provides is righteousness by faith! 2 Corinthians 5:21 says “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” Jesus actually became sin on the cross. He went from having a Papa “Abba, Abba” to “God, why have You forsaken Me?” Jesus’ relationship with God was completely cut off in that moment - He was fully forsaken of God. Jesus had become

sin and could no more have communion with God in that moment. He became sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him!

If we don't truly know for ourselves what the Word of God definitively says on matters, we will have what 1 Corinthians 8:7 calls a "weak conscience" when asked to provide a defense for our beliefs. We need to be firmed up in the creation story, what the Bible says about gender, firmed up about what God says about abortion, firmed about grace and righteousness by faith only, and firmed up in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. When we are discipling others, it is not enough to only know it "good enough" for ourselves; we want to know it well enough to set others free as well!

When discipling others, we are not called to replicate the world - we are called to replicate the Word! If we are not solid in issues controversial to the world, we will tip-toe around these topics and people's lives won't get transformed to what the Word actually says. For instance, it is only in being truly sured up in "righteousness by faith and faith alone" that we can actually set others free from condemnation.

The Law is not for the Righteous Person

Paul worked as a skilled master builder to establish churches in the grace of God. Paul had a tremendous revelation of grace which God had given to him over many years. He was so firmed up in what the Lord had shown him about grace that he even opposed Peter to his face when Peter stood condemned before them. Paul would go into a city, get converts, and get them founded in the doctrine. Paul would then put a pastor over that church to help them continue in the doctrine. In Ephesus, Paul place Timothy in charge as pastor. The letters of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy are to encourage Timothy in his young pastorship.

At the very beginning of his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3-9) we read this: *"As I urged (**charged**) you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. 5 Now **the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,** 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. 8 **But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person."***

Paul urged / charged / commanded Timothy with a commissioning before leaving him in charge in Ephesus. The Ephesian church seemed to have done very well under Timothy's early leadership. (For example, the letter to the Ephesians was a glowing report, whereas the letter to the Galatians talked about them having been "bewitched" by the lie that they could start in the spirit but finish in the flesh.)

Paul immediately told Timothy to “*charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*” Paul is saying “I set up the doctrine and I am now charging you, Timothy, that you charge others to not teach any other doctrine!” He told them not to let people come in and start talking about genealogies - about the strength of the flesh. Paul was telling Timothy “that’s not going to build up the body of Christ. He says that Godly edification is in FAITH - not the flesh!

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.” Paul was not talking about the 10 Commandments or the commandment to love one another. He is talking about the commandment that he gave Timothy in verse 3! He urged / charged / commanded Timothy to protect the doctrine he had established because if Timothy would do that the results would be *“love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith!”* We have that at Agathos because we have been founded in the doctrine Paul was telling Timothy to hold fast to!

Continuing in verse 6 we read *“from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”* Paul was warning Timothy that if you let this sort of idle / vain / worthless talk slip in from those who are trying to teach the law without knowing what they are doing, you will not get the sort of results you are looking for in your church! You won’t have love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith. Paul is saying you can have all of those good results through faith, but you are not going to have it the other way.

“But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully ...” It appears that we can use the law unlawfully or wrongly! Watch verse 9: *“knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person.”* Who’s righteous? Those who are in Christ! He became sin who knew no sin in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him!

The law is not for the righteous person! The law is not for the believer! The first thing that Paul wrote to Timothy, the young pastor who had taken over the church that he had set up was to tell him “if you want the sort of results that you are used to seeing in this church, be careful and charge them that no other doctrine according to the flesh. Everything according to faith - so you can get the results that God has for your church to have! And that’s what we have at Agathos!”

But, as people come in, they have not been taught this so we each have to be transformative to them! Salt happens to things. Light happens to things. We are supposed to be transformative agents for those coming to our church. Revelation is meant to happen to things and Peter is charging Agathos in Jesus’ Name! No other doctrine will come forth from this church than that of righteousness by faith apart from works that no one may boast! That’s the doctrine!

Romans 10:4 says *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”*

Romans 7:4,6 say *“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God ... But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”*

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes! That is the foundation of the revelation that this house carries! We are to guard this revelation! This can be a contentious in the church at large. The tendency is to mix the law with grace such that grace is no longer grace - or to mix grace into the law such that the law is no longer the law! But God keeps things separate when they are meant to be separate.

Holy Spirit is Convicting Believers - of Righteousness!

Jesus had a lot to say about people rejecting God’s Word in order to preserve the tradition of men. John 16:7-11 says *“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. **8** And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **9** of sin, because they do not believe in Me; **10** of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; **11** of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”*

Does the Holy Spirit convict of sin? Yes! Who does He convict of sin? Those that “do not believe in Me” of sin. Holy Spirit is convicting those that do not believe in Jesus of their need for a savior.

Holy Spirit is convicting believers not of sin, but of righteousness! Jesus was telling His disciples that He had been ministering righteousness by faith to His disciples while He walked the earth. Jesus was saying “when I go away, Holy Spirit will come to remind you of all I’ve taught you - to convict you of righteousness!” Holy Spirit is not convicting believers of sin; He is convicting us of righteousness!

The enemy is called the “accuser of the brethren” in Revelation 12:9-10. The enemy’s job is to accuse you! Does the enemy accuse you of righteousness? No! He accuses you of being who you are not. The enemy’s lies - if believed - will always make you hypocritical. He tells those who have not received the Lord they are fine and don’t need a savior. The Holy Spirit’s ministry to unbelievers, on the other hand, is to convict them of their need for a Savior!

If He became sin who knew no sin so that believers could become the righteousness of God in Him, then what do you think Holy Spirit will be trying to convict believers of? Their righteousness before God in Christ!!! Why would Holy Spirit be working to convict you of being a sinner when The Son died to make you a saint? Satan, on the other hand, accuses the brethren continually before God. Satan is constantly accusing the believers who are righteous by faith of not being righteous, but all believers have a Great High Priest who is eternally, continually, and successfully ministering

righteousness on their behalf before the throne of God in the Heavenly Holy of Holies. And IF we do sin, we have an advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is constantly declaring “righteous, righteous, righteous, he’s righteous, she’s righteous because of Me declares the Lord!”

Holy Spirit is constantly wanting to convict us - to cause us to see what He sees - that we are righteous before God. You will notice that after the resurrection in the New Testament that you will not be able to find a single place that refers to a believer as a sinner! There is one spot ... Paul talking about his pre-born-again state saying he was a “chief sinner” because he had been killing Christians! Paul shared that so we could see that if grace was good enough for him it is definitely good enough for us!

How does Paul address his letters to believers? To the saints! He did not write to the “sinners trying to be holy in Ephesus.” To the “saints!” To the saints at Agathos! If we are going to partner with the Holy Spirit in the discipleship process, what are we convicting them of? Their righteousness before God! If their hearts condemn them, God is greater than their heart, so let us show them what God thinks of them!

God Cannot and Will not be Angry with Us!

Isaiah 54:9-10 say “*For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,*” Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.” God has sworn to each of us that He would not be angry with us! It is impossible for God to be angry with you. God’s faithfulness is first to His Himself. There is nothing greater that He can be faithful to than His Word. He is not a man that He should lie and here He swore that He would never be angry with us!

Perhaps you have been in prayer and felt a little bit sheepish before God because you had messed something up. If you felt like that; you were wrong. He can’t be angry with you. He’s bound Himself by His Word. “*I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you ... nor shall My covenant of peace be removed.*” We need to rehearse that reality in our hearts until it becomes the farthest thing from our thinking that God could be angry with us!

When God made this promise, He made an un-conditional covenant. The covenant God made with Noah was an unconditional one. It was not like the 10 Commandments. The law for righteousness was about man doing His part so God could do His. The covenant with Noah was completely based on God’s promise, not man’s performance. Notice rainbows keep being shown in the sky even though folks are sinning. God’s covenant with Noah was completely unconditional. As God swore that He would not flood the earth again, so God has sworn that He would NOT be angry with us!

All of the wrath of God for all sin for all time actually went on Jesus. We, as believers, need to study to show ourselves approved - rightly dividing the Word of God. All of the anger for all time got put on Jesus; that means there is none left for you! There is even none left for the people that don't know Him yet either, so we can minister with absolute love and no reservation because the wrath for their sin got put on Christ too. God already took care of His part of the reconciliation (Romans 5:10) which is why the angels declared on earth "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*" (Lk. 2:14)

There will be a day of judgment - a day of wrath - when people will be judged according to Jesus' Word ... namely whether they received Christ or not. But today is the Day of Grace! Now is the appointed time for salvation! We need to guard our hearts. God has promised that He will not be angry with us. He can't. It's not how He relates to us! And, in turn, we can relate to others with God's love unreservedly. That's the gospel that we carry!

Nothing but Goodness!

Isaiah 54:11 continues "*O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,*" This describes, unfortunately, many believers. It speaks about being tossed about by every storm and circumstance of life that comes your way. God's heart is grieved for them. "*O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted*" Instead of being tossed about, God wants to lay a beautiful foundation for believers! "*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.*"

God is wanting EVERY believer to be "established in righteousness!" The Holy Spirit is convicting us of righteousness. He is establishing us in righteousness! God is saying "I'm never going to be angry with you. Jesus paid it all. You can receive righteousness by faith and now my work is to convict you of righteousness. To establish you in righteousness." God is working to give believers a beautiful foundation - righteousness by faith in Christ Jesus.

If you look at verse 15, we see that "*Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.*" Righteousness means to be in right standing with God. If we think we are not at peace with God (therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God. Romans 5:1) If we do not know we have peace with God, if we do not know that we are right with God by faith, if we are listening to the accuser of the brethren accuse us of being sinners (and thinking it is actually the Holy Spirit doing it) ... you will conclude that bad things in your life potentially came from Him. If America has a covenant of peace with England, we would never think a missile that landed on our shore came

from England ... but we might think it came from Iran. When you truly know your relationship status with God, it can tell you that bad things will not come from Him!

God wants you to be established in righteousness so that you will be far from oppression because you will not fear God doing bad things to you - and therefore from terror because it will not come near you. "If God is for us, who can be against us!?" If we know we are right with God, you will not receive fear from the enemy as something from God - because you know He only has good things to give us!

"Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me." trouble will come in all of our lives. But NOT because of God! God is not sending ANY bad into any of our lives! This is totally counter-cultural but it is true! God will never put anything on you that He put on Jesus! He put on Jesus everything He didn't want on us! He will not put sin on us (or even condemnation for it) because He put all of that on Christ! What is God going to put on you? Righteousness! He is going to convict us of our right standing before Him!

God is not going to put sickness on you. He put that on Christ so it didn't need to be on you! By His stripes you were healed! (1 Pe. 2:24) Jesus did not get beat for nothing. God is never going to separate you from His love. Jesus was forsaken so that we would never have to be separated from the love of God! God is not distant from you. He is not withholding His love from you at any point. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. What can separate us from the love of God? Anything? Absolutely not! Jesus got separated temporarily from the love of God so that we could always be united with Him!

Jesus had thorns crushed into His head. Thorns represent cursing (see Genesis 3). Jesus' thoughts, His mind was cursed so that you can have the mind of Christ. God is not making people schizophrenic. He is not giving you anxiety. We can be set free of all of that!

God will never send anything bad our way! Our church's name is "the goodness of God." God has nothing but goodness for us! If you go into God's heavenly inventory system to see what He has labeled with your name on it ... and it is NOTHING but good!

The Word of Righteousness

This word of righteousness by faith is actually the foundational revelation of all revelations! Imagine believing that God is against you - it will color your reading of all scripture. You will find curses not meant for you in Ezekiel and wonder if they are for you! The message of complete and total righteousness completely and totally by faith is the most essential revelation for rightly dividing scripture!

Hebrews 5:12-13 says this exact thing. *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.”* Paul was saying we ought to all progress to be teachers. Paul is speaking here about the FIRST principles of the Word of God. Paul was saying everyone who is partaking only of milk - who is not mature and ready to be a teacher - is unskilled in the word of RIGHTEOUSNESS. This is the foundational revelation of ALL revelations! This is the key who unlocks everything else.

If someone else eats the meat of the Word without this revelation, some of what they conclude will be way off base - because they do not have the foundational revelation! Even in the very next chapter Paul lists the 5 basic principles of the faith and again the first one is the word of righteousness: *“repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.”* That God has made you righteous - by faith - and not by works!

Romans 2:4 says that the goodness of God is what leads us to repentance. The ability to change your mind (repent) is completely contingent upon our revelation of God's goodness towards us! The entire discipleship (the process of changing our mind to God's Word and ways) is contingent upon our revelation of God's goodness towards us!

May we set many free by the word of righteousness!

Text Summary (for reading as a group)

Christian philosophy is to think like Christ. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is about trying to discern good and evil for ourselves. God is saying “that is going to kill you.” God has not made us to have the discernment for good and evil. His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. We therefore, are encouraged by God to simply just do what He says. Jesus Himself did exactly that. He did not count equality with God something to be grasped. John 5:19-20 says that Jesus just did what He saw the Father doing. That is the start and the finish of Christian Philosophy! It’s enough that we would be like our Father - like our teacher!

When we are discipling others, it is not enough to only know it “good enough” for ourselves; we want to know it well enough to set others free as well! When discipling others, we are not called to replicate the world - we are called to replicate the Word! If we are not solid in a topic, we will tip-toe around it and people’s lives won’t get transformed to what the Word actually says.

There is no more important message than the message of righteousness by faith. At the very beginning of his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3-9) we read this: *“As I urged (**charged**) you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. 5 Now **the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person.”***

The law is not for the righteous person! Jesus became sin even though He knew no sin in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him! Therefore, the law is not for the believer! This is the first thing that Paul wrote to Timothy, the young pastor who had taken over the church that he had set up - that righteousness is by faith apart from works that no one may boast! Romans 10:4 says it so well *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”* We are to guard this revelation! The tendency is to mix the law with grace such that grace is no longer grace - or to mix grace into the law such that the law is no longer the law! But God keeps things separate when they are meant to be separate.

John 16:7-11 says *“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. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because **they** do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”*

Does the Holy Spirit convict of sin? Yes! Who does He convict of sin? Those that “do not believe in Me” of sin. Holy Spirit is convicting those that do not believe in Jesus of their need for a savior. For believers, however, Holy Spirit is convicting us not of sin, but of our righteousness in Christ! The enemy is called the “accuser of the brethren” in Revelation 12:9-10. The enemy’s job is to accuse you! Does the enemy accuse you of righteousness? No! Satan accuses the brethren continually before God, but all believers have a Great High Priest who is eternally, continually, and successfully ministering righteousness on their behalf before the throne of God in the Heavenly Holy of Holies. And IF we do sin, we have an advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is constantly declaring “righteous, righteous, righteous, he’s righteous, she’s righteous because of Me declares the Lord!”

Isaiah 54:9-10 says “*For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, so have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,*” Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.” God has sworn to each of us that He would not be angry with us! It is impossible for God to be angry with you. God’s faithfulness is first to His Himself. There is nothing greater that He can be faithful to than His Word. He is not a man that He should lie and here He swore that He would never be angry with us! When God made this promise, He made an un-conditional covenant. All of the wrath of God for all sin for all time actually went on Jesus. All of the anger for all time got put on Jesus; that means there is none left for you! There is even none left for the people that don’t know Him yet either, so we can minister with absolute love and no reservation because the wrath for their sin got put on Christ too. God already took care of His part of their reconciliation (Romans 5:10) which is why the angels declared on earth “*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*” (Lk. 2:14) There will be a day of judgment - a day of wrath - when people will be judged according to Jesus’ Word ... namely whether they received Christ or not. But today is the Day of Grace! Now is the appointed time for salvation!

God is wanting EVERY believer to be “established in righteousness!” The Holy Spirit is convicting us of righteousness. In Isaiah 54:15, we see that “*Indeed they shall surely assemble, **but not because of Me.***” Righteousness means to be in right standing with God. We have peace with Him by faith! (Rom. 5:1) If we do not know we have peace with God, we will conclude that bad things in our life potentially came from Him. Trouble will come in all of our lives ... but NOT because of God! God is not sending ANY bad into any of our lives! This is totally counter-cultural but it is true! God will never put anything on you that He put on Christ! For instance, He's not going to put sickness on you. He put that on Christ so it didn't need to be on you! By His stripes you were healed! (1 Pe. 2:24) Jesus' body was not broken for nothing - it was broken for you! Likewise God is never going to separate you from His love. Jesus bore all the separation from God so that we would not have to!

Jesus was forsaken by God so that we would never have to be separated from the love of God! God is not distant from you. He is not withholding His love from you at any point. Draw near to God and He WILL draw near to you. What can separate us from the love of God? Anything? Absolutely not! On the cross, Jesus got separated temporarily from the love of God so that we could always be united with Him! God will never send anything bad our way! Our church's name is "the goodness of God." God has nothing but goodness for us! If you go into God's heavenly inventory system to see what He has labeled with your name on it ... and it is NOTHING but good!

This word of righteousness by faith is actually the foundational revelation of all revelations! Hebrews 5:12-13 says this exact thing. *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe."* Paul was saying everyone who is partaking only of milk - who is not mature and ready to be a teacher - is unskilled in the word of RIGHTEOUSNESS. This is the foundational revelation of ALL revelations! This is the key who unlocks everything else. Romans 2:4 even says that it is the goodness of God is what leads us to repentance. The ability to change your mind (repent) is completely contingent upon our revelation of God's goodness towards us! The entire discipleship (the process of changing our mind to God's Word and ways) is contingent upon our revelation of God's goodness towards us! May we set many free by the word of righteousness!

Points to Ponder . . .

- How does the law for righteousness relate to believers?
- Describe the Holy Spirit's conviction - what is He convicting believers of?
- How do we KNOW that God cannot be angry with us?
- Read Isa. 54:15, James 1:16-17, and 1 John 1:4-5 as a group. What's the common theme?
- Why is being established in the word of righteousness so important for believers?