

Righteousness

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17-18).

“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

“I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation” (Psalm 40:7-10).

“Think not that I am come to destroy the

law.” Jesus speaking in Matthew 5 what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was always in the will of God. In every decision, with every footstep He took, in everything He said, in everything He did, in everything He thought, He was altogether perfect and absolutely righteous.

In Psalm 40, Jesus declared that He comes in the volume of the Book. The volume of the Book—all of it, every word of it—was written about Jesus Christ.

“I did not come as an accident,” Jesus could say. “I came with perfect timing, in the perfect plan of God, according to the prophets—and the Book was written about Me before I came.”

There are 333 prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Christ fulfilled them all. Thirty-three came to pass in one day—the day He died. And on that day, He fulfilled it all.

Psalm 40 says, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.”

Jesus preached righteousness; He did not preach love, although God is love.

He did not hold back. “I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared

thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.”

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” Does the Bible say, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His love”? No. It says, “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

This booklet is written to bring the reality of the righteousness of God into focus. This is as it should be. For without truth and righteousness, there can be no mercy, no peace, no love, and no joy.

## Chapter One

# GOD'S THEME OF HOLINESS

There is a word in our culture and in our day and our time that is in many ways, knowingly or unknowingly, being avoided. It is the word “righteousness.”

We don't have any true righteousness in ourselves. We have what is called “relative righteousness.” Relative righteousness is simply this: “I'm not a bad guy. I am not perfect, but I'm not altogether that bad. The police do not know my name. I've not been in jail. The FBI does not have a list with my name on it.” I may even think, “I'm a really good guy. I'm on a board of importance. I'm accepted in certain circles. People know my name. I'm a man of integrity and honesty and truthfulness.”

In every way, men are lost in their understanding of what righteousness really is, because we are talking about perfection. We are talking about something that we don't have—some-



thing we are totally ignorant of. A tomato plant knows nothing of a fish, and a man does not know God's righteousness. This righteousness is something that must be given.

This is one reason why we love the ministry of Jesus Christ. When He was here, He was righteous. He was the only Man who ever walked on the earth who was righteous. He was altogether perfect all the days of His life.

These themes in the Scripture come to the surface often: righteousness, truth, absolute truth, the nature of God, purity, and holiness. These themes run from front to back in the Bible. In the beginning of our Bible we have Genesis. Then the book of Exodus brings us into the wilderness, and the first thing that God does there is teach the people about His holiness. He makes a holy area, the tabernacle, and He puts the people outside and says, "I am holy. I'm asking you to be holy" (see 1 Peter 1:16).

A major theme in the book of Leviticus is the word "holiness", which means to be set apart for God. We do not realize the depth of our depravity. We don't understand that the imaginations of our hearts are wicked and evil continually (Genesis 6:3-4).

I drink iniquity like water (Job 15:16). I think

I know the way, but the end thereof is death (Proverbs 14:12). I am sick from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet (Isaiah 1:5, 6). Who wants to hear that kind of message? Who wants to go to church and hear about how sinful we are, and how utterly wrong we are?

But, it is very important for us because in this teaching is one of God's great secrets. This is the key to revival and this is evident all throughout the history of the church. The key to every spiritual revival was a deep realization by believers that there is something definitely and absolutely wrong with men.

### Where the Rubber Meets the Road

There are people today who are looking for love and accommodating their emotions and living in human affections and human love. There are people that have no discipline over their flesh and their earthly desires, over their hormones and their feelings, and they are falling into some kind of infatuation with another person.

It is not popular today to talk about righteousness. "If you talk about righteousness, it only makes me feel guilty because it accentuates another problem. Frankly, I have enough problems without going to church and hearing about

the problem that I have with God.”

But this is right where the rubber meets the road. This understanding of my problem is what I need in order to come to God. And now, God will come to me.

When Jesus Christ came, He did not refrain Himself from speaking righteousness. There are a number of cases in the gospels where we see Him talk to people, and He is not holding back righteousness.

We are in a time of a “love” culture. It is a time of “understanding”—of being accommodating to people. It is a time of accommodating to whining and complaining and crying. If Jesus came here, I do not think He would be too popular, because He would not refrain Himself from speaking righteousness in the great congregation.

Jesus Christ was thrilled with doing His Father’s will. He did not do it grudgingly. He possessed a spiritual momentum.

Momentum is involved in riding a bicycle. Once you get up on the bicycle and there is movement, then you have momentum. There is balance and motion.

When Christ was here, He was living in a spiritual walk with His heavenly Father. And

just like riding a bicycle, He was delighting in doing the will of the Father, and the Father was carrying Him by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was always doing His Father's will, and He was delighting in it. There was balance in His life, and there was motion.

### The Great Congregation

"I have preached righteousness in the great congregation" (Psalm 40:9).

A great congregation is where two are three are gathered in His name, and God says, "there am I in your midst." That is the great congregation. It may not be great in number, but it is great in quality. The great congregation is one that is living in the Spirit of truth and God's imparted righteousness.

In Matthew 23, He spoke to the Pharisees with the disciples right there with Him. He was not holding back, and He called the Pharisees "hypocrites" and "sepulchres, full of dead men's bones." He called them thieves and robbers. He spoke to them directly from the heart and the mind of God. He was not very popular for doing this. But He spoke and the disciples heard Him.

I think the disciples were cringing and per-

haps complaining, “Do You know who You are speaking to? Do You know what it is that You are doing?”

Christ’s throne is established in righteousness. In Psalm 85, righteousness and peace have met together, and they have kissed. Truth springs up out of the ground and mercy looks down from heaven, and there is union. This is the great principle of how God is looking for righteousness on the earth.

Here is the awesome thing. We, as sinful people, have received the righteousness of God, not only by way of imputation (1 Corinthians 1:30-31), but also by impartation. We have received His righteousness by virtue of living in the Holy Spirit. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. We love the righteousness of God and we walk in it. Righteousness is now our nature, given to us from God.

## Chapter Two

# MERCY AND TRUTH

Jesus was here, and He did not turn to the right or to the left. He died and shed His blood on the Cross, where our sins went to Him and His righteousness came to us. Our names are written in heaven. Not only that, but we are perfect and one hundred percent righteous as God Himself. We've been born by the Blood into that holy place, into heaven itself (Hebrews 9:24). Jesus has gone on our behalf into heaven itself, and we are accepted there.

Now we have the Spirit of God in us, the Spirit of righteousness. Now we speak righteousness in the great congregation. Now we rejoice in the law. And Jesus said, "I will magnify the law, and I will make it honorable." Before it was a bondage but now it is our delight (1 John 5:4). Before it was something to avoid but now it is something to rejoice in. It is not our flesh living by the law, but it us, by the Spirit of God,

doing God's will.

Doing God's will is something that we now delight in. This is the nature of Christ that is in us. We are now living and doing the will of God by His grace in our walk of faith. Before, we were far away and had no ability, but now Jesus did it, and now we are righteous and live in Him. We even seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things are added unto us.

When Peter said to Jesus in Matthew 16, "Do not go to Jerusalem," Jesus wheeled around and spoke to Peter and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that are of God." "Savourest" is *phroneo* in the Greek and this speaks of a mindset. Peter spoke from a mindset that was not after God but instead favored the things that are from men.

"But I am not here to please men," Jesus said. "I am a burning fire, a light in a dark place. I am the Savior who does the will of My Father, and I always do the things that please Him. I follow Him and I honor Him above all of the things on the earth."

The righteousness that is in Christ has now been given unto us, and the Spirit of God is now dwelling in you and me. Now we also delight to

do the Father's will. We actually live and fellowship in God's righteousness. We do not have this ability in ourselves, but we actually do His will, and we find great pleasure in it.

### The Element of Righteousness

"Surely salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:9).

I want mercy, but do I also want the truth? God knows that we would like to have the mercy, but we don't always have a capacity for the truth. God also knows that we would like to have truth, but we don't have a capacity for mercy. We are people who are like sheep without a shepherd. We have turned every one to his own way, and we do not understand what it is to be living in the reality of a living God in a dark world with both mercy and truth meeting together, and righteousness and peace having kissed each other.

Jesus is on the Cross. He is righteous, totally perfect. When nothing really matters to us but this, do you know what will happen in our lives? It will become clearer and clearer to us that the only thing that matters in this life is His



righteousness, His way, His truth, His mercy, His lovingkindness, His reality. The Person of God is the only thing that matters.

I don't have any desire but only for Jesus. There are other desires, but in seeking Him first and putting that in order, then I have everything else.

Righteousness is one of the elements that is in that picture. This means that the Spirit of God has come into me. He will lead me in righteousness. He will set my steps in the way of righteousness. He will direct me in righteousness. I will delight in righteousness. Even if it hurts, I will make the right decision in righteousness, and then God will crown me.

### Jesus Is Crowned

The religious leaders and the civil leaders of the day crucified Jesus, but He was the one that God the Father crowned. They threw Him out, because He didn't say the things they wanted to hear. But He was the one whom God promoted. The Lord anointed Him with an anointing that is above His fellows.

If that happened to Him as an example, how much more should we walk in righteousness? God will reward us according to that imparted

righteousness from the Holy Spirit.

When you make decisions before God, God will promote you and crown you. It says in Revelation 19:12, “His eyes were a flame a fire, and upon his head were many crowns.”

When you are Spirit-filled, making right decisions, loving and giving grace and mercy and lovingkindness, you are living in the Spirit of God. And God will promote you and honor you in a very real and a very deep way.

## Chapter Three

# TRUTH SPRINGS FROM THE EARTH

“Truth shall spring out of the earth.” Where did the truth come from? It sprung up out of the earth. The Father is looking from heaven and asking, “Where can I find truth?” He passes over all these people, millions and millions—three million in the time of Jesus in Israel, twenty million in the Roman Empire. He passes over and says, “Where is the truth? Where is the truth? Where can I find it?” It springs up out of the earth.

What springs out of the earth? The root of David. Out of Mary, Truth came up out of the earth. Out of a human being, Truth was born in Bethlehem. There is the Truth, the Son of God, born of a virgin. Planted in her womb was the Seed of our Righteousness. Our heavenly Father put in the womb of that woman the blessed Son of God, the Holy One of Israel. Out of the earth

came truth, and mercy looked down.

Mercy and truth have met together. The Father looks at truth and gives mercy. This union is a very precious one. Now we have righteousness by our new birth, for when we were born-again, God put in us that truth, that mercy, that reality, that Person of Jesus Christ.

In that reality, He is the only life we have, and we cannot compromise it. It is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is not confused in the day and age that we are living in. The Spirit of God will lead us clearly through these days as salt and light. The Spirit of God is not tempted by anything that is at our door. The Spirit of God is not in conflict with anything, for there is no wisdom, counsel, or understanding that is against the Lord. There is no contest with God.

### The Lord Between Us

Jesus is in the great congregation where two or three are gathered.

I'll tell you what a weak congregation is. It is the place where the question is asked, "Where is the truth and the mercy? Where is the power? Where is the Christ? Where is the message? Where is the forgiveness? Where is the holiness? Where is the conviction? Where is the persua-

sion? Where is the manifestation of His nature?”

That was a great congregation at the Last Supper when Jesus was with the disciples. The great congregation was at Pentecost when the twelve were upstairs praying, and the Holy Spirit came in as a rushing, mighty wind. Commentators say that it was the angels coming in. They were coming in because something was about to happen there that had never happened before. And that was because Jesus had given His righteousness, and His holiness, and His Holy Spirit to men. Those who were in that room started to speak with tongues of men—fourteen different people groups are listed there. Three thousand were added to the church in one day (Acts 2:41).

The disciples lived all their lives in that power. There were failures, but still they would get up and go on in the power and the memory and the thought of a risen Savior Who didn't just come and leave us but Who came and gave us Himself.

To love that righteousness and to walk in it is a key in the Kingdom of God. Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. God will care for you.

We love His way and delight in His way and we live by every word that comes out of His mouth. We do not compromise and take away from the great Book. We cling to what God wants to say to us even if it hurts us, and we are built up and established in a Kingdom that has no end.

Someday He is coming back. And someday we shall see Him, for we have believed and embraced His righteousness. We have been anointed of the Holy Spirit to live in the authority and the ministry of His mind on this earth.

Some people do fall off the bicycle. They get scratches on their knees and they cry. They want mom. “Mom, I fell off the bicycle, and I’m scratched.” She comes running out and gives first aid, kisses the knee, and says, “Okay. You’re good to go. Get up and get going.”

### Rebound and Recovery

You can’t stay down. There comes a time to get up on the bike again. Get going. We’ve got a life to live. Let’s go. The Kingdom of God is here.

Some people want mercy, and mercy, and more mercy, and God knows that we need it all the days of our life! But mercy is given unto us

so we might get moving in truth. Let's get back on the bike and get moving. Let's rejoice in mercy and also live in a non-sentimental reality that is God's mind and truth.

When things are right and peace is there, mercy and truth kiss each other. It is hard to kiss in unrighteousness. There is something deceitful in the kiss. It is hard to kiss when there is lying and deceit and treachery and gossip and maligning and backbiting. When righteousness is there and peace is there, they kiss. In the soul there is comfort, peace, and quietness.

It says in Song of Solomon 1, "Our bed is green." Green speaks of rest. We lie down in that bed of rest because when righteousness and peace have met each other and they have kissed, there is an awesome union that is unbreakable. It is invaluable. It is the very nature of our personality in Jesus Christ. God has given us peace, and He has given us His righteousness, and so we enjoy it.

## CONCLUSION

Think about it. God sets me in the way of His steps. I can actually walk in His steps. That is what the Finished Work has done for us. It makes it so that righteousness and mercy are now a part of us. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And there we are, walking in the steps, riding on the bicycle—and we're cruising!

Yet, we fall down. We need mercy, and we need to get going and get back on the way. He shall set us in the way of His steps, and we will follow and walk in that way, and we will be in heaven, someday.

Our brothers and sisters, in God's perfect timing, are passing on out of this life and going to be with the Lord. There will be a time for you and I when that day will come. But we will delight in this reality, that God did the work, He made the law honorable, and we delight in it, and we enjoy it.



We are in that picture at the Cross, and now we live. It is not us but Christ in us. It is now our new life. We live in it. We fellowship in it. We preach it. We hear it, we believe it, and we make our decisions according to it.

Lord, may this message really be in our frame of reference, really build us up in the reality of Your Person. We walk with You because we really are called to know You. If we fail, we rebound and confess our sin, and we are restored and washed from all unrighteousness to live in the reality of Your Person. We are surprised by Your joy and Your peace and the reality of who You are and what You have done. Bless us today. Lead us in all that we do. Put a guard upon our mouths, Lord, that we would not offend You. Guide us in the way of truth. Keep us in temptation. Deliver us from evil. There is a supernatural authority in the great congregation where there is prayer that moves mountains and people that love—and love covers the multitude of sin. Amen.