

INTRODUCTION

WILL I EVER BE RIGHTEOUS?

Probably the most asked question amongst Believers.

Considering how dirty and unrighteous I Am,
Will the Lord be able to cleanse me and make me
righteousness? **YES!!!**

This is something I MUST accept as a reality in my life!

For thousands of years, from the dawn of creation until the coming of Jesus, not one human had been able to achieve goodness, righteousness, or holiness, by self effort, will power, nor personal ability; nor has anyone of the fallen race of Adam been able to stand clean before God on his own effort.

However, the set time for Jesus to do His work had finally come. (2000 years ago, on an old rugged cross outside of Jerusalem, Jesus finished the work that the Father sent Him to do). God removed all of the sins we had, so that not even a single spot remains. Do we really believe the previous statement? Frequently we know what the Word says, but, we need to go from knowing to believing. Jesus' blood washes away each and every sin that resides in us when we believe that Jesus became our '**substitute**' and '**sin offering**'.

We have no goodness, in and of ourself (**Rom. 3:10**), although we try to do good deeds. We do not have the power to keep the Law (and the law does not not provide a source of power) no matter how hard we try, because our '**will**' power is not sufficient (**Rom Chp 7**). We sin although we try not to. Everything is impossible when we try to do it by ourself. The only thing I'll be able to say is, "**I cannot do it!**" and end up being in misery, despair and probably out of church.

When we see ourselves floundering in sin and acting in an unrighteous manner, we can only become disappointed. But we have hope if we look to the Lord who sanctified other people just like me. Most people, in their spiritual lives, look to themselves rather than look to God. I cannot count the times I have 'tried' to fix my problems only to see them get worse. There is no one who can say, "**I am righteous. I am holy. I am clean,**" while looking at **himself**.

All of us have tried to achieve righteousness within ourselves, to do good, and put in limitless effort to bear fruit that God can happily accept. We want to be holy, truthfull, pleasing to God and put in endless effort and labor

toward that end. Nevertheless, it has not worked, is not now working and will never work.

Isaiah 53:6, *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*, God has moved all of our sins onto Jesus, no matter how they may look to us. **Everything** has been moved onto Jesus (he became our sin bearer, our sin offering, but He did not become a sinner). We have in our heart the memories of the sins we have committed, but that is just our memory. The word of God says that all of our sins have all moved onto Jesus, and Jesus has borne them **ALL** (**John 1:29; Isa. 53:6**). Jesus took our sins away, and in its place, poured His Holiness and Righteousness onto us.

God said in **Rom.8:1**, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*. . . . It means that condemnation in our heart (me condemning myself as well as being condemned by others) has already disappeared, provided we have the proper object of faith which is the Finished Work of Christ. (**Rom 3:24-28**)

Isaiah 44:22 says, *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee*. It means that your sins have already been forgiven.

Hebrews 10:17 says *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more* and **1Cor 6:11** says, *but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*.

I am so glad that I am covered by the Blood of Jesus. I know that I could never be good enough to get to heaven except through the mercy and Grace given to me through the Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus. I know that as long as I maintain my faith (not a one time event) in the Sacrificial Atoning Finished Work of Christ, Heaven is my future home.

It does not matter how I *'feel'*.... once I started believing that I am the righteousness of God **because of Jesus**, renewing my mind according to **Rom 12:1-2**, I began to see the transformation taking place in my life. Why? Because of what that Finished Work of Christ had provided for me, (and could **ONLY** be provided by the Blood of Christ), I could have what the Word promises here and now. Simply put, I start believing what the Bible says about who I am. To be *'set free to serve'*, I have to know that all my past, present and future sins have been atoned for by Jesus and God has made me accepted to Him by the Blood of Jesus! **Col. 1:19-20**

If I have accepted by Faith that Jesus paid the full penalty for my sins by dying on the Cross - taking full guilt and punishment for all my sins so that **ALL** my sins are forgiven forever and will not be held against me on the Judgment Day ... do I also **KNOW** that God the Father says **"You are NOW the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus"?**

This is **NO** small, insignificant matter! As a matter of fact, it is a fact of **HUGE importance!** What this fully states is that in one moment in time, when Christ died on the cross (at this very moment the veil was rent; not later), we were given access to God by Jesus Christ.

Mk. 15:37-39 This signifies that the way to the Holy of Holies in Heaven was made possible to all men through the Blood of Christ. **Heb 9:8-10; 19-20.** Not only earthly priest of the Law – but ALL men can go into the very presence of God and have access to Him without priests. **Acts 2:21**

Mt. 27:50-52 shows the veil was rent at death (providing access to God) thus demonstrating that it is not anything I do, but the Finished Work of Christ that provides constance and continuous access to the Throne of Grace.

So, how do I approach God? I think the best example is given by Jesus as He taught on prayer in **Luke 18:1**. In His teaching on prayer, He used as an example the Pharisee and the Publican.

What is God's Righteousness?

That which is right according to God's standard!
God's Standard is the key.
He never changes Man does.

Gal 3:6 *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* Abraham did not have any Righteousness before coming to God by Faith. God did not look at Cain or Able; but only their sacrifices.

1Cor 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

AMP: *For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [en]dued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].*

Isa. 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one*

to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

What is God's Righteousness?

Simply put ---- It is Jesus Christ and Him Crucified

Not possible to earn or merit.

Pharisee and the Publican:

How do I approach God; on what basis do I pray? Jesus was teaching on prayer – **Lk 18:1**

Luke 18:9-14

Pharisee

Self righteous

Relative righteous

Works righteousness

External righteousness

Prayer was not to honor God – but to honor self

Did not speak of sin

Publican

Knew he needed righteousness that was not his own

God requires internal righteousness

Stood at a distance

Lev 23:27-32 shows the Jewish nation was to fast on two days and this was one time per year. In Jesus' day this had grown to 104 fasts a year. This demonstrates how the Jews were growing in Law, but not in Grace.

The key to understanding this passage is found in **vs.13; God be merciful on me a sinner**. The Greek word here is *'hilaskomia'* and means ***'be propitiated or reconcile me through the atoning blood sprinkled on the mercy seat'***. Jesus is clearly teaching here that the **ONLY** way we approach the Father (no matter why we need to approach the Father) is **ONLY** through and by the Finished Work of Christ. **This is on the authority of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.**

God could forgive his sins and show mercy to him because of the propitiation of Jesus. God is propitious **ONLY** thru Jesus Christ and **NOT** thru **ANYONE** or **ANYTHING** else. He is **NOT** propitious thru a denomination or a religion. He is **NOT** propitious thru anyone except Jesus and Jesus **ONLY**. Jesus is our **ONLY** mediator before God and no matter how we would like to make someone or something else or mediator before God, we cannot. Jesus plainly teaches in this example that the **ONLY** way we will ever have to come before the Father is the Blood of Jesus and the Finished Work of Jesus on

the Cross. The key to all of this teaching by Jesus is not just knowing about the Cross but to **'experience the Cross'**. We can have vast knowledge about something but until we **'experience'** it, it is not real to us. I believe that man has walked on the moon, but I have not **'personally experienced'** walking on the moon. Neal Armstrong will give you a different story about the moon than I could. We **MUST**, thru the Holy Spirit, allow the Holy Spirit to bring us to the **'PERSONAL EXPERIENCE'** of the Cross.

Again, our access to the Father is based solely on the Blood of Jesus and His death on the Cross, **Mk. 15:37-39 and Mt 27:50-52**. This is the reason Paul comes down so hard on being **'in Christ'**, because if we are not **'in Christ'**, we do not have access to the Father. **1Cor 3:10-11** is very, very important. Paul tells us that we can build on the foundation of the Finished Work of Christ incorrectly and falsely or he would not warned the body of Christ against building incorrectly.

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus ... Romans 6:3a

The access we have to God was produced by the **death** of Jesus and not His suffering, although that was a part of it. You and I as believers, God has put us **'in Him'** (**Rom 6:3-5**). God the Father has declared us legally as holy and righteous as we can possibly ever **BE!** We are **NOW** (do not have to wait until we get to Heaven) 100% totally justified, we have received forgiveness for sins, and started receiving eternal life from God the moment we were saved. We do not believe or teach unconditional eternal security, but we do teach and believe in the eternal security of the Believer. There is a vast difference between the two. We teach that everyone must maintain their faith in the same One Who brought and bought our salvation in The Finished Work of Christ. It is **NOT** a one time event or an emotional experience at an altar and then live my life as I please, but daily (**Lk 9:23**) take up the benefits of His Finished Work (**Gal 2:20-21**).

2Cor 5:21 says, ***For He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus Christ) who knew no sin to be sin for us*** (he was the sin offering; He did not become sin. He bore our sins (He came in the **'likeness of sinful flesh'**, but did not become **'sinful flesh'** **Rom 8:3**). If He became sin, then whose blood was shed for Him? **Heb 9:22**), **Who KNEW NO SIN**, (He was not guilty, He was perfectly Holy and pure) ***that we might be made the righteousness of God (the Father) in Him (Jesus Christ)***. We are made righteousness by accepting what He did for us at the Cross. We place our faith in Who He **IS** and what He **DID** (His Finished Work)! ***In Him (Jesus Christ)*** It is a righteousness **"in him"**, in Christ, (God's work through Christ; therefore Christ's righteousness is **'imputed'** to the Believer) and not in ourselves, and therefore shows that it the righteousness of Christ and NOT our own

righteousness. This shows, that through Christ's righteousness, that His righteousness is imputed to the Believer, and put upon the Believer as a **'robe of righteousness'**.

Christ can only save sinners, which we ALL were. Grace cannot begin until the Law has accomplished its job by proving that we are guilty, then Christ offers us His righteousness. A gospel of mixed law and Grace has no power. False teachers of this kind of gospel are accursed because they pervert (not deny) the gospel. They admit that Christ died upon the Cross, but deny that faith alone in His sacrifice is sufficient for salvation and sanctification. People still like this kind of preaching because they believe they can do something to obtain merit before God. Religion is the best man can do. Christianity is the best God can do. The results of people's best is **Gal 2:16; Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

John 16:10 states that Christ is the Righteousness of God. (Jesus presented a spotless Righteousness to the Father, namely Himself, which pertained to His sacrifice at Calvary, that was accepted by God; then that Righteousness (Christ's) is imputed to all who will believe in Him and His work on the Cross). It is in that Righteousness the Believer stands. The Believer can say **'I have the righteousness in which no flaw can be found; it has preceded me into heaven and has been accepted there.'**

The moment we accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we were given God's covering (robe) of righteousness! It is God's righteousness **given to us free of charge**, because it is **IMPOSSIBLE** for any human being to **EARN ANY** degree of righteousness -- any degree of holiness -- that will be acceptable to God on the Judgment Day or a righteousness that will qualify a person to remain with God for eternity.

Simply stated, no person can become "good enough" to be declared "fully justified" in God's sight by their own efforts. It's impossible.

Accepting our position **in Christ Jesus** as **'righteous'** is a position few believers will openly embrace, let alone talk about. I think this is mainly due to our lack of understanding of **'Justification by Faith'**.

What does 'justified' mean? God credits to my account what Christ has done --- **just-as-if-I'd done it. Rom 6:3-5**. A criminal is pardoned though the person cannot be regarded as righteous. But justification is that act of God whereby He not only forgives us, but also credits Christ's righteousness to

our account. God justifies sinners without justifying their sin. He gives us a righteousness that is not our own, but Christ's.

How are we justified? **'Not by works'** Gal 2:16-17. Works are excluded! We are not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.

There are no degrees of justification. The moment we believe on Christ we are made just, period. Justification is:

By God – Rom 3:21-26; 8:33

By Grace – Rom 3:24

By Blood – Rom 3:25-26; 5:9

By Faith – Rom 3:21-28

Gal. 2:20-21 is Paul's personal word of testimony: **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.** This verse is true of every believer. We do not need to be crucified with Christ. We **have been** crucified with Him. He died in our place. Now we live not by law but by faith. Christ was our sacrifice for sin and now is our sufficiency for the new life. The Christian life is a dying life – dying daily to self and sin Lk 9:23. The crucified Savior lives in those who have shared His crucifixion.

Thus the death of Jesus Christ not only put our guilt and the punishment we deserved, on Him because of our sins. It **ALSO legally** became the means for sinners to receive God's **RIGHTEOUSNESS (JUSTIFICATION)**. Again, this is **ONLY** given to us because of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us on the Cross.

1Pet 2:21-24 NKJ: For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, (it was not Christ's suffering that redeemed us, although that surely was a part of what happened, but rather the price He paid, His death, by the giving of Himself) that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness (we are 'dead to sins' by virtue of us being **'in Christ'** when He died on the Cross, Rom 6:3-5. We are placed **'in Christ'** by God which is done when we place our faith in Christ and His Finished Work; and we are raised

with Him in **'newness of life'**, which guarantees us a perfect, spotless righteousness) - **by whose stripes you were healed**. This refers to the healing of our souls and the healing of our physical bodies as well. The Atonement included EVERYTHING man lost in the fall of Adam, but we have only the first fruits now and the balance at the resurrection!!

Some (maybe many) in the Body of Christ believe this is referring **ONLY** to physical healing. But, where, in the full context of this scripture, is God talking about **ONLY physical** healing? He's clearly talking about **"dying to sins and living for righteousness"** and **"Christ's atonement on the Cross and what it all represents in God's view is what equips us to die to sins and live for righteousness"** (We live righteously before Him by the Power of His Finished Work!) We can better understand this verse by stating that born again Christians are **delivered and empowered (past tense; equipped; made whole; made complete) to walk in victory over sin**. (Rom. Chapters 6 & 7). Some try to tie **ONLY physical** healing as the primary application of this scripture passage and leave out where we receive our empowerment over sin. Many Christians look to their prayer language or many other things as **'the'** source of power and **'proof'** that they have the power to defeat sin in their lives. Once again, **THE ONLY** source that any Christian will have to defeat the devil and sin in His life is the place where Jesus **has already defeated the devil**; that is the Cross of Christ. If I am **in Christ**, then the devil has already been defeated in my life also.

1 Peter 2:21-24 is primarily addressing the same issues being addressed in **Rom.6**; that is that Christians **HAVE BEEN DELIVERED** and have subsequently **BEEN EMPOWERED** by the Father, Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit living inside of us, providing the Power to walk in victory over sin in our lives (this is something that followers of God in the Old Testament weren't empowered to do [Law of any shape or form has no power to produce Godly living] but because of the Cross of Christ and the Holy Spirit being poured out for believers at Pentecost, we now have and depend on the Power provided by the Holy Spirit living inside of us).

- by whose stripes you were healed. Charles Spurgeon wrote it this way: *"The remedy for your sins and mine is found in the substitutionary suffering (death) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this only. But if I say of a certain ointment that it heals, I do not deny that you need a bandage with which to apply it to the wound. Faith is the bandage which binds the ointment of Christ's reconciliation to the sore of my sin. The linen does not heal; that is the work of the ointment. So faith does not heal; that is the work of the atonement of Christ."*

The less we know about our position **'in Christ'**, the easier it is for Satan to keep us bound in emotional and spiritual prisons that we may never realize we're **IN**, let alone know God wants us to be freed from.

We cannot say that we are righteous or that we are holy if we are continually looking at ourself in the mirror and feeling 'good' about ourselves or others. But if we look to the Cross of Jesus, and His Finished Work, we can believe that He has already sanctified dirty and filthy humans like every one of us. Then, knowing and believing He took my place, we can dwell within the righteousness and holiness of God (Jesus is Holy, and if I am **'in Him'** then I am Holy, made possible by His shed Blood). And, because we are people of faith (faith in His finished work) we can come and stand boldly before the Throne of God.

Again, and I cannot say this enough, because I belong to Christ Jesus, positionally, I am 'in Christ', I have already been made holy and righteous (Rom 6:3-5). Because of that Truth, the Holy Spirit now has the legal right to work in my life on a daily basis and bring my 'condition' up to my 'position', by daily shining His spotlight on my life and revealing to me things that need to change and the changes that can occur if I will follow His lead. Heb. 12:10

My identity **'in Christ'** is extremely important - a major key - to walking in ever-increasing spiritual Victory. I will struggle to one degree or another for my entire Christian life if I don't learn and **believe WHO** God the Father says I am **IN Jesus Christ**. And who AM I? I am nothing short of **"The righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!"**

**It is Christ Alone, Who He is and what He did;
nothing more, nothing less!!**

Compiled by:
Leroy Herring
CrossWay Ministries
P.O.Box 5777
Decatur, AL 35601
256.227.7455