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## **Righteousness** **Pastor Charles Mendenhall**

Righteousness is sometimes taught in a limited way and basically the church world doesn't understand what righteousness is, especially under the new covenant. It is believed they have righteousness associated with works or their ability to do everything right. Paul taught that they erred in their belief of righteousness, because they limited it in their ability to keep the law. The following scriptures show us who we are or what we are in Jesus Christ.

All through the epistles we find the phrases "in Christ, in whom, by Him" over 133 times. Paul teaches that if we have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, we are a new creation and He, Jesus is in us.

*2 Cor 5:17-21 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 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 "KJV*

2 Cor 5:19 is the ministry of reconciliation that has been given to us. The Amplified explains it a little better.

Paul was given revelation knowledge of what Jesus had done. God reconciled the world to Himself by what Jesus had done, had He not done this, the world would have been in judgment long ago. When Jesus was on the cross, God laid all the sin of the world on Him. We were made the righteousness of Him at the cross when we accepted Him as our Lord and Savior

*2 Cor 5:17-21 "Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come! 18 But all things are from God, Who through Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself [received us into favor, brought us into harmony with Himself] and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation [that by word and deed we might aim to bring others into harmony with Him]. 19 It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, not counting up and holding against [men] their trespasses [but cancelling them], and committing to us the message of reconciliation (of the restoration to favor). 20 So we are Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. We [as Christ's personal representatives] beg you for His*

*sake to lay hold of the divine favor [now offered you] and be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued 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]." AMP*

Col 2:14 "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;" KJV*

David in the Psalms declared that he had not hidden God's righteousness from the people, but had stood in their midst and declared the righteousness of God.

We receive our righteousness when we are born again, God sees us this way.

Eph 2:6 "*And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" KJV*

2 Tim 3:16 "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" KJV*

Foundation is being laid for us to know the instruction of righteousness.

Rom 5:17 "*For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)" KJV*

Rom 5:17 "*For if because of one man's trespass (lapse, offense) death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive [God's] overflowing grace (unmerited favor) and the free gift of righteousness [putting them into right standing with Himself] reign as kings in life through the one Man Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One)." AMP*

What are the benefits of righteousness? Why do we need to know that we are the righteousness of God? What are the advantages of being established in righteousness? Why is it important? The world is hard and many times our attitude condemns us, we feel that we cannot do anything for God. Our prayers are hindered because of our feelings of being unrighteous.

Righteousness means right standing with God.

E. W. Kenyon gives the meaning of righteousness as the "ability to stand in the presence of God or come to the throne of God without the sense of guilt, condemnation or unrighteousness".

For us to approach God with an attitude of unworthiness and of sin and guilt is wrong. Jesus took care of that on the cross. Righteousness is associated with confidence.

1 John 5:14-15 "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."* KJV

What keeps the church from not walking in righteousness? Why are we so works oriented, thinking we can earn things from God? Guilt, shame, condemnation are usually the excuses

given. Righteousness has nothing to do with works, we cannot do everything right.

1 John 1:7-9 *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." KJV*

The epistles are written to the born again believer and mentioned earlier in 1 John we learn that if we do something in ignorance it is covered by the blood of Jesus, however, when knowledge comes to the believer then it is our responsibility to begin to do something about it.

Cleanse means to purify from the pollution of sin and guilt. Many times we accept God's forgiveness but we fail to accept the cleansing that He does from guilt and shame. The process is not complete until guilt is dealt with, Jesus' blood dealt with it on the cross; it didn't just blot it out but completely removes it.

If you have ever been in court, you usually have a record of your offense. Pardons can be given; however, there is a term that is used called "expunging your record." The judge has the authority to do this for you. It means that all records are gone to never show up again.

God has done the same for us; He is not looking at our past, but is looking at what Jesus did. The world is failing to understand what their sin is, their sin is failing to accept Jesus, and this is what they will be judged on.

Jesus expunged your records at the time of salvation; His blood did this for us. We should not have any consciousness of past sin. Jesus is our righteousness totally apart from works.

1 Cor 1:30 *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" KJV*

When the worst sinner in the world bows his head and accepts Jesus as his saviour, immediately he can go into the presence of God, without the sense of shame and guilt in his life.

Rom 8:1 *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." KJV*

Rom 8:1 *"With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud." MESSAGE*

We are new creatures in Christ Jesus, free from shame and guilt.

1 Corinthians chapter 6 tells what we were before salvation, but we are no longer like that. We have been redeemed and set free. We may have done what the world said we did, but we are no longer who they say we are. We are now the righteousness of God.

The following is about our prayer life, when our heart is condemning us and we don't have confidence to ask in prayer as we should. God is greater than our heart. Does God know about our failures? He has already provided for those mistakes.

1 John 3:19-23 *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment"*  
KJV

1 John 3:21 *"Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence."*  
NLT

1 John 3:21 *"Dear friends, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence in relationship to God"* CEM

1 John 3:21 *"And friends, once that's taken care of and we're no longer accusing or condemning ourselves, we're bold and free before God!"* MESSAGE

God wants to bless us, the devil is doing all he can to make us feel unworthy and unrighteous, but we are in Jesus and He is in us. God's blessings are totally separate from works. We are learning to walk in love. God sees you complete and whole.

God is greater than a condemning heart. We keep ruling and reigning in that free gift of righteousness because we are in Him. With God there is no record of sin because of the blood of Jesus. If you have missed the mark, get up and walk again in God's righteousness.