

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED

By: Phillip Hayes

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

[Philippians 3:9]

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

[Romans 10:3]

These verses reveal there is a righteousness which is of man, and another which is of God. My desire in writing this article is to reveal the righteousness that comes only from God. God desires very much to manifest His righteousness through all His people and has on many occasions, although most of us didn't realize it.

I realize most everyone has their personal ideas of righteousness. I would guess the most popular concept is, "just believe you have it by faith and that's all there is to it". Others believe it is their outward display of holiness, while some may believe it is their tithing or church affiliation.

However, I believe the Bible reveals a righteousness that pleases God. It is His Righteousness. Throughout your lifetime God will give you many opportunities to reveal, fulfill and demonstrate this righteousness.

Discovering God's righteousness has opened my eyes to God's character like no other revelation has. I hope it has the same impact on every reader.

I have discovered His marvelous righteousness expressed throughout the Bible.

Before we begin I want you to know there are many times in the life of every Christian when they are prompted and sometimes compelled by God to do something and have failed to obey Him. The sad thing is, most of us never realized God was speaking to us! Especially when He desired us to manifest His righteousness.

"Quench not the Spirit" [1Thessalonians 5:19]. Quench means, *to extinguish*. The sense is, we are not to extinguish the influences of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. I am sure you will agree most of us have indeed "quenched the spirit".

Although we are saved by God's gift of grace and not by our works there is much in the Word of God we are commanded to do.

For instance, we find we must, *"put of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" [Romans 13:14].* We are to *"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" [Galatians 5:16, 25].* We are to, *"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" [Romans 12:1].* To qualify as a disciple of our Lord, Jesus said there was something we must do: *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" [Matthew 16:24].* Of course there are many, many more scriptures that I can refer to. As always, we have a choice to obey or not.

In the same way, we can obey God and produce the righteousness which is of God or we can resist the Holy Spirit when He prompts us to obey. You see, you have to put His righteousness on! Just as charity must be followed after; His righteousness must also be followed after. Although both are IN YOU neither is automatically exhibited!

The righteousness which is of God comes by faith. We should all know that faith will always produce works.

Faith without works is dead. James compared faith without works as a body without the spirit (James 2:20, 26). Therefore we conclude the righteousness of God will be manifested in the life of one that has received it through faith.

In order to reveal God's righteousness allow me to take you back before there was the Law, or the prophets, or the New Covenant. I will begin with the oldest written Book in the Bible; the Book of Job.

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" [Job 1:1]. Most everyone is familiar with the story of Job. God blessed Job and he was an extremely wealthy man but lost everything he possessed including his children. He was also tormented with boils all over his body. God had so much confidence in Job's integrity that He allowed Satan to do those horrible things to him. God believed Job would endure the onslaught of Satan and keep his integrity and faith in God. You remember that after Job's trial, God blessed him with far more than he had.

Now, I want to show you why God had so much respect and trust in this man Job. Verse one says Job was perfect and upright; he feared God and turned away from evil. These accolades barely scratch the surface of this man's character. I believe he was called "perfect" because he manifested God's righteousness.

It took six whole chapters for Job to describe the attributes of God and his relationship with Him. It is some of the most powerful reading in scripture. Space will not allow but for a few verses in which Job describes his life of serving God.

In the following verses, we catch a glimpse of Job's life as he tells of the time before his life seemingly fell apart. From Job, chapter 29, verse 5: *"When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of*

oil; When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." Wow, this man was a very well respected individual! Young men hid from him; the elderly stood up and princes refrained from speaking in his presence; the nobels held their peace in his presence! The very presence of this man demanded respect of everyone that knew him.

The next verse explains why he was held in such high regard: *"Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. Job says, "he put on righteousness"!*

I hope you can see this! Job was a perfect man in the eyes of God because he expressed the righteousness of God in every aspect of his life. He was acutely aware of the needs of the people all around him. He caused the widows heart to sing! He took care of them! He delivered the poor that cried and the fatherless (orphans) and also those that had no one to help them. Job was not just concerned! No! Job provided for them! The righteousness Job "put on" clothed him! His robe was justice for the hurting! He continues describing this righteousness he put on: *"I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out" [Job 29: 5-16].* Job didn't wait for a cause to help, he searched them out! **There is something about the poor that God wants us to know!**

In chapter 31 Job is more adamant about how he feels about the poor: *"If I have withheld the poor from their*

desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone" [Job 31:16-22].

This powerful statement from the man God trusted is almost unbelievable for modern man to grasp! This man would rather have his arm torn from the bone than to neglect the poor, the widows, and the orphans! As Christians, we must ask ourselves, "Do we have the same regard for the helpless as Job did?" Would you rather have your arm jerked from the socket than see the helpless neglected? **There is something about the poor God wants you to know!**

Job produced the righteousness of God in his life and God honored and blessed him for it. As a matter of fact, in today's economy the livestock Job possessed was worth over five million dollars! If you add all his possessions; his gold and silver, land and houses, you would have to agree, Job was an extremely wealthy man. After Job's trials had ended, God gave him twice as much as he had before. God blessed him because of the righteousness he "put on". Please note, Job had to "put it on". It was not a human display of pity. It was the righteousness of God!

I also found this Godly concern for the poor and helpless in the Law and the prophets, as well as in the New Testament. Before we continue, please note: righteousness is best defined as, right, right standing, to make things right; justice and equity: which is fairness or impartiality.

First, let's take a look at the Law:

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God" [Leviticus 19:9-10]. The Law of Israel actually compelled the people to give to the poor! They had to leave the four corners of their field (garden) for the poor and they were forbidden to glean (gather what was left over) their harvest. This was all left for the poor and the stranger. God ends this commandment saying, *"I am the Lord thy God!"* I believe He ended this portion of Law with this statement because He was letting them know that He was righteous and He wanted His righteousness manifested! God is a Good God! **There is something about the poor God wants us to know!**

Here is one more passage from the Law before we go to the prophets:

"At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest" [Deuteronomy 14:28-29]. Here is your prosperity scripture! God commanded His people to provide for the Levite (the ministry) and also the strangers, widows and orphans. When you obey that still small voice inside of you and give to the helpless; God will bless the work of your hands! That's His Word. It cannot fail! His righteousness must be revealed!

Now, let's look at the prophets. Isaiah the prophet reveals how God wants us to come before Him: *"When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations;*

incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." This is amazing because God had ordained them to do these things! God was sick of their boring, ritualistic, sanctimonious, well programmed services. He continues to say, He is going to ignore their worship and their prayers! *"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."* But then, God is so good, He informs them what He really wants from them: *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow"* [Isaiah 1:12-17]. Seek Justice! Relieve the oppressed! Provide justice for the orphans and plead for the widow! That was His will then, it is His will now!

God has ordained a fast that has a tremendous blessing when performed! We will read about it in Isaiah chapter 58. It is an amazing fast as we shall find the righteousness of God revealed in it.

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou

draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" [Isaiah 58:6-12].

Have you ever considered you were fasting when you gave to the poor? When you fast, you deny yourself. The word fast literally means, "put your hand to the mouth". Don't eat or drink! I believe in fasting and was influenced in my early Christian life to fast. However, I was never taught this kind of fast. Of course, the modern church has invented its own version of fasting called the "Daniel fast" which allows one to eat particular foods as much and as often as they want. I am sure the prophet Daniel would be very displeased with such a notion.

Now the fast God has ordained provides for the poor, and gives you power to break every yoke in your life. You sacrifice what you have for those that are less fortunate than you. God said when you fast, give your bread to the hungry, provide a place for the poor and clothe the naked. God is really saying, If you will take care of the helpless, the poor, I will cause your light to rise and your darkness to become like the sun. I will guide you continually and satisfy you in the times of drought and famine. I will call you a REPAIRER and a RESTORER! You see, this kind of fast reveals the righteousness of God!! I hope every reader will go on this fast.

I feel compelled to include this verse from the prophet Ezekiel chapter sixteen: *"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters,*

neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” [Ezekiel 16:49]. This may be amazing to some of you as you thought God destroyed Sodom because of homosexuality. However, the prophet is very clear what caused God to destroy Sodom. Homosexuality wasn't mentioned! Please understand, the prophet Ezekiel is not approving homosexuality. He is stating the condition that PRODUCED the wickedness of Sodom which included homosexuality.

Please note very carefully, the sin of Sodom was, “Pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy”. When you fail to provide for the poor, you commit sin! It is one of the sins that led to the downfall of these people!

Unfortunately, we see these four iniquities throughout our nation and many other nations of the world. The people of Sodom were self-centered. It was all about them! They never produced the righteousness of God.

Now, look at the prophet Daniel's recommendation to a king that had sinned. *“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity” [Daniel 4:27].* Notice Daniel told him to break off his sins by righteousness. He then explains what God accepts as righteousness for his sins. *“by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity”.* This is repentance – when sin is replaced with righteousness.

There is something about the poor God wants us to know!

We will see that nothing changes when you come to the New Testament. God's righteousness continues to be revealed.

John the Baptist required the people to DO SOMETHING after they repented. *“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And*

the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" [Luke 3:9-11]. The people wanted to know what they should do. John said, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise".* God expects you to bring forth fruit! John is simply saying, share what you have with the poor! God has blessed you with two coats, give the other one to someone that doesn't have a coat! Be a blessing! John was God's messenger prophet and he had the same message you find throughout the Bible. God wants His righteousness manifested.

When John the Baptist was in doubt of Jesus being the Christ, Jesus told John's disciples to tell John that the poor had received the Gospel. This was one of the evidences that Jesus was the Christ! I'm telling you, **there is something about the poor God wants you to know!**

Our Lord was very demanding and crystal clear concerning the poor.

"Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" [Luke 14:12-14]. The poor cannot pay you back for what you do for them. I know most everyone wants their prosperity now, but there is something that is going to happen at the resurrection you may not be aware of. When you give to the helpless and not expect anything in return, Jesus promised that you would be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. There are rewards in the afterlife! Where are you laying up your treasures?

With all the rapture teachings going around, you may not have considered, or even knew this; but Jesus described exactly what would take place at the resurrection and the judgment in Matthew chapter twenty-five. Let's take a look:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The truly born again Christians will be placed on Christ's right hand. They have manifested the righteousness of God! Here is what they did during their lives on earth: *"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* When you respond to the needs of the poor it is the same as doing it to Jesus!

Those on His left hand are the goats. The stubborn ones that refused to manifest God's righteousness on the earth. Here is what they did not do, and the consequence of their decisions: *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no*

drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” [Matthew 25:31-46].

Some did something – Others did nothing! As always, you have a choice. Neither God, nor His righteousness has changed. I am not writing about an emotional righteousness, but a practical righteousness. James 4:17 says, *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”* You know you should do something, but you don’t – THAT IS SIN! What is a Good thing to do? Provide for the poor, the widows, the orphans, the helpless; that my friend, is a good thing to do!

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” [James 1:27]. Here again, we find the writer verifying God’s righteousness is manifested through us when we consider the orphans and widows. It has been said, Salvation is what God does for us – Religion is what God requires from us in return. I think the scriptures certainly prove this statement.

How about you my friend? Do you consider the plight of the poor, the widows, the orphans, the helpless? Have you been self-centered, selfish? Have you known to do good, and didn’t do it? Don’t be ashamed, we all have! Yes, there have been times that I just didn’t think! I should have helped, but I didn’t. Why? What prevented me? I am convinced it was Satan! He comes to kill, to steal and to destroy! He wants to rob the poor and steal your blessings!

Look at just a few of the promises God has made when you consider the poor!

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble" [Psalms 41:1]. The Lord promised to deliver you in your time of trouble.

"He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse" [Proverbs 28:27]. When you hide your eyes from the poor you are cursed, but when you give to the poor you will not lack.

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" [Proverbs 19:17]. This is so powerful! This is how much God is mindful of the poor! When you have pity on the poor you lend to the Lord and He will pay you back. Wow! God is saying, "Give to the poor, I'll pay you back!"

"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" [Proverbs 21:13]. Perhaps this is the reason some prayers are not answered.

The great Apostle Paul was a man of great spiritual insight and power. This great apostle had a characteristic few have explored and that was his obligation to the poor. Look at this: *"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do" [Galatians 2:9-10].* This was his mandate from the other apostles; to remember the poor! **There is something about the poor God wants you to know!**

We see folks all about us that are reaching out for help. Street corners are filled with men and women begging for a hand out. "Need Work"; "Stranded"; "Help A Vet". And on it goes. I cannot help every person. I cannot feed

or give every child clothing; or visit every widow. But I can help those that God directs me to.

I look for opportunity. Opportunity that God provides! You see, I believe the real poor are the helpless. The widows, the orphans; the truly disabled that cannot provide for themselves or their families. These are the helpless!

The Apostle Paul knew and demonstrated the heart of God. When writing to the Corinthians, he said this about giving: *"For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack"* [2Corinthians 8:13-15]. He knew the heart of God was equality. That all be cared for is God's righteousness!

There should be no doubt. God's righteousness is that everyone should be provided for. We are His body. His hands and His feet. God is revealed through us by the good works we perform at His direction. When we let our light shine, we honor and glorify God. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* [Matthew 5:16].

No, we are not saved by our works, but we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (See Eph. 2:8-10). Again, I must remind you, faith without works is dead being alone (James 2:20,26).

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" [1Peter 2:12]. There is a day coming in which God will be glorified by the good works you perform! God is the ultimate Provider and He has ordained us to be providers also.