

# Living In God's Righteousness

## Witness to HIS new life in us as we abide in Him

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**Summary:** Last time I discussed “the forgotten gift” – God’s righteousness imputed to His children by faith. How do we live in that righteousness? How do we evidence the fruit of His life in us? I discuss the implications of being part of His perfect body; how you and I must witness to His resurrection, even almost 2,000 years after the fact.

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**Greetings, brothers and sisters in Christ, children of the Household of the Eternal God Yahweh. Warm hello to fellow worshippers of King Jesus the Christ, or as I often call Him, Yeshua the Messiah.**

Please *be sure* you listen to the previous sermon first, before hearing this one. I do always recommend that if you’re doing this only by notes, that you’ll get more out of the message if you also listen to it while having the notes in front of you – and vice versa.

*I gotta tell you something really cute that happened on Thanksgiving Day* this year that bears on this topic today. After our son in law Tom had asked a very heartfelt blessing for the food, and thanked our dear Abba for His many blessings, their 3-yr old daughter Juliana started asking each one around the table – without being prompted, “and what are *you* thankful for, Mama?”. She went around the room, came to me, “And what are you thankful for, Poppy?” I gave my answer. She particularly perked up when Nan (her grandma) said, “I am especially thankful for two wonderful little girls God gave us named Juliana and Adessa.”

I now take a cue from my granddaughter and ask each of you, “And what are *you* thankful for?”

This is not a sermon on thanksgiving, but I can’t help but say how excited I am, how grateful I am, for the wonderful *gift* of being able to have -- by faith -- the very righteousness of *God Himself* through the Messiah --credited to me as my very own righteousness as we covered last time. It sure beats any attempt of mine to even begin to be righteous, for I feel I am like Paul, “chief sinner”.

Last time I explained a seldom-taught concept in some Church of God circles or Messianic circles. We’ve all heard a lot about the gift of God’s *grace*, and the pardon of our sin debt by the death of the Son of God for us. But Father goes beyond that with a seldom taught gift that really is a part of grace but not usually explained properly: **the gift of His –God’s-- very own perfect, holy righteousness imputed/credited to us by faith.** This goes beyond the forgiveness of past sins. This shows us the way going forward. How are we going to be deemed righteous enough to be in the perfect kingdom of God no matter how hard we try, because we all sooner or later sin again?

It’s an important topic because no one who is at any level unrighteousness will be in the Father’s kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9). Where does that put you – and me? Even *our* best efforts at human moral excellence are just “filthy rags” to God and won’t cut it (**Isa. 64:6**). Are you seeing the problem?

This is a vital concept: There will be **only one level of righteousness in the Kingdom of God**. Yeshua said we had to exceed the Judaistic, meticulous “righteousness” of the legalistic Pharisees. ***The one acceptable righteousness is the sinless, 100% perfect, holy performance of the Son of God, Yeshua the Messiah – or if you prefer, Jesus the Christ. THAT is what He is offering.***

**This is also understood and explained in context of us being the body of Christ, His Bride. The Bride of Christ is part of Him, part of His perfect holy body, just as surely as the bride of Adam was part of Adam’s body.**

**Romans 5:14**

“....Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come”

**1 Corinthians 15:45**

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The **last Adam** [Jesus – or Yeshua] became a life-giving spirit.

Eve was not created separately from the dust of the ground as Adam had been – and yet she had her own personality and existence. Nor are we being formed separately as Father sees it, but as part of the body of Yeshua, who is called the “last Adam” or 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam. And yet, like Eve, we too have our separate personalities and existence. So we are a part of the body of Messiah (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23). We are all a part of Him, providing different functions for the assembly of believers. *We are one with Him and we should be one with one another (Romans 12:4-5).* We’re a part of the one body, together, and surely we’ll start to see it and act like one body – someday?

***Let me make a pitch for having truly one body of believers again: Yeshua is the Way. The One way we’re ever going to be one is “IN HIM” (read John 17:21).*** Let that percolate in you. We won’t be “one body” trying to work things out among ourselves. Never. We’ll continue to divide, instead. When we make it our aim to know Him and be one in Him, we’ll be one with each other.

Now, would anyone say any part of the body of the Son of God could be anything but holy? What implications does that hold for you and me? That is why we’re called *hagios* in Greek – holy ones, saints – throughout the Scriptures. Why? Because *HE* is holy and HE is in us and we in Him.

It has to do with really understanding the depth of being “ONE BODY” with Him and one another. Turn to Gen. 2:23-24. Adam and Eve were from one flesh, though two separate personalities. But being one flesh was a process, as two different personalities come together as “one body” together:

**Genesis 2:23-24**

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

It’s a process to be one. It takes time. We’re being called to be one with the Son of God – who is very different from us – and we’re also called to be one with one another. Adam and Eve came from one body, now were two – and “*shall become one*” again. Truly being one goes beyond the

marital act of love. Anyone married knows always “being one” with your spouse takes time, effort, surrender, and a lot of prayer. It’s frankly a miracle if it ever happens. But it *does* happen.

In the same way, *we are one Spirit with our 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, Yeshua* – but this time, instead of “one flesh”, we are one spirit with Him. This is a crucial concept to grasp. Here it is:

**1 Corinthians 6:17**

But anyone joined to the Lord is *one spirit with Him*.

*Being “in Him” and part of His body is far more than just being a part of His called-out ones. It includes that, but it has far, far deeper ramifications. We are experiencing the Son of God by being in Him.* For example, Paul teaches that we died *with Him* in His crucifixion since we are part of His body (Rom. 6), and – we can already sit beside our Father, because we’re “in Him”.

**Ephesians 2:4-7 (especially verse 6)**

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us *in Christ Jesus*.

Today I’m going deeper into this. We’ll continue discussing *how we must be witnesses to His resurrection in our lives in a very real way when we ask Him to come into us and let us be part of Him. We get ourselves out of the way and let Him live out His righteousness in our lives.* We’ll have more on what it means to be *living* in God’s righteousness, why we still sin even with the Holy Spirit, and how our Savior Yeshua – or Jesus Christ – is saving us day by day by His resurrection life. We’ll also discuss how we are to bear the fruit of *our Savior’s* righteousness vs. fruit of our own failed efforts at goodness and righteousness. There is a massive difference.

**Living in the Eternal God’s righteousness ultimately has to do with living in an intimate relationship with Yahweh; knowing you are coming to love Him more and more each day.**

This intimate, close bond is also growing with His Son—Yeshua the Messiah. **He “is our life” now.** *Wow! You and I are literally falling in love more and more with our King* – for in this group dynamic, we are in the role of His Bride, and He is husband. *It has much more to do with our HEARTS than it does the FORM of religion, the appearance of religion.* We fall into the trap of doing “spiritual looking” things instead of just loving our Father and our Savior!

That’s the best part of life: having awesome relationships. These are the things and the times we remember – fun and wonderful relationships (or sometimes really awful ones make an impression too). Can you get any closer than literally being *in* a person? We are “in God” – even God the Father -- and He is in us (Col. 3:3; 1 John 4:13-16).

## QUICK RECAP

We should do a quick recap of what we covered last time before moving on. So here we go:

- We have a choice: either be perfectly righteous and qualify for the kingdom, or accept Father’s forgiveness for past sins and Jesus’ righteousness imputed to you to cover your life going forward. That’s what Romans 2-3-4 is all about. You can be justified by works if

you can obey perfectly. But no one has, so we're all under sin. God offers His grace to forgive us, we accept it, and our sin debt is cancelled. Now we're back to zero balance. No debt, but no "assets" either. And what happens when we sin going forward, after forgiveness?

- God offers us another gift – the gift of His very own righteousness, which we accept by faith. It is faith in the righteousness of God and Yeshua. It is the standard of the kingdom of God's righteousness, and nothing less.
- Paul states clearly the kind of righteousness HE wants in Philippians 3:9-11.

***Given a choice, would you choose the best you can do as you keep Torah and obey God's laws – or would you pick the best God has done, which is perfect, sinless righteousness?***

### **Philippians 3:9-11**

"...and be found in Him, NOT having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

### **Romans 3:20-23**

20 Therefore *by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight*, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, *being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets*, 22 even the righteousness of God, **through faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on all **who believe**. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...."

You see, I don't agree with those who say this imputed righteousness is a "New Testament gift". Paul himself says in verse 21 that it was witnessed by the law and the prophets. Paul (Shaul) says it was imputed righteousness that saved Abraham, quoting Gen. 15:6. **There's only ONE perfect acceptable righteousness for the Kingdom**: Yahweh's own! Why aren't we hearing this preached more when it's all through the Bible? It's the righteousness of God by faith, which Paul especially says over and over. *It's the same righteousness that Abel had, that Enoch and Noah had, that Abraham, David and Isaiah spoke of.*

- Noah became an "heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7)
- David: Psalm 35:28 – "My tongue shall speak of *Your* righteousness..."
- Isaiah – Isa. 45:8, 24; 46:12-13; 61:10-11
- Jeremiah prophesies that even Jerusalem will be called "*Yahweh OUR righteousness*" (Jer. 33:16; 23:5-6). (Where you see "the LORD" in the verse is "Yahweh" in Hebrew.)

How do we acquire this level of God's righteousness? We can have it by asking for it and accepting it in faith, after repentance and confessing Yeshua as our Lord, Master and Savior.

### **Romans 5:17-19**

17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace **and of the GIFT of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, *even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.* 19 For as by one man's disobedience [Adam] many were made sinners, *so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*"

#### **Romans 4:23-24**

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it [righteousness] was imputed to him, 24 **but also for us. *It shall also be imputed to us who believe in Him*** who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead..."

**Last time we also talked about "the Big Swap" of 2 Cor. 5:21:** God takes our sins, and we take His righteousness. He became the sin offering for us, and we become the righteousness of God in Him. He gets us, and we get Him. We become His people, and He becomes our God. We give Him our dead body – and He gives us a glorious new body to be revealed in the resurrection, when we shall see Jesus as He is, for we shall be just like Him (**1 John 3:2**). What a bargain. What a Father!

#### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that ***WE might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul ends the chapter speaking of how Yahweh called weak people, the nobodies of the world to confound the wise. Then he finishes this way:

#### **1 Corinthians 1:30-31**

But of Him you are in Christ ***Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness*** and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

This should really be exciting us if we understand it. John (Yohanan) the baptizer said so much in just one sentence about this new relationship:

#### **John 3:30**

*"He must increase, and I decrease"*

Therefore we no longer live for sin, but for righteousness (**Romans 6:5-14**). Yeshua becomes the author of salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

### **Old Self Dying in the Wilderness, New Life into the Promised Land**

Now let's go much deeper into what all this means. I want to focus on something Paul said but I didn't understand until more recently.

#### **Philippians 3:10**

*"that I may know Him **and the power of HIS resurrection....**"*

How will we know the power of HIS resurrection? There's a clue given in 2 Tim. 3:5. He speaks of the way people will be like in the end times:

## **2 Timothy 3:5**

“...having a form of godliness *but denying its power*. And from such people turn away!

We can look godly on the outside but be denying the *power* of Godliness, denying the life of Yeshua in us.

## **Colossians 3:3-4**

For *you died*, and *your life is hidden with Christ in God*. 4 When *Christ our life appears*, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (“who is” is not in the original)

We have trouble letting the old self die and letting the risen Yeshua the Messiah live through us. Our words should be His words. Our actions should be His. And they can be, if we would get our old selves out of the way. We can be in Father, by being in Messiah – who is in the Father (v.3).

## **The “Old man” (our old self) has to die in the wilderness**

There was a TYPE, some imagery in the Old Testament, which demonstrates this for us. In Numbers 32, the Eternal God Yahweh through Moses explains that when the 12 spies went in ahead of time, 10 of them came back with faithless, discouraging testimony. They turned the people’s hearts from wanting to go in. The scouts made Israel feel they could never conquer the giant problems in their lives and in the days ahead. Is that a lesson for us? So what did God do?

## **Numbers 32:10-14**

So Yahweh’s anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, 11 *‘Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed Yahweh.’* 13 So Yahweh’s anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone.

That was recorded for our admonition! That was to picture that our old self first has to die over time as well – and then the “new creation” in us could go in to our Promised Land. The new generation demonstrated more faith. They obeyed Joshua and looked to him without the constant fights that Moses had to put up with. Ever notice that? It was a new generation that followed Yeshua (Joshua) into the Promised Land. We too, must be little children in heart – with simple faith in our Father above.

## **Matthew 18:3**

And [Jesus] said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted **and become as little children**, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Eternal God must produce a new life in us as well. Our “old generation” – the old way has to die and we let the new life emerge, so we can fulfill what Yeshua said: “unless you become as little children, you shall not be in the kingdom”. Let’s allow that new life, the little child of the new creation, spring forth in you. Actually, the new life is the life of Messiah himself in us!

## **WITNESSES to “the power of HIS Resurrection” (Philippians 3:10)**



There's more. So much more.

**We are called to be witnesses of Him and His resurrection**, by witnessing to the power of His resurrection, as Paul puts it in **Phil. 3:10**. In fact, those in *the end time* “who bear witness to Jesus and to the word of God” will even be beheaded (**Rev. 20:4**) for that witness.

That may include some hearing this message. So how can we bear witness to Jesus? *OK, you and I didn't see Him crucified on the tree or stake on that hill. You and I didn't peer into the empty garden tomb after our Master was resurrected. You and I didn't have a radiant angel telling us He was alive again. You and I didn't walk with Him on the road to Emmaus or see the Messiah rise up in the air.* But we *still* must be witnesses of His resurrection and that He lives. How?

Paul says something in **Phil. 3:9-10** I hadn't ever focused on before: I had focused on the fact he wanted to know Him, but I hadn't focused on the *rest* of the sentence: “***and the power of HIS resurrection...***”

*Over and over again, God's word teaches that when we really believe in the risen Son of God, that faith can be demonstrated by our life changing to look more and more like Him as HE bears HIS fruit in our lives. It is His creation in us (Col. 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:49).*

### **Philippians 1:9-11**

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 **being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ**, to the glory and praise of God.

**If we claim to be His people, but aren't letting His resurrected life be visible in us, we are guilty of what 2 Timothy 3:5 calls “having a *form* of godliness but denying the POWER thereof.”** We may *look* spiritual, we may *sound* spiritual and use spiritual words, maybe even speak a little Hebrew or Greek; we go to our church assemblies, we sing hymns, we rest on Sabbath – and have the form or appearance, of godliness.....but are we also exhibiting what Paul called “the power of His resurrection” (**Phil. 3:10**)?

How do we demonstrate the power of **His** resurrection? By letting *Him* radically begin to change our lives. It starts with a powerful simple believing faith, and ends with a life that is constantly demonstrating faith in Him (James 2:17). *We prove what we believe by what we do.* That is true of everything you claim to believe. Our actions bear out what we really believe.

**1 John 5:10 “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself...”**

If it's been many years since we have repented and been baptized, but really haven't changed that much, can the Son of God be living powerfully in us? Remember, it's the “power of His resurrection”.

If I haven't seen someone for ten or more years, after spending a few hours with them, the last thing I would want to hear is: “You haven't changed a bit”. I know they'd mean well by that, but

if someone says that, how apparent is the life of the Messiah in me? It's far more exciting to me to hear they thought I'd matured a lot or changed.

I'll never forget **a phone call I got a few years ago** when I was a pastor in Canada. It was from a Roman Catholic woman I'd never seen or heard from before. On the phone she said, "You don't know me, pastor. But you know my sister (gave her name). She used to be selfish, irritable, unhappy and frankly hard to be around. But ever since she started going to your church, she's changed dramatically". Then she started to sob... then continued. "I want that change. Whatever you did for her, I want you to do for me as well."

I gave an uncomfortable clearing of my throat, and then said, "Ma'am, I didn't do anything to her or for her, except introduce her personally to her Savior. She has gone through a heartfelt repentance and accepted Him as her personal, individual Savior. The change you see in her is the living Son of God living out His righteous life again, this time --in her. Yes, you can have that same experience, if you believe and surrender your old self to Him—and accept the new life He wants to give you."

She did, her life changed so much that a 3<sup>rd</sup> sister then followed. There were other similar stories where someone changed so much and exhibited so much of His joy – that others wanted it.

*That's how we witness to His resurrection; for we are saved by His LIFE remember (Rom. 5:10).*

**The first and best way we witness to the risen Messiah is by letting Him change our LIVES.**

Yes, we should confess Him with our mouths as well. But first is the changing life. Then our words that witness to Him are real. "Your actions speak so loudly I can't hear what you're saying". Ever hear that? Positive actions can speak volumes too! Yes, Jesus lives again, in us.

That's why Peter spoke of wives who are married to unbelieving husbands to let the wives' new lives in Messiah "do the speaking" and witnessing, rather than trying to preach to their husbands.

**1 Peter 3:1-3**

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, ***they, without a word, may be won by the conduct*** of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

We talk too soon. We were given 2 ears and one mouth to remind us to listen twice as much as we speak, I think. We rush verbally to witness to relatives and old friends, as we try to explain our new beliefs. We loudly speak out against their false religion, and try to open their eyes. This usually just causes division. It would be better to wait to be *asked to explain our new life. Explain how the risen Messiah is changing your marriage, your home, your life, your thoughts, your joy, your peace, your finances, and your entire life – and now that's witnessing!!*

Even slaves who were being converted by God's Spirit were encouraged to let their lives be an adornment to the doctrine of Messiah. Have you ever thought of making the teaching about Messiah "pretty"-- by the way we are living now?

**Titus 2:9-10**



Slaves are to be submissive to their masters in everything, and to be well-pleasing, not talking back or stealing, but demonstrating utter faithfulness, *so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior* in everything.

OK, we're not a slave, but we are employees, or we work for people. Our bosses should notice something is very different about us in very positive ways. They should never fear they will ever be cheated. They should see excellence of Messiah in everything we do for them and with them. Peter said they can't say anything bad about us if we're living this way (1 Pet. 3:13-17; 4:1-4).

So – how do we *first* witness to the Risen Christ? By letting Him live His life in us. Remember the phrase in Col. 3:3 – “Christ our life”. And Gal. 2:20 - where we're told the lives we now live should be Messiah alive and well - and obviously resurrected – in us! Then when we confess Him with our mouths (Rom. 10:9-10), our words come from a strong foundation. People see His light!

**If we're ever asked, “What is Christ like?”**, or, “tell me about Yeshua. What kind of person was He?”, we should be able to point those people to other believers. “If you want to know what Yeshua was like, and is like, just hang out with so-and-so over there. She's a lot like Him.”

Yeshua was in His Father and the Father in Him (John 14:10, 20), so He was able to say, “If you've seen me, you've seen the Father”. We should be coming closer to being able to say something similar. Paul in fact said, “Follow me as I follow Christ.”

This isn't about rituals, and what we wear, and church liturgy and all that. No, brethren – it's about our hearts being set on HIM 24/7. I gave a teaching recently on “setting ourselves on Him.” Then His new life being lived obediently again in us shines forth and witnesses to His resurrection.

Turn now to James 2:22-24 please. So this teaching of God's perfect righteousness being imputed to us **does not mean we can stay the way we always were**. If that were the case, where's the proof of His righteousness we received by faith having actually been imputed? That's having a form of godliness but denying its power. Faith must be demonstrable. Is He living in us, or not?

#### **James 2:22-24**

Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

So we receive this perfect righteousness by faith, and then we should be demonstrating that faith by our changing lives.

#### **1 John 2:3-6**

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 **He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

**Our new life – really the Messiah living in us – is not passive.** The King has come into you to make your body the temple of His Spirit, of His residence. He wants it to be His father's House of Prayer. He wants your life and body to be a clean place of godly worship. So the King is going to actively be "cleansing His temple", fighting sin, giving you the power to resist and overcome. We will hear feelings and thoughts to do or not do certain things if we listen. This will be a process that can move along fairly quickly if we are serious about it, or growth can be slow. He is turning you into a perfect replica, an exact image of Himself over time – if you stay close to Him.

Or as Paul put it, he says he was working with the Gentile Galatian brethren "***Until Christ (Messiah) is formed in you***" (***Gal. 4:19***). Remember John – "He must increase, and I must decrease" (John 3:30). More and more we look, act, respond and resemble our Master – because He has been resurrected and our lives are witnessing to it. He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world, so our victory is assured if we abide in Him. In the day of battle, we can "stand in the Lord and in the power of *His* might" (***Ephesians 6:10***).

Paul explains then that at the resurrection, our corruptible carnal side is finally disposed of, when we are changed or resurrected into His glory (1 Cor. 15:53-54). That's when we will finally be 100% like Him! Perfect, without spot of wrinkle. Without sin. Without fault. It's at the resurrection that Father takes us all the rest of the way and finishes what HE started in us (Phil. 1:6). That is when we shall be perfect in the sense that we westerners understand that word.

### **1 John 3:1-3**

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that ***when He is revealed, we shall be like Him***, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this *hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure*.

We shall be like Him, for we – the bride of Messiah – are being formed out of the very life and body of the Son of God, just like Eve was of Adam's flesh and bones. We are joined to the Lord and are one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).

***So why do we still sin then even with God's spirit in us?*** Of course I pray these are more like stumbles and not our way of life, or our way of living any longer!

## **Why We STILL SIN, Even with Christ in us**

So why do we still sin even with Yahweh's Holy Spirit? Mostly because we still also have the fleshly nature – even though we should now also have received the new nature from our Father.

### **2 Peter 1:2-4**

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as *His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness*, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, ***that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature***, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So now we have two natures in us. *It's almost like a Dr. Jekyll (the good side) and Mr. Hyde (the "dark side") situation. This is why "good people" can still do bad things. Including you and me.*

Scripture calls responding to the old self as living "according to the flesh". When we open the door to Yeshua the Messiah, and let *His* mind and actions work in us – we are living "in the spirit". We are flesh and blood, but that's not what it means when it says "in the flesh". It has to do with listening to the carnal nature vs. listening to the spirit divine nature we now have.

***Romans 8:8-9***

***8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***

We sin when we give in to the flesh and let it become dominant. We sin when we give in to our sinful desires instead of fighting them (James 1:14-15). We win, when we let the Spirit flow in us and use the Spirit to fight the lusts and desires of the flesh. This is explained in depth by Paul in Romans 7:14-20, and to the end of Romans 7. There he says that now when he sins, "it is no longer I who sin, but sin that dwells in me" (V.17). His new self wants obedience.

But don't get discouraged! This is a process—"until Messiah is formed in you." Until we become one. Until we bear the image of the heavenly. He must increase, and I decrease. That takes time. But this time we have the very "seed of Yahweh" in us, His very seed of His divine nature.

***1 Peter 1:23***

*"...having been born (or begotten) again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..."*

We've known for a long time that genetics often overrides upbringing. (Story of twins separated at birth, and how similar they are even 40 years later.) We have been given the "seed" of the very nature of God in the Highest when we received His Spirit (**1 Peter 1:23**). But we still also have the old nature. These two war against each other inside of us. It says clearly in verse 17 why we sin, why we do things we don't really want to do.

***Galatians 5:16-17***

*I say then: **Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.** 17 For the flesh lusts [wars] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

**When you sin it doesn't mean you don't have God's Spirit.** It *does* mean, however, that at that moment you listened to the flesh and not to the living Son of God in you. "Walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh". We will sin when we don't follow the lead of the Spirit. Even King David, after he had killed Uriah and stolen Bathsheba was still able to say - "don't take your Holy Spirit from me, O Yahweh" and he begged for Yahweh to create a new, clean heart and a steadfast spirit (**Psa.51:10-11**).

**But sins of presumption**, "in His face", sins of out and out rebellion against God – that's another matter (**Heb. 10:26-31**). But Father does understand occasional sins when we stumble due to weakness or ignorance. He's helping us get stronger in Him.

***Psalms 103:8-14***

Yahweh is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

9 He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

*13 As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.*

**14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.**

#### Lesson from Moses/Aaron and Hur on the Hill Overlooking the Battle with Amalek (Ex. 17:8-13)

**The winning nature in us will be the one we feed and encourage.** We must starve the fleshly nature and feed the divine nature in us. We feed the divine nature by constant contact with our Leader and King in prayer, study, listening for Him, and in letting Him live His life of doing good and service in acts of love. We feed His nature by serving the most helpless, pitching in when good deeds and acts of charity are needed – by doing good deeds by His power. As people see our lights shining as we do His good works in us, Father gets glorified. We are called to be lights, not fog horns.

We will lose if we don't starve the fleshly nature. Sometimes our flesh will cry out, demanding we give in to its desires, its lusts, passions, anger, hatred, malice, bitterness and resentment. But it will become increasingly weaker if we are successful by Yahweh's power in resisting the temptations. We sin when we allow ourselves to be drawn away by our desires, and are enticed (James 1:14-15).

**Moses, Aaron and Hur learned this in the battle when fighting Amalek.** When they lifted Moses' arms in supplication to Yahweh, they won. When they let him tire and not reach up, they would start to lose in their own efforts. Sometimes – like Aaron and Hur – (**Exodus 17:8-13**) we have to be humble enough to let others hold up our arms. Sometimes we should *be* the Aaron and Hur for someone *else* who needs *our* encouragement. *Go find your own tiring Moses* out there who needs some support. By the way, look past your church members. Do it for someone you work with. What a testimony – a witness – to the living, resurrected Son of God that could be! *He wins in us when we encourage one another in the Way, pray for one another, and forgive one another.*

We feed the divine nature as we seek His help in all we do, from the time we wake up to the time we go to bed. We have big and small battles. We need to be raising our arms up to heaven in petition for support and grace, all the day long. As we practice this, we will be living more and more in the Spirit.

We need to really watch out thoughts which affect our feelings and moods – and which affect our whole life. What thoughts, feelings, movies, songs, books, and input of all kinds – are we allowing into our heads? **Philippians 4:8** tells us what to think about – “Whatsoever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely” and so on, “think on these things”. When we feed on gossip, anger, resentment, bitterness – these things dam the flow of the life of the Living Son of God in us!

***I'm convinced You and I would never sin again if we would let Jesus rule as Lord of our lives every single second we live and breathe.*** Yeshua has never sinned. *He* will not sin in us either. But

we sin as we put any distance between Him and us and as we don't let Him be our new life. That's Gal. 5:16 all over again -- "Walk in the spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh".

On your own, read Romans 7:14-25, and you see how twice Paul says Father knows that when we sin now, it's that old "Mr. Hyde nature". Paul says in Rom. 7:17, "It is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." He repeats that in verse 20. He ends Romans 7 by exulting in his Savior who will save us from this miserable, failing fleshly nature.

It's all by His Spirit, and it's to HIS glory. I can't be righteous enough by keeping Torah, the Sabbaths, and all the things we do. All of that still won't cut it. It has to be faith in His life.

"...for if righteousness comes through the law (the Torah), then Christ died in vain" (Gal. 2:21).

I submit we will be seen as perfect in Yeshua, in Christ Jesus – if we trust in Him, look to Him, abide in Him to the end. *We do have to abide in Him to the end, listen to Him and obey Him.*

I'm confident, *not* in my own human performance but in the perfect, flawless obedience of my Savior. That is the life Father sees now. In the flesh we died, but in the spirit He sees the perfect life of Yeshua fulfilling His own good and holy law perfectly in us.

***Romans 8:3-4***

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, ***God did by sending His own Son*** in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: ***He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.***

How can we share more in the life of the Messiah?

**BEARING FRUIT of God's Spirit by ABIDING IN OUR SAVIOR**

***The fruit of God's Spirit is simply the life of God's nature in action.*** When we bear the fruit of God's Spirit, and not just the fruit of trying to be like God – it is because we are letting Yeshua live in us. He abides in us by His Spirit and we abide in Him. "Abide" comes from the same meaning to make something your abode, your home. That's home base for you. Where you stay.

***1 John 4:13-16***

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

In Galatians 5:22-25 we have the list of the fruit – singular – of God's Spirit. One fruit, many parts. (Have you noticed it says "the fruit of the Spirit IS"... not "fruits ...are"). The greatest part is love. Paul said "walk in the Spirit" (v.16). Starve the fleshly natures. Walk in the bond of love. On love hang all the law and prophets – so love for God and neighbor defines the entire Bible in one short description.



**How do you starve the sinful nature? How do you starve anything? You quit feeding it.** Our king lives in us by His Spirit and His eyes see, His ears hear – whatever you and I are experiencing. Two won't forever walk together, lest they be agreed. God's children shouldn't find pleasure in entertainment that uses His holy name in vain, or promotes sin: adultery, fornication, lying, murder, and on and on. But many of us tolerate that (even seek it!) and pay hard-earned money to be entertained by sinners sinning. Go figure. I do that too often too, but am changing.

***In His word, the Eternal likens His people to TREES. We are branches on the Vine. He is the Vine.*** He calls Judah an olive tree, and refers to Gentiles as wild olive trees (**Romans 11:16-24** for example). Many of us sing in our hymnals a psalm from **Psalm 1** – the man of God “shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of water, which brings forth fruit in its season” (v.3). The Holy Spirit is likened to rivers of water. So we should be like a tree drinking in of the Holy Spirit, resulting in a healthy, strong “tree” which bears fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.

Think of the analogy of the tree and how it grows, bears fruits and remains healthy. *Remember in John 15, which we're about to read, you are not the Vine. You are a branch. It's the Vine's responsibility to provide for the whole grapevine and all the branches.* Our King is the Vine, or tree. We are the branches. For fruit to appear, plants need light, water, food and air.

- Have you watched how trees, or especially house plants – ***grow towards the light***? *They need light and know it.* Do we know we need light, and strive to get as much light as possible? Children of the light come to the light. Yeshua is the light of the world.

**John 3:20-21**

20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth **comes to the light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been *done in God*."

We're told “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path” (**Psalm 119:105**). A good tree grows in light, to the light. Spend time daily in the word. Pick up your daily manna. I fear many of God's children are not getting enough light each day, and that is stunting our growth and the fruit of His righteousness we could be bearing.

- **Tree roots grow down into the soil to find a** source of water and other necessary nutrients. The water is likened to God's spirit. I read some time ago that in a strong storm trees are putting down roots faster than ever. Our king said if we come to Him, out of our bellies will flow rivers of living water (John 7:38). We need to be tapping into that Spirit every chance we get. I love **Isaiah 37:31** – which speaks of taking “*root downward, and bear fruit upward*”. Jesus is the Vine. He's the root and main trunk therefore also. The fruit He bears in us is for His glory. We're just the branch displaying *His* fruit. So we need to abide and cling to Him. Our eternal life depends on it. A barren, dead branch is burnt up.
- Without getting technical, **the whole process** of capturing sunlight, the process of photosynthesis, pulling up water from the deep ground, producing oxygen, and all the things busily happening in trees and vines – **all happens naturally**. Remember we are likened to branches. The branches of the vine will get what they need from the Vine (“ask



and it shall be granted unto you”, remember?). *If the branch stays attached to the vine, fruit will come – naturally, in its time.*

I think a lot of people miss this point that fruit comes naturally to the branch when it is firmly attached to the Vine. We'll read it in a moment in John 15. We are called the branches. The branches have to stay attached! The tree does the rest. Naturally. One day you look and see fruit!

What most believers seem to try to do is work really hard to be more loving, work real hard at peace, work real hard at gentleness... *I don't think that's the Father's righteousness at work, but the fruit of our own gutsy effort.* It's Yahweh at work when we open the doors and gates, let “the sap” of His Spirit flow through the Vine resulting in His fruit in us. The branch has to have faith that the Vine can get it done. It's HIS righteousness, not ours. I know I've said that 100 times now it seems, but we keep trying to be the ones producing the fruit.

*Please hear me again: Stay close to Father and the Son of God, and let Almighty God do His perfect work in you. Let Him produce fruit of HIS work, and we by faith know it's going on. **We do have a part. That part is to stay as attached to God as we can, as we believe in HIM and HIS work in us. We must not let anything tear us off the Vine.***

**Now turn to John 15:1-8. Let's let Jesus tell it.**

#### **John 15:1-3**

**I am the true vine**, and My Father is the vinedresser 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

#### **John 15:4-6**

Abide in Me, and I in you. **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;** for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Note the key to bearing fruit is abiding in the Vine. Look back now at John 14:23. It's about making the son of God our abode, our home, where we live, where we call home base! Notice who comes to live in us....

#### **John 14:23**

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;** and My Father will love him, and **We** will come to him and **make Our home with him.**"

#### **1 John 3:24**

24 *Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.* And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

***So here's how my teaching differs from the Protestant view of imputed righteousness:*** some Protestants teach “one saved, always saved”. Scripture doesn't support that, so neither do I. At some point, Christ has to be forming in us. ***If we truly, faithfully accept His gift, and let the Son's resurrection life empower us today, people will see us changing.*** Others will perceive more love, more grace, more obedience, more of all the fruit of His Nature, the fruit of the Spirit. *We can't claim He lives in us and keep doing the sinful things we've always done.* But take heart. Paul likened it to a pregnancy. For the first few months, you may not even know a woman is pregnant. But at some point, it becomes clearly apparent: a new life is forming in her! (Gal. 4:18-19).

***If Messiah lives in us, we will look more and more like Him. As time passes, we will increasingly talk, act and live as He would have lived.***

I preach to myself. But be encouraged. The hard work is to keep seeking Him, staying attached to Him, and He will grow in you and me. Be sure to listen to Him –and follow up on what He tells you to do. This often happens via strong feelings, thoughts, or even circumstances in our lives.

### **Don't duct-tape the fruit to the tree; it's an inside job**

We don't have to go to Safeway or other food store and buy a handful of grapes and duct tape them to the grapevine. That's how some of us try to produce godly fruit. *We* try to provide the fruit and try to make it evident. That's not the fruit of God's spirit but the fruit of our own human effort. It's not the things we do that produce fruit, as is commonly taught. *We shouldn't focus on how “we'll produce fruit” – but what we do to let HIS fruit appear in our lives.* It's the fruit of His spirit, not mine. Focus on letting Him delight in living once more His perfect life in you.

*I don't know how else to say it, but I strongly suspect most of us still are still trying to produce the fruit of God's spirit by our efforts. But that's like buying grapes at Safeway and tacking them to the grapevine, instead of letting the Vine produce the fruit in the branch, and letting it become evident naturally. Our hard work and focus is to stay attached. You can't get any closer than “attached”.*

### **Philippians 1:10-11**

...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 ***being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ***, to the glory and praise of God.

*The Tree produces the fruit. The Branches display the tree's fruit.* We are just the branches on the tree that is Jesus Christ. When we see lots of fruit, we never marvel at “what an awesome branch that is” – but “what an awesome tree that is; can you see all the fruit on it”-- when the tree is bearing fruit. Are you getting this? It's His fruit. It's His work. After all – back to the other metaphor: *it's HIS body. It's HIS life. It's His Vine.* We are to stay attached and display what He is doing in our lives

This should be obvious, but many don't seem to understand what I'm about to say: **You and I can't make ourselves become like God.** To use yet another analogy -- HE is Potter who is shaping this lump of clay. *He's* the one duplicating His righteousness in us by faith and He credits HIS righteousness to us. What I *can* do is make myself available to Him to work on this lump of clay to fashion me into whatever item HE chooses. ***See Jeremiah 18:1-10 and Romans 9:21.***

Yes we can and must “imitate Christ”. We do become better people by doing that. *But I believe we will never be able to be exactly like Him no matter how hard we try to imitate Him, because we still fail too much. We can’t imitate our way into the kingdom.* That’s just another form of works, ultimately. I’ve heard entire sermons about “imitating Christ until we are just like him and qualify to be in the kingdom”. That’s not grace, that’s not faith, that’s not Biblical. It is nonsense.

**HE** qualified for the kingdom and imputes His righteousness to us who value Him, who obey Him, who abide in Him, who seek Him like a house plant reaching toward the light or the window. *You should get goose bumps if you really understand what Scripture teaches. Only ONE BODY was ever perfect as a human being. You and I are now part of that one body.*

### **Colossians 1:12-13**

“...giving thanks to **the Father who has qualified us** to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints *in the light*. 13 **HE has delivered us** from the power of darkness and [HE has] **conveyed us** into the kingdom of the Son of His love...”

### **I’m out of time... before I go, let me review some of the main things today.**

- We reviewed the GIFT of God’s righteousness. We don’t get just the gift of his grace, or his forgiveness, or his Holy Spirit. Don’t forget the gift of His *righteousness*. If any speakers are listening to this, please – we need to be talking more about this. This righteousness is apart from our own deeds of Torah, as it says in Rom 3:21 and other places. It is a gift, not something earned. It comes by faith, and can be demonstrated.
- As I understand it, there will be but **one level of righteousness allowed in the Kingdom**: the Father’s own perfection. Fortunately, He covers His family with that and we all will have His perfect righteousness. That is how we could ever stand before Him flawless, blameless, and without fault or blemish. Among humans, one *can be* more righteous than another. But in the end, we all fall short, and we all need to be covered with His perfection. Scripture calls it righteousness that is “imputed”, “reckoned” or “credited” to us.
- Hebrews 11 and so many other passages make it clear that this is the same righteousness that Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David had and spoke of. It’s also the same one spoken of by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets.
- As the Bride of Christ, just as Eve was part of the body of Adam, we are part of the holy, perfect body of Christ, no matter what body part we are. *Every body part of Messiah can only be holy. Messiah has no unholy body parts. We are holy, because He is holy.* I cannot make myself holy. I am only holy because I am a part of Him and He is a part of me. We are “one spirit” with Him (1 Cor. 6:17) just as Eve was “one flesh” with Adam.
- We’ve been **called to be witnesses of His resurrection**. We do that by being a living testimony that He LIVES because that is the only possible explanation for the radical changes that are beginning to happen in our lives. These changes take a while, but they are happening if we are abiding in Him.

- We still sin because we have two natures now. Though we have God's spirit, we still have the old carnal nature. These two war against each other. Whichever side we feed and fight alongside with – wins. But since the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and we're still flesh and blood, we still give in to sin from time to time. However, we are not to think of ourselves as being "in the flesh" any longer, but "in the spirit" (Rom. 8:8-9). We need to learn what it means to live "in the spirit".
- The key to producing fruit is NOT to work hard to come up with fruit and tack it on the tree – but to abide in the trunk of the tree. Let the Tree do its work – naturally. Yeshua produces in us the fruit of His SPIRIT, not the fruit of our hard work. Our hard work is to stay attached to the Vine and let nothing rip us off or make us diseased.
- Some people find the concepts in this sermon hard because they want to be responsible for their own salvation, I guess. They don't like anyone doing anything for them without paying for it somehow. I fear for people like that. You and I can't pay for this grace of God, or it's no longer grace. We are not our own saviors. There is but one Savior. We are not our own Potter. We are not our own creator of the new creation in Christ. There is one Creator, who created and continues to create all things. Even where it says to "work out your own salvation" in Phil. 2:12, I pointed out how verse 13 says, "For it is GOD who works in you both to will [to want to do] and to do, according to HIS good pleasure".

If we understand this Gift as part of His grace, if we understand the importance of abiding in Him and letting "the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:11) appear in us, we should just be ecstatic about what all this means. Yes, we're still in the fight of our lives to resist sin, to resist being pulled away – but He is faithful and just to finish in us what He began. He started this in us, and He will finish it. We just must make ourselves always available to Him.

***He continues to save us day by day by living His way in us.*** HE is finishing what HE started in us (Phil.1:6). He is the A to Z, the alpha and omega, the Alef and Tav.

**Philippians 1:6**

"...being *confident* of this very thing, that **He** who has **begun** a good work in you **will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ;

Enjoy what this means—even as we work hard to stay attached to the Vine, to abide in Him. As my granddaughter asked me to explain on Thanksgiving what I was so thankful for, it is for the peace I can have that my salvation is assured if I abide in Him to end.

God bless you. Until next time, this is Philip Shields wishing you well and asking God's blessings on you.