

Part 3, Righteousness – Yours or God's?

Letting Jesus live in us

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields

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Abstract: Is the righteousness of God by faith alone – or does God call us to live and practice His righteousness every day? If so, how? If we have to practice it, how can it also be imputed to us? Hear scripture's answers of how we let Jesus live in us – and experience the resulting peace and joy.

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Good day again, brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to seek first God's kingdom and its righteousness and all our concerns will be taken care of (Matthew 6:33). Only the righteous will inherit the kingdom; the unrighteous will not. Therefore I want to be among those truly seeking a deeper understanding of this vital topic. I have felt for years that most who preach on this topic end up in one ditch or the other – either the ditch of “we have still to do it all and work out our own salvation” or the 2nd ditch of “it doesn't matter anymore how we actually live, for Christ has already done it all for us if we just confess His name”. Both ditches have error and yet both ditches can quote lots of scriptures to support their case. Hence this study.

I have a ton of scriptures as I try to use everything the Bible says on the topic, so I'm going to just allude to many of them. Print off a transcript and take your time studying each scripture; it would be a great Bible study. There is so much in the Bible about righteousness.

We've been talking about Paul's statement in **Philippians 3:9** – **that there are 2 kinds of righteousness: God's – and our own**. Paul said our own, from imperfectly keeping the law, was inferior to God's righteousness, which was perfect. He said he didn't want his own righteousness or human accomplishments which he equated to just so much dung, but wanted God's righteousness, available to us by faith.

Today we're going to finish the series, which I consider one of the most important topics I've covered to date. In coming weeks, I'll have sermons on “crucified with Christ”, “surrendering to God”, “abiding in Christ” and what it means to pray or live “in Jesus' name” -- and also one soon on the dangerous doctrine of “eternal security with no conditions”.

As we come close to Passover, I'd recommend you look up my sermons on the web on “New Look at Passover emblems”, “forgiving one another as Christ forgives”, and one on “Passover's connection to healing” – which goes into far more than just the concept of “by his stripes you are healed.” They're all on the web, or if you'd like a cassette copy, I can send you one if you just order one. I'm also starting to make cd originals of sermons as we go forward, so you can ask for cd's as well from 2007 onwards.

In part 1, we saw no one is ultimately righteous but God, if use the definition that requires perfect 100% obedience to the law of God.

-but people in Old Testament were called “righteous”: Abel, Noah, Abraham, so many.

-It's not a contradiction: there is a righteousness from the law and for that matter, as I hope we showed in #2, many of these had the righteousness that is by faith anyway.

Our own righteousness from the law is obeying the law of God as best you can. In part 1 we covered:

- people and nations were blessed for that.
- After all, God's law is love and it defines who and what God is
- God's law is good. Nothing wrong with the law. But there's something wrong with humanity – for we can't keep the law perfectly.
- We also saw that when Paul speaks of “the law”, he includes the 10 commandments. Go back to part 1 if you missed that.
- But neither is Paul, or I, throwing out the 10 commandments. Far from it.
- We also saw the commands about God's law was to keep all of it, completely.

Paul does come back and say, if you could keep it perfectly, you would be justified by being a doer of the law (**Romans 2:13**). But, no one ever has been able to perfectly keep all the law, even though Paul called his own obedience “blameless”. (**first part of Rom 3**). So therefore, since no one from earth has (Jesus is from heaven), it is evident that no one can be justified or made righteous by keeping the law. (**Romans 3:20**).

In fact, compared to God's holiness, God calls our own human righteousness “dung”, and nothing more than filthy or “menstruous rags” in Isaiah 64:6. In Psalms, we're told a man in his best state is altogether vanity, a puff of wind (**Psalms 39:5**). So we don't measure up by our best efforts, because we have all incurred the death penalty for sin, for we've all sinned and fallen short of saving righteousness.

Paul then makes it very clear that no one ever has been justified (made righteous) by doing the law (**Rom 3:20; Gal. 2:15-16; 3:11**). Therefore, he makes his rock solid foundation for stating that we must be made righteous by faith in the righteousness of Jesus, the only one who perfectly obeyed God's righteous law.

Justification by faith is clearly stated in **Romans 3:24-26; Romans 5:1-2; Phil. 3:9, Gal. 2:15-16, etc.** Today we'll see more clearly and extensively that the “faith” mentioned in the Bible is always a working faith, an active faith. It's a faith that is evidenced by obedience. So James says that the faith of Abraham, Rahab and others was proven by their works of obedience (**James 2:21-26**).

In fact, when you hear preachers speak of “Faith alone, nothing else” – the Bible actually describes that kind of faith as “dead faith”; as dead as a human body that has no spirit of life in it (**James 2:26**: “Faith without works is dead..”) And **Hebrews 7:19** says “the law made nothing perfect”.

We also saw human righteousness vs. God's justification in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, as well as in the story of Job. They felt righteous and superior to others because of their obedience. But in the end, even Job had to say “I am vile” and “I abhor myself” – but that happened only after he “saw” God and His holiness. Elihu had gotten it right, when he said in **Job 36:3**, “*I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker*”.

Now please get this: only God can make you righteous for salvation. He was your maker physically and He certainly is our Maker spiritually.

Then in Part 2: the Righteousness of God by faith we covered:

If Jesus is righteous, and He's the head of His own body – His body must also be righteous. Jesus does not have a wicked body. In short, I explained that as we come to be “in Christ” by repentance and accepting Him as our Maker, Redeemer, Savior and Lord – we are put into His spiritual body.

We also explained what seems on the surface to be a contradiction

* **Rom 2:13 and James 2:21-25** say we are justified by works

* **Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:15-16; 3:11** etc. say no one is justified by his own works but only by faith.

As a result, for centuries we've had the battle between those who believe they have to be righteous by our own obedient works and those who believe they can only be righteous by faith, implying our own good works aren't required. I'll start injecting some new material now into this sermon even as we finish the review of #2 in this series.

Those of you into spiritual “self improvement” note that you either have to perfectly keep all the law (**Galatians 3:10; 5:3**), from the very beginning and be on your own – or you can have peace in the righteousness that comes by faith (**Romans 5:1**). I don't know about you, but I'd much rather have faith in what Jesus did – and will continue to do in me – than what I can do myself. The fact is, we can't perfectly obey as long as we are in corruptible flesh. If anyone could be justified by his own works, then that person could set aside the grace of God and Christ died in vain. Do you realize that!?

Galatians 2:21 “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

Some of you are objecting: “but we have the Holy Spirit now, so we love God now, love His law now – and we have the power to obey now”. That's true to a point. But then how do you explain that you and I continue to stumble into sin from time to time? How do you explain that the apostle Paul himself, filled with God's spirit, said, “that which I hate I do”? Are you more spirit-led than Paul? Are you more righteous and stronger? Apparently even a spirit filled Christian still falls short, still sins, still cannot be justified by their own obedience.

Remember we also talked about **the lesson of Unleavened Bread**: that we are to be a “new lump”, unleavened (**1 Cor. 5:7**), as Jesus our Passover was sacrificed for us. The lesson is this: you cannot make leavened bread unleavened by trying to dig out the leaven out of it. No way. We have to discard the entire loaf – and start with a new unleavened lump of dough. Interestingly enough, the Corinthian church had many sins still overcome – but Paul still said they were “unleavened”. Ponder that. This was presumably written just before the days of unleavened bread, so they would not have even been physically unleavened yet.

In the same way as we can't take leaven out of a loaf, **we cannot make ourselves righteous once we have earned the death penalty**. You're leavened at that point. The leavened body has to be “crucified with Christ” and let to die – and a new life, a **new creation in Christ** has to be accepted. God was your creator in the flesh, and now let Him create in you a new spiritual creation. He is the creator, not you, not me. The “new you” is really the life of perfect Christ. That's what it means to be “in Christ” – we're now part of His righteousness, His body. So when we come before Father in prayer, in Jesus' name, Father doesn't see my old nature – but the righteousness of His Son, in whom He was well

pleased. I will give a sermon soon on the power of “in Jesus’ Name”. It’s much more than just coming by His authority.

There is no contradiction in scripture. People just haven’t explained it well, and so many end up in the ditches of legalism or license. We need to avoid both ditches.

If anyone could keep God’s law perfectly, they would be declared justified or righteous (**Romans 2:13**). Now here’s the explanation: **One person did keep the law perfectly – the One from heaven**, Jesus who was also completely man. Jesus of Nazareth defeated Satan on his own turf. He was pre-existent God, who spoke the words “Let there be light”. Jesus is also called Immanuel or “GOD with us”. He was God, or else it would have been a sin to have worshipped Him while He was a man – and he was worshipped from the time of His birth onwards by people here and there, and He allowed it. Of course, He was God in the flesh.

So Jesus the Righteous (**1 John 2:1**) kept the law perfectly and always did what was pleasing to His Father, always (**John 8:29**). Paul says He fulfilled the law’s perfect requirements (**Romans 8:4**).

In **1 Cor. 1:26-31**, Paul begins that passage explaining why God chose us, the weak of the world. Let’s pick up in verse 29.

1 Corinthians 1:29-31

“that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 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.”

So the Bible tells us a 2-fold swap is made, to all God calls and all who respond:

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to **be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness OF GOD in Him [or because of Him].**”

There’s the 2-fold swap!

- **we impute to Him our sins**, and HE pays the penalty for us, as He “became sin for us” (**2 Corinthians 5:20; Gal. 3:13**), so therefore no repented sin is any longer imputed to us. Note I said “repented sin”. We must confess our sins and repent and turn from them, or there is no forgiveness. Many who teach the false and dangerous “eternal security” doctrine tell us that all sins were forgiven on the cross –past, present and future. But that’s not what scripture says! Scripture says “sins that were previously committed” are forgiven (**Romans 3:25**), and then only if we confess and repent of them (**1 John 2:1-2**). I’ll address this dangerous Eternal Security doctrine in a future sermon.

Don’t get me wrong. We do have some security – but it must be as we abide in and obey Christ. I’ll go into that in more depth later today and especially in my sermon on Eternal security.

So we give Him our sins and He pays the penalty. That doesn't make Him a sinner – but He pays the penalties for us. That was His choice, agreed to with the Father, and it's something He's offering.

But where does that leave us? With a zero bank account! Prior to Christ taking our debt, we were debtors to God to pay Him the death penalty. We owed God – if we made an analogy of financial terms – billions. He paid that off for us. OK, we're debt free, but now we have nothing in our account.

Another analogy is the filthy garments. If all we do is take off our old filthy garments – like the Laodecians – that's initial repentance. That's God forgiving us of past sins. But where does that leave you, Christian – after you've taken off your filthy rags of your own failed efforts?

NAKED! Hence Christ says to His church of Laodecia, see your nakedness! “You're miserable, poor, blind and naked”, He says. He tells them in **Rev. 3:18** to buy from Him “white garments, that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness not be revealed”. So after Christ takes off our filthy clothes, we stand there naked unless we take the next step, and accept – and put on -- what He is offering us. That's the change we have to make in this life.

Christian, brother and sister in Christ, please see this. Please put on the wedding garment being offered you. Put on the white garments of righteousness being handed to you. In other words, when you change, don't just take off the dirty clothes of sin and worry and your own failed efforts. Complete the job of changing: put on the clean clothes God's given you, and don't just stand there naked.

- **So in return, the 2nd part of the swap, God imparts or imputes to us the righteousness of Christ by faith. IF you grasp the enormity of this, your eyes would be welling up with awesome gratitude right now. Tears of joy and thanksgiving to our generous, forgiving dear Father.**

We read in **Romans 4 and 5** that God – because we are now in Christ – imputes the righteousness of Jesus on to us. This notion comes all the way from **Genesis 15:6**, when Abram's believing confidence in God was “accounted to him for righteousness”. We covered last time how God imputes or accounts to us the righteousness of Christ.

This is where so many who know about imputed righteousness though, go off. Some of them feel we don't have to make *any* effort to obey or be pleasing to God because He has already done it all perfectly for us. That's not Biblical, though I know about Romans 8:4, we can't ignore the many other verses that do speak of our responsibilities too.

We also discussed how God now COVERS us with His robe of His righteousness (Isa. 61:10):

- **Joshua the High Priest – Zechariah 3:1-7** was pulled out of the fire, so to speak, and told to take off his dung-covered garments in exchange for a fresh clean robe.

But do you not remember that God did more than the clean robe. He also put a turban on Joshua's head. The turban had a crown on it with the words “Holiness to the Lord” (**Exodus 28:36-37**). God gave him His holiness back. But there was an “IF” with this, and there's an “IF” all through the

New covenant too, as we'll shortly see. We must now live a life that represents holiness. WE are holiness to the Lord now. Here's the part we didn't have time to read last time:

Zechariah 3:6-7

"Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, 7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If you will walk in My ways, and IF you will keep My command,
Then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts;
 I will give you places to walk among these who stand here."

When Jesus forgave the woman about to be stoned for adultery, He also said, "Go and sin no more". The same Paul who wrote we can't be justified by our own works (**Gal. 2:15-16**), also wrote that if we do the evil things in life, we won't inherit the Kingdom (**Galatians 5:19-21**).

So the righteousness we're supposed to have now is Christ's righteousness. The life we are supposed to be living now is Christ's life (**Gal. 2:20**).

What does that mean? It means we let Jesus live in us like He would if He were in your place! In means we follow His leading by the Holy Spirit, instead of what our carnal nature wants us to do. We let the Spirit grow, the new nature get stronger, as we feed it and follow it. You either do that, or you follow the lead of the carnal nature. Which one will lead? Which will you follow? Which nature will grow and dominate in your life? That's largely up to you. But that's how Jesus lives in us today. Jesus would not swear, would not lie, and would not delight in sin – though He was very comfortable around sinners. So, if Jesus is alive and active in us, we will please Father, we will obey, we will not go into places of outright sin, we will be careful what we watch, hear and do – for in fact we're making Jesus watch, hear and do those things, for He is in us.

As a brief aside, it was the Pharisee who was the "separated" one. Pharisee means "separate ones". But publicans and sinners felt comfortable around the most holy being that has ever walked this planet. That tells you a lot about Jesus, and a lot about how we should be. Though we shouldn't choose to hang around a brother who is living a deviant, sinful life – Paul says that doesn't apply to people of the world, or we'd have to leave this planet (**1 Cor. 5:9-12**). Turn now to **Romans 4:1**.

This matter of imputed righteousness is so important to understanding the righteousness we have access to now, that we need to read it again.

Romans 4:1-4

"What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For **if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about**, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? **"Abraham believed God, and it [HIS BELIEF] was accounted to him for righteousness."** 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt."

Rom. 4:5 "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: [did you catch that? God imputes....]

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man **to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.**"

[Just as God no longer imputes our sin to us, He does now impute His righteousness.]

Rom. 4:20-22 “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 **and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."**

[GOD credited, accounted, righteousness to Abraham because he believed – or had faith. That's why God's righteousness is called “the righteousness of faith”. Now, are you ready for the next verse?]

Romans 4:23-25 “Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. *It [righteousness] shall imputed to us who believe* in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

NIV in Rom 4:22-25

“This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” 23 The words “it was credited to him” *were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.* 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

How does Paul then resolve this?

Romans 5:1-2 “Therefore, **having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,** 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:17-19

“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.** [Did you get that?] 18 Therefore, as through one man's [Adam] 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 many were made sinners, so **also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.**”

Did you hear verse 19? Let me read it again: “**by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.**”

THE EMPTY BANK ACCOUNT IS NOW FILLED

Remember what I said earlier, that if we merely repent of our sins – that means our debt to pay the penalty of sin has been paid. That puts us back to a zero balance. We owe nothing now, but neither do we have anything in there.

What God has just done, in the scriptures we've just read is: after paying off our enormous debt, He now fills our spiritual bank account with everything He is, with all He has. We have become inheritors of ...GOD! His perfect righteousness is credited into our spiritual bank accounts as well.

In return, God has now bought us , and we have – gladly, I might add – become HIS. In reality, He has paid the marriage price, the bride price, so He can clean us up and prepare us to marry His perfect Son. Hence the wedding garments. We're counting the days to the wedding, folks. I hope you

understand you are espoused to marry Christ, the Righteous. Now we are to be one in Him, and as we become one in Him, part of His perfect righteousness, we shall be able to be presented to Father's holy presence without spot or wrinkle - - for it won't be our righteousness, but what Paul said: "I want the righteousness of God by faith through Christ" (**Phil. 3:9**).

So we're indebted now to live a righteous life. How? Some of you are asking how God's righteousness comes into us. Last time I mentioned it starts with repentance and confessing with your mouth that Christ is your king and Savior (Rom. 10:9-10). That's the starting point after repentance.

That means completely surrendering to Christ as your new LORD and Master of your life. I will speak more in later sermons about this crucial topic of surrendering. By letting Christ's mind rule over our carnal mind that is still there, and will remain there, until we are changed to spirit, when we are clothed from above with our new tabernacle. I hope you recognize the verses I'm referring to. "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus" – **Phil. 2:5**. Letting something different than what we are is hard. But let it happen.

Stop thinking, "This is the way I am, and you'll just have to accept it". Not so. That's what conversion means: changing. Not staying the same way you always have been. That's why I have to address the error of "eternal security without condition" doctrine. We're called to change. To change our mind, to change our behavior, to change our fears into hopeful peace, to change our garments of wickedness to holiness. This life is about our change. It culminates in the resurrection when finally "we shall be changed!" Once born of God, we will not be able to sin (**1 John 3:9**). But until then, we must fight sin by the power of God's spirit – *and let the Holy Spirit dominate in our lives*. For it to be effectively leading, we have to be following, listening to the messages from God's spirit.

I preach to myself. I've failed, big time, a trillion times. But thanks be to God, who promises that if I repent, if I come back to an abiding life in Christ, He will never leave me nor forsake me (**Heb 13:5**) and He promises to finish the saving work He's started in you and me, if we endure to the end (**Phil.1:6; Matt. 24:13**).

But it is completely unbiblical to believe you can revert back into a life of sin! Peter says it would be better to have never known the truth, than to go back to your old way of life, like a dog returning to his vomit (**2 Pet. 2:19-22**). Why? Because those who have never known the truth will have their one and first chance to come to know God, as I covered in the sermon about "the 8th Day of the Feast". Go back and hear that. There's some deep stuff in there too.

But those of us who have tasted the heavenly gift, and now willfully sin, knowing better, have only to look forward to a hot, burning lake of fire that will devour us completely (**Heb. 10:26-31**). **The wages of sin is death, by burning up in a lake of fire, becoming ashes under the feet of the righteous (Mal. 4:3) – not as so many believe.** *Why do so many believe this error: "the wages of sin is eternal life in an eternal separation from God". Find me a verse that says that! God is not into torture.*

So it would be better to have never known the truth – than to have known it and depart – for any in that camp have nothing to look forward to but an execution by fire. So if God is calling you, we must now obey, we must now live as a slave to righteousness.

Romans 8:1-11

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 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.

[Got that?]

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 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. 10 **And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

[So now Christ lives in us. WE should see “the self” as dead – Gal. 2:20 – and the life we now live is Jesus Christ living His perfect life in us, if we follow Him, let Him, if we walk in the spirit. For more on this, by the way, hear my sermon on the web called “New Creation”]

Romans 8:12-14

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors -- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [now get what comes next! A warning to saints, to those who have accepted Christ! All of you who believe in Eternal security, take note] 13 **For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Did you see the definition for who are the children of God? Those who follow the Spirit. That’s another way of saying “to be led by”. The spirit will never lead us into sin. The spirit will never lead us into uncontrolled anger – but will lead us into “a meek and a quiet spirit”. The spirit from God gives us a nature that is gentle, peaceable, and pure. I preach to myself. The Spirit loves God’s law and God’s spirit in us will lead us to want to obey. Our carnal spirit does not want to obey. Which will we follow? That’s the one that becomes dominant in us. By the way, when I speak of “the flesh” some translations call it “the carnal nature”.

The spirit leads us to trust – not to be stewing and worrying. Anxiety and worry is sin, because it means we’re not trusting. Trusting, faith, believing –it all comes together.

Letting Christ live in you means letting His mind dominate over the carnal mind in our bodies. It includes feeding yourself with His mind – by His scriptures.

But now Paul has just said, this faith also leads us into obedience. Now we keep God’s law because we want to, now that we’re converted and no longer walking “in the flesh”; because it’s natural for God’s spirit to obey God’s law, and because we love God and man. It’s not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

That's why one of my favorite hymns is "Trust *and* Obey". That's the way.

Jesus STILL WALKS THE EARTH – THROUGH HIS BODY

Brethren, Jesus still walks the earth! But instead of walking on earth in just one physical body, He walks on earth through His new body—God's church. We must become one with Him, even more so than Adam and Eve were from one body, one flesh. We must become one body, one spirit, with God's Son, whom God's church will soon marry. By being baptized into His Body and receiving His spirit, we become a child of God, we become "in Christ", and He in us.

Now we must let King Jesus walk on this earth again, with every single place the soles of your feet step, let them be Jesus' steps. Every single word you and I speak, may it be Jesus speaking. Everything you and I see, everything we purpose to hear – may it be with Jesus' eyes and Jesus' ears. Something to think about, isn't it?

It's no longer about what you or I are doing and accomplishing or want to do or accomplish. That's just so many menstrual rags, or as Paul calls it – "dung". Paul says in Philippians 3, he no longer wants to know about what Paul has done or is going to do – but only what Jesus has done and is doing. That's why in another place he says he wanted to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. That's why in Gal. 2:20 he says Paul no longer was the one living – but Jesus lives in Him. If only each of US could now say that – and live like that.

We could, if we too would surrender the self over completely to God. Let Him give each of us a new heart, a renewed mind. May Jesus' will become ours. May His desires be the desires of our hearts, now. I believe a huge key in how all this happens is to surrender to God's will, consciously, every single day, moment by moment. If we're learning to let Jesus lead in us more today than yesterday, this starts to happen more frequently, more "naturally".

But it's more than asking "what would Jesus do?". You know what I'm saying: if Christ fills your life, you will almost naturally be living Christ's life. But that's a big if. We have to let Him fill our lives. Just as a vine branch doesn't have to put fruit on itself from outside. No – the fruit is developed automatically as the branch stays attached to the vine. The strength of the vine produces the fruit. That's what Jesus said: abide in me and you will bear much fruit! (John 15:1-8). He will bear much fruit in us, for us, with us - - without us having to go to Safeway to buy a bunch of grapes to tack on. That's an analogy I'm giving to make the point. He produces naturally the life He wants if he fills our lives. But the problem is, our human nature is still there and we have to fight it, and listen instead to God's spirit, not our own carnal nature.

Brethren, let's get it: we can't do it ourselves. But with Christ, we can say with Paul – "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (**Philippians 4:13**). He raises us up, picks us up out of the mire, HE cleans us, HE clothes us, HE feeds us, HE provides for us, as we walk in the power of His might (**Ephesians 6:10**).

(**Story of my father and I when I was 5 or 6**, in the sticky mud flats. If I had just held daddy's hand...)

How and Why the members of Christ's holy body still fail and sin

We are part of Christ's body, yet we know we still stumble into evil from time to time – as did Paul (**Romans 7:19,21**) - - so how do we explain that? **The NEW Creation that you are, is Christ in you.** However, the “old you” is also still in your life until you are changed to spirit at the resurrection – and so there's a conflict. But as long as we strive to talk daily to Christ, let Him lead us by His spirit – when we sin, though we have to repent daily and deeply, God tells us “it is no longer I [the new creation that we now are] who does it, but sin dwelling in me [the old me]” (**Romans 7:16-20**, especially verses 17 and 20).

How can that be? Because you are now “in Christ” and Paul says it's not the “new you” sinning, but the “old you” doing it. The new you now hates sin and loves God – but at times we're still pulled down by our old nature. But it's not Christ's holy body doing it – but the old nature doing it. How else do you explain those verses, that I doubt you'll ever hear a sermon on elsewhere. You may want to rewind the tape and hear that last minute or two again until you get it. And read from your own Bible, the verses I'm citing in the transcript.

I must hasten to add: you and I must confess and repent when we do this. We must ask forgiveness for what our old self has done.

The goal becomes, therefore, that we let the New Creation grow in us and completely vanquish the old nature, what the KJV calls “the old man” in us. You've please got to understand this. It is Jesus at work in you – and not just your own efforts, when you see this. And then we see that Christ fulfilled His law perfectly and completely – even for us, if we accept it in faith – it clearly says in **Romans 8:3-4**.

So do we negate God's law, do we cancel obedience to God, do we no longer have to fight sin because somehow it was all accomplished perfectly for us already by Christ? No way! **We have to fight sin like crazy**, as we follow Christ! We **have to overcome** through Christ. We have to grow, through Christ. In fact, we're told our goal is to grow into the perfect stature of Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 4:13**). We no longer walk and live in the old way we used to (**Eph 4:19-21**).

I do NOT want anyone hearing my first 2 sermons to think that I teach we do not have to obey, do not have to strive to fight sin. NO! I do not teach that, because neither does the Bible teach we can throw God's law away now! Far from it! But we have to understand how obedience fits into the concept of Christ's perfect obedience being imputed to us since neither can we ever perfectly obey in this life. I know no one except Christ who has! Christ has to take us the distance and its His righteousness that comes before Holy God.

For now, you must all just know that I do not believe or preach that all we have to do is accept Jesus in our hearts and then we can go back doing whatever we were doing before, living a life of sin – and still somehow end up in the Kingdom of God. No way. And I'll absolutely prove it within a few weeks, Master willing.

WE ENTER A COVENANT TO OBEY

When we have been given the Holy Spirit, and are being led by the Holy Spirit, we will not go back to as a way of life. We will not revert to living like we did before our conversion. **The sexually immoral, liars, those who as a way of life profane God's name, or as a way of life routinely break**

the sabbath or steal or hate – will not be in God's kingdom. Nor will any of us, if we have unrepented sin. We must repent regularly, confess regularly.

1 Cor 6:9-11

“Do you not know that the **unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

That is repeated in Galatians 5:21, after listing the works of the flesh, God says, “...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” *We cannot claim to be a saint and live a life of constant sinfulness as a way of life, though it is true even saints still stumble and sin from time to time -- but not as a way of life. Sin just can't be our way of life any longer.*

******But when do we sin? When we follow our carnal desires and fleshly nature more than following King Jesus and His Spirit. That's when you sin. It's the old you sinning – and you have to repent of not following God's Spirit at those times.***

We can't say Christ is in us – and therefore I'm heading back into sin. Christ would not do that. That's not Christ in you!

Get this difference: Saints can still stumble into sin, oh yes. But there's no such thing as being a “sinful saint”. It's a contradiction of terms. We can't be “wicked holy ones”. We must change.

1 John 3:10

“In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: **Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God,** nor is he who does not love his brother.”

Did you get that?

For those of you who wish to study further that obedience to God's commandments is still absolutely required, please read the verses below on your own time. Keep in mind this basic salient point: If Jesus is really living in you, He will do once more in you what He did Himself: always please the father!

1 John 2:1-6—if we don't keep his commandments, we are liars, and don't know Him. We must walk as He walked.

1 John 3:7-8 – those who sin as a way of life are of the devil. Those who practice righteousness are righteous.

1 John 5:2-5 – the love of God is defined as keeping His commandments. They're not burdensome [contrary to what so many claim, when they misunderstand Paul]

John 14:21-24—If you love Christ, you will keep His commandments. Those were Jesus' own words.

John 15:9-10 – Jesus says: “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.”

Go back and on your own time slowly read **Heb. 11**. Write that down as homework. You'll see that the men and women of faith proved their faith BY doing something - - going to Canaan, marching around Jericho, being willing to sacrifice Isaac, and so on (**Heb. 11:4, 7, 8, 17, 30, etc.**). Godly faith works. Godly faith is action oriented. Godly faith does something about what they see – **also slowly read James 2:14-26**.

Paul makes it clear that those who are currently sexually immoral, profaners, disobedient to God will NOT inherit the kingdom! (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**). Earlier we read that if we live according to the flesh we will die (**Rom. 8:13**).

You'll see a key threading through here: the hard work we must especially work hard at doing is this – abide in Christ. How?

- obeying Him and His commandments
- studying his word
- walking with Him day by day 1 John 2:4-6

So how does all that square with what Paul said about imputed righteousness? We receive Christ's perfect righteousness, and Christ now comes to reside in us and live again in us as Gal 2:20 says, and if we give Him free rein in our lives, He will live His righteous life all over again, demolishing sin, resisting temptation in us. If we don't let Him have free rein, we are no longer surrendering, we are no longer walking “in the spirit”, and we're starting to give in to the “the flesh”, and start to live by the flesh, we fall back into sin – and condemnation. We cannot take our calling lightly!

Like it says in 1 Cor. 10, the same Paul wrote to the saints that all but 2 of the Israelites over age 20 made it to the promised land. We too are in a wilderness – in between our calling out of our spiritual Egypt and our entrance into our Promised Land. We're warned not to think that just because God is granting us His righteousness that we can just live as we please! They were all baptized in the Red Sea, they were all eating the same food and drink – and they still failed!

It's so easy to let our fleshly nature rise up again – even as we try to let it die in Christ. We must fight sin. We must not take God's gift of His righteousness lightly. Any of you who have heard me over the years know I teach frequently that we must resist sin, we must fight evil, we must submit to the risen Christ in our lives.

But as Paul said in **Philippians 3:9** – it must be God's righteousness by faith that **now controls us, and not our own efforts at righteousness from trying to keep God's law – and imperfectly at that.**

It's also a matter of surrendering our priorities, goals, life dreams, fears, doubts, depression and defeatism – all that we are right now – to Christ. Say the words. Give them up. Hand them over. Cast your cares upon Him. Crucify the self. You no longer live but Christ lives in you. And as Christ lives in you, He will obey Father all over again! That's what He did the first time, and He wants to do now again! I've just shared a big “how” this happens to you.

Did you notice though, that NONE of these verses say, in the New Testament, that “keeping God's law will make you righteous unto salvation”. So we must keep the commandments, but

keeping the commandments will not make us GODLY-level righteous. Humanly righteous, perhaps, but that falls far short and will not justify us. Only faith in God's righteousness ultimately justifies us, as I clearly showed the last time.

So even as we try to surrender to God, as we let Jesus live in us – our carnal nature still rises up – we have to repent of that, and move on again. But in the end, it is Christ's perfection that is imputed to us, allowing us to be presented without spot or wrinkle.

SALVATION, NEW CREATION – IS 100% God's DOMAIN

From start to finish, Scripture makes it clear –so that no human can boast – God is the one who is saving us. From start to finish. In fact, I believe – as I clearly brought out in the 2 part series on "Why God Called YOU", that God knew you long before you were born, because God is not into accidental child birth. You were planned from the beginning, and even predestined to be among those called now. It's not arbitrary, it's not willy-nilly, it's not accidental, and it's all part of a grand purpose and design.

God calls you and chooses you (**John 6:44-45**) – and not due to any goodness on our part (Titus 3:5). It's God's goodness that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

There's no righteousness without first repenting of our UNrighteousness and proving that repentance is real by letting Christ completely change our lives. No matter what evil we've done in the past, our Father chose you and me – and Jesus warmly welcomes us into His holy body, regardless of what you and I have done. To me, that's just beyond comprehension. Be sure you are a repentant ex-sinner, now holy one of God.

It's at this time when we also acknowledge Jesus as personal Savior and confess you believe He lives again – and invite Him to come live in you by God's Spirit.

It's a total and complete surrender that happens at repentance, and frankly should happen every day thereafter. My wife believes the biggest key of all is surrendering what you want to hang on to. Be looking for my upcoming full sermons on surrendering and being crucified with Christ.

It is Jesus, who then introduces us to "Abba", our dear heavenly holy Father (Matthew 11:27). You don't go to Father on your own. No way – Jesus introduces you to Father. He's the door (John 14:6). We enter the House of God only through the one door of Jesus (John 10:9). If any of you think we can get into the kingdom of God through other names – Allah the moon god of Islam, or Buddha, or pagan gods, or by our own good works, i.e., in your own name – you're sadly mistaken!

Now we must STARVE SIN and FEED THE SPIRIT.

Quiet time in the morning and evening – when studying the word of God, you let God speak to you. Listen. Hear my sermon on the web called "Eating your Daily Manna" – it's really a study in daily Bible study and how that sustains us. Keep evil, things of the flesh out of your mind and heart, but fill it with scripture, true spiritual words, songs, and ideas.

Let God speak to you as you quietly study. You can't do this with a "5-minute Bible" approach. It takes some quiet time every day. We feed the spirit by filling our mind with God's word, listening to audio tapes of scriptures even more so than sermons, reading the Bible, studying the Bible. We feed the spirit by doing what we are urged by God's spirit to do. We starve the flesh by not feeding it. We

don't let ourselves stew in a bad attitude. We don't get on the carnal internet sites. We don't fill our minds with the dung that fills so much of TV time. We don't listen to gossip or speak it. Every time a carnal thought comes in, we take it into captivity—and over time, it gets weaker, and God's spirit in us gets stronger. Jesus said about Satan, "he has nothing in me" (John 14:30). Wow. Nothing.

So Jesus is being formed in you as you come to your spiritual birth.

Some of you still think you have a part in **your own spiritual conception** – and then birth. Think of it. **How much part did you have in your own physical conception?** The physical is a type of the spiritual. God has begun a new birth in you. Did you conceive yourself the first time? No! Can you possibly be responsible for your new birth spiritually? ***Then don't talk, live and preach like you are responsible for that new birth!***

How about Creation? Are you a "spiritual evolutionist" – believing that given enough time you can bring all the pieces together to produce your own "new Creation"? Some of you act like you believe that! God created the first creation and God is the creator of the new Creation (**Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:17**). Otherwise He wouldn't be GOD, would He?

Even our FRUIT is from Jesus – "being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are BY Jesus..." (**Phil. 1:11**). The spiritual fruit is a result of the Spirit, fruit *of the spirit*, not fruit of Philip's efforts (**Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9**). We abide in Him and He bears fruit in due season (**John 15:4-8; Ps. 1:1-6**). If we abide in Him, HE produces the fruit. We don't have to drive to Safeway and buy a bunch of grapes and stick them on to the vine, which is what a lot of are doing spiritually.

If we don't abide in Him, there is still fruit alright – but it's the fruit of our carnal nature coming into dominance again. The fruit of the flesh. Your fruit will depend on which nature you are feeding, letting be dominant, in your life – until we are changed to spirit.

The VICTORY is also Christ's. God gives us the victory through Jesus – **1 Cor. 15:57**. WE have to fight sin like crazy – but in the end even our overcoming is through the blood of the Lamb (**Rev. 12:11**). **God is also the one who qualifies us, makes us fit for, His Kingdom.**

Read it yourself in Colossians 1:12-13– "**giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us** to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints..." and goes on to say "HE has translated, conveyed us, into the kingdom of the Son..."

So what's the point of this section? "Salvation belongs to the Lord" (**Ps. 3:8**) – and not to us. He is Savior. The very name "Jesus" means "The Eternal saves". It is His calling, it is His working in us, it is HIS fruits, it is HIS grace, it is His power, it is His spirit, it is His holiness, and it is His salvation! Psalm after psalm talks of the "God of my salvation". It's His deal, start to finish.

So you can no more give yourself spiritual birth than you can have brought yourself into existence the first time. It was all God's doing, it continues to be all God's doing.

RESULT: EXCEEDING JOY – UNDERSTANDING YOUR SALVATION AND ASSURANCE

What's the result of understanding this? If we know God, and trust him, what a relief that salvation is His job, not mine. Even the legalists favorite – **Philippians 2:12** – “work out your own salvation..” goes on to say, “**For it is GOD** who works in you both to will (the ‘want to do’) and to obey” (v. 13). When we understand this, it should result in the great peace of knowing God is into finishing what He started. God is able to make us holy, to resurrect Christ in us, to have us be presented without spot or wrinkle! “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God...” – **Romans 5:1**.

We are inscribed on His hand (**Isaiah 49:16**). He is going to do above anything we can think or imagine (**Ephesians 3:20**). God's promises are beyond our comprehension.

Then we understand that we must find that balance of trust and obey – there's great joy. I know I am sure relieved to know God is looking at Jesus' goodness when He sees me, as long as I AM in fact abiding in Christ and using His Spirit to fight temptation, to resist the wrong, to let Christ live in me. And what comfort to understand the powerful words Paul teaches us – that when we're abiding in Christ, and when we're in Christ, walking by the spirit:

- there is no more condemnation to those who are in Christ! Hallelujah! Praise God! (**Romans 8:1**). It's all about God and Christ – and it makes us praise and sing about Jesus and about Father.
- Why and how? Because “the sin that I do is no longer I who is doing it, but sin that dwells in me” – the old self, not God's new creation in me (**Romans 7:17, 21**). When you understand that, what joy and relief it is. But, be warned: neither is it permission to go into a life of sin!
- I don't have to worry about my past. Like Paul, I forget the horrible sins of my past without forgetting their powerful lessons, and now press ahead with the new creation in me (**Phil. 3:13**). He has forgiven, and paid for, all my many sins. Praise God. Knowing this, how can we judge or condemn anyone else? If we're doing that, we haven't seen yet how much we've been forgiven.
- Coming before God in Jesus Name should help us come boldly and like David – joyfully -- therefore, before the throne of grace (Heb 4:16). There's no boldness if I'm going before the throne in my own righteousness, because I have none of my own righteousness!

I must end here. I hope you see – it's not our goodness that will count, but Christ's in us, as we let Him live in us and mold and shape us. But neither can we think we can continue in sin. We must obey, as we trust. We must spend time abiding in Him, seeking Him diligently, hungering and thirsting after God's righteousness – and in faith, receiving it joyfully and thankfully and humbly.

Tell others about this message and this website if it has helped you. Write me if you have questions or comments.

Have a great day, brethren. God be with you all. Have joy in receiving God's righteousness by faith – and then walk in it, following the lead of God's spirit in you. Hallelujah! Til next time, your brother – and now in Christ, your fellow saint because of Christ's perfect holiness – God bless you all.