

# The Gospel and the Righteousness of God

by Art Katz

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*The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and the righteousness of God is revealed through faith, which comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*

**Duration:** 1:01:04

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:16-20, Romans 10:14, Romans 10:17

**Topics:** "Gospel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing a situation where he is speaking in a classroom and a Vietnam veteran on drugs enters and listens to his message. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and loving the Gospel, as it reveals the righteousness of God. He mentions that the Gospel is the most formidable opponent and that Paul refers to those who oppose it as enemies. The speaker concludes by discussing the power of the Gospel to bring about the death of the old self and the importance of Christ living in believers.

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## Transcript

I am yearning to sink our teeth into the second of Paul's opening statement that deserves such a probing that after saying that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, those of the Greek, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith, for faith, as it is written, the one who is righteous will live by faith. That the issue of the gospel is the issue of righteousness and that by it the righteousness of God is revealed. And which of us right now could so much as compose a single statement on what the righteousness of God is, that waits on the gospel to reveal it.

The issue of how do we begin to even move toward the appropriation of the word holy or holiness, we have not first come to some elementary consideration of the word righteousness. Righteousness is almost the key to holiness, the route to holiness. If you read today's chapter in Proverbs, chapter 11, it celebrates the righteous man, how the righteous man is prospered, how the righteous man is honored.

The word righteous is central to God, the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of his kingdom, but what in heaven's name is it? And Paul is saying the gospel is that revelation. So, that deserves another prayer. Lord, if we stumble over this, if we lightly dismiss this, we've lost the ball game even before it's begun to be played.

It's imperative that we understand and cherish what righteousness is and it may well be that unless we apprehend it through the gospel, there's no other way. And that the gospel is the epitome, the sum and the substance of righteousness. So, Lord, we desire to know that word.

We desire to love that word. We desire to live that word. And we're asking your blessing afresh now as we move to the second part of Paul's remarkable opening statement.

Come Lord and help us with a little help, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So I have before me one of the great commentaries on Romans by John Murray, who is greatly detailed in explicating every verse.

And you want to hear his statement of why the Jew first? So since Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and since the church at Rome was preponderantly Gentile, it is the more significant that he should have intimidated so expressly and priority of the priority of the Jew. So it does not appear sufficient to regard the priority as merely a matter of time. The implication appears to be rather that the power of God into salvation through faith has primary relevance to the Jew.

And the analogy of scripture would indicate that this peculiar relevance to the Jew arrives from the fact that the Jew had been chosen by God to be the recipient of the promise of the gospel and that to him were committed the oracles of God. Salvation was of the Jews and the lines of preparation for the full revelation of the gospel were laid in Israel. And for that reason, the gospel is preeminently the gospel for the Jew.

How totally contrary to the current attitude of Jewry that Christianity is for the Gentiles but not for Israel. It is expressly and uniquely first and foremost for the Jew. The Gentile is the Johnny come lately.

The Gentile is not the first intended recipient. But you who are far off without God and hope in the world through God has by the blood of the Messiah brought nigh or near into the hopes and promises and the covenant of Israel, even into the commonwealth of Israel. This is Paul's explanation of a secondary application of the gospel.

But salvation is of the Jews. That's why Peter required a trance in order to be open to even the thought that what they had received as Jews is now also to come to Gentiles. That's a revolutionary, totally unprecedented thought that required a trance to be communicated by an Orthodox Jew, Peter, who would not otherwise have ever gone into Cornelius' house.

An observant Jew does not come into the house of Gentiles. It's defiled. And when God gave me a relationship with one of these Hasidic Jews years ago in New Jersey, the whole story.

And when he came to visit me, he came with a brown paper bag, styrofoam cup and a plastic spoon. All he would receive from me in my house because it was mixed bag with a Gentile wife was boiling water. And there he would put his tea bag and his styrofoam cup and swish it with his plastic spoon.

But that was as close as he would come to eating anything from off of my mixed and defiled table. You need to know. So for Peter to come into the house of Cornelius and speak the message and the speaking of which the Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles was an utter astonishment.

And remember the vision of the veil that came down with unclean animals and God's command, kill and eat or take and eat. And Paul's cry even in his trance condition, Lord, I've never touched anything unclean. Call not unclean what I have made clean.

And when he wakes to that startling exclamation, there's someone downstairs at the door, Gentiles from Cornelius' house asking for Peter to come and explain to them. You guys need to know, the church needs to know that you are secondary. You're not the first intention, but it's a grace of God through the blood of the Messiah to bring you wild branches who are far off without God and without hope in the world into the commonwealth of Israel.

Salvation is of the Jews. You've received a salvation intended for them by the grace and the mercy of God for which you need to have in your heart a gratitude and that you have been grafted in a tree that is not your own. Left to your own tree, you'll be fruitless still.

But the grace of mercy of God having broken their branches off in unbelief is to graft you in that you might be fruit bearing and by your fruit move them to envy. Got the idea? And that you, who should have a greater faith for their return than you? Because he was able to graft you in, who have no natural right even to be included, that you can sap and draw life from that root? How much more then shall they be returned to their own root? You ought to have the greatest faith to believe for their return seeing that you yourself having no qualification have been brought in. Think of Paul's apostolic call in Acts 13.

Separate unto me, Paul and Bonibus was it, for the work unto which I have called them. That work is never identified but the believers hearing from the Holy Spirit that these are men called forth, prayed and fasted laid hands upon them so they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost went. But where did they go? In the very first place in that Mediterranean world they proclaimed the Gospel to the Jew.

So Paul by the natural process of the Son of God in him was already demonstrating in his own experience the principle of God to the Jew first which he later now expresses pointedly to the Gentile Church of Rome. But he didn't do it as a principle. He did it as the natural outworking of the residency of the Son of God in him as God's divine desire and love for the chosen people to the Jew first.

Then seeing in his practice what God repeats in every community, in every location, he then formulates as a principle and sets it before the Roman Church. But though it's a principle, we don't do it by principle. We do it by the same life by which Paul did it.

See what I mean? It's wonderful to find in the natural outworking of the life of God in us a corroboration and confirmation of God's principles. But to do it as principle is to be religious or under obligation I guess I've got to. How much more glorious and true is the thing just issuing from us as I said about that group of Gentiles in Northern California where I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Something issued from them, not as an issue of obligation, but out of a love which is the Lord's love for his own people through them even as Gentiles that so affected an environment and atmosphere for me that I was able to receive the baptism of the Spirit which for a year I had been seeking with great difficulty and not finding because I was not in the environment in which the Spirit was free to so manifest himself.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Paul is establishing a principle but it's not a practice to be performed as a principle. When you reduce the glory of the gospel to a principle and you're doing it as a principle you move from faith to religion, to something that you're humanly performing with God's intending is what Marlene is touching that as for Paul so for us something ought to issue that would express itself in an urgency and a love for this people that makes them a first priority and we find ourselves acting in accordance with the principle but not because of the principle. Is that over your heads? Can you follow that? That this whole issue of the Jew, his priority for the church is the righteousness of God.

I can't even explain myself. There's something in the heart of God to the people chosen that are yet a first priority despite their apostasy and rejection even be the instruments of his own crucifixion that is the very demonstration of righteousness. That's what righteousness is.

Not to neglect or to refuse a consideration to a people who are the very instruments of your death but still to hold them in esteem and as being a first consideration because of their chosenness, because of their history, because of their fathers. That's righteousness. At least an aspect of an understanding of what righteousness is.

It's the righteousness of God and when it's expressed through us it's all the more glorious. So when it's expressed as the working out of his life, that's righteous. If it's expressed as a religious principle under which we feel a kind of constraint and obligation and never a joy in doing it, it's no longer righteous.

It's unrighteous. We're trying to find why Paul is saying that the gospel itself is the revelation of the righteousness of God and I'm thinking and saying for the first time publicly, going on record, that it's not the least of the reasons why it's the righteousness of God is because it's to the Jew first. All the more because they are the ones who stoned the prophets, rejected their own messiah, were instrumental in his death and yet God says to the Jew first.

That's righteousness. Unrighteous would say, well let them suffer. They had their chance, they blew it, they've rejected and now it goes to the Gentile and they're out of the picture.

That would be unrighteous. That they're yet in the picture with a foremost destiny that their Zion is to be the capstone and the spiritual capital of the world and out of Zion is to go forth the law and Jerusalem, the word of the Lord, is a testimony to the glory and exaltation God yet reserved for that nation though presently apostate. If you have an attitude like that and an interest like that and a jealousy like that, that's righteousness.

I don't know how to explain it. That's a righteous attitude because it is so self-dismissing where a God would have every right to be offended and snubbed and say tough on them, they've had their chance and we would all say yes, that's right because we're men that are unrighteous. We would agree quickly.

God is different. He says though they have blown it and blown it grievously, they are not dismissed from my consideration because my love does not require conditions to be fulfilled in order to be obtained. In fact, I'm showing myself as the righteous God all the more by being to them what I am despite their indifference and their undeservedness.

My mercy is my righteousness and unless I show it to the Jew, I'm not demonstrating it to the world and if I could demonstrate to the world through the Jew, who in the world would be exempt from my mercy? Who will say that they're not deserving or that God passed me by when we see that he's bestowing to a people who have been historically virtually his enemy and the instruments of his crucifixion and yet this mercy is a first priority. How then shall we feel ourselves exempt? That's why this is so critical at the heart of the matter. This is the heart of reality itself and not to dismiss too quickly the issue of acting out of principle or acting out of the life of God.

Paul himself as I've already indicated is that demonstration. When he proclaimed the Gospel to the Jew in every place, not because he was under the obligation of a principle, that principle had not yet been enunciated. The principle came out from the experience of a Paul who was moved by the life of God to

follow the divine logic of God, yet to the Jew first.

And when you examine 9-11, how does it begin? The cry of Paul that he would wish himself accursed for his brethren's sake. It's the deepest identification and how does it end? The greatest exaltation or the depths of the riches both of the wisdom of God. We've seen the mystery of this room.

So when I preach this I say, don't think that you're dismissed from Paul's cry in chapter 9 because if you don't begin with a comparable cry, you'll not end with a comparable doxology or the depths of the riches. But on what basis does Paul cry out at the commencement of chapter 9? Is it because he's ethnically a Jew himself that he wishes himself accursed for his brethren's sake? Or is this the heart cry of very God himself who became accursed for his brethren's sake? So that Paul's cry is not ethnic but apostolic. And if it's apostolic then we have every right and in fact obligation to be able to sound that cry ourselves to the degree that we have that union with God's heart.

He's crying out of a union with God's heart and it opens the way for the revelation of the mystery that ends with the great doxology or the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. So the church is devoid of the mystery to the same degree as it lacks the ability to cry out with Paul over the plight of Jews who are without Christ and that we are willing for this sacrifice almost even of our own salvation that they might be saved. The righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith as it is written the one who is righteous will live by faith.

What's the conjunction between faith and righteousness expressed in the initial statement of Paul that sounds the great dun dun dun dun dun dun dun. These are the great opening themes of the rhapsodic message of Romans and in it is the word faith inserted in conjunction with the word righteousness. Any clue can righteousness be understood, revealed, received or expressed independent of faith and if the message itself is the power of God unto salvation what does that power perform? But what the power performs is to create faith.

Faith comes by the word and the hearing of the word. The sent word, the apostolic word in Romans 10 how shall they call upon him of whom they've not believed except one preach. Let's look at that.

Somebody read that in Romans 10. Paul says how shall they believe in them of whom they've not heard and how shall they hear except one preach and how shall they preach except one be sent for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God so that the issue of the righteousness of God can only be apprehended by faith and not by mental gymnastics or logic or the exercise of intellect or cerebral ability or that would dismiss the possibility for salvation for the great multitude of mankind and make it only the privileged experience of a select few. But the issue of salvation is without partiality so then the apprehension of the message unto salvation has got to be exclusively by faith and that not of yourself it is a gift lest any man boast.

See the whole remarkable thing is established in terms that are righteous because if it was partial and just an exclusive prerogative of those who have the ability oh now I see what God is saying I think I'll believe that. Then it would dismiss the great mankind but if it's an issue of faith which is given as a grace and order to receive and that the word itself creates that faith then God is altogether righteous in the way in which he presents salvation to mankind. Got the picture? The gospel is the statement of God's righteousness not only its content but its mode of delivery and the means by which it is received as salvation.

It's remarkable and without that revelation how can anyone know in fact what righteousness is as this is the most unique and monumental statement not just as an elaboration of a word but as a demonstration of a power unto salvation to the utmost to everyone who believes to the Jew first but also to the Greek. Not to the Jew first because of his intellect but because of his believing but what's the basis for his believing? The word itself that was sent and is apostolically proclaimed in power to create faith to believe a message that is otherwise totally offensive to human consideration and would be rejected if it had to be considered on the basis of our minds. So the gospel is so to speak enacted in the gospels but the exposition and the articulation of the gospel and its implications comes with the apostles and that God who suffered the death and was raised by it entrusts the exposition to those who follow him especially Paul on what basis that the same life of Christ now is functioning through a man who says for me to live is Christ and therefore it's the Lord continuing to explain himself through the apostle in things that waited for his resurrection and could not be taken up before it.

Got the idea? And in that act of generosity to the Gentiles what is revealed? The righteousness of God. Where do you guys figure in? By what right? What was your qualification? You were drinking beer out of skulls as Simon has heard me say a thousand times and fornicating like jack rabbits. You had no distinction that deserved the consideration of God but his righteousness extended his mercy to those who were without God and without hope in the world through the blood of Israel's Messiah and grafting you into their tree.

That very act and that consideration is the righteousness of God. That's what righteousness is. Righteousness is magnanimity and generosity and love and extension of remarkable grace to the undeserving.

So then if that's what righteousness is of what shall our righteousness consist? You think God is giving us an exposition of righteousness that we can be clever at the next coffee table discussion or is he giving us an exposition of righteousness that we ourselves might be righteous and act in the same way in the issues that are before us that require our magnanimity, our generosity, our grace, our forgiveness. We've got to love righteousness and where do we learn to love it? When we see it as revealed in the gospel from faith to faith. Even that phrase from faith to faith maybe even could be expressed to the degree of faith.

To whatever measure of faith you have to that degree you understand the righteousness of God. As your faith increases your understanding will increase but you'll never exhaust the genius of God in righteousness and exploring the reality of the gospel. It's there, it's contained in the dynamic of that historic episode of a son sent to suffer and die and be raised again by the power and the glory of God the Father and establish forever the atonement of all mankind.

We're facing the most formidable opponent because the gospel, Paul even says in Romans, they are the enemies of the gospel for your sake. Why? Because they're so formidable it compels you to come to a place in God adequate to meeting that formidable challenge and therefore the grace of the Holy Spirit is probably the primary provision of God in that encounter. There is a real conjunction between the spirit poured out from heaven and the commandment of the Lord through his church.

All authority is given me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore into all the world. Preach this gospel of a creature beginning at Jerusalem.

The place where I was crucified, the place where the prophets were stoned, there you begin. You don't first try it out and see if it works in the boondocks. Go to Bemidji first and then from there you can go to

New York.

No, you go to New York. Begin where the opposition will be the severest but I've given you every grace with the fullness of my spirit that is not a Pentecostal luxury. It's an endowment for power and ability and that mandate that I'm giving you that you cannot fulfill on the basis of your own religiosity and well meaning intention.

You can only fulfill it on the basis of me. Yeah, I did. The night of my baptism, I'll always remember driving back from Northern California to Oakland where I was a teacher.

We came alongside another car for a few moments and it was occupied by two black men. I'll always remember the image. There was a pack of Marlboro cigarettes on the dashboard and these two men were chatting with me and I just looked like this for a moment and a wave of compassion came over me for these men.

What they represented, what the Marlboro cigarettes represented, their lostness, their alienation from God, what it means to be black in our world today. Like a wave of something that came with that baptism. The second thing that I observed and is factual to this day is the spirit of revelation and the word.

That the word just opens. Today's psalm, whatever it is, there's something operating of a revelatory kind that came with that baptism that was not operative before. And who knows the other benefits? I talked about speaking at universities.

It began at the University of Illinois at Champaign where I was for seven days the principal speaker and they put up these stickers all over the campus, cats is coming, as one word, no space in between. And when I came and I arrived and I saw that, I was terrified that I'm the guy. But what God did in those days was awesome.

One meeting in particular, I was, the meeting, four to six meetings a day. I was spent, I was exhausted, my brain was numb, I couldn't think of my own name and I'm being taken by the hand from the philosophy class to a Jewish fraternity house or another classroom or wherever it is that they have arranged the meeting. And I'm praying in the spirit under my breath.

In the few minutes I'm going from this commitment to the next. When I come to the next commitment, devoid of any thought of what to speak, and I open my mouth, there's a profusion of spirit and activated words that engage, if not antagonize my hearers. And into that atmosphere comes this Vietnamese veteran cracked out on drugs and falls to the ground, to the floor, and listens as the students then began to oppose me after I finished my little message, questions and answers.

And he gets up and he says, what are you guys doing? He said, opposing this man. Can't you see that he said that God is here? That man, Tom Bloomer, is today one of the leaders of Youth with a Mission in Lausanne, Switzerland, who arranged the program by which for five days I spoke on the subject of apostolic foundations. The book that we have today, now in German and Bulgarian and one day in other languages, remarkable in its richness, had its first expression from Tom Bloomer in Lausanne, who was saved at that meeting and went on to the remarkable position that he occupies today.

And I would say, if I had not spoken in tongues under my breath, being taken from the one meeting to that meeting, he would have heard and received something less compelling and it may have been the issue of his salvation. There's no way to exaggerate the importance of the baptism of the Spirit and the remarkable

refillings and renewings in its power as often as we will give God our voice and faith in the language which he has given by which the Spirit itself is carried and renewed through our being. And the issue of the Jew makes that prominent.

It's interesting that I was called out of the teaching profession to be taken into a mission to the Jews that was Baptist in its origin and to this day. And after four years I was forced out of that organization by those members who resented the fact that I was the only Pentecostal missionary in that organization. And the only reason I was was because Moshe Rosen wanted to tap the resources of the Pentecostal churches and knew that the mission needed to have at least one man in its midst who was a recognized Pentecostal.

And that mission today continues but with very little fruit. In fact, Jewish missions are one of the patent failures of missionary endeavor in the world and their fruit is always the peripheral Jew. More Jews are saved independent of the church let alone missions than by missions because they still are at a distance from this reality of the baptism of the Holy Spirit which they have set aside as being the distinctive only of Pentecostals or Charismatics and don't see their own need.

In light of this revelation as a barometer for what righteousness we're acting out of because self-righteousness will love them and will show them heart. What a paradox to come to the Jews on the same basis by which Jews themselves subsist, namely their own self-righteousness. Only we come out of the Christian form of it.

Now we have got to come to them from heaven. We have got to represent the antithesis of all to which they subscribe, which they dismiss as patent foolishness and absurdity and weakness. But in that weakness God's strength is revealed from faith to faith.

I can't help but backing up into verse 16 again. For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the... The gospel itself is the death blow to the old man. It should be the true gospel, but it hasn't been in our experience.

But it should be the death blow to the old man. So the power of God is weakness and foolishness. And that is the thing that reveals righteousness and that brings us from faith to faith, leading on continually to faith.

That's the essence of our salvation. It's the power and the weakness that comes in Christ living in us. Which is the death blow to the old man.

We mustn't neglect the aspect of salvation that was celebrated by a Swedish theologian in a book called *Christus Victor*, Christ the victor. That the principle heart of the gospel is not only the salvation of men, but the defeat of the powers of darkness. Because at the cross Jesus made of them an open, how does it go? Spectacle, and disarmed them.

So that the defeat to the enemy, to the devil, he says I've come to destroy the works of the devil. Now has the judgment come. Now will the prince of this world be confronted.

So there's a cosmic dimension to the gospel that needs to be considered and not forgotten that in it the powers of darkness are dealt with and their wisdom is contradicted. Which celebrates power, prestige, wealth and all these things and it's met and defeated by the foolishness of the weakness by which Jesus was crucified. He was crucified in weakness and yet in that crucifixion the powers were defeated.

That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians had they known they would not have crucified the lord of glory. They would not have earned their own defeat by what they thought they were eliminating. Because in exercising their wisdom which is power and force unto death, they brought a necessary death that eventuated in a resurrection and the atonement of all mankind and the final and utter defeat to the church birthed through that atonement.

So this, what's involved in that wisdom of God is manifold. That's why we're taking it apart, we're trying to examine. In it is the wisdom of God revealed from faith to faith and we're even growing in faith today by the word and the exposition to show the ramifications of what is in this single episode that is the only great moment in the whole of world history, the crucifixion of Jesus, the son of God sent for that purpose.

Think of the whole basic thing. God is visiting a ruined creation through the fall. A terrible tragedy has taken place with Adam's fall.

The whole of creation has been submitted over to the evil one and suffers now defilement and corruption. And God now is addressing that lost cosmos by the sending of his son and effecting a redemption through his blood. How righteous of God even to give his creation a second thought after it has blown it and disfigured the glory of what he had given at the first.

But instead of allowing them to wallow in that corruption and defilement which is Adamic and unavoidable, he sends a second Adam who is his own son and very God himself to bear the righteous requirement of its redemption through a life given over unto death. That willingness and that jealousy over his own creation and the lengths to which he will go to redeem it is a statement of the righteousness of God. What a righteous God we have who will not abandon us to our own Adamic fall to which we are all given and all have subscribed and all are guilty.

So without qualification, why were we yet sinners? God loved us. He didn't wait for something from us. He took the initiative.

Why were we yet sinners? To set in motion our redemption at the cost of himself. And last night I was reading where the writer says, what did it cost the father? Jesus we know suffered, but did the father suffer or was he looking down from a kind of Olympian height and a kind of neutrality and saying too bad, but my son has got to go through this. There's no shortcut.

Or was he suffering a grief? And so the writer says he was suffering divine grief that was accentuated at the point where his son cried out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And everything in his father's heart would have yearned to be with his son and at his side and save him from that abandonment, but he could not. It was necessary in the very process of atonement that Jesus bears sin and know that sin alienates from God and that the forsakenness was part of that experience. But the grief that a father bears, picture your own kids crying out to you, dad, I'm suffering from something from which you can extricate me, help me now and you cannot.

And your heart is torn by every fatherly impulse of love to extend that aid, but to extend it is to defeat the greater purpose for your son and the purpose through your son. So you bear the grief. So the father is not exempt from the suffering of the cross.

He so to speak is crucified with his son. That's righteousness you guys. I like a God like that.

This is not a God who sent his son to do the dirty work and he'll wait for him to return. This is a God who's with his son in that sending. What did it cost the father to send his son? He's not sending him off to college and here's your allowance.

I'll see you in the spring break. I'm sending you into this vile world that hates me. I'm sending you into a fallen world and you're going to be its victim ultimately.

You're going to be rejected even by my chosen. You're going to suffer indignity and at the hands of men, unbelievable travesty and violence. I'm sending you.

You think that God could send his son like that without a sense of grief, without a sense of loss, without a sense of the brokenness of a relationship that they've enjoyed together since time immemorial that has now to be ruptured because the son must be sent into the world. We have not calculated what it has cost God to establish his so great redemption, but every aspect of that cost and his willingness to bear it is the statement of the righteousness of God. Our God is righteous.

This is what righteousness is and we would not have seen it if he had not performed it. And we'll see it to the degree of our faith, from faith to faith. And even that is a grace that we can see it.

So let me read the work of a theologian who's pondering all this. The reason that the gospel is revealed a righteousness of God needs to be observed. How the concepts originate even from the Old Testament itself because there we find the conjunction of salvation and righteousness again and again.

Oh, sing unto the Lord a song. His right hand is holding on, hath brought salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation.

His righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the nations. Psalm 98. Isaiah 46, I will bring near my righteousness, you shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.

I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory. Isaiah 51, my righteousness is near, my salvation has gone forth. My salvation shall be forever, my righteousness shall not be abolished.

My righteousness shall be forever and my salvation from generation to generation. So again and again in the Old Testament there's a remarkable conjunction between righteousness and salvation to the point where you can almost say righteousness is salvation and salvation is righteousness. God rarely ever refers to salvation independent of the word righteousness.

But because what is salvation in the last analysis? It brings to the unrighteous the righteousness of God. That we who knew no sin, that he who knew no sin became sin, that we who did not know the righteousness of God could become the righteousness of God. Salvation is becoming the righteousness of God and what a righteousness that is.

Where else would Kit Kat's be today without it? I'd be dead long ago or I'd be I don't know what. I only want to consider the possibilities. I'm saved by the righteousness of God for righteousness.

It's a gift and there's a difference between God's righteousness and human righteousness because the Jew was unwilling to relinquish his human and religious righteousness to receive the righteousness which is of God. It's not an issue of a degree, it's an issue of a kind. The righteousness of God is other than the righteousness of man.

God's concern is not only against evil and wickedness, it's against righteousness of man which in the last analysis is wicked. How do you know that Katz? Because the righteousness of man crucified Christ. Who are the instrumentalities? Roman law, Lexus, what is it? Romanus.

The law of Rome was the foundation of order in the ancient world. Roman law, the jurisdiction, the concepts even are active today in our own legal practices. In conjunction with whom? The religion of Israel.

The highest form of monotheism. It is most liturgical and sacramental beauty were the joined forces that conspired together to execute the Lord of Glory and to destroy the righteousness of God and the keeping of their own righteousness. Men will kill to preserve their own righteousness.

Is that remarkable? So do we esteem the righteousness of God or are we more Jewish than we know? Are we more Judaic than we know that we've allowed the righteousness of God to lapse in our consciousness and that we have more and more moved in a religious way into a righteousness of our own which is no longer the righteousness of God but a religious counterfeit very much like Judaism while we're yet Christians. Do you love the righteousness of God so much as to dismiss your own? Why is that an issue for you as well as for the Jew? Because self-righteousness is the foundation of self-esteem. We want to be recognized for our merit and that which we perform and of what we are capable but to be emptied of those distinctions and all that we have as barren nothings who are mere as dust is what God imputes by faith.

Who's willing for that? And what if he doesn't impute? What if your face is sticking out at a critical moment and you have nothing to say and are able to do because you have covenanted with God that you would not again return to the pitiful rags of your own self-life and he's taking you at your word and here comes a crisis situation where you're facing a rabbi or your own Jewish kinsmen or black Africans and if God be not God and there's no resurrection you are most to be pitied. To trust God for his resurrection power and word is to trust God for his righteousness and to be righteousness in your trust. Got the idea? This righteousness is not a little flaky issue.

It's a current moment by moment issue whether we will abide in the righteousness of God and be blameless before him which is why he said to Abraham, Abram walk thou before me and be thou blameless I'm God Almighty. And I've said this before many times. Why does the conjunction of the command to walk and be blameless and be righteous and I'm God Almighty? Because the only basis upon which you can't be blameless is upon me.

Not on your own Abrahamic life you dear sap because on that basis you went down to Egypt and offered your wife up as a piece of entertainment for the court. An object of their Egyptian lust. You big shot.

You father of faith. So I'm imputing righteousness to you because you have none and you're the father of that faith for many who will have it as you have obtained it. My faith as it is imputed by the God who is alone righteous.

Have you guys come to this ground or you're still fighting, kicking against the pricks wanting to establish yourself on the basis of your own righteousness, your own performance, your own ability. So why did Jesus say to put to John the Baptist who denied him and was astonished that he should request baptism where he needs, I need more to be baptized into him because it fulfills all righteousness. That word comes up again.

Why? So that Jesus would go into the muck of that river and be established in identification himself as if he were himself a sinner with his nation or he cannot be to them a priest and a savior. Righteousness required his immersion in their guilt and sin. That's righteousness.

And when the father saw that, he said, Oh, this is my beloved son. This is my boy. He's really shown me forth.

This, this is what I am as God, but I could never persuade men about it until my son himself actually demonstrates it. That's why what he does is righteousness. That's why the gospel is righteousness.

What Jesus explicated and performed at the cross is righteousness and that's the gospel. And how shall we be in eternal fellowship with him except that we share his nature which is righteous. So that's a salvation to the uttermost and a preparation for an eternal fellowship with a God who abides in that character because that's what he is in himself.

The righteousness of God is not an affectation. It's not a put on. It's not a punctuation.

It's what he is in himself. That's why I'm so grateful for this God. We could have had any kind of tyrant for God and we would have had no choice in the matter.

But what we got miraculously is a God who's righteous and has demonstrated that at great cost to himself. And his righteousness is his continuing patience with us. With sons who are sluggish, who are not active, who will not thank him, who will not praise him, who will drift and coast and not come into the active appropriation of their call.

A church that has not been obedient to his mandate though he has said to the Jew first and we have historically circumvented him and turned away from that obligation. And there's a God who's yet there, yet patient, yet pressing, yet faithful, and will have his church at the end. He's righteous in everything.

He's remarkable. How else should we have known it? If we don't know the righteousness of God, we'll only know the righteousness of the Pharisee, which is self-righteousness, which is self-serving. And when you get to the heart of it, however altruistic it may seem at its place and philanthropic, it's self-serving.

It's for man, his gratification. Men would recognize him, compliment him, but the righteousness of God is not in any way clouded or contradicted or compromised by any such consideration. It is always totally for the consideration of the other.

Nothing that redounds to God that he needs to be exalted in his ego. That's righteousness. A righteousness that is pure from self-interest.

Otherwise, the other kind of righteousness, however zealous, will bring you to the place of a persecutor and a murderer, which was what Saul himself became before he became Paul. Saul is the epitome of religious self-righteousness brought to its final point of expression, where it finds itself opposing God and killing, in God's name, God's own people, so that when he's confronted by the risen Lord, the statement is, Saul, Saul, why for persecutest thou me? So that the man in one stunning, blinding moment, that in fact leaves him blind and as good as dead for three days before a simple St. Lance lays hands upon him, recognizes that his zeal, his righteous religious zeal, the logic and the ultimate end of it, was to be a murderer against God's own people, which is to say against God himself. That's the end of human right.

And Paul hath of eat it to the end. Have you known the joy of righteousness? Have you ever experienced the exhilarating delight of being righteous in God, of the righteousness of God? Have you ever been clean through the whole cookie? Have you ever had a conscience undefiled before God and before man? Have you ever been pure from taint and from sin and the blood has abolished and you're walking consistently in the life of God and in his righteousness and tasted that as joy? I can't say that this is my every moment, but I can say that in the few moments that have come to me, it has always been accompanied by a sense of such joy, such inward exhilaration, such delight that you would not exchange that for anything. Let the most luscious babe cross your path and offer herself at abandon.

You're completely indifferent. Nothing, no temptation can begin to move you once you have tasted the joy of the righteousness of God. That's an incentive to keep in that righteousness.

And I would suspect that the fallenness of our ministers, which is of plague proportions, is that they have not known it and have not known the gospel and have only superficially been inducted in the few catchwords pertaining to it and therefore made themselves candidates for temptation and falling from which alone the righteousness of God and the joy of that righteousness would have kept them. To look at the righteousness of God, who will not give us a blessing that is just a superficial feeling and a motive kind of thing, but roots his blessing in righteousness for our sake. That we would not be pacified by some transient little catch thing, but that we would be impelled to find our blessedness in his righteousness.

And so this is the love of a father who's not willing for a cheap alternative, but however long the process takes, he's insistent on the real thing. He's insistent on his righteousness and will give us every encouragement to attain it, but will not divert us by a cheap substitute, which he could give. And the way we give as fathers, here's an allowance, here's to your wife, go buy a hat, go to the movies, but we won't deal with the issue that really needs to be faced that's painful and that will really bring peace, righteousness and joy.

Because we have not the heart of a father and we want an easy out that relieves the momentary tension of the difficulty that we can buy off with a few bucks or a little gesture and an easy thing. God is not that kind of God and his truth and redemption is real and he insists on it and we praise God for that. What is our worship if it is not the thing that issues from us out of the joy of the righteousness, which is the gift of God by faith? What is our worship that affects a joy that does not have this as its nexus and auspices, but a soulish counterfeit that we can obtain through musicality and voices? That's the kind of that's unrighteous, that's unrighteous worship, which is more the affecting of an atmosphere for our enjoyment than giving God his due in our gratitude for the gift of righteousness.

It would be unrighteous for us to pursue that and to dispossess God from the thing, the real thing out of which worship should issue, which is the current practice of the church today grievously and celebrated for that reason that they have the better worship. What they mean is the better music, but worship that doesn't issue out from righteousness and joy and the gratitude for its gift is not a true acknowledgement to the Lord. So you see the implications of righteousness in the church's very practices that needs to be corrected by someone coming in prophetic authority and voice and blowing the whistle against a fraudulent counterfeit and shutting it off and waiting for the true thing that issues only out of righteousness.

And that very prophetic interjection is itself righteous, though it will not be misunderstood and will be dismissed as being unrighteous, as disturbing the program. So the issue of righteousness is before us because the joy of the Lord is our strength, but it's not a fictitious joy. It's a joy of a unique kind that issues

out of this kingdom reality.

So may we be jealous because of the instruction of today for that righteousness and its implications, which is also our strength and our power. For the joy of the Lord is our strength, but it's the joy of the Lord that comes from the righteousness of the Lord. In fact, what does not come from the Lord and any setting of the Lord aside by any self-initiated thing of ourselves is unrighteous in the face of a God who is righteous in his giving.

He who gave us his son, will he not give us all things through him? What will he withhold from us who has already given us his son in atonement? He'll give us all things that pertain to godliness of the life. For us to void that and to initiate something out of ourselves as substitute like worship is unrighteous, robs us of joy, robs us of strength, robs us of witness, and leaves the Jews in their present condition totally unchallenged for which God waits for they are at the heart of the kingdom promised them. God has set a standard.

He himself is that standard. For us to elaborate a human standard based on our ethical premises or subjective experience is the height of unrighteousness and that's exactly what Judaism is. Contemptuous of the goyim, the gentiles who don't have their practices and follow the fastidious requirements of the law.

See what I mean? And look down with contempt and disdain. Why does it wait for us to be prostitutes or drug dealers or tax collectors to come to that acknowledgement? Why aren't we all equally as grateful for so great salvation that has brought us up out of the mire as those whose sin is so ostensible and conspicuous? You know why? Because we don't think we're that bad. We don't really believe that our sin is saved by grace and that our sin is as grievous as a righteous man as the prostitute or the gambler or the drunkard.

We have not the concept of sin which will be our soon subject maybe even tomorrow without which righteousness does not really obtain distinction. So these are the foundations that need to be restored or laid. We have not the knowledge of sin apostolically as being the exceeding sinfulness of sin that we might with gratitude understand the exceeding righteousness of God that has saved us out of that condition and continues to save by being our righteousness.

So let's thank the Lord. We're on a remarkable symphonic thing here that God is sounding and we need to pause and give him praise for this much. Amen.

So Lord thank you Lord. As you go on my God we're getting some sneaky suspicion about our unrighteousness even as Christians. So my God receive our gratitude Lord.

You're so good. Thank you my God for your righteous answer to a despairing servant of which we have all been beneficiaries. Thank you my God and may we all be encouraged for we will have moments like that in which there's a sense of abandonment and despair and a sense of defeat and the dampening of our hearts and the heaviness my God that is unbearable which will allow us to suffer because out of that suffering issues of glory and we've seen the portion of it today and we thank you and give you the praise and glory in Jesus name.

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