

Righteous Behavior

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a righteous life, as described in Psalm 1, and the need for a mid-course correction in our theology to understand that righteous behavior is essential for salvation.

Duration: 53:10

Scripture: Psalm 1, Psalm 119:97, Proverbs 1:7, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 12:18

Topics: "Baptism", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of water baptism as a symbol of laying one's life down at the cross of Christ and starting a new life in God. He explains that baptism signifies a change in behavior and a supernatural transformation that can only be achieved through belief in Christ and obedience to God's commandments. The speaker also warns that failure to keep God's commandments will result in severe punishment for the nation. He urges the American church to repent and live according to God's standards, abandoning sinful behaviors such as lying, anger, gossiping, and sexual perversions.

Transcript

We're going to turn to the first psalm. I felt this morning we should just feed on the psalms, and I don't know how far we'll get or what we'll do, but I just felt we should feed on the psalms. There stood many generations of Christians in a time of trouble.

Okay, if you want to read with me verses one through six here. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. And on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Not so the wicked, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. This psalm, as is true of many of the psalms, does not distinguish between those who are saved and those who are unsaved, but those who are righteous and those who are wicked.

We need, I think, a mid-course correction in our theology in these days, because we've been taught, I think in many cases, that righteous behavior does not count. And we've got a view of salvation as some

kind of a ticket that we subscribe to, and then we go to heaven. And then another thing we've been taught is that there's no righteous person.

Well, we misunderstand that, and let me explain that a little bit. Because you notice here it says, the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, so obviously there's righteous people, and there are righteous people in the world. Some are Christians and some are not.

But when Paul said there's none righteous, no, not one, he was quoting Isaiah, I guess, either Isaiah or Psalms. But anyway, the context of that saying in the Old Testament is not that there's no righteous person that's ever lived, because we know that can't be true, because God calls several people in the Old Testament righteous, Noah, for example, and there are others. So when the person spoke, whether it's Isaiah or Psalms, what he was doing was talking about a specific group of people at that time.

Like you'd come into a place and say, there's nobody decent, there's just nobody as decent, you know. You're not talking about the whole world, you're talking about the context, it was a saying in context. Then when Paul was making his argument against the Jews and the Ten Commandments, he applied it in a more general way, saying that there's no righteous person on earth, and there's just no righteous person at all, meaning we must be saved through Christ.

That also is true. And what it's referring to, the fact is that all of us were born in sin. And all of us have sinned at one time or another, I think, I know I have and I'm pretty sure you have.

So in that sense, there is no one in that pure and perfect sense who is righteous. So you see, that's true, that's absolutely true. But given that, given that all of us have been born in sin, and none of us can save ourselves by our own righteousness, all of us need Christ, given that, nonetheless it's true that there are righteous people in the world, and always have been.

It says the mother and father of John the Baptist were walking in all the ordinances of the law blameless, blameless. So both the Old Testament and the New speak about righteous people. The reason I say that is because it has been misused so much in evangelical teaching.

The idea is, why try to be righteous? There's nobody's righteous, we're all unrighteous, and only Christ is righteous. That's not what the Old Testament or the New Testament teach. Several times in the New Testament, it says that we must be worthy of the kingdom of God.

We've never heard that, it's new to us. Worthy of the kingdom? Nobody's worthy but Jesus. Well, I'm not taking down Jesus at all in any way, as you know, but it's had a bad effect on our conduct because it's as though it doesn't matter whether you're righteous or not.

And I tell you the truth, the only people on the face of the earth who do not know what righteousness is, is the Christians. Because this has been overdone, it's just been overdone, till we have the idea that it doesn't really matter whether we're righteous or not because nobody's righteous. Well, I'm here to tell you that God expects righteousness, and when we're not righteous, we get judged for it, Christians or not.

And then, well, Christians will say, well, I'm not righteous, but I'm saved. And I say, well, what do you mean saved? What are you saved from? Are you saved from lying? Are you saved from anger? Are you saved from drunkenness? What do you mean you're saved? Let's see some fruit here. Let's see something going on here.

Do you claim to be saved? Let's see it. And as James said, faith without works is dead. You can't say I have faith.

Well, let's see it. Let's see it in action. So our nation today is suffering to a great extent.

To a great extent. The problem in our nation today comes from this false application of the word righteousness. And see, the churches do their churchy thing, and they talk about grace and heaven and the rapture, but that isn't what God is looking for, is grace, heaven, and the rapture.

He's looking for people who are honest and truthful and have integrity. And this is what Christianity is supposed to do. It's supposed to make us righteous.

That's its whole purpose, is to make us righteous. The reason that God gave us a new covenant was because the old covenant didn't work. And what do I mean, didn't work? It didn't work because the people weren't righteous.

And God says in Hebrews, I'm going to make a new covenant. The purpose of the new covenant is so first of all, we can get forgiven and get a start here with a clear conscience. And then through the Holy Spirit, the body and blood of Christ, the born again experience, the testimony of the apostles, the gifts and ministries of the Spirit, all are working to change us from what we were into a new creation.

Does that make sense to you? Well, I guess it makes sense to everybody. Did that hit you cold? Did you ever hear that? Well, it's true. And when we say in our nation, how many believe that these things are happening in our nation so we will repent? How many believe that? Well, probably one third of the congregation believe that.

What does the other two third believe? It's bad luck? Well, I think it's a general feeling among Christians that we've got a wake up call. Can you live with that? We've got a wake up call and we're supposed to repent. Well, now stop and think.

Just stop for a minute and hold on. All right, the word repent means to turn from the way you're going to the literal meaning of the word, its root meaning etymologically, linguistically, its root meaning is to turn, to turn. It has nothing to do with feeling bad or feeling sorry or crying.

Nothing is not associated with it. Well, it's associated with it in practice and that we've been made aware. We're displeasing God, we feel bad, but that isn't repentance.

You can feel so bad that we have to send David Borman out for another carton of Kleenex. Because you're weeping and getting the rug wet, but that is not repentance. That's you feeling bad because you have displeased God.

Now, I want you to see, there's a tremendous issue here. Feeling bad is an act of the emotions. Repenting is an act of the will.

See, and you can feel bad or not, that's up to you. And many times they say prayers wash the soul and I believe that's true. And it's a good, it's a healthy thing to weep before God because we are sorry that we have displeased our Father in heaven.

We wouldn't displease Him for the world and we don't want to displease Him. We all feel that way. But that is not repentance.

Repentance doesn't take place until you say to yourself, you choose by your will and say, I'm going to change. That's an act of repentance. You can get up there and repent, I'm so sorry, I'm mean to people, I'm bitter.

Well, you haven't repented until you say in your heart, I'm not going to do that anymore, Jesus help me. Does that make sense to you? Everyone's agreed on that point. All right, now stop and think.

When you're talking, why are you repenting? You're repenting because you know intuitively, in spite of our incorrect teaching, you know instinctively that God wants righteous behavior. That's why you're repenting. You're repenting of wickedness and turning to righteousness.

Well, if it's not necessary, why do it? I ask you. If it isn't going anywhere, if it doesn't have anything to do with your salvation, then why do it? So you see, whatever we believe about the four steps of salvation or whatever, or grace or whatever, in our heart, in our heart, where we live, throughout the theology, in our heart, we know that God is righteous and he wants his children to be righteous. Can you live with that? Now, the Lord Jesus Christ did not come and shed his blood on the cross as a substitute for righteous behavior.

See, that's the idea. Well, I have to behave righteous because Christ did it. See, that is not only a misunderstanding in theology, it is a tremendously wrong approach to the Christian life.

How many believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased when you behave righteously? Well, we know that. We know that. See, we've gone down this road and a lot of people have been, quote, saved by that and have learned about God, but they've done it in spite of the teaching, not because of it.

When we repent, we repent in spite of what we've been taught. Now, I have maintained for years that we can have revivals come and go, but until God's people understand that Christ came to make us righteous and not to excuse our sin, we can have 15 outpourings of the Holy Spirit and it isn't going to make any difference. Because we haven't got the message up here.

We don't know what God's after. We don't know that God pours out his Spirit so that we'll act righteously. We thought, well, he does it so we'll feel good or add people to the church or whatever.

But whatever God does, from the time of Adam to the present day, I'd say from the time of Adam to the present day, God has not changed his mind. Now, we've got theological theories that chop up things. We're in this dispensation and that, and back here they had to be righteous and now we don't, and what the future holds, I don't know.

But let me tell you something, God does not work in dispensations. Thank you very much. Because they imply that God changes his mind.

See, well, he tried this with man. It didn't work. Well, I'll try this.

Well, I'll try this. And that doesn't work. Oh, forget it.

If you can't lick them, join them. Well, that's where we are today. God gave up on the situation and he said, well, we might as well accept it.

That's the way the poor people are. So, let's get down there and hassle the basil and be like them. Let me tell you something.

From the time of the beginning of Adam and Eve, God has had one purpose for mankind and every covenant that has come along the way has to bring us closer to being made in the image of God. Every single one. The rabbis say if you distill the whole Bible, by them they meant the whole Old Testament and got it down to one verse, it's this.

He has showed the old man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, that's righteousness, to love mercy, because righteous behavior without mercy makes you a Pharisee, and to walk humbly with God. In other words, you can't do it yourself.

That's Old Testament. That has never changed. That was God's will for Adam and Eve.

It was God's will for Moses and it's God's will for us today. It doesn't change. And you say, well, where does grace come in? We have more grace than the Old Testament did so that we can do justly, practice righteousness, so that we will be merciful and not stuck up church Pharisees, and so that we won't try to do it ourselves, but we will walk humbly with God.

And when you've got that, when you're living righteously, when you love mercy, you're a merciful, compassionate person, and when you're walking with your hand in the hand of God, brother, sister, you've got what God wants from man. And Jesus Christ did not come to give us another way. I'm not going to preach that anyway because it's right.

Jesus did not come to give us another way. He came to reinforce and to give more power through the Holy Spirit and His blood to the thing that God has always wanted, which is for people to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. And all through the book of Psalms, when it talks about the righteous, it doesn't mean that those people weren't born in original sin or that they don't need Christ's forgiveness or the blood atonement.

It doesn't mean that at all. It means that within their abilities, they did justly and they loved mercy and they walked humbly with God and there was a whole bunch of them in the Old Testament. Amen.

The same thing is true of today. It hasn't changed. We can't say, well, I've got Jesus now so I don't need to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

The reason you've got Jesus is so that you'll do justly. If Christ does not make you righteous in behavior, you have received the grace of God in vain. And that's a scriptural expression.

And Peter says, talking about Paul, he says, the wisdom that God gave our beloved brother Paul, this is one for you, beloved brother Paul says, according to the wisdom given to him, he has written things which people rest to their own destruction. And that's what we have done. We have taken the writings of Paul, misunderstood what he was talking about, and have succeeded in the one thing that Satan wants.

He doesn't care if you and I sing hymns till this room shakes, jump up and down next to the chair to get ready for the rapture. He does not care. As long as you don't do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

And he'll do anything to prevent that. Because it's his image, it is Satan's image, when you live in an unjust manner, when you're unmerciful, and when you try to do it yourself without walking with God, that's what Satan's after in your life. And so he has perverted our doctrine with that in mind.

So God is saying to the United States, wake up! In fact, for four years now, just about four years, we've been on the internet, and when we went on the internet, God said this, and it's still playing. It's a long run there. It's still playing.

It says, God has a word for the American people, for the American Christians, and that is, if we do not begin to keep God's commandments, our nation is going to be punished severely. That's been on there for almost four years. And today we're in it.

The fault is not with the world, the fault is with us. And so God comes to us this morning, starts off with Mary Brown, and is picked up by others. What does God want out of our young people? He wants them to walk with God, and to do what is right.

Isn't that so? You say, well, is it important? It is all important. It's the whole purpose of getting saved is so that you'll become a new creature. That's the whole purpose of getting saved is to become a new creature.

Amen? Can you live with that? So when God is saying to the American church to repent, He means quit lying and start telling the truth. Quit your angry rages and start being a peacemaker. Quit your gossiping and your backbiting and speak things that will build up your brother and sister.

And my goodness sakes, quit molesting your children. Quit aborting children. Quit doing these things.

Quit your sexual perversions. Quit your drugs and your drunkenness. Quit it.

God is saying, and I'll come and I'll heal your nation. But you must, my people who are called by my name will humble themselves. Humble themselves.

They'd much rather humble the government or humble the Democrats or humble the lesbians in San Francisco. And God didn't say that. He said if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, my people, then will I hear from heaven.

Then will I forgive their sin. Then will I heal their land. Now, the reason that we have the Lord Jesus Christ is so first of all, we can start off with God by being forgiven.

You can't come in any other way except through the cross. You have to come through the cross because you were born in sin. If you never did anything wrong, you still have got a bad birth there.

The Bible says we were born in sin. That academic thing has come down through the years to us. Okay? So we cannot say, well, I'll be a good person and therefore God will accept me.

You have to receive Jesus for the blood atonement to make an atonement for your souls. And everyone said amen. Alright, what is next? What is next is you're baptized in water showing that if you haven't been baptized in water, would you please see Stan Josephson? He's the song leader up here with the brown suit.

Alright, and tell him because he's the John the Baptist around here. If you've never been baptized in water, you need to get that way. Well, why? I don't see any sense to that.

Because the Bible said so. That's enough. I have to understand it.

The Bible said to do it. Now when you do that and you go up here in the baptismal tank and give everybody a blessing. We're always blessed in these services.

Baptismal services. What you're saying is I have laid my life down at the cross of Christ and I'm starting a new life in God. That's what you're saying.

And that means a change in behavior. Alright? And as was said this morning, you don't have to change yourself. Well, some things you can change, but by and large the basic change that will make you a new creation has to be done supernaturally.

So God says believe in Christ. God says be baptized in water. And God will give you His Holy Spirit which is eternal life.

Alright, now you've got something you never had before. Furthermore, the seed from God, Christ, is conceived in your personality. Something is born in there that you never had before.

So you've got things you never had before. You've got your sins forgiven. You've got God's Spirit that you never had before.

You've got a piece of Christ that's been conceived and germinating in you. You never had that before. Now as you pray and seek the Lord and read your Bible, then God is going to lead you in paths of righteousness.

He's going to show you each day. Now today we're going to work on this lesson. Well, what are we working on? We're working on you've got a critical spirit.

Okay, we're going to work on that one today. So the Spirit calls it to your attention and you confess it to God. I've got a critical spirit.

I never realized that, but all my friends knew it, but I didn't know it, but now I see that that's the case. Alright, so what happens? God forgives you and by the power that is in grace, He removes it from you and gives you victory over it. It is His Spirit plus your will working together.

You can't flop around on the beach like a jellyfish. You've got to exert what you can, but it takes God kicking in like power steering to finish the job. And the first thing you know, there isn't a critical word being heard out of your mouth.

That, people, is what salvation is. That's what Christ came to do. Are you a new creature? Yes, I don't criticize people anymore.

Are you perfect? No, because the Holy Spirit's got a new subject for you. Okay, so up comes the new subject. Well, now we're going to work on the fact that you're still swearing.

When you get hurt, you sound like a Marine Corps drill sergeant. You know, that is not Christ-like. Imagine Christ around swearing using four-letter words.

Well, you know that. If you ever wonder what righteousness is, picture Jesus in your mind. Okay? Just picture Jesus in your mind.

And you know He didn't smoke, and He didn't do drugs, and He didn't chew out everybody, and He wasn't unkind, and He was scrupulously honest, and He told the truth and all of that. You'd say, well, you lost me. Well, alright.

It's a step at a time. It's a step at a time. He's not asking you to deliver yourself.

He just says, follow Me. Follow Me. Follow Me.

Walk humbly with your God. And He will change you. And that is what He came to do is to make people in His own image.

Hallelujah. So, in the world today, there are righteous people. Some of them are Christians.

Some are not. There are wicked people. Some are Christians.

Some are not. What God decides in the wheat and the tares is the difference between wickedness and righteousness. That's what God's after.

It's wickedness and righteousness. Not because we made a profession of Christ. If we make a profession of Christ, it's to make us righteous.

See? That's why you'll see all through Psalms, you'll see this play back and forth between the righteous and the wicked because that's what God is interested in. You say, who goes to hell? If I get saved, will I go to hell? There's no place in the New Testament that talks about salvation being to keep you from going to hell. Now, you may believe that or not.

Break out your New Testament. Read it in 14 different translations, including the original Greek, and you'll say nothing about Christ came to save us from hell. We just made that up.

Who goes to hell? The wicked. Christ came to make you righteous so that you don't belong in hell. Now, that doesn't take Einstein to figure that out.

Christ came to make you righteous so that you don't belong in hell. He didn't come to bring the wicked into heaven. That doesn't make any sense.

Boy, they just got quiet. You thought, well, I've got my pass out of hell. You want your pass out of hell? Start living like people don't live in hell.

Down there is where all the liars are. Amen? Are you telling the truth? Well, you better start doing it. Because God doesn't have all the Christians up here in heaven and all those who are not Christians down here in hell, and up here you've got, just like today in the churches, part of the Christians are wicked and part are righteous.

Now, what sense does that make? God didn't come to bring the wicked to heaven. How many know God did not come to bring the wicked to heaven? He came to save the wicked from their wickedness. Well, you know, this is not an academic exercise in theology.

This is why, before I get through here, we may have a bomb in San Diego. And the reason is because God is not seeing righteousness in the churches. Stan was telling me, you can't believe how far we've gone down because of this misunderstanding of righteousness.

But Stan was listening to a Christian where they have God's Answer Man where you call in and the voice of God answers you from the studio. Anyway, someone called in and said, if I commit adultery, does Jesus care? A Christian. And the answer was, well, it might bother your wife, but Christ is not concerned about it.

Now, you can ask Stan. He didn't make that up. He'll tell you who said it, this channel, when it was said.

But that shows you where we are. Christ doesn't care. Maybe your wife will be upset.

Christ doesn't care if we commit adultery. I don't know what Bible they got, but it sure isn't anything I've ever seen. I thought you'd enjoy all of that.

I knew you'd just be a blessing. First Psalm. Oh, we'll have an altar call.

You don't have to go out of here. You say you're condemning. I'm not condemning anybody.

I hopefully bring you under conviction. And then you come to the altar and take communion. We had communion this morning.

You come and you take it here and confess your sins to the Lord and repent in your mind. You go out of here on hinds feet. If you walk out of the door in condemnation, that's your own choice.

You're saying I heard it and I know it's right, but I don't want anything to do with it. That's your choice. And you'll be condemned by the Word.

But if you come up and get it taken right, you're not going to walk out of here condemned. We're not up here to condemn anybody. We're up here to tell you what God is saying in the United States in the year 2001.

If you don't think it's God, check it out. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked. And everyone said amen.

Then it says whether or not he's a Christian. And everyone said amen. Ooh, that was sneaky.

That was sneaky. I thought that didn't apply anymore. If it doesn't apply anymore, then what am I teaching you from it for if it doesn't apply? Why not throw the whole book of Psalms out if it doesn't apply? There I went.

Of course it applies. God's Word doesn't change. When He told Timothy to cut a straight course in the truth, to pay attention to the wordings, talk about the Old Testament, there wasn't any New Testament at that time.

Well, of course it's all livable today. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked. When you hear somebody giving you wicked counsel, get out of there.

You say, well, I'm going to be his friend and he can lay it on me and eventually I'll correct him. The chances are you'll get corrupted. That's what Jesus told them.

Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees. And they thought He meant because they were hungry. He said it's the doctrine of the Pharisees.

When you see somebody that's wrong, get out of there. You don't have to say you're wrong. Just leave.

Don't walk in that council. Get out of there. Because it will corrupt you.

Or stand in the way of sinners. Well, I work with a bunch of sinners. Well, you don't have to do what they do.

In fact, if you'll start doing right, you may find some of them will follow your example. Now, the Bible says, let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father. Again, it says in Daniel, those who turn many to righteousness shall be as the stars.

Again, it says in Proverbs, he that wins souls is wise and the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. We thought that meant hand out of track. It doesn't mean that at all.

It's talking about the fruit of the righteous. And wherever you are, you can be in jail, you can be on the job, you can be in the public school, you can be wherever you are. When you do righteous, you're going to bring people with you.

Because everybody wants to do good. But people are like sheep, and they're led astray. And so somebody comes along and does wickedly and everybody follows them.

Because they want to be considered cool. Okay? Try doing righteous, you know, get a little steel in your backbone and do what's right regardless of the group pressure and see what happens. I don't say everybody will go after you, but there will be people that will think, well, I wish I had that kind of guts.

And you'll change them. Because wickedness is contagious and righteousness is contagious. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God.

And you can talk religion until it's a fright, but that isn't what it says. Let your light so shine before men and talk religion. It says your good works.

And that will influence people. You can be a child in grade school and set an example and someone says, you know what, we've been told not to do drugs, but maybe we ought to try it. That's what kids do.

And the other ones don't want to be figured that they're a nerd and they're out of it and everything else. Well, I guess I've got to go along. Do what's right.

Stand up for what you believe. You don't have to go throwing around your religion at everybody. Just do what is right.

And you'll bring others with you. Those who turn many to righteousness will be as the stars. We get religion sometimes that destroys our character.

In fact, I've come to the conclusion that there's nothing that will destroy character quicker than religion. Nor stand in the way of sinners. Nor sit in the seat of mockers.

You know, when mockery gets going, whether you're in a school setting or whether you're in prison or wherever you are, when it gets going, it's contagious and nobody wants to be left out. And they say, oh, they're making fun of the teacher. Well, then you don't want to act like you really think the teacher is the greatest because there's a contagion in mockery and you don't want to feel single out that you're some dumbbell or something that you don't know what's going on or where it is.

You're out of touch. You know, so you go along. The Bible says don't do it.

If other people want to mock, that's their problem. You have enough character. When you see something valuable from someone, stay with it.

And if others want to mock, that's their problem. God will deal with them. But be stern in what you do.

Upright. See our nation, they're like blind. They don't know why did this happen and will they hurry up and bomb Osama bin Laden so we can get back to our beer and television? That's where our nation is.

Business as usual. The late night show. Hollywood.

Shock movies. That's what we want to get back to. And God says, oh, no.

Oh, no, no, no, no. If I'm hearing correctly and the other prophets that I've heard from are hearing correctly, this is just the beginning. And that's why you're being fed with psalms.

So we're not going back to what we had because God is grossly displeased to give us a land, one of the greatest natural resources and beautiful scenery in the world and every advantage and everything and what are we doing with it? Corrupting ourselves like little children playing in the mud. And God says, enough of that. I've got starving people in the world and I don't want you living like that.

What you have, I want you to give to others religiously and other physical resources and everything. Get with it, America. The days of playing with the late night shows is over.

Let's get serious. Some of those whole late night shows, some of them are nothing but mockery. No, aren't they nothing but mockery? They mock this one, mock the president, mock the next one.

Well, what does it say? He doesn't sit in the seat of the mockers. That's talking about sitting in your chair watching the mockers. How many here love those late night shows and see everybody made fun of? Nobody? Oh, we're so religious.

Isn't that wonderful? But his delight is in the law of the Lord. He doesn't read it and say, oh, woe is me, I've got to do this. This is terrible.

I'll get out my comic books. Delighting. You read something and it shows your face is dirty.

Praise the Lord! I didn't realize I was doing it. Thank you, Lord. You spoke to me out of Your law.

That's so wonderful. Oh, God. Best thing that's happened to me in years.

God showed me in the Bible how wicked I am. His delight is in the law of the Lord. His delight is in the law of the Lord.

Yay, yay, rah, rah! For God's law. Let's hear it for God's law. Yay, yay, yay! His delight is in the law of the Lord.

Oh, hallelujah. Is that right, Jason? Do you agree with that? Huh? I won't ask you what I said. Jason was finding some fish of his own over there.

His delight is in the law of the Lord. And in His law does he meditate day and night. People, it's time to start studying the Bible.

I know that Christians expect for the pastor to study the Bible while they do whatever they do. Listen, don't let a day go by that you don't break out the Word. You're going to need it.

You're going to need it. You don't know what's coming down. You have no idea, nor do I. But I'll tell you one thing.

When you get a few verses that you've got memorized, you know where they are in the Bible, and you've got them down, they're going to help you in the days to come. Instead of panicking, you can think of the Bible. So important.

It's so important that you read the Bible every day. When you say, I don't get anything out of it. Oh, isn't that sad? Boy, what toughies we are.

Get the Peterson translation. It's not a translation that's kind of some guy figured out what he thought it meant and he wrote about it. But he's got a pretty good tone to it.

I'm thinking of putting it out on our new site. That's a translation that speaks to people. Peterson.

If you don't remember it. Peterson. He's got the whole New Testament Psalms done and he's working on the Old Testament.

I think he's a Lutheran minister. But there's a lot of good translations. Avoid Taylor.

Taylor and I are not friends, but there's a lot of good translations out there. Don't stick with the King James. That was alright for 1610.

You can't understand it today. I like the NIV. Is it perfect? No indeed.

Sometimes I argue with it, but it's a cut above most of them in my opinion. Okay? Get something you understand and read it and soak it up. And don't let a day go by that you don't read in the Bible and pray.

And if you do, there will be times when God will speak to you. Yeah. Some people will close their eyes and God spoke to them.

Sometimes He does and sometimes that can be misleading. So, you know, it's best to read. When you open up your Bible, always when you open your Bible, say, God, give me understanding from Your Word in Jesus' name.

And if you'll do that, He will. Sure He will. He's waiting for you to read the Bible.

You've got to read the Bible. That's why we have it. So you can read it.

Someone wrote to me the other day and I had said don't pray to the Holy Spirit. Well, I said it's not scriptural. There's not one scriptural in the Bible to pray to the Holy Spirit.

Well, this lady wrote back to me and she took umbrage at that and she had all kinds of reasons why she should pray to the Holy Spirit. Well, if you have a helper, shouldn't you ask Him to help you? You know, all this logic. And I wrote back once.

I'll argue with a person once, but after that, I'll get up there and delete some. So, I deal my bread if you want it, fine. If not, you know, go where you're... But anyway, I said it's not scriptural.

But her response was, but it feels right. It feels right to pray to the Holy Spirit. And it makes sense.

I figured it out. Ask the helper to help you. Does that make sense? Yeah, it makes sense.

But it's not scriptural. We've got to get back to the thing. This is the only thing we can count on.

You may feel good, you may feel bad, but this doesn't change. It's like a contract. Once you get it in writing, it's different from an oral expression of a contract.

Once you put it in writing, the lawyers get busy. You bet. So, never mind.

People say there's a contrast between faith and feeling. There is not. If you've got faith, you'll have all kinds of feelings.

But the Bible is the criterion that you use. Whether you feel like it or not. And if there's no Bible passage that says pray to the Holy Spirit, then don't do it.

It says pray to the Father in Jesus' name. Why do you want to change it for? Do what it says. Make up stuff as you go along.

Delete zone. That's where that goes. Yeah, I don't argue with anybody.

It gets nowhere. I'll put people on the defensive and it's a big waste of time. On His law, He meditates day and night.

Whoa! Now, we've got a problem in America with our brain. We all have brains. We know that.

If we didn't, we couldn't function. Alright, now we've all got brains. But we're being barraged with media.

You know, there's never in the world where you can drive down the street and break out your cell phone if you've got it programmed right. You don't even have to dial a number. Just remember, well, this one is for whoever it is.

Number 5. Hold it down and they'll do the whole thing for you. Even if he's in Texas or Connecticut. Why are you driving down 15? What's next? Well, I know what's next.

I really do know what's next. Well, the Japanese company. Now, they've got it going.

I told you it was going to come. They've got it on your wrist here. And if somebody else has got a receiver, the same thing, wherever they are in the world, you can see them and they can see you and you can talk to them and they can talk to you.

Oh, yeah, that's already done. That's a done, done. That's coming out.

A Japanese company perfected that. Well, this is just the beginning. Well, what's the end of it? We'll all be insane, I think.

You won't even know how to program your microwave. It'll be so complicated. You have to get a programmer in to figure out how to program your microwave.

Well, that's why we've got so many people that are bipolar and on drugs and drunk and everything else. It's because they can't figure out society. Well, it's the truth.

It's the truth. It used to be alcohol is anonymous. Now it's drugs, alcohol, anonymous.

And now it's drugs, alcohol, and bipolar anonymous. And I don't know what's coming on next, but these things are proliferating because nobody can figure out what they're doing. Well, anyway, it's interesting.

Just keep praying and you'll survive. But this is a battle for the mind. This is all for the mind.

What are you supposed to do? You're supposed to be thinking about the Bible. It says in His law, He meditates day and night. I'm too busy for that.

Well, you're not any busier than King David. Are you busier than King David? You think he was sitting around all day in his palace? He's a busy man. Kings are busy people.

He meditated on the Lord day and night. Well, if King David can do it, you can do it. Well, I've got things to do.

Well, while you're doing them, meditate on the Word. Get a Bible verse and keep saying it to yourself all day long. You can do this.

You say, oh, I can't concentrate. Yes, you can. Your brain can do several things at once.

And if you meditate on God's law, you'll find the things you're trying to do will go better. Try it. If you don't like it, it doesn't work, figure out what you put in the offering, come up and tell us and we'll give it back to you.

We're not selling you something that doesn't work. Get a verse, meditate it on all day today. I mean, when you're driving home, honey, read me a verse anywhere.

Not out of numbers, but somewhere in the New Testament. And then think about that thing. And it will grow on you, grow on you, grow on you, pretty soon the whole universe is filled with that Word.

Try it and see. In His law, does He meditate day and night? Well, at night I want to meditate on the television. Meditate on His law.

We're in a time of survival, people. In case you didn't see it, it's getting rough. He is like a tree planted by streams of water.

Now, I used to keep up all the shrubbery around our house. And I planted hedges and I've done this and that when I was young in my 60s. Well, now I'm too tired.

It's all I can do to keep going on the computer. So what happens to the shrubbery? It doesn't get watered. So you know what happens? Those that have the roots down far enough do great.

And those that don't wither. You can see it. The hedges are withering.

I think the back-breaking work I put into planting those hedges. Got them from Home Depot. And planted them.

Watered them. And they grew like topsy. Wonderful.

What are they doing now? Withering. They evidently haven't got down there, but we've got oleanders along the side and they're green all the time. Why? Because they got down to the water table and they don't need to be watered anymore.

They should be like a tree planted by the rivers. So when the anthrax is all over the place, wait until flu season hits. We've got a lot of hypochondriacs in this nation.

They've got to get the symptoms of flu. I've got anthrax! Down there will be emergency rooms having legs sticking out of the window. People with anthrax.

What is it? It's the flu. Yeah, you ain't see. And of course we've got a lot of practical jokers that'll be putting salt in envelopes and everything else.

That's our nation. We never get entirely serious. But you will endure if your roots are in God.

If your roots are in God, you're going to make it. And no matter how it happens on the outside, you're going to make it because you've got something they don't have. They've got fun.

They're merry of heart. Practical jokers and everything else. But you've got something they don't have.

You have joy. And see, joy will survive in jail or prison. You can burn it at the stake and it's still there.

Joy. Joy. Jesus didn't say, My fun I give you.

My joy I give you. The day will come when we're not having much fun. But you can have joy.

It runs deep. It runs deep. When it gets deep enough, you'll never turn brown again.

Alright. He yields its fruit in season. There's a season.

How wonderful it is to get in touch with God's timetable. So much Christian work is done without a sense of God's timing. We lay stuff on people and they hate it because there wasn't time.

Fruit in season. There's a time, you know. There's a time for things.

Then Jesus told us to bear fruit in season and out of season. But nonetheless, Jesus did nothing apart from the Father's time. And whose leaf does not wither no matter how bad it gets out.

You stay green. Whatever He does prospers. No matter what happens outside the great tribulation or whatever, you will prosper.

The Bible doesn't change. Not so the wicked. Not so the wicked.

And this is tricky because we look at wickedness and it seems to be prospering all over the place. It's a question of time. We want things too much in a hurry.

Oh, God, strike them dead. God gives people a chance to repent. The wicked are like chaff.

There's nothing substantial there. Things come and they don't have their roots down and they blow away. The wicked will not stand in the time of judgment.

We're in a judgment now. And the wicked will not be able to stand in these things. We're going to see a lot of funny things happen with people as they panic in the fear of their life.

There are sinners in the assembly of the righteous. As it is today, the churches have a mixture of righteous and wicked people and they're all happy. You wait until the ministers start preaching discipleship.

Should they do that, which I hope they'll do, and say you can't be a Christian unless you deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ. You're going to see the biggest backdoor revival in history. We've got mixed multitudes in the churches.

They've been brought in by the devices of the churches and they're happy so long as you don't get too serious. We're in serious days. I don't want any foolishness.

People have got needs today. Think of the relatives of people blown up there in New York. This is no day for foolishness.

Do you know that? Everybody looks serious at me. Thank you. That wasn't hard.

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous. Is the Lord watching over you? He is if you're righteous. Well, I'm a Christian.

I didn't ask you that. I said, are you righteous? Well, you've got a lot on your conscience. You need to come up here when we get ready to do the communion and tell the Lord about it.

So you go out of here feeling well. But the way of the wicked will perish. People, we're going to see a lot of wickedness.

We're seeing it with the different perverse things that are done by terrorists and so on. We see it sometimes within our own family. We see wickedness and we say, God, how can they prosper? Aren't you ever going to do anything? Be at peace.

Go about your way peaceful. If your enemy hungers, give him something to eat. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink.

Leave judgment with God. Because the Word cannot be changed. The way of sinners shall perish.

You don't have to perish them. You don't have to avenge yourself. Just be at peace with God and with all people.

Keep peace and love and joy in your heart and God will help you to do that. And God Himself will take care of the wicked. Amen? I preached on that Tuesday night last.

If you're interested, the tapes are available. Shall we stand?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11248.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/robert-b-thompson/righteous-behavior/>

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