

Can I Be Righteous Before God?

by Robert F. Adcock

Being righteous before God is possible through faith in Christ, who is the righteousness of God.

Duration: 35:18

Topics: "Righteousness By Faith", "Salvation Through Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to preach the word of God and prays for those who are considering accepting Christ. The sermon then focuses on the question of how a person can be made righteous before God. The preacher highlights the importance of finding acceptance with God rather than seeking acceptance from fellow humans. The sermon emphasizes that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the means by which one can be made righteous before God and urges listeners to have faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Transcript

What I'd like for us to think about this morning is a matter of being righteous before God. A question is raised in the scriptures found in Job chapter 9. Job asked the question, how can a man be made righteous before God? That's a searching question. Everyone at some point in his life needs to ask that question.

If you've never been confronted with that question, I'd like for you to think about it this morning. How can I be righteous before God? That's where it really counts. I think the passage we're going to read will serve, because of the experience of the man that wrote these words, it will serve the purpose of reminding us of one that made a search.

He made many blunders. He had many misconceptions, but you know God divinely and sovereignly sees to it that those who seek after him, they find him. I'm reminded of what it says in the book of Jeremiah, those that seek me and seek me with their whole heart, they find me.

Half-heartedness won't get it, as far as seeking after God. There has to be that seriousness of purpose. God knows the heart.

You can even deceive yourself, and certainly others can deceive you. And certainly the master deceiver, Satan, you haven't got a chance with him. So let us read this passage, and then we'll make some comments.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. For Moses described it, that righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.

Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above? Or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring Christ again from the dead? But what saith it? The word is near thee even in thy mouth and in thy heart. That is the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. I just quoted one question that was raised in the book of Job. I haven't counted this member that I'm going to quote.

I haven't counted, but there are reportedly 300 questions raised in the book of Job. I would have to say that the one that's raised there in that second verse of the ninth chapter has to be one of the most important. Poor Job, a man that was acquainted with a lot of unpleasant circumstances in his life, I think those circumstances served to just prepare the ground and send the heart searching for some relief in an area in which all of us, without exception, have needs.

We need some answers to questions that deal with these matters that are eternal, these matters that are spiritual and divine. So he says, How can a man be made righteous before God? By what means? There must be some means, and I haven't discovered it. That's what Job is saying, I haven't discovered it.

I know that in the process of life, sometimes it seems so important to be accepted by your fellow man. Peer pressure, especially among young people today, seems more important, at least to the natural man, that I find acceptance with my fellow man than it does to find acceptance with God. That seems all important to the natural man.

Spiritual things to the natural man, of course, are foolishness, things that we talk about this morning. The man that's unsaved, the man that has a mind that is blinded by Satan, these things seem so foolish and so silly. But to the natural man, it does seem so important to be sure that you have a right relationship with your fellow man.

Try to keep it on a level whereby things are pleasant, and certainly it serves an advantage sometimes to be sure that you are rightly related to your fellow man. I know the wisdom books in the scriptures, and I refer to the book of Proverbs. It tells us that the fear of man can bring a snare, and it is without question.

It's dreadful to be fearful of man. I know this. The Word of God tells us that God does not give to his people a spirit of fear.

So if you're afraid of other men, and you're afraid of what they'll do to you, God didn't give it to you. It didn't come from God. There is a certain air of fearlessness that is associated with fearing God.

And that same book, that wisdom book, the book of Proverbs, tells us that the beginning of wisdom, that fear and reverence for God, is the beginning of true wisdom. You want deliverance from fear, anxiety? Then have a holy, divine respect and reverence for God. He will dispel that fear of man, because ultimately all men will stand in the presence of God.

Every man shall give an account unto God for what he's done in the course of this life. He may have never raised in his own mind, in his own heart, this question that Job is raised for. How can a man be made righteous before God? He hasn't confirmed himself with that.

Well, that's sad, because the Spirit of God is in the world to convict or convince men of sin and of righteousness and judgment. Indeed, it should be one of those serious considerations in the heart of every man. In connection with all those questions that are raised in the book of Job, the third verse of that ninth chapter says that if God put a thousand questions to men, think of the intelligentsia of our day.

Think of all of those learned people that are in the world today. And there are at least a thousand, and I believe it could be ten times that many or more, questions that God could put to men, no matter how brilliant they may be, no matter how knowledgeable they might be of the things of this world, and they'd come up empty. They wouldn't be able to answer those questions.

Those questions would be profound. Those questions would have the kind of depth to them that deal with issues that are eternal. But these men couldn't give you the answers to those questions.

The only source of information and understanding of these things is found with God. They'd be confounded. It would be a disarming thing.

So often men don't like to at least confess ignorance about anything. Some of them, you call them know-it-alls. They know everything about this world, and yet they can possess such ignorance concerning the things of God.

Better to have just a little grasp and understanding of the things of God and have the answer to this question that Job has raised concerning, How might I be righteous with God than to know everything about this world that we live in? I'm not speaking in a demeaning way about the knowledge that you can acquire about this world. It's nice to know things, but I'm just using that in a comparable sense. You know a lot about this world.

What do you know about God? What do you know about the Lord Jesus? What do you know about the righteousness of God? What do you know about the state of your own soul? How do you think you stand before God this morning? Your relationship with God? Are you satisfied with it? Remember, he could put some pretty probing questions to you concerning matters that would stump you. But I can assure you at the very outset, this question that is being raised, divinely raised, and is recorded upon the pages of Scripture, God doesn't want you to be in the dark about how to be righteous with God. I think Paul has settled this question.

How could a man be just before God? I think about Romans 5.1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, being in continuous action, the man that puts his faith in Christ, he is made righteous in the sight of God. And you know God marvelously and

divinely, that word being justified has the thought of continuous action.

Moment by moment, day by day, every day until I see him face to face, God, by the wonderful divine process, the action of God in which he makes me righteous by faith in his Son, he keeps me righteous. I can't keep myself righteous. There is, of course, those practical aspects of sanctification.

Positionally, so secure in Christ. The Word of God tells us that we are already counted in that divine wisdom of God as seated in heavenly places in Christ. So secure as to our position of being in Christ.

Being righteous in the sight of God. I think of 2 Corinthians 5. He that knew no sin. That is, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sinless. The Lamb of God. God's wonderful divine sacrifice.

His only begotten Son is to be made a sacrifice for sin. He that knew no sin is the only one that qualified. He's the only one that met with the divine requirements as to that perfect sacrifice.

The only sacrifice that would truly satisfy God's justice and God's righteousness. That righteous sacrifice. Jesus Christ knew no sin.

He was made sin for us. He took our place. He was our substitute.

He hung upon Calvary's cross, not for his own sin, but for our sins. It was my sin that he died for upon the cross of Calvary. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And do you know as a result of that, that scripture says, He that knew no sin, but was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Those that are in Christ, they're justified. They're made righteous.

That answers the question, doesn't it? Job and his dilemma, how to be made righteous. While he was in a fog about the whole thing, he didn't understand it. And here the Apostle Paul, writing to us, and we were this wonderful book, the word of God before us.

Read these things and we can thank God that the Spirit of God has enlightened our hearts and minds to this wonderful divine truth. And now we're justified. We're made righteous and fit for the presence of God.

You know, if we weren't so restrained and sometimes we weren't given to being so reserved, we'd just jump up and say, Hallelujah, praise the Lord! I'm made righteous for the presence of God. I'm saved. I'm on my way to heaven.

My wonderful God has made provision for me and my dilemma of being a poor sinner, lost in this world, with no hope. With no hope. We're Gentiles.

I presume everyone in this room is a Gentile. There's a Jew here. There's no difference, brother.

God's no respecter of persons. Jew, Gentile, all alike, we're all sinners. You know, it wasn't until long ago, the brother that deals primarily in the area of evangelism among Jewish people, reminded me that there's one important thing.

I say this for the benefit of you that witness. That you must understand in dealing with Jewish people, they don't think they're lost. They're God's covenant people.

They're God's people. They're not lost. Gentiles are lost.

And you know, later on in visiting and witnessing to a Jewish gentleman that I'd known for a long time in the hospital, I pressed home that truth that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Even Jews, even God's chosen people, they're sinners. They're defiled.

They're not fit for the presence of God. And since there's no longer any animal sacrifice being offered in the temple, and so many are not even Orthodox and don't even go along with that, there is one that has made a sacrifice for sin. And that person is the Messiah.

God's wonderful Son has offered Himself as a sacrifice for their sin. Do you know, I think the Spirit of God so sovereignly bore witness to the fact that that truth is needed when you witness to all men, but especially to those that are Jews in the world today. Remind them there's no difference.

We've all sinned. We're all as an unrighteous thing before God. And the only way we'll ever be accepted into the presence of God and have a standing that meets with that perfect, righteous, divine standard that God demands is to be in Christ.

You have to, by faith, receive Him. You don't bring anything in your hand, not by works of righteousness which we have done. And I think the reason that we can look at that and think about Paul's answer to these questions is that he had such a love for God's people, his people, the Jews.

In the ninth chapter he said, I would be a curse if all of these people could have their eyes opened and see what I see. I would be willing to be made a curse, my own soul, if only that blindness that grips them, they could be delivered. Do you know who keeps men and women blinded to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God and the salvation? It says the God of this world blinds the minds of those it will not believe.

Men stubbornly and rebelliously say, Oh, I'm all right, I'll hang on to what I've got. I'll take my chances. You talk about the gospel.

You talk about Christ dying for our sins. You talk about the righteousness of God, so perfect and so pure, being put to a man's account. Well, I'll take what I've been depending upon and someday I'll stand before God and I'll take my chances.

I'll tell you, that's a tremendous gamble, because you haven't got a chance. Like most suckers that go to Las Vegas, you haven't got a chance before God. There's only one way.

There's only one way. The Lord Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me, and Paul knew that.

He was convinced of this in his own soul. That man that persecuted the Church, and he said, What I did, I did with zeal, fervency. Man, I didn't play about this thing.

I went with a big stick. I persecuted the Church. Those people that said they were Christians, I'll beat it out of them.

I'll even put them to death if necessary. They'll recant or else that fervency that Paul possessed in his own soul. He loved his people.

He loved the religion of the Jews. And if you go to the book of Philippians and you read in that fourth chapter, third chapter, he begins to give us a list of all of the things that he put value upon. He said he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

He was a Pharisee. As touching the law, he was blameless, and yet he discovered something. He said, All of these things that I put value upon, one day I took them and put them all in a bundle, tied it up very neatly, and I took it out to the garbage heap and I dropped it right there.

That's where that belonged. That is no good as far as attaining to a righteousness that pleases God. He said, I divested myself of any hope of ever being made righteous except on one basis, and one basis alone.

And yet he acknowledges my people, my people the Jews, their ignorance of this way of righteousness that God has provided. There's ignorance there. It's not justified.

You never justify ignorance. Go to a court of law and you say, I plead ignorance. You can plead all you want to, mister.

Ignorance is no excuse. Ignorance of the law, no excuse. Do you think God's law is any less strict? Do you think God's laws are so flexible and so pliable that you can just manipulate God and do what you choose to do, make whatever amendments you want to make, come to some conclusion that is contrary to God's word and not be rebuked for it? There's ignorance here concerning the righteousness of God.

And there's something that follows where there's ignorance. If you won't accept what is true from the word of God, I can guarantee you this morning if you're here and you will not accept the truth of God's word, you have gone about some way, somehow, and you have sought to establish your own righteousness on some other basis. I'll guarantee you you've done that.

You may have unwittingly done it. You may not even be aware of it. But you are counting upon something else that you have devised on your own.

I'm going to circumvent the gospel. I'm going to circumvent the cross. I'm not going to go that way.

I don't like that. They're too strict. They talk about Christ being the one way, the only way.

They talk about the righteousness of God, and there's only one way to have that righteousness put to my account. I don't like that. I've always been a free spirit.

I've always been an independent thinker. I'm going to do it my way. And so they go about to establish their own righteousness, having not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

But the Lord Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God. If you've got Christ, if you've received him, you have the righteousness of God. If you don't have Christ, you've got something else.

You've got something else that will not stand up before God. You'd be better like Paul to take it and put it in a neat little package and take it somewhere and say, That's the end of that. I won't trust in that.

It's like the man that built his house upon the sand. Ultimately, and most certainly, it will be washed away into oblivion. Isn't it strange that men would deny themselves the blessing of God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ? They would not put themselves in the hands of the one that God has said can

deliver you out of your dilemma.

Those are nail-scarred hands, the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, one that shed his precious blood for the remission of sin. And men will not entrust the eternal destiny of their souls into those pierced hands. But listen to this.

In their own feeble hands, they would entrust the destiny of their souls. In their own hands. Perhaps they would even entrust others.

Perhaps they would even persuade others. And that's what false teachers do today. Those that deny the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Those that deny this ground and this basis for the righteousness of God and how it can be imputed to a man and put to his account. They would even seek to win others to that position that's contrary to the word of God. This opposition to the gospel.

It's in the world today. That enmity to the gospel, it's in the human heart. That rebellion that's in the human heart, it's there.

Our acquaintance with Adam has assured every one of us that that fallen nature that we possess, so contrary to the nature of God, unless it is dealt with, you don't deal with it. You see, all that was lost in Adam can be restored in the person of Christ. God wants each one of his dear children to be conformed to the image and likeness of his son.

Everything that Adam possessed in God's likeness, in his image, he lost it in the fall. And now it can only be restored in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And God's people, the Jews, Paul's people, the ones that he loved, they were blind to this and he wanted them to have their eyes open.

A question could be raised, when will Messiah come? When will he come down? Paul says, don't ask that question anymore, he's already come. Those that were denying the resurrection, how can he be raised from the dead? He's already been raised from the dead, passed in. He's already ascended back into heaven.

He's seated at the right hand of God. You've raised new questions, but they've already been answered. You are behind time.

God has already acted, taken this wonderful divine action that provides for us salvation. These are searching questions. The destiny of our own souls? Do we have what satisfies God in view when we hold out our hands and say, Lord, I come not by any effort on my part.

Anything that I would bring as a substitute for the sacrifice that Jesus Christ had made for my soul, I see it as nothing but filthy rags. I see it as something that indeed should be a shame and reproach, even to my understanding. I do a discredit to all that he has done for me personally upon the cross, and even suggesting that I can do anything to merit your favor.

I am dependent upon your sovereign divine grace and your mercy and your goodness to me. I humbly bow at the foot of the cross, not trying to circumvent the cross. I humbly and submissively bow at the foot of that cross as a poor sinner, knowing that I am unclean.

I am a sinner, and I need the righteousness of God. Nothing short of that divine righteousness. And being made righteous is not a process.

It's a divine action in which God sovereignly, divinely makes the poor sinner righteous because of his identification with Christ. And that is an unchangeable position. And if you don't understand the difference between relationship and fellowship, you can get stumped there.

And you may think every time you go out and you sin that you've lost your salvation. So many teach that horrible doctrine today. In Christ there is security, related divinely to God eternally through faith in Christ.

The righteousness of God has been put to my account, and nothing can take that away. Fellowship and communion with God hangs by a fragile thread. Any time you let sin come into your lives, fellowship with God is broken.

And God divinely and wonderfully makes a provision for that. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And no Christian should tolerate any sin in his life, should be dealt with and dealt with promptly, any time that I sin.

Let me be quick, realizing wonderful relationship with God demands that his people be a holy people. I confess and forsake that sin. Fellowship and communion.

Beautiful, wonderful. If you've raised any question in your mind this morning as to where you stand with God, you say, I really don't know. I've wondered, I've pondered that question many times.

I've just wondered if I am right. I'm wondering if I had to stand in the presence of God in just a moment of time, would I be acceptable? You can settle that. The provision is made in the word of God through the person of Christ.

And God's not going to do anything else to save your soul. He's done all he's going to do. You might put it this way.

Billy Sunday used to say, friend, the next move's up to you. The next move's up to you. We become responsible when we hear the truth of God's word.

We're held accountable. And the word of God says they're all without excuse. Irregardless of whether you've heard a little or a lot, there is no excuse.

May God give us the grace and the mercy and the wisdom to see this morning that there is a way whereby one can be made righteous for the presence of God. It's through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Shall we pray? Our Father in heaven, we do bow in Thy presence and thank Thee for Your love and grace to us.

Thank Thee for the privilege of assembly this morning. We thank Thee for the word of God. We thank Thee for the clarity and the simplicity of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee for this day of grace in which we're still afforded this privilege of preaching this wonderful, wonderful word. We pray for all that are present in this room and those who are out across the face of the earth today that may be very carefully considering this question. Help them, we pray Thee divinely by Your Spirit, to close in and to accept Christ by faith.

For this we pray in His holy and divine name. Amen. Now, Brother Bob.

And number 242. 242. Jesus, I come.

We'll sing the first, second, and the fourth, if you please. Just three verses. First, second, and the fourth.

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