

(True Faith and False) the Righteousness of Faith

by Zac Poonen

The righteousness of faith is the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith in Christ, not from our own efforts or works.

Duration: 50:36

Scripture: Matthew 7:22-23, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:3, Hebrews 8:10-12, Revelation 14:3

Topics: "True Righteousness", "Humility Before God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker warns against the danger of developing a superior attitude within a fellowship or organization. He emphasizes that our righteousness should not be based on comparing ourselves to others or boasting about our own accomplishments. The speaker shares a personal realization about his own pride in not sending reports or making his needs known, only to realize that what truly matters is how we use our resources for the glory of God. He also highlights the contrast between two types of righteousness in the parables Jesus spoke, particularly focusing on the parable of the man without a wedding robe at the king's feast.

Transcript

Brothers and sisters again, the most popular books in Christian bookshops today are books on faith. And my fear is that Christians are being fed on a faith that is counterfeit. So, I want to basically share this morning on the subject of faith as we find in the New Testament and different aspects of it.

So, first of all, I want to begin with the righteousness of faith. With a verse from Philippians in chapter 3. Now, we would think that all righteousness is good. When we speak about righteousness, we say, well, that's a good thing.

But yet we read here that Paul says in Philippians 3.9 that I want to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law. So, he says there is a righteousness I don't want. Very clearly.

And I believe it's very important for Christians to understand what is that righteousness which we should not be having. And which if we have, we should get rid of as soon as possible. All righteousness is not acceptable to God.

And Paul realized that and he says, I don't want this righteousness. A righteousness that comes from the law. And if you want a demonstration of that, you have it in Old Testament saints.

Humanly speaking, it wasn't bad. All decent human beings around the world would follow most of the Ten Commandments. And it gives them a pretty decent standard of life.

In fact, that is what exalted Israel above all the other nations in the world. Paul says, I want nothing of it. And he was a man who pursued it for, zealously for perhaps 30 years of his life.

And at the end of it, he could say, I lived before God with a clear conscience and I kept the law without violating it anywhere. And at the end of it, he says, I don't want it. I don't want to find myself standing before God one day with that righteousness.

This is the righteousness which Isaiah calls filthy rags. In Isaiah 64.6. This righteousness that Paul speaks of. And just like none of us would want to be found dressed in filthy rags.

Paul says, I don't want this righteousness of the law at all. But he says, I want that other righteousness which is through faith in Christ. The righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

And this is the great theme that Paul expounded perhaps more than anybody else. The revelation which God says, which he says God gave him. Of being accepted by God.

Not on the basis of works. But on the basis of simple faith in Christ. Of course, it's not without repentance.

But our acceptance is not because we repent. A person who repents is not necessarily righteous. It's faith in Christ that justifies him.

And I believe it's important for us to understand the basis on which we are accepted by God. Because I find that it's very easy for evangelical Christians to pursue the righteousness of the law. And to be obnoxious, stubborn, hard to get along with.

And yet to imagine that they are very holy people. There are lots of people like that among believers. And I know it's possible to pursue this righteousness because I've been down that road myself.

So I don't have any stones to throw at anyone. Not qualified. But I can tell you what the Lord taught me.

And how he pulled me back out of that road of legalism. And it's actually self-righteousness. It's a road.

It's like taking the wrong path to a destination. You want to go one place and you've taken a wrong road. And the further you go along that road.

The further away you are from what God really wants you to be. And that's what many people pursuing a legalistic righteousness don't realize. And I know how I turned on that road myself.

It's because I saw the worldliness in Christianity around me. And that's how a lot of sincere people get led on to this road. We seek compromise, adulterous, worldly Christianity around us.

Now we say we've got it. Particularly if we're building a church as a shepherd or elder or something. We say we've got to protect our flock from all this worldliness.

Otherwise we're going to be corrupt. And so begins a church where the only way the pastor or shepherd feels they can protect the flock from this worldliness is by imposing certain rules. Now whether they are written or unwritten doesn't make a difference.

It's the spirit of the law there. And with those rules that you can't do this. And you know like it says in Colossians, touch not, taste not, handle not.

You must do this and you must do the other thing. You produce a bunch of Christians who look pretty holy. And look unworldly.

But who have pursued this righteousness which the Bible calls filthy rags. The very righteousness which Paul says I don't want to be found with it. And the mark of Christians who pursue this righteousness.

It could be in our life, it could be in the way we do our ministry which we feel is superior to the way other people are doing it. You know a lot of people who have faith ministries where they feel that we should never let our needs be known to anyone. Never make a report of our work.

I mean this is the way God has led me in our work. But when the danger is when people who are doing that begin to think that they are superior to others. And this is what I found.

I'm talking about myself. I thought because I don't make my needs known to anybody and I don't send reports of our work. I'm superior to Christian organizations and groups that do that.

Till one day God opened my blind eyes to show me. That it's not a question of how you get your money that's important. Whether it's by sending out reports or not sending out reports.

But how you use that money. Whether you use it for yourself or for the glory of God which is more important. Then I realized that that thing which I gloried in wasn't such a big thing before God.

And that took me years to get there. Just to get the little light on that one little thing. So I know how it could be in other areas where we can go for years without getting light on our self-righteousness.

That that righteousness which we think we have. Which we think makes us superior to a whole lot of other believers who do things differently. Is not righteousness in God's eyes at all.

And the clearest proof that this righteousness is not the righteousness of Christ. Is the fact that we are proud of it. Which proves that we produced it ourselves.

I mean I wouldn't be proud of a book which I haven't written. Even if I'm distributing it. If people appreciated it.

How could I be proud of it? I didn't write it. I can only be tempted to be proud of something I wrote. I can only be tempted to be proud of a righteousness which I produced.

Not something that someone else produced. Not something that God produced in me. That's the difference.

Whenever we find ourselves inwardly congratulating ourselves for something we have. Whether in our life or our ministry. Where our attitude is Lord I thank you that I'm not like other men.

I thank you that I'm not like yonder publican or whatever it is. Or somebody in some other denomination or some other group. Who does things little differently from the way I think is right.

Whenever I'm proud of it. It shows I've got the spirit of the Pharisee. That's the very righteousness which Paul says I don't want to be found with.

The primary mark of the righteousness which is by faith. Faith means which comes out of dependence upon God. It's leaning.

Faith is the leaning of the human personality. The total human personality. In absolute confidence in God.

In His perfect wisdom. His perfect love. Almighty power.

That's faith. There can be no glorying in it. And the primary mark of that righteousness which is by faith is humility.

And where humility is lacking. Whatever ministry it is. Whatever holiness it is.

It's a counterfeit. It's very very important to keep that in mind all our days. Because the Bible says God gives His grace to the humble.

He doesn't give it to everybody. Anybody else. And if what I have is by grace.

It can only come through humility because God gives it only to the humble. So if I'm not humble. If I'm not.

If I don't have. I'm not talking about low estimation of myself. I'm not talking about that.

If I'm not. I believe I have great value in God's eyes. But yet the Bible says let this consider each other as more important than yourself.

Philippians 2. If I cannot consider other believers not as more spiritual. That would be fooling myself. Paul didn't consider the Corinthians as more spiritual than himself.

And the humblest man that walked this earth. Jesus did not consider other people as more spiritual than himself. That's a false humility.

Trying to pretend that other people are more spiritual than yourself. When you know it's not true. The Bible doesn't say that.

It says in Philippians 2. Consider other people as more important. It's very clear in the NASB translation. More important than yourself.

And that. That's how Jesus considered. That's why He washed people's feet.

And that is one of the primary marks of the righteousness which is by faith. One of the most difficult things that God can do. I've asked this question in different congregations.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for God to do? Think of this. One who could create the universe like that. In a moment.

With words. And who can do all types of things. There's one thing He finds very difficult to do.

And that is to bless one of His children and still keep them humble at the end of it. To make someone holy. And to keep them humble at the end of it.

To bless someone's ministry. And to keep them humble is one of the most difficult things that through the years God has found to be able to do. Because a small thing is enough to puff us up.

You see, this is one of the clearest evidences that we are so weak. If by some chance you laid hand on someone who had a little fever. And his fever disappeared immediately.

You'd find it very difficult to keep yourself in low thoughts of yourself after that. Even if you don't tell anybody about it. I mean that itself would be difficult not to tell anyone about it.

But to really consider oneself as nothing before God at the end of it all is extremely difficult. A small thing like that. Imagine if you brought a Muslim to Christ.

It would be difficult to remain humble. It's so difficult for God to keep a man in that place of humility where he can continue to give him grace. And I believe this is the reason why God finds it difficult to bless a lot of His children.

Because He doesn't want to destroy them. He doesn't want to send them to hell. The Bible says, what have you got which you did not receive? 1 Corinthians 4. And if you received it, how can you boast as though you hadn't received it? As though you manufactured it yourself.

The righteousness which is by faith is the result of God working in me. The terms of the new covenant are described in Hebrews 8 like this. In Hebrews 8 it says, I'm going to make a new covenant.

Verse 8, with the house of Israel. And this will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers. Which is the law which produced the righteousness which is according to the law.

He says this is the difference. And I've emphasized this many times. That if you read the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments, Exodus chapter 20.

You see the difference between Exodus 20 and Hebrews 8. There's one big difference. Exodus 20 which lists the Ten Commandments is, Thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt, thou shalt not. That's basically in those two phrases.

You have the entire Ten Commandments and the righteousness which is of the law can be summed up in two phrases. Thou shalt and thou shalt not. And it need not be the Ten Commandments.

I mean in today's churches you can have 10,000 different rules. But it's all thou shalt and thou shalt not. Whether it's referring to particular forms of dress.

Or what we permit Christians to do or not to do. It's all the same spirit. But in Hebrews 8, there is no thou shalt.

In the Hebrews 8 in verse 10 to 12, God says, I will, I will, I will, I will, I will. And if you can understand the difference between thou shalt and I will, you've understood the fundamental difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. And the fundamental difference between, in very simple words, between the righteousness which is of the law and the righteousness which is by faith.

The last miracle that Jesus ever did was to illustrate the difference between the righteousness which is of the law and the righteousness which is by faith. That is the miracle of the boat being filled with fish in John chapter 21. Where it says they toiled all night and caught nothing.

That is pursuing life under the law. A constant, endless struggle. Where you imagine that you are becoming righteous.

You imagine that you are catching fish. But in God's eyes, your boat is as empty as anybody else's. It's empty.

And at the end of it, it's almost as though they did nothing and their boat is filled with fish. And that was one catch. You know how fishermen are proud of the fish they catch.

They talk of the size of it and the number of fish they catch, etc. But that was one catch Peter could never be proud of. He may have been proud of other catches he had earlier in his life, but not that day.

That was 100% grace. It says they had 153 large fish and he couldn't be proud of one of them. It was all of God.

All of grace. And that was the last miracle Jesus ever did. It was not the result of their effort.

It was the result of their faith. They trusted in Jesus. Did what he told them to do.

Threw the net on the right side and lo and behold their boat was full of fish. And they could take no credit in it. Remember this my brothers and sisters.

If you can take no credit for your purity, and your goodness, and your love, and your ministry, and your labors, the people you brought to Christ, the sermons you preached, and this that and the other you did. You can take no credit for it. Well, you got the right righteousness.

But, if you secretly congratulate yourself for something you have done, you know that's not of God. Or you are stealing the glory that belongs to God. It's darkness.

Jesus said in Matthew 5.16 Let your light so shine before men. What is that light? That they may see your good works. And here is the most important part.

Not glorify you, but glorify your Father who is in heaven. It's that part which is very, very difficult. It's very easy to let our light shine before men in such a way that they glorify us.

And think that we are pretty good people. Or we got a great ministry. Or we are pretty good Christians.

But to let our light shine in, that's actually darkness. When our good works so shine before men, that they think we are wonderful people. That's actually darkness.

It's not light at all. But light is when our good works don't glorify us. But they glorify God.

I believe this is one reason why Jesus was so careful to tell people not to advertise to others what he had done. And very often he would disappear when people wanted to come and make him a king or give him some credit. And the Bible says in Luke 5.16 after great multitudes were healed when they looked around for Jesus.

He had disappeared. He would slip away into the wilderness to pray, to get along with the Father. He was, he had made himself so much like us that he was tempted like us.

The Bible says that in every point. And he saw, he sensed those temptations that come to us when we see fantastic results in our ministry. And he knew he had to get away and be alone with his Father.

You know, most of us usually pray much before we engage in some important ministry. Jesus prayed much after he had engaged in important ministry. That's how he protected himself.

It wasn't automatic. If we say that Jesus was automatically protected like hermetically sealed from temptations, then he would be no example for you and me because we are not hermetically sealed from temptation at all. Particularly after God has blessed us in some way.

So Jesus found his protection in getting alone with the Father after that passage in Luke 5.16 is amazing. Great multitudes came from all over and they were healed and he would go away and slip away and be alone with his Father. He saw the danger.

So here it says in Hebrews 8 I will put my laws into their minds. I will, verse 10, write them upon their hearts. Verse 12, I will be merciful.

It's what God is going to do within us. Just like the Lord filling that boat with fish. And there can be no glory in that.

A number of the parables which Jesus spoke you know, highlight this contrast between these two types of righteousness. If you look at it carefully, you remember the story of the the parable he spoke about the king having a wedding feast in Matthew 22 where there was this man who was found without a wedding robe. And to understand that parable, Matthew 22 and verse 11 he found a man not dressed in wedding clothes.

It's not written there, but I have accepted the explanation that when they went out to pick up all these people from the streets they were not properly dressed. And so presumably at the gate of the king's palace they were all given a robe so that they would all look decent at the wedding feast. And here were these people picked up from the bylanes and the beggars and all types of people in rags and they all looked decent because they were given the wedding robes at the gate.

But here was one fellow who thought his dress was good enough. He wasn't picked up from the streets. He came from a decent home.

And he was dressed neatly. He said, I don't need your wedding robe. I'm okay by myself.

I mean, my suit and tie are okay. Don't categorize me the same with these beggars. And that's the fellow who got thrown out.

And those beggars remained inside. Because he was too proud to accept the wedding robe at the gate. He thought his dress was good enough.

This is the righteousness of the law which Jesus was trying to emphasize. It's the good people who have the problem. Not the evil people.

Jesus said, the prostitutes and thieves will get into God's kingdom before you because they are the beggars with rags. They are glad to accept this righteousness which God gives. It's the decent person.

The one who is brought up in a good family. Who hasn't done these great crimes that other people have done. Who are in danger of being proud.

Look at the other story which Jesus said about the prodigal son. How is it this story begins with this one wicked son away from the father's house and the good boy at home and ends with the good boy outside and the bad boy sitting in the father's right hand. It's amazing.

Because the bad boy had nothing to commend himself. I don't deserve to be a son. He says, I'd be happy if I get a room in the servant's quarters.

That person sits in the father's right hand. The other person says, he says, dad, what have I done wrong? I've only done what's right. All my life and I'm not like this person.

You see, this is always the mark of a person who's got the righteousness of the law. I am not like this person. You beware of that attitude.

It can happen within a fellowship. I'm not like him. I'm a good boy.

I've kept all the commandments. I've done everything. And I'm not like people in that group.

I'm not people like in that other organization. It may be true. But when we're conscious of it and we are aware of all that we've done it shows that what we have is usually of our own making.

I find it interesting, this contrast between two pictures that Jesus gave us of his judgment seat where in one he said if I were to just sum it up two groups of people come to Christ at his judgment seat and the fundamental difference between the two is this one group is very conscious of all that they have done for the Lord in their life. And the other group is unaware or not conscious of what they've done. This is the difference.

One is in Matthew 7 and the other is in Matthew 25. In Matthew 7 you have this group that comes before the Lord. You know, you're familiar with that verse.

It's 22 or 23 or something which says, Lord, I make a list of all that they have done. We prophesied in your name. We did miracles in your name.

We cast out demons in your name. And that's just a little introduction. There could be a hundred other things.

And the Lord says, I never knew you. Get away from me. And then in Matthew 25 you have the other group where the Lord says, You know, you did all this for me.

You clothed me. You fed me. You gave me water to drink.

You did all this. And they say, When was that? I don't remember all that. I say, Yeah, you did it.

What's the difference between these two groups? Just this. One has got this list of all the things that they feel they have done which should qualify them to be accepted and to be honored and rewarded. And the other group feels with the nothing.

Jesus once said, After you have done every single thing that you have been commanded. Have you got there? After you have done every single thing you have been commanded, say, We are unprofitable servants. That's Luke 17.

You know, to get that degree of unprofitable servants, you got a long way to go. You got to do everything you have been commanded. This is New Testament Christianity.

This is the righteousness which is by faith. There is another parable Jesus spoke in Matthew 20. When he speaks about these people who came to work in the vineyard at different times of the day.

Some came at 6 o'clock in the morning, worked for 12 hours. And others came at 5 o'clock in the evening, worked for one hour. And it's not just that they both got the same wages.

These other fellows got it first. It says, the ones who came at 5 o'clock received a denarius. Matthew 20 verse 9. And when those who worked for 12 hours, when they came up to get their wages, they thought they should get 12 denarii.

Because these other fellows worked for one hour and got one denarius. But they got the same. And look at their complaint.

Their complaint is, verse 12. These last men who worked only one hour. And here is the basic complaint.

You have made them equal to us. The mark of those who have the righteousness of the law is they don't want anybody to be considered equal to them. They must be considered as more spiritual than everybody else.

We are or I am the most spiritual person in this organization, in this church. I don't want anybody to be considered equal to me. That's their complaint.

You have made these people equal to me. How can that be? I have been here from the beginning. These fellows came yesterday.

That's God's way. He makes them equal to us. And it's a very good question for us to ask ourselves.

Are you happy if God makes you equal to those other fellows who came yesterday? Who don't have 10% of the spirituality that you think you have? What if God decides to say, well, they are equal to you. And I am going to give them the same reward as you. And even though they are one third your age or half your age, they are equal.

And if you can say, well, praise the Lord, that's wonderful, Lord. That's exactly what I wanted. You are okay.

But if that disturbs you a little bit, that somebody is made equal to you, when you think that you should be given a little more respect for your seniority or some garbage like that, you got, you are following the wrong road. That's the very thing Jesus kept on warning His disciples against. And that's the thing which is so close to us.

You know, I think of that expression in Hebrews 12, which says, that sin which so easily besets us. It says, let us lay aside every weight and that sin which so easily besets us. I think this is it, you know.

The sin which so easily besets us that before we know it, we have fallen. This feeling proud about something or superior about something. And it afflicts righteous people.

It says, it's with difficulty, Peter says, the righteous person is saved in 1 Peter 4. It's with difficulty the righteous person is saved. Because it's so difficult for that man to remain humble. It's difficult for a man who's done so much for the Lord, brought so many fish in his boat, to remain humble.

And Paul says, I do not want this righteousness. There's something wrong with this. It's human effort and that's why salvation is by grace, through faith.

That all of us are equal. I love to meditate sometimes on how it will be in heaven. I find for my own salvation it's necessary to meditate on how we're going to worship God in heaven.

Where we're all going to be standing together with millions of others and nobody special. And everybody is going to say, Thou alone art worthy, O Lord. If you can sing that song, no Paul, no Peter, no you, no me, everybody is equal.

The fellow who came at the eleventh hour and the fellow who came at the first hour, they're all standing there and singing one song, Lord Jesus, Thou alone art worthy. That's the new song and we got to learn it before we leave this earth. We better hurry up and learn it.

They're the ones who stand with the lamp on Mount Zion. No one could learn that song except these who learned it. They were redeemed from the earth.

They were redeemed from this earthly attitude of competition and trying to show themselves as more spiritual or better or superior. You know, through the years, as I said, I'm not throwing stones at anyone. I'm just giving my testimony.

The things that God showed me of the corruption and the wickedness of human righteousness, that which He cursed on the cross and that I should have nothing to do with it. I can see, my Paul says, I don't want to be found with this wretched thing on me. I want a righteousness which is totally from God.

What the Lord showed me was in Philippians 2 in verse 3, that there were two sins particularly that people who pursued the righteousness of the law would find very difficult to discover within themselves. One we've seen is pride. I mentioned that how, you know how the elder son says about the prodigal son, Dad, I'm not like this fellow.

Or the Pharisee says about the publican, Lord, I thank you, I'm not like him. It's always this comparison. The folks who came at the first hour, look at the fellows who came at the eleventh hour and say they are not equal to us.

And this is one of the primary marks. And Jesus repeated it in parable after parable after parable of people who sought the highest seats at banquets and in the synagogues and people who wanted titles like Rabbi and Father and various other titles we have in Christendom today. Everything designed to show that I am not an ordinary brother like the others.

I'm a little special. And that's why I've got a little title before my name. And a little tail after mine or a longer tail than somebody else's.

To show that I'm not an ordinary brother. I'm someone special. Jesus detested it.

He had no title before his name. No tail after his name. He was just Jesus.

He said I'm just an ordinary man. When he said I'm a son of man he said I'm just an ordinary man. He who was almighty God himself walked on this earth and always said I'm an ordinary man.

But this comparison is because of insecurity. I've discovered through the years. The days when I was insecure and before God.

Not sure whether God had accepted me. I always had to prove myself. Particularly when we are young.

I remember the early days when I was seeking to serve the Lord. I had to prove myself. I had to prove to others that I'm somebody.

I'm not an ordinary brother. I'm not an ordinary servant of the Lord. I'm somebody.

And the more insecure we are the more we are tempted to prove to others that we are holy or where God is using us or God's I'm an anointed servant of God and all this rubbish that people are trying to prove to one another. It's all due to insecurity. And I tell you Evangelical Christendom is full of insecure people.

Proof? They are always trying to prove that they are somebody. The man who is secure in God who knows that God has accepted him freely in the beloved. Not due to any righteousness of his own but because Jesus died for him and shed his blood and clothed him with his righteousness.

Period. He is secure. He doesn't have to prove anything to anyone.

He is so happy that God has accepted him not because of his righteousness. You know even though we may all subscribe doctrinally to the righteousness of faith I have a feeling that secretly I know it is true of myself secretly we feel it was that plus I mean a little bit of good that God saw in me that makes me acceptable. And those are the most insecure people.

Secure... So here is where we got to begin. To find our security in the fact that God loves me just as I am. He has accepted me just as I am.

Then I can accept other people just as they are. I am not trying to compare myself with them or... It's... You know this comparison of righteousness where I think I have got a little more than others is something like two ants you know these small ants comparing themselves with each other and saying hey I am 0.001 millimeters longer than you. That's such a joke.

I mean among ants I suppose it does mean a lot if you are 0.001 millimeters longer than another ant but when a human being looks at that isn't it crazy? 0.001 millimeters longer? taller? That's exactly how it sounds to God when we think of our righteousness being superior to somebody else's or our ministry accomplishing more than somebody else's etc. etc. etc.

I have discovered through the years that my ministry is going to be imbalanced forever because I am only one part of the body of Christ. The only balanced man that ever walked on this earth was Jesus Christ. And I don't have any illusion that I am anywhere near that.

He was the body of Christ in total. In total. I am one part of it.

One small teeny weeny part of it. That was my salvation when I discovered that. And if you can discover that no matter how spiritual you imagine you are you are a small teeny weeny part of the body of Christ.

You are not balanced. You are thoroughly imbalanced. And no matter how much you try to be balanced you will find your balance only if you accept other imbalanced members of the body of Christ.

Take any part of the human body. Useless in itself. Imbalanced.

But wonderfully useful when it finds its humble place along with all the other members who can do a lot of other things which we can't do. I know in my ministry for example there are so many aspects of Christian ministry worship, praise, evangelism ministry I hardly ever talk about these things. I think God has committed a certain ministry to me a certain emphasis.

That's all I ever do. I don't say it's everything. It isn't.

The kidney is not everything in the body of Christ but it does one job it keeps on doing it. It leads the other people to do the other jobs. And it humbly accepts its place and says well I need you.

You may think you don't need me but I need you. That is true Christianity. To do my part and to keep on doing it faithfully and accept that God has given somebody else the job of doing something I just can't do.

Therefore like it says in Philippians 2.3 we consider others as more important than ourselves. But these two sins are mentioned in the first part of verse 3. Selfishness and conceit. These are the marks of people who pursue their own righteousness.

One is conceit. We have just spoken about that. The other is selfishness.

You know a person can be so meticulous in following little rules and regulations of paying all their taxes properly and doing this matter righteously and the other matter righteously and the other matter righteously and a hundred and one things that they are pretty proud of of doing righteously and have absolutely no light on the thorough stinking selfishness of their life. It's possible. And yet they may be righteous in a hundred and one areas and pride themselves on the fact that we are so righteous here and so righteous here and so righteous here and it's right and it's all good.

Like Jesus said these ought you to have done and not to leave the other undone. You need to get a little more light the Lord would say on the selfishness of your whole way of life. Do you see how much your thoughts revolve around how well it's going with you and your children and your family.

Do you see the selfishness in all that? Despite all this meticulous righteousness in a hundred and one areas that your thoughts revolve around how well it's going with you and your children. With hardly a thought about some other parent suffering with a rebellious child. Maybe you're congratulating yourself that you've done it so well that you brought up your children so well and sorry they didn't do it as well as I did.

That's not Christianity. That's the stinking righteousness of the law which makes me feel that it's because I did it better that I brought up my children this way. Those other fellas just didn't do it like I did it.

It's exactly the attitude of the elder son towards his younger brother. God I thank you I'm not like these other fellas. So the righteousness of the law is much closer to us than we think.

And we need to be delivered from it. The righteousness which is by faith. This is the faith that we need.

That helpless dependence upon God for him to do a work in us where we give all the glory to him. And not the faith that's spoken of in a lot of books that we see nowadays. To bow heads in prayer.

Heavenly Father open our eyes to see more clearly what perhaps we don't see as clearly as we should right now. That which is so we so desperately need to see. Well while we are looking for light and understanding in so many areas please give us light on ourselves.

Particularly on selfishness and pride. We humbly ask in Jesus name. Amen.

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