

THE PROMINENT ASPECTS OF THE GLAD TIDINGS

Part 1a: RIGHTEOUSNESS - Intro

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TGOCM

Understanding the importance of righteousness: This is the *most* prominent aspect of the Glad Tidings. It is spoken of more than any other, and in more ways than any other. It is so dominantly important that the Scriptures give it as the reason for Jesus Christ's ministry: 1 Jn. 3:5a *"You know that he appeared in order to take away sins."* Righteousness is the pivot of the New Covenant: Mt. 26:28 *"for this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."* And it is documented as God's power to produce life, his kind of life with all of its fullness for those who believe: Rom. 1:16a-17 (Murdock) *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power {or: energy} of God unto life, {or: salvation} to all who believe in it; ... For in it is revealed the righteousness of God, from faith to faith; as it is written, The righteous by faith, shall live."* See also 1Cor. 1:18.

Righteousness is the main point with which God's people are the most challenged. It is no coincidence that forms of this word are used at least 75 times in the book of Romans alone, i.e. *"right," "righteous," "righteousness," "just," "justify," "justified," "justification."* This is not to mention other related words, such as *"forgiveness," "blood," "death" (Jesus), "cross," "sin," "condemnation," and "guilt."* Righteousness is absolutely the most foundational aspect of the Glad Tidings.

If we aren't clear on its meaning, then the other aspects of the Glad Tidings will be unclear. And if we aren't practiced in it to the point it is our habit of thought then spiritual maturity is at least greatly hindered: Heb. 5:12-14 *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled (not accustomed to, inexperienced) in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained (exercised – gymnazo) by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."* (Heb 5:12-14 ESV)

God is the Just Judge:

1. Ge 18:25b *"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"*
2. De 32:4 *"He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."*
3. Ps 7:11 *"God is a righteous judge, Yea, a God that hath indignation every day." (ASV)*
4. Ps 33:5 *"He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD."*
5. Ps 96:13 *"Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."*
6. Ps 98:9 *"Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."*
7. Ec 12:13-14 ¶ *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*
8. Jer 9:24 *"but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah."*

As the Creator over his creation, God has set the standard for what is right. All will be judged. Throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, ones who aimed at living righteously lived in acknowledgment of God being judge over all.

Here is the big problem: Mankind has been corrupted by sin since Adam's disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden. We have been weakened by sin and layered with imperfections. So then, how can we, being imperfect, keep a perfect standard of doing what is right? By our own abilities, no matter how dedicated, committed, intent, devoted, sworn to "do it right" we are, we ultimately fail! We break God's standard of doing rightly, which in the Scriptures is called *"sin," "iniquity," "trespass," "transgression,"* and the like. And by the standard of our actions we CANNOT be judged righteous:

1. *“For in thy sight no man living is righteous.”* (Ps 143:2b ASV)
2. *“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”* (Pr 20:9 ASV)
3. *“If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not)...”* (2Ch 6:36a ASV)
4. *“Surely there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”* (Ec 7:20 ASV)
5. *“...for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; 10 as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one;”* (Ro 3:9-10 ASV)
6. *“for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;”* (Ro 3:23 ASV)

The various words rendered “righteousness” in the New Testament come from the Greek root word dike. It means *justice; hence, judgment. It refers to the judicial process: including judging, rendering a verdict and pronouncing a sentence (punishment).* Dike was also the name of the Greek goddess of justice; the personification of just judgement.

Heb 2:2 RSV *“For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,”*

Can anyone escape the all-encompassing dike (just judgement) of God? NO! Yet God’s nature of love allowed for us to be spared the devastations of the consequences of sins. He did this by the substitution of his Son, Jesus Christ in our behalf:

Jesus Christ *“who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father:”* (Ga 1:4 ASV)

God’s master stroke of all of time was Jesus Christ’s substitutionary death for our sins! God could NOT have made it easier for us than to simply accept (believe in) his act of love in rescuing us from the despairs of sin through his obedient (even unto death) Son.

“19 ¶ Now we know that whatsoever the law says, it speaks to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: 20 because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. 21 But now apart from the law a righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 whom God set forth to be a propitiation (mercy seat), through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; 26 for the showing of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that is out from the faith of Jesus.” (Ro 3:19-26)

and he (Jesus Christ) is the expiation (judicially satisfactory punishment) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 1Jo 2:2 RSV

Jesus Christ suffered the punishment due to every one of our sins, as well as those of the whole world. This is God’s righteous judgment against sins. One judicial act at Calvary covered it all; every sin of every individual for all time.

RIGHTEOUSNESS THERAPY: Meet in small groups to discuss 1. Any point which stood out to you from the teaching, and 2. Read together out loud Ezek. 33:11-20 to discuss it.