

Receive God's Righteousness by FAITH

Part 1



January 2022

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All scriptures are unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: righteous, righteousness of God, justified, faith,

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Summary: *Do you struggle a lot with trying to be perfectly righteous? In fact, most of us repent daily for where we've failed! Do you seek to eventually attain to God's goodness and character – but that goal seems unattained so far? We will not ever be able ourselves to be righteous enough, even with God's spirit. It could well be that we are seeking God's righteousness entirely the wrong way, by our own deeds and works of keeping God's law. This is such a vital topic to understand. Have peace in accepting the free Gift of God. **This is part 1 of a 2 part sermon on God's perfect righteousness.***

In sermons I've given in the past, I've focused on how we're saved by God's grace or favor and not by our own acts or works as Eph 2:8-9 tells us.

I've also given a sermon on how we must have God's very own perfection and how we come to that point, and what "perfection" means. In the Greek it has more to do with maturity, completeness, completion, being finished in Christ – and not so much about being flawless in this life. God of course is flawless. But get the full details in the "God's perfection" sermon.

Today I want to continue showing how our entire salvation is God's doing, not something we do. GOD is our Savior. I mean both God the Father and Jesus Christ, through whom he works. Remember? GOD so loved that world that he offered and sacrificed his one and only Son for us. And Jesus accepted that task. Together, God is our Savior.

Today we'll be highlighting a GIFT from God that I'm not hearing a lot of sermons about, but it's so big, so vital, so exciting – that we've GOT to talk about it. **God LOVES giving gifts.** There are so many –

the gift of Jesus Christ, the gift of eternal life, gift of his Holy Spirit and then the Holy Spirit itself has gifts within it, the gift of salvation, the gift of his grace, his calling, and so much more. Then there's THIS gift, we just don't hear much about that I will speak about today.

It's the GIFT of ... well, wait for it, and I'll get to it in a few minutes.

No, in fact, let me go ahead and read the verse now and then expound on this wonderful GIFT God wants to give us freely. Quotes are usually from NKJV.

Romans 5:17 NKJV

“For if by the one man's offense [Adam] death reigned through the one, much more those who **receive** abundance of grace and of **the GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:17 NIV

“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who **receive** God's abundant provision of grace and **of the GIFT of righteousness** reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.”

True righteousness is a GIFT OF GOD? It's not something we can *ever* attain by our own efforts to inherit God's kingdom. And notice that this righteousness from God, as his GIFT, must be consciously received.

Paul tells us of his own righteousness that was by keeping the law, and he said he was blameless (Phil 3:6). But he wasn't satisfied, and in **Romans 7:14-20** **twice** he says he still failed and did some things he hated from time to time.

Romans 7:14-20 NIV

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual [carnal], sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.

17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, **it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.**”

So in **Phil 3:9** he says he doesn't want the best he could do. He didn't want his own righteousness from keeping the law. He wanted GOD's very own righteousness by FAITH through Christ. Phil. 3:9. We'll read it later.

So all our own efforts to finally be righteous enough to qualify for the kingdom of God and eternal life – misses the point! It's denying a much higher righteousness – **the perfect righteousness of God himself**. Let's talk about that, which Paul says is the GIFT of righteousness.

Aren't you very aware of how much – even with God's Holy Spirit – we still fail, we still sin, we still come up short! It's time to look to, and accept, the gift of God we're talking about today.

A gift has to first be received, or we don't have it! A gift is not something you worked for or earned. It's a GIFT. A gift is FREE. Working for what you receive is called your wages, something owed to you (**Romans 4:4**). I'll show you over and over how *this* gift is not something we work for – it's said that way over and over. It has to be truly a GIFT.

This same gift of righteousness is also referred to – as you'll see – as **“the righteousness which is by faith”**. This kind of righteousness is not by the things we do, but by belief, and faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:7

“By faith **Noah**, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world **and became heir of the righteousness which is according to FAITH.**”

NIV and NLT – **“the righteousness that comes by faith”**

We love to recite how Noah was righteous; how he was “a just man, perfect in all his generations and walked with God”, and forget that before that is said, and right after God said he was about to destroy all living creatures by a flood, **we read “But Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the LORD”** **Genesis 6:7-9.**

Genesis 6:8-9

**“But Noah found grace [or favor] in the eyes of YHWH.
9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.”**

Remember Noah got very drunk after the flood. But he had the righteousness that comes by FAITH. The same we need to have. So he had favor with God.

*WHOSE righteousness IS that? Have you received that GIFT of righteousness? Have you ever thought of your own righteousness as being the one true righteousness, GOD'S own righteousness, **as being a GIFT in the first place?***

So hello everyone. I'm Philip Shields, host of Light on the Rock. Thank you for welcoming us into your home and earpiece! We have hundreds of sermons and videos and blogs, so learn to use the SEARCH BAR – just 1-2 key words works best – to find topics you need.

You can also go to the top of the Home page – hit Videos – and ALL the videos will scroll down... as we're demonstrating. Or Sermons = the audio only sermons....(demonstrating... I might pause if needed)...And BLOGS, short articles on hundreds of topics.

So back to God's righteousness "which is by faith" This will be a 2-PART sermon. Part 1 today – explaining this GIFT. Part 2 – OUR part in RECEIVING this gift and putting it to good use and how Jesus' perfect life must become our own.

We know we have to be righteous. 1 Corinthians 6:9 says, "the unrighteous will NOT inherit the Kingdom of God". Let that sink in. Anyone God deems to be unrighteous won't be there. Also Romans 1:18; Isaiah 55:7; Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:50 and so many other verses.

So we must have righteousness GOD considers righteous. And – yes, there were some who were called "righteous" in the Bible – but it was being good as best they could. It wasn't perfect. It was not the righteousness I speak of today.

Remember there are 2 kinds of righteousness –1 – from our own efforts to keep God's commandments and laws. That is righteous, but filthy rags won't cut it with God.

Or **the 2nd** and only acceptable form of righteousness with God is his own perfect righteousness. *They're not the same, because OURS fails too often.*

But that leaves us with a huge problem. Jesus himself told a man that only ONE is "good" – and that ONE is God. That would include Jesus then. GET this: when it comes to God's judgment, no one else is perfectly good.

Luke 18:18-19

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

19 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? **No one is good but One, that is, God.**"

Romans 2:13 tells us IF we could keep God's law perfectly, yes, we would be deemed righteous.

Romans 2:13 NIV

"For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous."

NKJV -- "but the DOERS of the law will be declared righteous"

But then you keep reading, **Rom 3:9-12** says, "**that's great** – if you *can* keep the law perfectly, but no one has and no one can perfectly keep God's law". Look at the scriptures, so we learn how important this topic of righteousness is! And this explains what seems like a contradiction. It's not. IF you COULD keep it all perfectly, great (Rom 2:13), but you *can't* (Rom 3:10-12) keep God's law perfectly.

Romans 3:10-12

10 As it is written:

"There is NONE righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have ALL turned aside; They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

So do you see your problem? You can obey God's law maybe even most of the time – and that's good – but you and I are not ever going to do it perfectly, so that means we fail! Including me! It's perfect or nothing. If we're not perfectly keeping God's law 100% of the time, we're not perfectly righteous.

And the BEST you can muster – your own righteousness – comes up to God as smelly, filthy rags, actually menstruous rags. SO we do not want our own righteousness. We can't save ourselves or become righteous enough ourselves.

ISAIAH 64:6 NET Bible

"We are all like one who is unclean, all our **so-called righteous acts are like a menstrual rag in your sight.**"

So we need some help. **Even JOB** – who was deemed blameless in Job 1 – by the time God was finished with him came to see himself compared to God and said, "I abhor (detest) myself, repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:4).

Job 42:5-6

"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.
Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

Are you and I any better?

Romans 3:23

"**ALL** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

But God wants to forgive us our debt of sin, which earned us death – and wants to give us a GIFT. The Gift of Eternal Life – but that's only for the perfectly righteous. So what do we do? **We know Rom 6:23 – wages of sin is death but gift of God is eternal life.** Let's read it in New Century version... leading up to it.

Romans 6:20-23 NCV

"In the past you were slaves to sin, and goodness did not control you. 21 You did evil things, and now you are ashamed of them. Those things only bring death. 22 But now you are free from sin and have become slaves of God. This brings you a life that is only for God, and this gives you life forever.

23 When people sin, they earn what sin pays – death. But God gives us a free gift – life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord."

So even the most righteous among us would still fall short of the glory of God, as Rom 3:23 tells us – "ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

That's why we need this topic, so we're sure we have God's very own righteousness and not our best effort. Ours will fall short.

WHAT IS righteousness? Let's define it and post it:

Righteousness means to be RIGHT WITH GOD, aligned with Him, in line with his way and his life. Righteousness is associated with the word "justified" – made right, made righteous, seen as righteous by God.

Other synonyms: virtuous, moral, good, just, blameless, upright.

The righteousness I'm speaking on today is also called "the righteousness by FAITH" and it's also called "the righteousness of GOD" – and by FAITH in God and Jesus, God offers HIS very own righteousness to his children.

So now let's explore this with lots of scripture.

Righteousness ACCORDING TO FAITH

Hebrews 11:7

“By faith **Noah**, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world **and became heir of the righteousness which is according to FAITH.**”

NIV and NLT – “***the righteousness that comes by faith***”

Noah combined his belief /faith in what God was telling him with his actions, or works – that is, he prepared the ark. As James says, faith is proven by obedience, by our works, but our works don't save us, they just confirm we believe.

But faith is proven by our works (**James 2:20+**) You show yourself and others what you really believe by what you DO. But your salvation is God's gift to you; not something you can earn.

And in part 2 I will show you clearly from scripture the part we have to play.

DON'T CONFUSE REWARDS WITH SALVATION.

Your salvation is God's GIFT to you – living forever in his kingdom after your sins are forgiven. You're saved by grace (Eph 2:8-9)

Your Rewards are what you'll DO in God's kingdom. What your responsibilities will be. That's a reward. THAT IS based on what you do.

1 Cor. 3:9-15 goes into that a lot – we'll be rewarded by how we build, whether with precious stones, gold and silver or with hay. Those with precious stones will be saved and rewarded. Those with hay will be saved, but no reward. PONDER that.

Revelation 22:12

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work." [not salvation]

We do have to work for our REWARDS. We *are* rewarded by our works. Your reward is what you'll be doing for eternity. It's not

salvation. OK? In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke often of reward. Plus **Matthew 16:17; 1 Peter 1:17** showing rewarded by works.

We must also be **overcomers**. Realize that I am teaching that too. To the 7 churches of Revelation 2 and 3, Christ says the overcomers have a great reward.

IN PART 2 of this series I'll show how we maximize how we USE the free gift of God's righteousness.

But God's word teaches, and I teach – that we're saved - NOT, NOT, NOT by what WE do, but by what GOD does.

We're **SAVED** by His **GRACE**, his **FAVOR**, not our works, but we are told to do good works as **PROOF** we are being saved, are **changing**, are a new creation, that we have **GOD WORKING IN** our lives now.

Ephesians 2:8-10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the **GIFT of God,
9 NOT of works, lest anyone should boast.**

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”.

AGAIN, all the GOOD THINGS we are doing are well and GOOD, but won't save us. We're saved by what GOD does for us, by what Jesus does. By grace.

So understand that this righteousness by FAITH is also often called the righteousness of GOD.

Let's learn more now about the righteousness of GOD.

So the righteousness of GOD is also the same as the righteousness by FAITH.

The word “justified” pops up a lot and it means to be made right with God, like when you “justify” your margins. You're making them straight.

The entire process of our salvation is entirely God's work, by grace.

Romans 2:4

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, **not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**”

HE calls us. HE leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). HE decides we're chosen when we respond to his invitation to come to him and follow him. **HE gives us the Comforter** – the help that comes alongside and helps us when we're down and opens up the scriptures to us and all thru all 24/7 times of day and night. **He promises to finish what he's started in us. HE will glorify us in the resurrection. It's all GOD's work.**

Our part so often boils down to trust, trust, trust Him, and believe him, believe on him. Love him. Our salvation starts and ends with faith.

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the **power of God to salvation for everyone who believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of GOD is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall LIVE by faith."

Rom 3:10-12 – nobody could keep the law. Nobody is perfectly good.

Romans 3:20

“**Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified [righteous] in His sight**, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

So because of that, God's own righteousness has to be given to us.

GOD'S righteousness is the FOCUS

Romans 3:21-22 NKJV

“**But now the righteousness of GOD APART from the law is revealed**, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the righteousness of GOD, though FAITH in Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;”

Notice this righteousness is on all who BELIEVE. **Now let's continue** and please focus on God's wonderful GIFT of his righteousness, a gift we almost never seem to hear about.

Romans 3:23-28

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
24 ***being justified [declared righteous] freely by His grace***
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as
a propitiation by His blood, through faith, **to demonstrate HIS**
righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the
sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that
He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in
Jesus.”

So we see this is God’s righteousness again – for those who have faith in Jesus. This righteousness Paul speaks of is not our own righteous merit, in other words. Please, this is crucial. The righteousness of GOD by FAITH, is not by your own hard work and merit. We’re DIY people and would rather attain our own righteousness.

Romans 3:27-28

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of **faith**.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [declared righteous] by FAITH APART FROM the deeds of the law.”

Romans 3:31

“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”

So we must be righteous, but it can’t be our own righteousness, because ONLY Jesus has been perfectly good, has been righteous without flaw. We want HIS goodness.

We now have two natures: the old fleshly carnal nature that detests God and his law and the heart that is deceitful (Jer 17:9), that’s all still there; **but now we’ve also been given God’s own divine, new nature** and His new heart he creates in us – as David prayed for. The end of Galatians 5 says **these 2 natures WAR against each other**. The one we feed spiritually will be victorious. If you feed the fleshly nature, you will die (Romans 8:5-6). (There’s more in the video).

HOW do we get to have this gift of GOD’S very own righteousness?

Let’s continue reading, in Romans 4 now. You’ll notice that God declares righteous even the most evil people who believe in him? Even the ungodly.

Romans 4:1-6

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified [declared righteous] by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**" 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, ***his faith is accounted for righteousness***”

Even the most ungodly evil people can be seen by God as good people, righteous people now – because of faith in God’s righteousness being credited to them. Even you in jail can be righteous now in spite of your or my evil of the past.

Paul is using an accounting term. **God credited Abraham with righteousness** because Abraham believed God. Abraham was very, very old. Maybe around 85 at this time. He was 100 years old when he had Isaac. God is telling Abraham that his descendants will be as numerous as sand on a sea shore. But he’s too old to have any children now. Did God wait too long?

Let’s read verses 4-5 in the NCV this time and let it sink in:

Romans 4:4-5 New Century Version

“When people work, their pay is not given as a gift, but as something earned.

5 But people cannot do any work that will make them right with God. So they must trust in him, who makes even evil people right in his sight. Then God accepts their faith, and that makes them right with him. [Hallelujah!!!!]

Gen 17:17 – he laughs in his heart, it felt comical that a 100 year old man and 90 year old wife would be having a child. He still has no child from Sarah at this point in Gen 15:4-6. Abraham’s example: he just believed. He did not work for this righteousness. Get this: on this point, he did nothing to earn this.

Genesis 15:4-6

“And behold, the word of YHVH came to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’

5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6 And he believed in YHVH, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Abraham believed before the evidence was in his hands.

Paul goes on in Romans 4 to tell us all that God doesn't change. God is impartial. **He says that same God will credit US as well, with His righteousness** if we do what Abraham did and just believe promises.

Romans 4:19-25

"And not being weak in faith, he (Abraham) did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. [HE BELIEVED GOD. FAITH]

22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Now for the really good part! Let's continue in **Romans 4:23-24.**

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it (righteousness) was imputed to him,

24 but ALSO FOR US. It shall be IMPUTED TO US who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification."

Are you getting it? This is very exciting when you finally see it, and when YOU believe it applies to YOU as much as it did for Abraham! WHY would anyone refuse to accept or teach "God's imputed righteousness"?

Are you ready to humbly accept that YOU can never, yourself, be righteous enough, have enough of God's own character – without it being stamped right on to you and into you by God himself? HIS very own character and righteousness. Hallelujah!!! Praise YHVH!!! Praise you Yeshua!

Let me remind you again: Jesus said there is NONE righteous, no one is good except God (Luke 18:18-19). Jesus in us will lead us to live as HE lived, righteously, keeping God's commandments – but it's His doing, it's HIS righteousness.

Praise God. He imparts it to us. Credits it to us. He accounts His own righteousness to us. Imputes it to us. But we like the DIY kind of righteousness though, don't we? Let me show you how scripture says it's imputed.

THIS IS WHY Paul says what he does in Phil 3:8-10

Philippians 3:8-11

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and **be found in Him, NOT having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from GOD by FAITH;**

10 **that I may know Him** and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”.

So how do we receive this righteousness of GOD himself, from God? Believe that Christ has this perfect righteousness and when we come to be IN Christ, we receive it, as a free GIFT, if we ask for it and receive it, believing.

Jesus our Life wants us to be ONE in Him

Are you seeing how important Jesus the Son of God is to you and me? We have to be ONE with him, *in him*, as Jesus himself said in his prayer as our High Priest at the end of the Last Supper. And my brothers and sisters in the Lord, WE believers must come together as one. This was Jesus' PRAYER. And it was specifically for us at the end time – v. 20 – “for those who believe in me through their word.”

John 17:20-23

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 **that they all may be ONE, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be ONE IN US,** that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one,** and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Just as EVE was a part of Adam's body, so we are a part of the body of Christ. One in Him and with him. But in our case, we are not one flesh with Christ, but ... well, let's read it: ‘

1 Corinthians 6:17

“But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”

We'll talk much more about what part our Messiah plays in God's righteousness for us. We'll end this part 1 with this.

But do realize more than ever, **God's own righteousness is now available to be credited into your account as His free GIFT to you**, apart from anything you do except believe in God, apart from your own works (Romans 4:4-5; Phil 3:9), for we are saved – remember – by grace, not works.

I'll explore and expand all that in Part 2, HOW we receive this wonderful, perfect righteousness of God Himself.

- We must change from a life of constant sin to a life of righteousness
- How we activate his powerful righteousness in our lives
- How Jesus' life must now be our life going forward
- How we must still fight sin, resist the devil and hear God's voice.
- How the fact that we are changing is proving our salvation is real.
- How we WIN in the end.

So much coming in part 2.

Closing prayer.