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SESSION _____

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE SCHOOL SECOND EDITION
SESSION 76 – FAITH – PART 15
SEVEN STEPS TO THE HIGHEST KIND OF FAITH – PART 2

In this session we are going to continue our discussion on the third step necessary to attain the highest kind of faith.

STEP NUMBER THREE KNOW THE REALITY OF THE NEW CREATION

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

“14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: FOR WHAT FELLOWSHIP HATH RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH UNRIGHTEOUSNESS? And what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that BELIEVETH WITH AN INFIDEL? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 ...come out from among them, and BE YE SEPARATE...”

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD, NOT SEGREGATION

Many people read this passage of scripture and think it is talking about what they call separation from the world. This passage is talking about separation from the world, but not segregation from the world. However, some read this passage and begin practicing segregation from the world and its ways. (There is a vast difference between separation and segregation.)

These people read 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 and then they think that they cannot have anything to do with the world or with anyone in the world. They sometimes even think they are supposed to separate themselves from other Christians, if other Christians don't believe just like they do.

But Jesus didn't say that. He said, *“Ye are the salt of the earth...Ye are the light of the world...”* (Matt. 5:13, 14.) Believers are in the world, but Jesus said they are not of the world (John 17:16). Believers are not to segregate themselves from the world, or how could they be the salt of the earth and the light of the world? However, on the other hand, they ARE to be separate from the world in not adopting the world's standards (2 Cor. 6:17). They are to be like Jesus, or they couldn't be the salt of the earth, nor the light of the world either.

A man once asked a preacher to pray for him. He seemed to have the idea that he was to be segregated from the world. He didn't understand the difference between separation and segregation. He said to the preacher, "I work in a certain company, and I am the only Christian in my department. Please pray that God will move me out of there."

The preacher responded with, "Oh, no, why the whole department would putrefy if you were gone. You stay right there. You are the salt of the earth, so you stay right there and salt it."

You see, we are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:12-16). Some think we are to segregate ourselves from the world, but we are not to do that. It would be unscriptural.

BELIEVERS ARE CALLED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LIGHT

I want you to notice something else in 2 Corinthians 6:14 that God is saying to us. First, He talks about believers and unbelievers. Then he says, *"...for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness..."* The believer is called righteousness and the unbeliever is called unrighteousness.

Did you ever think of yourself as being righteous? Have you ever called yourself righteousness? Well, if you are a believer, the Bible says you are! A preacher said that to a woman one time, and she denied it and said she wasn't. The preacher told her either she or God were lying about it because God said as His child that she is righteous. By saying that she was not righteous, she was really disagreeing with the word of God and with God, himself.

That is the reason many of God's people haven't enjoyed the blessings of God in life and are not reigning in life by Christ Jesus. Instead of believing the Bible, so many times they take sides against the Bible. You must side with what the bible says if you are going to enjoy the blessings and benefits it affords.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

"14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: FOR WHAT FELLOWSHIP HATH RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH UNRIGHTEOUSNESS? And what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that BELIEVETH WITH AN INFIDEL?"

In this verse, the believer is actually called light. Notice in this scripture, Christians are called believers and sinners are called unbelievers. Then the believer is called righteousness and the unbeliever is called unrighteousness (v. 14). Then the believer is called light, and the unbeliever is called darkness (vs. 14).

As a Christian I am a believer; because I am in Christ, the Bible says I am righteousness; and I am light. And if you are a Christian, you are a believer; you are righteousness; and you are light too!

It is amazing that people don't mind our saying they are light, but when we call them righteousness, they are not sure that is true. When we say that, they think we are trying to start some new doctrine. But if one third of **2 Corinthians 6:14** is true, then the whole verse is true. I am not saying that believers are righteous in themselves. Of course not! But we are righteous in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Think on that a minute and let it soak into your spirit! Hold all this in your mind, as these scriptures are just going to lead us right into steps four and five of attaining the highest kind of faith. They just dovetail right together.

STEP NUMBER FOUR **KNOW THE REALITY OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST**

The fourth step necessary to attain the highest kind of faith is to know the reality of our righteousness in Christ.

Romans 3:23-26

“23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (atonement – paying the price for sin) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his RIGHTEOUSNESS: that he might be JUST, AND the justifier OF HIM which believeth in Jesus.”

The same Greek root word that is translated “righteousness” here in **Romans 3:25** and **26** is also translated “just” and “justifier” in this same verse. The words “just” and “righteous” or “righteousness” can be interchangeable terms.

What is this verse in **Romans 3:26** telling us? That God has declared His righteousness to us through Jesus. And that God, Himself, is righteous and He has become my righteousness. God is the righteousness of all who have believed on Jesus (**2 Cor. 5:21**). This is not theory but a bible fact!

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A GIFT

Most people have thought that righteousness is some kind of a state they had to attain to by living right but that that is not true at all.

Romans 5:17

"¹⁷ For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Of course, believers are to live right. But actually "righteousness" means rightness or right standing. And righteousness is a *gift*. If you cannot see that then read **Romans 5:17** again and again and let it sink in. Righteousness as a gift is something that is received NOW. Righteousness as a stage of spiritual development is a fruit of the born-again recreated human spirit and it takes time to grow.

Other scriptures in the Bible do talk about "the fruits of our righteousness," but they are referring to the fruit that is a product of our right standing with God. (**Phil. 1:11; 2 Cor. 9:10.**) Righteousness as a fruit of the born-again human spirit is a result of our being vitally connected to the Vine (**John 15:1-8**).

But if the word "righteousness" referred to in **Romans 5:17** was a fruit of the spirit, it would have said, ***"... and of the FRUIT of righteousness."*** In other words, you would have to grow or develop to that place of righteousness. But it does not say that in **Romans 5:17**. It says that we receive ***"the gift of righteousness."***

Every one of God's dear children have the same righteousness and the same standing with God because we are *in* Christ, and He is our righteousness. God does not love one of His children more than He loves another, and He will not listen to one praying more than he will listen to another praying. When you understand and know this, your faith will abound, and your prayers will work.

So many people struggle so long in the realm of self-condemnation and in the process let the enemy rob them. People who do this just know their prayers won't work and that God won't

hear them. They think if they could just find a righteous man to pray that his prayers would work because of what James 5:16 says, ***“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”***

However, people live in the realm of self-condemnation do not know that they are righteous. They think they are not righteous. They think if they could just find a righteous person to pray HIS prayers would be heard and answered. So instead of studying the Word and finding the answer to their problems, they have sought desperately for some righteous person to pray for them. But thank God, according to Romans 3:26 it says, ***“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just (righteous), and the JUSTIFIER (righteousness) OF HIM which believeth in Jesus.”***

GOD IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

God Himself has become our righteousness. God the Father became our righteousness when He imparted to us His nature – eternal life – when we were born again in the new birth. Jesus became our righteousness the moment we took Him as our Savior and confessed Him as our Lord. He then became our Sponsor, our Lord, our Head, and our very life.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

“17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”

I want you to know that God did not make any born again creatures unrighteous. That would be an insult to Him. No, Jesus who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be MADE the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21.) In Christ believers are the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 6:14 ***“14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath RIGHTEOUSNESS with UNRIGHTEOUSNESS? And what communion hath LIGHT with DARKNESS?”***

You see, you are righteousness! Say that out loud. "I am the righteousness of God in Christ."

ONE MAN'S SEARCH TO UNDERSTAND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST

A young man's first gleam of light on righteousness came to him when he was in a bed of sickness. He had the same struggles that we have in order to get to the place of receiving deliverance, victory, and health.

He began to read and study the Word and look up references. One of the scriptures that he read was **James 5:14-15**

James 5:14-15

"14 Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

He began to cry when he read these verses because he knew his church didn't believe in healing and especially didn't believe in anointing with oil. He began to cry to the Lord and say, "Lord, I can't be healed then, because I don't know any elders to call on."

The Lord spoke to him and said, "Did you notice that it is the prayer of faith that heals the sick?"

The young man said, "Yes, I noticed that."

The Lord continued, "You can pray that prayer just as well as anyone can."

Now, here was a sixteen-year-old boy who had just been born again a few months earlier, just a babe in Christ spiritually speaking. But God told him that HE could pray that prayer!

Immediately after hearing what the Lord said he started wrong thinking and it defeated him. He listened to the devil instead of what the Lord said.

The devil said, "Yes, this is true, but the next verse in **James 5:16** says, The prayer of a righteous man avails much. You could pray the prayer of faith if you were righteous. But you are not righteous."

You might say that a fellow lying on a bed of sickness couldn't do too much wrong, and that is true, he couldn't, but he surely could want to. You even might not be able to do a lot that is

wrong, but you could still want to do what is wrong. You could think a lot of things that would be wrong. The young man was sure because of all of his mistakes and shortcomings that the devil was right, and that he was not righteous.

He didn't know anyone that could come and pray for him, and he didn't understand what the Lord meant when he told him that he could pray the prayer of faith just as well as anyone could. He thought he couldn't pray because he wasn't righteous, and yet he thought about what the Lord said.

He began to read further in James. He read about Elijah being a righteous man that prayed.

James 5:17-18

17 Elias (Elijah) was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

He read this but it didn't register with him because he wasn't familiar with this man Elijah. But in the process of time, he read a little bit about Elijah, and said to himself, "Well, there is something wrong here, because if I remember correctly, James gives this man as an example of a righteous man praying. Elijah is surely not my idea of a righteous man. I know he had his good moments, but most of us have had our good moments too. However, Elijah had his bad moments too.

After reading about Elijah and how he ran from Jezebel in fear and begged the Lord to let him die he realized that Elijah was just as inconsistent as he was. Elijah didn't really want to die. He was just crying out to God in a desperate state.

No, Elijah didn't want to die any more than you would if you said in a desperate state that you wished you were dead. For a man to be so inconsistent and doubleminded was not this young man's idea of righteous. You see, many times we have our own ideas instead of taking God's Word for what it says.

Elijah had become discouraged, and what he said to the Lord was just his own despairing words coming from his discouraged spirit.

The young boy thought, "How in the world could James ever give him as an example of a righteous man praying? In my opinion he isn't any more righteous than I am."

Then he remembered that James also said in **James 5:17** *“Elias (Elijah) was a man subject to like passions as we are...”* and yet God called Elijah righteous.”

He struggled to understand it all when he read **Psalms 32:1 and 2** where it says, *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity...”*

Under the Old Covenant the blood of innocent animals covered the people’s sins. God did not impute their sins. He covered their sins and forgave them. He imputed righteousness unto them. Because their sins had been atoned for. Maybe man looked upon them and called them unrighteous, but God said they were. That’s why God said in **Exodus 12:13**, *“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”*

The more this young man read the word, the more he realized that because he was born again all of his sins were remitted in the sight of God. All of his past life no longer existed. He saw that he had become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and he knew that God did not make an unrighteous new creature.

Then the devil spoke to him again and said, “Well, now, that is all true, all right. But what about since you were born again? It hasn’t been very long ago that you lost your temper and got mad and knocked the tray off your bed. That is no way for a righteous person to act.”

Well, the devil got him looking right back at the natural again. He put the light out on God’s Word for him. But then he read further in the Bible and got to **1 John 1:9** where it says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness.”* The bible wasn’t talking to unsaved people in that passage. He was talking to believers.

He was so thankful to have seen the truth. He wrote beside that scripture in **James 5:15 and 16**, “I am a righteous man.” He wasn’t bragging on himself. He was bragging on who he was in Christ.

Thank God he received this revelation and thank God we have too. Thank God we are who God says we are. We have what God says we have. And we can do what God says we can do.

This means we can stand in God’s presence without any sense of guilt, condemnation, or inferiority. That means the prayer problem is settled. Our righteousness in Christ settles it. We no longer need to go into God’s presence tongue-tied because of condemnation. We do not need to be fear-filled because of ignorance.

Jesus said in John 8:32, ***“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*** What sets us free? The truth! The very truth of God’s word sets us free. Of course, if you aren’t going to accept the truth, then you can’t be set free, because it is the truth that sets us free.

We know what we are in Christ. We know that in the new birth God made us who we are. We did not make ourselves God’s righteousness in Christ. Jesus did that for us through His death, burial, and resurrection.

Since we know we are in Christ, it is not a problem of whether or not we *feel* righteous. It is not even a problem of faith; it is a problem of knowing our rights and privileges in Christ. It is that we are the righteousness of God in Christ and that we can come boldly before our Heavenly Father without a sense of guilt or condemnation.

That is why in the final sense, going into God’s presence does not require faith any more than it requires faith for Jesus to go into the Presence of the Father. Jesus did not stop and examine Himself and say, “Have I got enough faith to go into the Presence of the Father God and pray?” Jesus was righteous, and thank God, we are too because of Him.

Therefore, you can enter into God’s presence without fear and in complete faith that your heavenly Father hears your prayers, just as He heard Jesus’ prayers when Jesus was upon the earth.

Say this with me now, “I have been made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I am righteous now!”