

Righteousness Must Be Sought

God is everlastingly righteous. His judgments are “righteousness altogether” (Psalm 19:9). His testimonies are “righteous and very faithful” (Psalm 119:138). He has truly demonstrated His righteousness by revealing the redemption that is in His Son.

On the other hand, men are not righteous. Although God’s creation of man was good (Genesis 1:31), man rebelled. Adam and Eve transgressed the righteous Creator (Genesis 3). They chose unrighteousness and as a result suffered the consequences of their sin. Apart from God and without Christ, “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). When men allow sin to reign in their lives, they are “instruments of unrighteousness to sin” (Romans 6:13).

Our righteous God offers each one of us the opportunity and privilege to partake of the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22). Like Abraham who believed God’s promise and obeyed His instruction, our conviction in the One whom God has raised from the dead may be accounted for righteousness, too (Romans 4:22, 24). Jesus is the propitiation by His blood for sinners who have faith in Him unto justification. Grace reigns “through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:21). Having been perfected by suffering and death, Jesus is now “the author of salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9).

All, who are “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), washing away their sins (22:16), are buried into Christ’s death and raised to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). This call to newness is a God-ordained responsibility to present oneself to God as an instrument of righteousness (6:13). “God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. . . . You became slaves of righteousness” (6:17-18). Men must conduct themselves in such a manner that their deeds and words are in accord with God’s righteousness. “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” (1 John 3:7)

The grace of God teaches that Christians must live righteously (Titus 2:11). This is not some mystical, uncontrolled change of behavior. A believer must first earnestly desire righteousness. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6). Then they must seek it; they must pursue it by submitting daily to God’s word of righteousness. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, . . .” (Matthew 6:33).