

## Audio Transcript of Sermon

May 2, 2026

### Being Righteous

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. During the time of Jesus the scribes and Pharisees were the religious elite of their day, and when common people would think of a person who was godly and righteous, they would often think of people like the scribes, who were very familiar with the word of God, because during a time before the printing press, it was their job to accurately copy scripture. They would also think of Pharisees who would take that copied scripture and interpret what the scripture meant. Back then, people who were involved in religious activities were seen as righteous by the people, and thousands of years later our thinking hasn't changed too much. Because of the news media and internet, today we are more aware of scandals of religious people that sometimes come to light, but because of the printing press and digital media, accessing the Bible in a preferred translation is today easier than ever before. Knowing that scandals also befall religious people, society tends to still regard religious people as righteous without knowing much about the person except for they are a religious person. Because of personal experiences or bias some completely disregard religious people, and others might tolerate them, but society overall tends to see religious people as righteous.

With God and Jesus Christ, what They think about a person's righteousness is important, and Jesus taught this to the disciples. Unlike people who might ascribe righteousness because a person does religious activities or works within a religious field, Jesus taught that righteousness is based on doing what is commanded and expected of us, and teaching others of the need to do the same. Jesus explained that He came not to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil. To further clarify, Jesus taught that there would be not even a small part of the law that would be changed until heaven and Earth passed. Earth and the universe around us are still physical in nature as we have known it to be, so for the words of Jesus to be true, that means the law is in effect. What has happened is that Jesus fulfilled parts of prophecy and because He died once for the sins of all, His death replaced the need for sacrifice.

Jesus concluded by telling the disciples that unless their righteousness would exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, they would not be part of the Kingdom

of God. That forward looking view on righteousness by Jesus shows us that righteousness is developed over a lifetime. Matthew five verse seventeen.

**Matthew 5:17-20**

**17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**

**18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**

**19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

**20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

We might think that righteousness is this next to impossible standard to achieve, especially when the disciples were told their righteousness needed to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, but it is a standard we work towards. We can also take comfort knowing that Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. Righteousness is doing what God expects of us and teaching others to do the same, while not merely acting as a hypocrite just to appear righteous to others. We cannot be one way in the privacy of our home that is contrary to righteousness, and then live our life in public appearing to be righteous, and somehow think God and Jesus Christ will count that as being righteous. If Jesus called out the scribes and Pharisees for hypocrisy in their day, if we live a life of hypocrisy today, we will be called out for that as well.

Jesus taught that God's righteousness along with the Kingdom of God is what we seek first. God's righteousness and the Kingdom of God fit together like a glove on a hand, and that is why even though two specifics are mentioned we seek these first as if these are one. We also seek these before the needs of our physical life. Matthew six verse twenty-four.

### **Matthew 6:24-33**

**24. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

**25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?**

**26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?**

**27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?**

**28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:**

**29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.**

**30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?**

**31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?**

**32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.**

**33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

Knowing that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees to be part of the Kingdom of God, and knowing that our quest for righteousness and the Kingdom of God must take priority over any physical need, we might conclude that being righteous as a person means we do not sin. In Proverbs those who are wicked are warned against seeking harm of even the physical possessions of the righteous, because while the righteous might fall many times, they always get back up. When the wicked fall, they tend to stay trapped in what is wicked. The reader is told not to be happy when their enemy falls or stumbles, because that could redirect God's anger from the enemy to the reader. What we can learn from this passage is all fall short of the glory of God and sin, and may even sin repeatedly. The difference with the righteous is they do not surrender to sin. They fight sin, and in fights it's not uncommon to get knocked

down. To win a fight, a fighter cannot stay down. They need to get up and continue the fight. That's what a righteous person does. Righteous people do sin and might even sin repeatedly, up to every day in the week, but they get up to continue their fight against sin. Proverbs twenty-four verse fifteen.

### **Proverbs 24:15-18**

**15. Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:**

**16. For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.**

**17. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:**

**18. Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.**

When Jesus died, He died for our sins and the sins of all people. This makes reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ a reality because our sins are imputed to Jesus Christ instead of each of us. If this same deal worked with our local police department, each time any of us got a traffic ticket, even though we were the one driving, Jesus Christ would get the ticket in His name. Society doesn't work that way, but that is part of the faith we have. Paul also encouraged the Corinthians to be reconciled to God. We can't give ourself salvation because salvation is a gift of God. If we are not reconciled to God salvation will not be in our picture, and we will not have the righteousness of God that we are told to seek first. Second Corinthians five verse seventeen.

### **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.**

The righteous person falls seven times and gets up. The fight against sin will be a lifetime fight. We never surrender to sin. We never embrace sin. Whenever we fall to sin, we get back on our feet and continue the fight against sin. Knowing that the fight against sin would be a lifetime endeavor, Paul encouraged Timothy, a younger minister of that time, to flee youthful lusts and to follow righteousness along with faith, love, and peace congregating with others of a like mind. He told him to avoid foolish and unlearned questions that mostly bring strife. As we seek first the righteousness of God, a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, we can look to Paul's words to Timothy where Paul is explaining about what today in behavioral terms would be akin to a replacement behavior. Working to get sin out of our life is good. We are expected to do that. If all we do is get sin out of our life, we could unintentionally create this vacuum, where we are not sinning, but we are not doing anything else. It would be like if you were creating a short video, and you made a mistake and needed to go back and rerecord part of it. If you deleted the part of the video having the mistake and recorded your corrected video from that ending point of the deleted video, you would have a gap in your video where the viewer would hear or see nothing. They would get bored and watch something else. To avoid that gap in the video, the newly recorded video would need to be moved to the exact place to replace the deleted video content. Similarly, Paul told Timothy not only to flee youthful lusts but to replace youthful lusts with righteousness, faith, love and peace, and to congregate with others having a like mind. Second Timothy two verse twenty-two.

## **2 Timothy 2:22-23**

**22. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

**23. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.**

John also wrote of the process of fleeing youthful lusts instead following righteousness, faith, love, and peace, and simply called this process, purifying oneself. He explained that society does not understand us because it doesn't understand God. John showed that because we have this hope, we purify ourself

because we will be like God. We do that which is righteous because God is righteous. We do not do that which is sin because sin is of Satan. In verse eight of the first chapter of the same book, John wrote that, “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” While we might fall daily and sin, sin is not something we seek to do. We might be tripped by sin, but we don’t plan a trip to sin. We seek to do that which is righteous knowing that those who seek to do that which is sin are of Satan. First John three verse one.

### **1 John 3:1-10**

**1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.**

**2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.**

**3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

**4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

**5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.**

**6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**

**7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.**

**8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.**

**9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

**10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.**

In the psalms we are told to depart from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it knowing that the eyes of God are on the righteous, and the ears of God hear the cries of the righteous. Psalm thirty-four verse eleven.

### **Psalm 34:11-15**

**11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**

**12. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?**

**13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.**

**14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.**

**15. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.**

In another psalm, it is written that blessings come to those who keep judgment and do righteousness at all times. Righteousness is not something we only turn on when in public so that people will look at us and conclude that we are righteous. Righteousness is something that is always in the on position for us, when we are in the privacy of our home and when we are in public. There is never a time or place for a righteous person to do what is evil. Psalm one hundred six verse one.

### **Psalm 106:1-3**

**1. Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.**

**2. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?**

**3. Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.**

If we are doing what is righteous, we will have guilt about any sin that we have fallen to. Proverbs tells us a righteous person hates lying but a wicked man is loathsome. A wicked person will lie without conscience and think nothing of it. Similarly a wicked person will not think twice about any sinful act, and a righteous person will always feel guilty about any sin that they find in their life. The guilt of that righteous person causes them to stand when they fall and will ultimately keep them in the way and on the path to eternal life and the Kingdom of God. Proverbs thirteen verse five.

### **Proverbs 13:5-9**

**5. A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.**

**6. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.**

- 7. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.**
- 8. The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.**
- 9. The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.**

Isaiah writes showing different consequences for the righteous and unrighteous. The unrighteous, the sinners, are shown a brutal future of fire and brimstone where fear overtakes and surprises the hypocrites. Imagine the fear and surprise of the hypocrite who on the surface appears righteous but who otherwise has surrendered to sin, has been overcome by sin, and practices sin. Those who do what is righteous, those who speak uprightly, those who refuse to oppress others, those who can't be bought, and those who refuse to accept evil will not have this brutal future of fire and brimstone, instead living a peaceful existence. Isaiah thirty-three verse ten.

#### **Isaiah 33:10-16**

- 10. Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.**
- 11. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.**
- 12. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.**
- 13. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.**
- 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?**
- 15. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;**
- 16. He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.**

We can take comfort that God has called us to salvation and to righteousness. Isaiah wrote beautifully about garments of salvation and a robe of righteousness, and showed how one day righteousness will be present in all the nations. Isaiah sixty-one verse ten.

### **Isaiah 61:10-11**

**10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**

**11. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.**

When Daniel wrote of the seventy weeks prophecy that was revealed to him by the archangel Gabriel, the purpose of the seventy weeks prophecy as relayed by Gabriel was to finish transgression and end sin, to make reconciliation for the iniquity, to seal up the vision and anoint the most Holy, and to establish eternal righteousness. As we look forward in prophecy, we cannot overlook that establishing everlasting righteousness is the result. Later in the Book of Revelation, we see that everlasting righteousness embedded into prophecies of the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem. For now, let's review what Daniel recorded in Daniel nine verse twenty.

### **Daniel 9:20-24**

**20. And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God;**

**21. Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.**

**22. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.**

**23. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.**

**24. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**

Hosea warned Israel of its sins and how iniquity had overtaken them. When God had desired a harvest of righteousness, Israel plowed wickedness and reaped iniquity. He urged Israel and we can take it to heart that what is expected is for us to sow righteousness and reap mercy. From the onset what we do must be based in righteousness, if mercy is what we seek to reap. That means we cannot be self-deceived into believing that anything less than righteousness will yield a favorable result. We must seek God until God comes and rains righteousness on us. Some may look at this as a circular argument, but what we are being told is if we start with sin in mind, we should not expect the result to be righteousness, but if we honestly start with righteousness in mind, God will bring us to righteousness. Whatever result we want is where we need to begin, and because we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, we must honestly start with righteousness. Hosea ten verse nine.

### **Hosea 10:9-13**

**9. O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.**

**10. It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.**

**11. And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.**

**12. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.**

**13. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.**

Jesus pronounced blessings on various groups of people, including those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. He explained that their hunger and thirst would be filled. He also proclaimed a blessing on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, explaining they would inherit the Kingdom of God. We live in a world that knows good and evil, from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but it doesn't understand righteousness which is from the tree of life. The righteousness that we are to have will put us at odds against the world which only understands good and evil. Matthew five verse three.

### **Matthew 5:3-12**

- 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- 4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.**
- 5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**
- 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**
- 7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**
- 8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**
- 9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**
- 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- 11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.**
- 12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**

When we consider the Kingdom of God to come, it will be a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. Unlike the world today, it will not be a kingdom where the focus is on meeting physical needs. Through faith some wrongly use basic physical needs as a means to demean others, and Paul warned against doing this as it takes what is good within us and gives it the appearance of evil. Paul encouraged the Romans to be focused on those things which make for peace, and which edify one another. Those things which edify are those things which move us closer to righteousness. Romans fourteen verse thirteen.

### **Romans 14:13-19**

- 13. Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.**
- 14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**
- 15. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.**
- 16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:**
- 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**
- 18. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.**

**19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.**

The Galatians were told that through Jesus Christ we have freedom and have been given the Holy Spirit which leads to righteousness by faith. We seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and we sow righteousness to reap mercy. As we live day by day, we are to do what is expected of us, doing what is righteous, but the full harvest of righteousness will come when Jesus returns, and we are either resurrected or changed to spirit. Living by faith means we know eternal life is a gift of God, and given by God to those who are called and led by the Holy Spirit, and is not based on anything we can do. In the Old Testament, the male children of Israel were circumcised on the eighth day, and offerings and sacrifices were required for sin. Today, there is no need for circumcision, or offerings and sacrifices. Those who think otherwise cannot benefit from Jesus Christ because they see eternal life as something dependent on themselves, and not the death and resurrection of Jesus, who died once for the sins of all. Galatians five verse one.

#### **Galatians 5:1-5**

- 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**
- 2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.**
- 3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.**
- 4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**
- 5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**

Paul told the Philippians that he wanted them to be filled with the fruits of righteousness which come by Jesus Christ. Those fruits of righteousness are founded in love, knowledge, and judgment, and come by Jesus Christ. Philippians one verse nine.

#### **Philippians 1:9-11**

- 9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;**

**10. That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;**

**11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

James wrote of the wise person of faith, and showed that ultimately the wise person of faith has the fruit of righteousness that is sown in peace. Some think that righteous people have the responsibility to create conflict by pointing out the sins of others, and instead the Bible points to peace. Those who create strife and envy and somehow think they are righteous are deceived because strife and envy is described by James as being of this world, sensual, and devilish. We cannot create strife and envy and must instead be focused on what brings peace. James went on to add that faith should lead us to focus on what is pure, and then the very next thing we focus on is peace. If we are living a conflict-filled life because we engage in conflict, according to James we are not even out of the starting block of faith. We will have differences with others because when we live a life focused on righteousness, others may not be focused on righteousness. With those differences, James tells us we will seek to be peaceable. Beyond peace, we will be gentle and approachable. When differences exist, we will exercise mercy and the fruit of the spirit first. We will also be impartial and will not be hypocrites where we hold others to a higher standard than we would hold ourself. If we want to be righteous, we cannot ignore peace. James three verse thirteen.

### **James 3:13-18**

**13. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.**

**14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.**

**15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.**

**16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.**

**17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**

**18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.**

Later in his letter, James writes that a benefit of being righteous, is that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous person really helps. Effectual prayers are

those prayers that seek a result, like when a person is sick, we might pray that a person's health be restored. Fervent prayers are those prayers that are truly intended and that are meaningful for the person offering the prayer. Righteous people cannot be emotionally disconnected from people in their life. James five verse thirteen.

#### **James 5:13-16**

**13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.**

**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.**

**16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**

The Ephesians were told to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, to put on the whole armor of God because we will fight some mighty spiritual battles. We begin with truth and then must add the breastplate of righteousness. That breastplate in battle would have protected vital organs, and if that breastplate would have been breached in battle thousands of years ago, would have led to death. Similarly today, we cannot expect to fight spiritual battles if we are not properly spiritually equipped, and righteousness is at the top of our equipment list. We seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and righteousness must become part of who we are. Without righteousness we are exposed and can easily be defeated. In addition to righteousness, we need to know the gospel of peace which is about the Kingdom of God to come. We use faith to defend against specific and targeted spiritual attacks. Salvation becomes our helmet, and the word of God is our offensive weapon. Think about it. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, even Jesus responded by quoting scripture. We must become familiar with what is in the Bible to do the same, and when we pray, we pray for all saints, meaning those who are of the household of faith. Ephesians six verse ten.

#### **Ephesians 6:10-18**

**10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.**

**11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

**12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

**13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

**14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;**

**15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

**16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

**17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

**18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**

The free gift of eternal life is made possible by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil sin entered this world, and it was not until the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that eternal life for mankind was possible. As Jesus lived a life of righteousness, so we must be righteous seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Romans five verse twelve.

#### **Romans 5:12-21**

**12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

**13. For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.**

**14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.**

**15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.**

**16. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.**

**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.**

**18. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**

**19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.**

**20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:**

**21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.**

One final point to consider about righteousness is anything that can be considered righteous within us is not of and by our doing. Any righteousness that we have is made possible through faith in Jesus Christ, which came through His death and resurrection. Even though we have this free gift of eternal life before us, we must be like Paul who considered himself as having had not yet attained. Paul did not count himself as already having eternal life. He saw himself as having a need for being righteous, but not any type of righteousness that could be attributed to what he did, but the righteousness that came through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul saw every benefit in pressing forward in his calling and eternal life to come. Philippians three verse seven.

#### **Philippians 3:7-14**

**7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.**

**8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,**

**9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:**

**10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;**

**11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.**

**12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.**

**13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,**

**14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

Being called to the faith means we are called to be righteous. The kind of righteousness we have cannot be hypocritical like the scribes and Pharisees. Our righteousness must exceed their righteousness. Righteousness like that doesn't come all at once. Righteousness is something that is developed over a lifetime as we continue our fight against sin and spiritual wickedness in high places. As Christians who seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, we will do that which is righteous from the onset, and we will live our life in peace with others.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.