



HOMESWORD

April 1999

...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15b

Righteousness and Fellowship

Having the righteousness of God and having fellowship with God are not the same thing. The righteousness of God is given to us by the grace of God when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Fellowship with God is dependant upon our walk in accordance with God's Word. The righteousness of God is one of the sonship rights a person receives as a Christian, which makes it available for that person to walk in fellowship with God if they so choose.

Righteousness was not always available by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Man could not always claim he was righteous in Christ Jesus. Before Jesus Christ paid the price for sin, man was required to walk according to God's Word in order to be righteous before God. This is what occupied man's Godly desire – to be righteous before God.

Deuteronomy 6:24, 25

And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day.

And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

In the Old Testament, the keeping of the commandments of God was for the people's righteousness. The people did not even consider fellowship with God, their concern was being righteous before God. Their sacrifices, cleanliness, and obeying of the commandments of God was for their righteousness.

To have fellowship with God was and still is a pretty radical concept. When man's desire is occupied with becoming righteous before God he does not even consider fellowship with Him. When everything you do, everything you think, everything you say is done in order to be righteous, there is no concern of doing things for fellowship. But God took care of our righteousness so we could focus our desire and concern on fellowship with Him.

Philippians 3:9

And be found in him [Christ], 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:

Today, a Christian's righteousness is not of the law but by believing regarding Jesus Christ. Man does not become righteous by observing to do all the commandments of God, but by believ-

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ing that Jesus Christ paid the price for our righteousness.

II Corinthians 5:21

For he [God] hath made him [Jesus Christ] *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

God took care of our righteousness through Jesus Christ and opened the door for us to have fellowship with Him. Now what needs to occupy man's Godly desire is fellowship with God. "The principle key in a successful Christian life is fellowship with the heavenly Father."¹

Christianity is not a religion made up of rules, regulations, traditions, dogmas, and creeds. Christianity is a way of a Father with His family. God does not want us struggling and striving to be righteous. He made us righteous by His grace so that we can spend our time fellowshiping with Him.

I John 1:3-4

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

God tells us in His Word that His will is that we have fel-

lowship with Him. And the purpose to our having fellowship with God is so our joy may be full. God is not trying to load us down with heavy burdens. Obtaining righteousness was a heavy burden that God lifted off of us through Jesus Christ. Now God wants us to fellowship with Him and be full of joy. Fellowship with God is not a heavy burden but it does require us to walk in the light of God's Word.

I John 1:5-7

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

To have fellowship with God requires walking in the light. If a person is walking in darkness, they cannot be having fellowship with God. God's Word is clear that to have fellowship with God requires walking in the light. But God knows we are going to walk in darkness at times. And He tells us in His Word how to deal with that darkness.

I John 1:8-2:1

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

The exhortation in God's Word is that we walk in the light so that we can have fellowship with Him. But all of us sin at times and walk in darkness and out of fellowship with God. God promises to cleanse us of that broken fellowship if we confess our sins to Him. When we do that we need to know that we are righteous in Christ Jesus and that we are dealing with broken fellowship and not a loss of the righteousness God gave us. Our righteousness is a gift of God's grace. Our fellowship with God is by our walking in the light.

In God's Love
Ray

¹ Victor Paul Wierwille, *The New Dynamic Church*, (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1971), p. 71

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