

Series: John

Title: Sin, Righteousness and Judgment

Text: John 16: 5-15

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John 16: 5: But now I go my way to him that sent me;

The Lord Jesus had declared this to the apostles over and over, even that night he declared it repeatedly, declaring “I go my way to God my Father that sent me.”

John 16: 5...and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

But did not Peter ask John 13: 36, “Lord, whither goest thou? Thomas said, John 14: 5, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” But the Lord looks on the heart. And none of them had really asked from the heart. Nor had they heard spiritually in faith when the Lord told them. Why not?

John 16: 6: But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

They were focused on the earthy, on the temporal. The apostles were focused on the fact Christ would not be with them bodily. They were focused on the trouble Christ told them would come. It filled their hearts with sorrow so that they missed the gospel. They missed the good news that the Lord declared to them because they were focusing on the earthy. By focusing on the carnal, they missed the spiritual. They did not hear Christ declare how profitable this would be for them and for all his people.

Each of his believing people are like them. We look far too much on the carnal. When the storm comes upon us we focus on the temporal. Sorrow fills our hearts. We may go to the Lord in prayer, as they asked, but except the Spirit of God teach us to pray as we ought we don't ask in faith. We focus on the outward and forget the spiritual good news. Far too much we think God's blessing is what we see with carnal eyes. It is not. The Lord is saying to them what he said that night when they were in the storm. This is what he says to us. "Why is it ye have no faith? Why are ye fearful, o ye of little faith?"

But how gracious and compassionate the Lord is to us. He said, “**Nevertheless.**” Oh what grace and compassion toward us with our little faith.

John 16: 7: Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient [profitable] for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Our thoughts are not his thoughts. They thought it unprofitable for Christ to go away bodily; he declares, “*It is expedient [profitable] for you that I go away.*” They thought if he goes away bodily, we will not have his presence, we will not have comfort, we will be orphans; he declares the opposite, “*for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*”

The Spirit of God must make Christ Wisdom unto us in spirit. If Christ had given the apostles what they deemed best it would have been most unprofitable, not only for them but for the whole church. There are many ways it was profitable that he send the Comforter.

One, if Christ had not ascended to the Father but remained bodily, he would have continued to be in one place at a time. But by sending the Spirit, he is omnipresent—he is present wherever he gathers his people in his name throughout the world—and in each of his saints personally.

Two, it was profitable because Christ, through the Spirit, accomplished even greater works through the apostles and his church than before because Christ went to the Father.

John 14:12: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

But especially our Lord speaks here of the need for the Spirit to teach his people. The blessings of God are spiritual. They are seen and experienced only through faith in Christ by the Spirit of God. Spiritual blessings are experienced in the new spirit which the Spirit of God has created within. The just shall walk by faith and the law is not of faith. Every old testament saint was born again of the Holy Spirit. No sinner was ever saved except by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and faith in Christ. But it was only after Christ's ascension that the Holy Spirit came in a far greater way.

Proposition: Through the Spirit the Lord teaches us Christ is our Righteousness; he teaches us to believe on Christ and to walk by faith not by sight. The Spirit's work is to reprove, to convict and convince the sinner. And to guide his believing people into the truth of Christ.

John 16: 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Some think the Lord only means what the Spirit would do in general in vindicating Christ and convicting the Jews of their wrong. He does do that. But this is certainly what Christ works in the hearts of his elect throughout the world. "The world" means not only the Jews but the Lord's people throughout the world. Only those Christ redeemed shall be convicted and convinced savingly by the Spirit of God. And each one shall.

No man can understand the truth of sin, righteousness and judgment apart from the Holy Spirit reproving him. Regarding sin, natural men regarded Christ as the sinner. When it comes to righteousness, natural man commended themselves as righteous by their works. Concerning judgment, in false judgment they condemned Christ and nailed him to a tree. Christ said they will do the same to his believing people. The self-righteous will do all three toward God's saints.

Reprove means to rebuke, convict, convince. A man is convinced when things are made so clear to him that he has nothing with which to object. As long as he continues objecting he is not convinced. But when things are made plain spiritually so that he no longer can object then he is convicted and convinced. Then he believes on Christ.

OF SIN

John 16: 9: Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Until convinced by the Spirit, sinners think that their sin is only in their sinful sins. If they put those away and reform their life and keep the law outwardly then they think they are righteous.

George Whitfield had a man come to him and he said something along these lines. He said, "Preacher I am such a sinner." Then he told all the sinful things he had done. Whitfield said, "Is that all?" The man kept adding more sinful things he had done. Whitfield said, "Is that all?" The man was surprised and did not understand. Whitfield told him he had not confessed his sin because he had not confessed that he had not believed on Christ. The Lord Jesus said the Spirit will convince "*Of sin, because they believe not on me.*" The Spirit makes us know that we are sin and everything we do is sin by making the sinner know he has not believed on Christ.

Romans 14: 23: Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Hebrews 11:6: But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Without being born-again of the Spirit we are flesh. And the flesh cannot receive the word of God. Those in the sinful flesh, not born of the Spirit, cannot please God. Until the Spirit regenerates and gives us faith in Christ, we do not see that WE ARE SIN. Our evil is everything a sinner does and only what he does. No matter how good his deeds might appear to men Christ declares it is evil. Our sinful sins are sin. Our self-righteous sins are sin, even our very best works of righteousness are evil. While we are in this state of flesh, we will compare ourselves with others and exalt ourselves while condemning others in self-justification. In that state our sin is not believing on Christ. When the Spirit gives us faith we are no longer

in the flesh but in the Spirit and we are righteousness in Christ. But while in unbelief all we are is sinful flesh.

John 18: 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

Until the Spirit brings us to believe on Christ, no man will confess that he is sin. The unregenerate sinner will not confess his very nature is enmity against God. He will not confess—he does not see—that his very best religious deeds are sin. He will not and cannot confess himself personally to be sin. He will read Isaiah 64: 6 and speak of it as it relates to all sinners. But he will not say of himself personally,

Isaiah 64:6: [I am] as an unclean *thing*, and all [my] righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and [I] do fade as a leaf; and [my] iniquities, like the wind, have taken [me] away.

But the Spirit convinces the sinner that he is sin. The Spirit convinces him that everything he does is sin by convicting him that he has not believed on Christ. That is when the commandment comes and sin revives and we die. Then whatsoever things were gain to him becomes only loss.

John 3: 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Doing truth is coming to Christ the Truth in faith. True faith comes to Christ confessing that I am only the sinner. All my works were worked—not by me—but in and by Christ alone. “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5: 19). Faith confesses by Christ’s obedience alone am I made righteousness—the righteousness of God. True faith confess Christ is the Author and Finisher of MY faith.

True faith even confesses that the Spirit of God gave me life and faith and made me willing to come to Christ and only by the Spirit am I kept looking to Christ alone. And concerning our life of faith, truth faith confess, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life I know live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

John 16: 10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

The Spirit convinces the sinner that Christ alone is Righteousness because he makes us behold Christ at God’s right hand.

God the Father receiving Christ to his right hand testifies the acceptance of his person. God receiving his Son at his right hand declares the sufficiency of Christ’s death. It declares Christ is the Righteousness of God who made his people the righteousness of God in him by his obedience unto the death of the cross.

Like Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph’s knowledge and exalted Joseph to his right hand with all power over the storehouses so the Father is satisfied with Christ’s knowledge. The Father is satisfied with his Son’s one offering. Thus the Father exalted Christ Jesus, the GodMan, to his right hand declaring Christ is the Righteousness of his people.

Isaiah 53:11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Scripture says Christ “was raised again for our justification” (Rom 4:25). God-given faith behold the Father taking Christ up in his arms, adorning him with a place at his right hand, giving him the government of all and making him Head over all things to the church, by which the Spirit bears witness in our new spirit that Christ alone justified is people. He alone is the Righteousness we must have. Only when the sinner is convinced Christ alone is the Righteousness God has received will the sinner see that he has no righteousness in himself and that he can do nothing to make himself righteousness.

Until the Spirit convinces us Christ is the Righteousness of God, sinners think they can keep the law of God. God declared through Moses all the blessings and curses of the law. The Lord said, “Do and you shall live.” But it did not mean any sinner could. The law is only kept in perfect righteousness. Not one sinner can keep it before or after conversion. God gave the law to shut our mouths in guilt. He gave the law to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith and continue living by faith.

God declared through Moses before it happened that due to their disobedience, Israel would be scattered into all the world. Then God would have compassion and turn the captivity of his elect and gather them. In our text, that is what Christ is declaring he is sending the Spirit to do in elect Jew and Gentile. Moses preached the gospel of faith, declaring,

Deuteronomy 30: 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise their heart to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live....8: And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day....11: For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Does the Lord mean his regenerated child will be able to keep the commandments of the Lord given at Sinai? Remember, they are only kept in the perfect righteousness that God is! The Pharisee’s read Moses’ words and thought God meant they could keep it in righteousness by their works. And they thought they had! So they did not need Christ. Therefore, they crucified him. Christ declares they will do the same to you, child of God for the same reason, when we preach only Christ and him crucified to them. Therefore, since the Pharisee’s were offended at Christ and stumbled at that stumblingstone, the Lord sent the gospel to the Gentiles who did not even have the law. And the Gentiles obtained righteousness. How so? By God circumcising their hearts and giving them faith to keep his commandment to believe on Christ. By faith in Christ they established the whole law of God—they kept all the commandments of the law as God said we would—because Christ established the law for his people. It is called “the righteousness of faith!”

Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; [at Christ],

Romans 10: 1: Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 5: For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, [here is the requirement] That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6: But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, [here is what Moses said and what he meant] Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8: But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, THE WORD OF FAITH WHICH WE PREACH [here is the doing of faith] 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man BELIEVETH unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11: For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Moses gave the law with its many commands, yet Moses nor the law gave grace or ability to keep it. But grace and truth came by our Lord Jesus. He gave the law perfect obedience for his people. And Christ gives the gospel with one command to believe on Christ. And the Spirit gives us life and faith to believe on Christ our Righteousness.

Oh, dear sinner, Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and confess him before men and you shall be saved. He said that!

Mark 16:16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

OF JUDGMENT

John 16: 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

When the Spirit has convinced his child that we believe not on Christ therefore we are only sin and all our best deeds are sin, when he convinces us Christ alone is Righteousness seated at God's right hand, then he convinces us Christ has settled judgment at Calvary for all his elect by his death.

In the righteousness of Christ all elect sinners were judged on the cross when Christ bore the righteous judgment of God in our place. Jehovah's judgment of his people in Christ resulted in everlasting acquittal and clearance from all Satan's accusations.

God has put away the sin of his people by the blood of Christ. God is satisfied with his people in Christ. The law of God is honored in the righteousness of God by Christ's obedience unto the death of the cross. God is just to show mercy to his people because God satisfied his own justice upon his people when he poured out judgment on his own only begotten Son instead of upon his people.

The Spirit purges out conscious with the blood of Christ. That is when we begin to believe on Christ. Then when we believe on Christ God declares of us in our new man, "There is therefore now no condemnation!" In the court of our conscience the righteous Judge makes us know with all assurance that God will never impute iniquity to one for whom Christ died. Those he gives faith trust Christ has satisfied justice and made us the righteousness of God in him. Our sins are forgiven. God will not lay sins to our charge because justice declares we have no sin to charge.

Therefore, when the devil tempts and accuses us due to our sinful flesh, God is the Judge. God the Judge come to our defense declaring,

Romans 8: 33: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. 34: Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Christ vindicates his child in heaven and, usually before men in the earth. He sits as the Lamb slain. But Christ is the Lamb who is also King of kings. He silences the accuser. He takes care of our accuser and his weak sheep do not have to lift a finger. The perpetuity of our justification is due to Christ sitting at the right hand of God forevermore. Christ is our intercessor preventing any sin from being laid to the charge of his believing child. He is our Advocate and Propitiation with the Father. Christ is our King that stands between the Pharisee and those they charge. And Christ our Righteousness silences the devil's every charge in the presence of God. And by the Spirit indwelling us, he purges our conscious with his blood, declaring to us, there is no more condemnation. This is the only way God's child is kept from running back to the law to self-righteously attempt to make a foolish offering of vain works in attempt to atone for our sins.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

The Holy Spirit makes us look to Christ from the first hour to the law. It is to Christ that the Spirit continues to turn his child the rest of our of faith. Christ is the Truth. The Spirit keeps guiding us into Christ the Truth.

John 16: 12: I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13: Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: [THE TRUTH] for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14: He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. 15: All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

In the believer's seasons of coldness and indifference when we are in unbelief or we look to ourselves for righteousness or when we are overcome by our sin-nature, the cure is the same as it was the first hour.

One, the Spirit convicts and convinces us our sin is not believing on Christ. Two, he makes us behold Christ our Righteousness seated at God's right hand. Three, the Spirit purges our conscious to know our judgment is settled and makes us rest in Christ and walk by faith.

Believe on Christ Jesus our Righteousness and thou shalt be saved. And remember, the just shall live by faith! Continue looking to Christ, believing on him. The Spirit shall convince his people and we shall do so unto the end.

Amen!