

## Righteous is as Righteousness does

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Jesus) is righteous.

Good evening and thank you for tuning in to Refuel tonight. I would like to share with you tonight about how to live a righteous life before Christ. We are told many times in God's word that we are to be righteous, but what exactly does that really look like? Did you ever see the movie Forrest Gump? If you did you will remember a reoccurring line "Stupid is as stupid does" Did you ever wonder what that meant? It means if you are stupid you will do stupid things. My devotion tonight is titled Righteous is as Righteousness does a takeoff of the Forrest Gump line in as much as it means that if you are righteous you will do righteousness. Let's read our text tonight from 1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Jesus) is righteous. Let's pray:

The He spoken of here is Jesus. John in the previous verses has just finished telling us what a wonderful thing it is to be called a child of God and in that calling there is a knowledge of who He is and who we are in Him. John then goes on to talk to us about who we used to be as worldly sinners. Now that we have been changed into sons and daughters of the living God through Jesus we should not be living a sinful life any longer. John tells us that we are like Him now but when we see Him we will be as He is. We are to be like Him, right now in this life as He was on this earth. When we see Him in all His glory, when He returns for His church, we will see Him in a way we never knew before, as He is! This is His promise and it is our hope, and this hope develops purity in us. John goes on to say that if we are living a sinful lifestyle after coming to the knowledge of who He is that we really don't know Him. The purpose of Jesus coming to earth was to defeat sin and pay the price for sin so that we could live without habitual sin in our life. Living without habitual sin is called righteousness.

This brings us to our verse tonight; **Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Jesus) is righteous.** John starts this verse with a warning, and he address us as little children. Little children is not a term used to exalt himself or to belittle us in any way. Rather it is a term of endearment, Jesus used this term children or little children in teaching His disciples, in Mark 10:24 Jesus says this to the disciples concerning riches; **And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answers again, and says unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!**

Again in John 13:33 Jesus says; **Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.**

Paul in his letter to the Galatians uses the term this way; **Galatians 4: 18, My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,**

Little children is like a father expressing love, or a teacher who cares deeply about their students. So it is out of a caring heart of love that John uses the term little children. He also uses this term in the following verses of 1 John, chapter 2:1, 12, 28, chapter 3:7,18, chapter 4:4 and in chapter 5:21.

John then goes on to warn us not to be deceived, deceived by what? The answer is in the last part of this verse and the context of this chapter. He tells us that if someone is doing righteousness then he is righteous. In order to fully understand just what John is teaching here we must first have a full understanding of what righteousness and righteous mean.

They are from the same root word, the definition of this word is as follows; Righteousness – **Strong’s, integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting**

Righteous – **Strong’s, upright, virtuous, keeping the commands of God.**

So in other words if a person is living a life of integrity with virtue, a pure and correct life in both his emotions and his walk then he is an upright virtuous obedient true follower of Christ. This is how we know

we are righteous if we see the evidence of righteousness in our day to day life. It is the fruit of the Spirit manifest in and through us. As I contemplated what the Lord was showing me to share with you, I have to be honest, I asked the Lord if it was even possible for me to be a righteous man. These are difficult terms to ascribe to. Terms like integrity, virtue, purity, even my thoughts and actions need to be evidence of this character in my life. When we look at ourselves in light of who God is, how can we but declare how unworthy we are to even be called righteous. Isaiah said it right in chapter 6:1- 5, **In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.**

**And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.”**

Wow imagine having a vision of the Lord like that! If we want to live a righteous life before God, if we want to be worthy of His calling we need to know that He has given us everything we need. In 2 Peter we are told that **“we have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness”**. There are many verses throughout God’s word that instruct us to live this kind of life. Here are a few;

**2 Peter 1:5-8, And beside this, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance; to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Galatians 5:22, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.

Ephesians 5:9, (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Psalms 15:1,2, LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.

Proverbs 2:7, He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;

Isaiah 33:15,16, He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil: He will dwell on high; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure.

We could go on and on with the faithful precepts of the Lord on how to live a righteous life and the benefits of doing so. The reality of it though is that without what Jesus did for us on the cross we are lost and pitiful souls. It is not in us without Christ to be righteous, quite the contrary it is in us to be the opposite of righteous. We live and have our being in the righteousness of Christ, if we truly have received Him in our heart. If we truly have Him in our heart, then His righteousness will be evident in our lives. It is this evidence that assures us that we are truly His. It is obedience to His teachings out of a heart of love and gratefulness, trust and belief that are truly pleasing to Him. If we are trying to be righteous on our own strength, even if we are somewhat successful, it accomplishes nothing. We are told in;

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness's are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

The righteousness of Christ accomplishes in us that which we are unable to do in ourselves. When we truly believe Christ for the remission of our sin and accept him as our Lord and Savior, His righteousness is thrown over us like a blanket. It is in this place of being covered by Him that we can say we are indeed righteous. By faith we receive this great gift and can now begin to display His righteousness in our life and walk with Him.

1 Corinthians 1:30, But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

2 Corinthians 5:21, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Ephesians 4:24, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Philippians 1:9-11, And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 3:8,9, Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

We have these and many more scriptures that confirm to us that we who truly believe in Christ have indeed received His righteousness so that not only can we live a righteous life but we can come boldly before the throne of God! We no longer need to say like Isaiah woe is me, we now cry Abba father!

So now we can go back to our question about the deception spoken of in this verse. John is telling us that without righteousness we are not of God. Don't let any man tell you that you can continue to live a habitually sinful life and be saved. The true believer is changed from his old man and the works of the righteousness of Christ will be evident in his or her life. Habitual sin is a life style of sin; it is not an occasional stumble. It is an un-repented continual sin that drags us into other sin and other sin and so on down we spiral. John tells us in this chapter that if we are in this state we are of the devil (verse 8). If you find yourself in this state tonight freedom is just a repentance away. Christ has paid the price for this sin and can and does renew you if you will truly give yourself to Him. With your whole heart count everything else as rubbish as Paul says and strive with all that you are to give yourself completely and fully to Jesus. He will lead you into His righteousness and His righteousness, that will become the desire of your heart to live it. When we agree with God that His way is right it has to move from our head to our heart, and from our heart to our feet. James in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter talks to us about faith without works, in the last verse he concludes that faith without works is dead. In verse 14 he asks this question; "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" True faith is manifest in action; true righteousness is manifest in righteous living. It takes a diligent effort to live a righteous life for Christ. It is simple just not easy, hard work and faith together accomplish our desired goal. It is by His power and strength that we can be righteous and live righteous. I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will empower you to a full and joyful life of righteousness until He returns and we have full understanding of who He is. Let's pray;

