Romans 13:11-14 (NKJV) 11 And [do] this, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation [is] nearer than when we [first] believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to [fulfill its] lusts.

- Wake up out of our sleep and slumber!
- Cast off the works of darkness, put on the armor of light
- Walk properly or purposefully not in the darkness of sin but in the light of Jesus glory
- Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and leave no room for sin to remain

It is too bad that many look at Christianity from a perspective of what you do not do rather than who you are. **The emphasis of Christianity is Jesus Christ!** What He has done, what He has accomplished, His righteousness revealed. The Christian life is the great exchange of my ashes for His glory.

I want to connect last weeks teaching on the Great commandment to love God (heart, soul, mind, strength) and Jesus command in **Matthew 6:33** (NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- While Matthew 6:33 tells believers *what to pursue* (God's kingdom and righteousness), the Great Commandment defines heart *posture* of love that fulfills God's law.
- Loving God with all one's heart, soul, and mind naturally leads a person to seek His kingdom and righteousness above all other concerns.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(this is given right after Jesus tells us not to worry and promises all provision will be taken care of by Him if we seek Him first.

Seek First-First in time, First place, in rank, influence, in honor, priority. *I believe we see in this command the principal of first fruit that stems/derives from first love.* The promise to receive everything we need in this life is preceded by the command to always put Jesus Christ first. Give Him the first and the best of our time, **talent, finances and devotion! Give Him our absolute best.**

- The Old Testament law of first fruits needs to become a New Testament stewarding principal. The concept of first-fruits derives from God's creation work. Because God

created everything that exists, all of creation belongs to him (Psalm 24:1). **Consequently,** *that which is first and best belongs to him and is to be given to him. The first and best of Animals, wheat, fruit, wine etc. were given back to the Lord as a thank you as well as a sign of trust and obedience.*

- We can do the same thing out of loving devotion by giving back to the Father our first hours of the day, first-fruit of our finances, the best of our talents, we give Him the first day of the week, Jesus is our first love etc. **There must be an intentional decision to place Jesus above all things and accept His Lordship in all areas.** THE FIRSTFRUITS SANCTIFY THE FRUIT THAT FOLLOWS.

Seek first His Kingdom, His Righteousness, it is all about Him.

Kingdom of God/Kingdom of heaven-King's domain, royal power, His rule and reign, perfect leadership, The gospel of the kingdom is the good-news message of repentance, redemption, and restoration and healing offered by God to all who will receive Christ.

Matthew **4:23-24** *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,* ***preaching the gospel of the kingdom,*** *and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.*

Daniel 7:14- His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Romans 14:17 (NKJV) for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

As we yield to His leadership and His truth in the word of God He renews our mind, transforms the way we think which changed your direction.

Matthew 4:17-*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near*

Repent-change your mind so you can change your direction.

Jesus displayed perfect righteousness everywhere He went. He came against every injustice of the enemy.

Righteousness is not secondary. His kingdom and His righteousness cannot be dissected. His kingdom is known by His righteousness and the heirs of the kingdom are dressed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Everything Jesus does is right, perfect.

Psalm 89:14 (NKJV) Righteousness and justice [are] the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.

Righteousness- the condition acceptable to God. It is integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting.

There are two types of righteousness. Positional and practical

I. **Positional righteousness.** This is righteousness that we receive from God. It is given to us when we trust in Jesus, and it is based on Christ's sacrificial death. This is described as imputed righteousness. Positional righteousness is not earned, it is given. It is a gift of grace that we receive by faith. **Christ in You (The Indwelling):** At conversion, Christ or His Spirit takes up residence inside the believer, regenerating the heart and providing a new spiritual nature. This is who you *are* positionally in God's eyes.

I. **Practical (practiced) righteousness.** This is doing what is right, what is holy. It is when Christians practice (live out) their position. It is trusting God, acting with discipline and living in alignment with God's standards. Scripture repeatedly admonishes us to pursue what is right. **This is Putting on Christ**, the action of deliberately choosing to wear His character, love, and righteousness like a garment. It means actively aligning your daily behavior, speech, and decisions with the new life that is already inside you.

Psalm 24 helps us understand this idea! **Psalms 24:3-4** 3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

- *Pure heart refers to the work only God can do while clean hands is our commitment to live out the righteousness given*

You cannot attain righteousness; it is a gift of grace from God who takes the righteousness of Jesus Christ and gives it you when you place your faith in Him. It is first given and then lived out which both require grace.

- **2Corinthians 5:21**- He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- **Isaiah 61:10** I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God;
  For He has clothed me with garments of salvation,
  He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness,
  As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
  And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

- **Romans 4:6** just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:
- **Romans 5:17**- For if by one man's offense 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.

Now let me give you the other side of righteousness that must be practiced.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

We are told of the blessedness of God filling us is reserved for the one who hungers and thirst for righteousness. **There is great reward for the one who perseveres into the depths of Jesus heart and His nature and hungers for Him and Him alone. (Beholding Him makes you hungry).** Hunger is a great sign of spiritual health and vitality followed by incredible promise.

1John 3:7 tells us not to be deceived the one *who practices* righteousness is righteous.

Philippians 1:10-11 - 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.

So though it is a gift of grace from a righteous God, yet it is also something that we pursue as a lifestyle, that we press in for His fullness. We steward well. If you don't practice righteousness and His righteousness does not reign in you, one must question if they know Him.

Revelation 19 [8] It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Righteous act of the saints is our eternal garment

We are often times to easily satisfied when God is willing to impart so much more. Are we hungry and thirsty for Jesus. Pray for hunger pains.

Home Groups

- Discuss the action of putting on Christ and making no provision for the flesh.
- Discuss seeking God first as a lifestyle. How do we practically do this? Do we truly love and trust God if we don't seek Him first?
- *Is God calling you into deeper levels of lived out righteousness. Share*
- *Discuss the difference between positional righteousness and practiced righteousness..*
- *Spend time blessing each other*