Small Group Guide: Jehovah Tsidkenu — The Lord Our Righteousness

Based on Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Jeremiah 33:14-16

Overview

This week's message explored one of the most foundational truths of the Christian faith: that righteousness before God is not something we achieve through good behavior or moral effort — it is someone we receive. Through the name Jehovah Tsidkenu, meaning "The Lord Our Righteousness," we see God's provision for a problem we could never solve on our own.

Key Takeaways

- God's standard of righteousness is His own perfect holiness, not a comparison to other people
- The law was never given so we could keep it perfectly — it was given to expose our need for a Savior
- Every person faces a coming judgment in which all things will be laid bare before a holy and just God
- Jesus Christ is the answer to our unrighteousness — He took our sin and gave us His righteousness in exchange
- Salvation requires genuine repentance and personal trust in Christ, not merely mental agreement with facts about Him

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Opening Question

Use this to get the group talking before diving into the content.

When you were growing up, how did you understand what it meant to be "a good person"? Where did that standard come from — your family, your culture, your own feelings?

Discussion Questions

Section 1: God's Standard

1. The sermon made a distinction between goodness by human comparison and God's standard of perfect holiness. Why do you think it is so natural for people to measure themselves against other people rather than against God's holiness?
2. Romans 3:10 declares that no one is righteous and no one seeks God on their own. How does that statement sit with you honestly? Does it feel true, or does part of you resist it? Why?
3. The pastor described his own encounter with God's holiness as disorienting and breaking — a moment where he was deeply convicted rather than immediately comforted. Have you ever had a moment like that? What did it do to your understanding of yourself and of God?

Section 2: The Law and Its Purpose

4. The sermon explained that the law was not given so that people could keep it and earn God's favor, but rather to expose sin and point people toward their need for a Savior. How does understanding the law this way change how you read the Old Testament?
5. The pastor warned against what he called a watered-down gospel — one that asks people to simply agree with facts about Jesus without ever confronting their sin. Have you ever heard the gospel presented that way? How might that kind of presentation leave people with a false sense of security?
6. James 2:10 teaches that failing in one point of the law makes a person guilty of all of it. How does that standard change the way you think about "small" sins or private sins that no one else can see?

Section 3: Judgment and Justice

7. The sermon argued that God's commitment to judge the world is actually evidence of His moral perfection, not a contradiction of His love. Do you find that argument convincing? How would you explain it to someone who sees judgment and love as opposites?
8. The pastor said that on the day of judgment, every mouth will be shut because God will judge so perfectly and righteously that no one will be able to call it unfair. How does that picture of God's justice affect the way you think about injustices you see in the world today?

Section 4: The Great Exchange

9. The sermon described the Old Testament sacrificial system as a shadow pointing toward Jesus — where the worshiper's sin was symbolically transferred to the animal and the animal's innocence was credited back to the worshiper. How does understanding that imagery deepen your appreciation for what Jesus did on the cross?

10. 2 Corinthians 5:21 teaches that God made Jesus to become sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. The pastor called this "the great exchange." In your own words, what did Jesus give up and what did He give to us in that exchange?
11. The sermon stated that righteousness is not works you must do — it is a gift you must receive. What is the difference between those two postures practically speaking? What does it look like in daily life to receive righteousness rather than try to earn it?

Section 5: Repentance and Faith

12. The pastor described repentance not simply as feeling bad when you get caught, but as a change of mind that leads to turning from sin and relying on God's grace and power to live differently. How does that definition of repentance differ from how you may have understood it before?
13. The sermon drew a sharp distinction between mentally agreeing that Jesus existed and personally trusting Him as Savior and Lord. Where do you think you land on that spectrum? Is there any area of your life where you have been holding back full trust or full surrender?

Reflection Questions

These are for personal journaling or quiet reflection before or after group time.

- When Satan accuses you of your past sin or present failure, what do you typically say back to him? Does your response reflect confidence in Christ's righteousness or uncertainty about your own standing before God?
- Is there a sin in your life right now that you have been minimizing or comparing away rather than bringing honestly before God? What would it look like to repent of that this week?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you in your salvation — not based on how good you have been, but based on what Christ has done? What is that number telling you?

Practical Applications

1. **Read the law with fresh eyes.** This week, slowly read through the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5 through 7. Ask God to use His Word to show you areas of your heart that still need His grace and transformation.
2. **Practice gospel-centered confession.** When you sin this week, resist the urge to simply try harder. Instead, bring that specific sin before God, name it honestly, thank Him for the blood of Jesus that covers it, and ask the Holy Spirit for power to live differently.

3. **Share the full gospel.** Think of one person in your life who may have a surface-level understanding of Christianity but has never genuinely confronted their sin or trusted Christ as Lord. Pray for an opportunity this week to have a deeper conversation with them about what the gospel actually is.
4. **Memorize a key verse.** Consider committing 2 Corinthians 5:21 to memory this week. When you feel the weight of guilt or accusation, let that verse be your response — not a claim of your own goodness, but a declaration of what Christ has done.
5. **Examine your assurance.** If you are unsure of your standing before God, do not leave it unaddressed. Talk to your small group leader or pastor this week. Assurance of salvation is not arrogance — it is the birthright of everyone who has genuinely trusted in Christ.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying in three directions:

- **Upward:** Thank God for His perfect holiness and for not overlooking sin, because His justice is what makes His grace so costly and so meaningful.
- **Inward:** Ask the Holy Spirit to continue the work of exposing any areas of self-righteousness or hidden sin in each person's heart.
- **Outward:** Pray for specific people in your lives who do not yet know that Jesus is the Lord their righteousness — that God would send His Spirit to convict them and draw them to Himself.

Scripture

Here is a list of all scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

- Jeremiah 23:4-6

- Jeremiah 29:11

- Jeremiah 33:14-16

- Romans 3:10-12

- Romans 3:20

- Romans 2:5

- Romans 2:16

- Romans 4:5

- Romans 5:17

- John 3:36

- Hebrews 9:27

- Galatians 2:21

- 2 Corinthians 5:21

- James 2:10

- Isaiah 64:6

- Isaiah 54:17

- Acts 17:30

- Zechariah 3:3-5

- Isaiah 6:1-8 (Isaiah's vision of God's holiness in the temple, the train of His robe, "woe is me, I am undone")

- John 14:6 (Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life)

- John 16:8 (the Holy Spirit convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment)

- 1 John 2:4 (if you say you know God but do not keep His commandments)

- Matthew 5:21-28 (Jesus intensifying the law regarding murder and adultery)

- James 2:19 (demons believe and tremble)

- Luke 22:42 (Gethsemane, "not my will but yours be done")

- Genesis 15:6 / Romans 4:3 (Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness)

- Revelation 12:10 (Satan as the accuser of the brethren)

- Romans 6:1-2 (shall we go on sinning that grace may abound, God forbid)

- Ephesians 2:8-9 (saved by grace through faith)