

Sunday, November 14, 2021

In Pursuit of Righteousness

Intro

- Announcements
 - Looking for Worship team members
 - AV, Sound and Presentation software
 - Instruments and especially vocalists
 - Contact Michael S
- Passage this morning is Deuteronomy 9:1-10:11
 - Pray
- Talking about Righteousness this morning. What it is, why do we need it, how can we get it, what happens when we do?

- What is Righteousness?

- *Deuteronomy 9:1–5 (ESV): Hear, O Israel: you are to cross over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, ‘Who can stand before the sons of Anak?’ 3 Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the Lord your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the Lord has promised you.*
- *4 “Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, ‘It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,’ whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. 5 Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

- The word that is usually translated as righteousness is the idea of always doing what is right, what is just, what is good
 - Righteousness flows out of the character of God
 - God is perfect, God is Just, God is good, God cannot change
 - Everything that God does is righteous, he can't not be righteous
 - To be righteous is to be perfectly in line with the character of God, to perfectly walk in his ways. Psalms 1 opens up the book by describing what this looks like.
 - *Psalm 1:1–6 (ESV): Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*
- What is righteousness? It is delighting in the law of the lord and meditating on it day and night. Why? Because in the law God's perfect character is revealed
- God is described as a consuming fire
 - - consuming fire
 - Because God IS righteous, to be in his presence requires perfection
 - *Look at Isaiah 6:1–5 (ESV): In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for 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!"*
 - Hotel Sheets Illustration

- Anything else but perfection is burned away
- To the unbeliever God's fire is destructive
 - There is no standing in his presence
- + refining fire
 - While fire is destructive, it's power also takes imperfections and under the right circumstances makes them more perfect
 - Coal - Diamonds
 - To the believer, God's fire like nature is described as refining
 - Burning away the imperfections so that what comes out is made better
- Assumptions at this point
 - We make ourselves righteous through our obedience
 - Israel had the law. They had the promises to the forefathers. If they did a good job and walked in obedience they would make themselves righteous
 - Hear-Obey-Be righteous
- Yet this passage makes clear that they are not getting the promised land because of their own righteousness, but because of God's
 - 4 *"Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. 5 Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*
- Where does righteousness come from?
 - Not because of their righteousness.
 - Not special. Not picked because they are great.
 - Swore a promise to Abraham, Issac, and Jacob
 - Wickedness of the Amorites is now complete

- *Look at Deuteronomy 9:6 (ESV): Know, therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.*
 - We are Karmaic in how we view God
 - Do good, good happens
 - Do bad, bad happens
 - If good is happening= you are good. And vice versa
 - No text in Deuteronomy besides these verses make it clear that Israel is getting the land because of Grace and not law
 - They did nothing to deserve the land. In fact, they are a stubborn, or stiff necked people
 - Farm Animal
 - Paul
 - Righteousness does not come from internal obedience but from external grace
 - It is underserved. It comes regardless of where we are. While we were still weak, not strong. While we were enemies of God not friends. While we were dead, not alive. God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us

- **Why do we need it?**

- *Deuteronomy 9:6–17 (ESV): Know, therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people. 7 Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. 8 Even at Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, and the Lord was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you. 9 When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. 10 And the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words that the Lord had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. 11 And at the end of forty days and forty nights the Lord*

gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. 12 Then the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you have brought from Egypt have acted corruptly. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them; they have made themselves a metal image.' Furthermore, the Lord said to me, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people. 14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.' 15 So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the Lord your God. You had made yourselves a golden calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you. 17 So I took hold of the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes

- Why do we need a righteousness that doesn't come from our own good works?
 - Religious hypocrisy
 - Israel
 - Tempted to believe they were better than those in the promised land
 - Church
 - Tempted to believe we are better than those sinners out there
 - Out right idolatry
 - Israel
 - Golden Calf
 - World
 - Romans 1
 - Church
 - Ourselves
- Look what Jesus says in the SOTM
 - *Matthew 7:1–5 (ESV): 1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your*

brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

- How easy is this? We are so blind to our own condition yet we can so easily notice all the faults in others.
 - Grace is upsetting because it declares to us that we are worse off than we could've ever imagined
 - *Ephesians 2:1–3 (ESV): And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*
 - Grace is unbelievable because it declares to us that we are more loved than we could've ever dreamed
 - *Ephesians 2:4–9 (ESV): But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
 - *This is what Peter says in 2 Peter 1:3–11 (ESV): His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore,*

brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- Grace precedes obedience. Grace empowers obedience. Grace perfects obedience.
 - Apart from grace stand under the consuming fire of God's just anger against sin. We have no hope of our own righteousness. Yet because of what Jesus accomplished in His Life, Death, and Resurrection, we have a righteousness that is not our own but one that is credited to us as a gift.
 - Freedom from the Penalty of Sin
 - Freedom over the Power of Sin
 - Freedom from the Presence of Sin

- How Can we Get it?

- Look what happens next in our text this morning.
- *Deuteronomy 9:18–29 (ESV): Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the Lord bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also. 20 And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21 Then I took the sinful thing, the calf that you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust. And I threw the dust of it into the brook that ran down from the mountain. 22 “At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the Lord to wrath. 23 And when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, ‘Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and did not believe him or obey his voice. 24 You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. 25 “So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights, because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26 And I prayed to the Lord, ‘O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not regard the stubbornness of this*

people, or their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which you brought us say, "Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness." 29 For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.'

- How can we get the righteousness that we need to survive the consuming fire of God? Through the work of a mediator.
 - Moses stood between the people and God and interceded for them, spending 80 days and nights on the Mtn without food or water
 - In doing this he was showing not just his own devotion but pointing forward to a greater mediator of the greater covenant.
 - The salvation of the Israelites did not rest on their own works or righteousness, it rested on Grace and was mediated to them through the work of Moses. He identified with God's people though he was free from their sin. He put himself between the wrath of God and the people and was willing to stand in place of them. In all of this Moses was pointing us to Jesus.
- Gospel
 - Life
 - Perfect Obedience
 - 40 days and nights
 - Death
 - Propitiation
 - took the wrath we deserve.
 - Sacrificed for us
 - Reconciliation
 - His righteousness is now ours
 - Our sin was his, and buried with him in the grave
 - Expiation
 - We are no longer viewed based on our own righteousness but on his

- We are washed. We are redeemed. We are ransomed and made whole

- What Happens When we Do

- Look what happens next in the passage

- *Deuteronomy 10:1–2 (ESV): At that time the Lord said to me, ‘Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.....Deuteronomy 10:10–11 (ESV): 10 ‘I myself stayed on the mountain, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the Lord listened to me that time also. The Lord was unwilling to destroy you. 11 And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people, so that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.’*

- With this rescue and intercession from Moses comes a renewal of the covenant

- New tablets were given. The promise was renewed. The promised land would be given to the people.

- The same thing happens in the Gospel. If we die with Christ in his death we also rise with him in newness of life in his resurrection. The promise of a renewed covenant and obedience is ours. God promises through the prophets that the law is written on our hearts and minds and that our hearts stop being stony and become soft.

- Resurrection

- *2 Corinthians 5:17–21 (ESV): Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

- In the Gospel of Jesus we have everything that we need to live a righteous life. 1 John says I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

- If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Application
 - What happens now?
 - Notice a few things
 - Corporate Solidarity
 - Personal Renewal
 - Time of repentance, confession, and renewal
 - Personal and corporate.
 - Idols, religious pride, judgement, disobedience
 - Pain the church has caused. Pain our families have caused. Pain our nation has caused.