

The Righteousness of Job

I. The Airplane Analogy

- a. A story
 - i. Imagine Adam is a pilot, having flown a plane successfully for many years. He's a good pilot and really understands how planes work.
 - ii. He gets a memo from corporate, with some news about some changes in the planes he will be flying.
 - iii. From now on, the planes will no longer be using the right wing, will only have the left wing.
 - iv. Adam is quite concerned, this sounds like a really bad idea. Calls his boss and asks what this is all about. His boss says....
 - v. "We've had some real problems with right wings of a few of our planes. One caught on fire, another almost fell off. So we decided in a meeting that right wings of planes must be dangerous and we should only use left wings."
 - vi. Adam: "But we've been flying planes with two wings for years and years. Why don't we just fix the problems with the few planes with bad right wings? Flying a plane with only one wing will not work!"
 - vii. Boss: "No Adam, we've concluded that right wings on planes are dangerous. If you don't feel comfortable flying only a left-winged plane, you will need to find a new company to work for."
- b. This story should sound completely absurd! Yet, today we are going to talk about the right wing of the plane, which in much of Christianity has cut off.
That right wing is what the Scriptures teach about God's expectations that we lead righteous lives, the topic of my lesson today.
 - i. The two wings, faith and works (what we do or how we live our lives), are often presented as opposed to one another, you can't have both: you either are saved by faith, or you are saved by works. Sadly, this is a new teaching introduced by the Reformers in the 1500s in response to terrible abuses by the Roman Catholic Church, including their over-emphasis on works.
 - ii. Many are confused about how faith and works fit together. But, in fact, Jesus teaches that you must live a righteous life to enter the Kingdom of God. This may sound heretical to some who have been taught that you only need a right wing to fly the plane: faith. Yet, believing that faith alone saves us would be absurd (and heretical) to Jesus, the apostles, and the church for nearly 1500 years.

- iii. Since I will be focusing on the idea of righteousness today, if this is a new concept for you, I encourage you to listen to two excellent lessons you can find on the Scroll Publishing YouTube website:

- 1. *Does God View our Righteousness as Filthy Rags?*

- 2. *Harmonizing Paul and James*

- c. Also, I will be posting my notes to our website, so you can study out the Scriptures we will be looking at today for yourself. Please, do not take my word for it.

II. The Call to Righteousness

- a. Righteousness must exceed that to the Pharisees (Read **Matthew 5:19-20**)
 - i. Those who do not teach or obey these commandments will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
 - ii. Those who teach and obey these commandments shall be called great.
 - iii. Jesus then proceeds to deliver the Sermon on the Mount, where he gives his followers commandments, the laws that govern his Kingdom. Jesus calls his followers to lead righteous lives.
 - iv. Jesus even tells us how righteous we need to be: *your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees to enter into God's kingdom.*
- b. How righteous is the righteousness of the Pharisees?
 - i. Since I want to make it to heaven and be saved at the end, this requires me to look at the righteousness of the Pharisees: what did this look like, what am I trying and needing to beat?
 - ii. Read **Matthew 23:1-15, 23-36**
 - iii. The Pharisees' righteousness characterized by:
 - 1. Prayer, teaching the Scriptures, titles (Rabbi, Teacher), evangelizing, tithing. Also...
 - 2. Hypocrisy (do what they say, not what they do)
 - 3. External for men to see (what they wear, long prayers, best places at feasts, like to be greeted in the marketplaces by their title, appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and uncleanness, lawlessness.
 - 4. Neglect weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith.

5. Placing burdens on others.
 6. Proud.
- iv. Jesus says the Pharisees are guilty of “all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the alter.” (**Matthew 23:35**)
 1. Jesus says the Pharisees are not righteous as Jesus/God expects.
 2. There are righteous people.
 3. If our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees to enter the Kingdom of God, we must learn to distinguish between the righteousness of the Pharisees and the righteousness that God desires and expects of us.
 - c. For the rest of the lesson, we are going to spend time with a righteous man in the Bible named Job.
 - i. If our salvation depends on our righteousness, of ultimately entering the Kingdom of God at the end, we need to understand how to live righteous lives.
 - ii. By spending time with righteous men and women in the Scriptures, we can learn how they think, how they act, and become like them in their faith and righteousness.

III. The Righteousness of Job

- a. Job's background. Read **Job 1:1-22**
- b. Story recap:
 - i. “[Job] was true, blameless, righteous, and God-fearing, and he abstained from every evil thing.... His works were also great on the earth, and that man was the most noble of all the men of the East.” (**Job 1:1, 3**)
 - ii. He was wealthy, large family, and he was devout, offering sacrifices for his children in case they sinned.
 - iii. Satan comes to God, saying he's been roaming the earth.
 - iv. “Have you yet considered my servant Job, since there is none like him on the earth: a blameless, true, and God-fearing man, and one who abstains from every evil thing?” (**Job 1:8**)

- v. Satan says he's blameless because you've protected him from hardship and has only been blessed. If he experiences hardship he will not be blameless and faithful.
 - vi. God gives Job into Satan's hand.
 - vii. Messengers arrive one-by-one:
 - 1. your servants have all been killed.
 - 2. Your sheep and shepherds have been killed.
 - 3. Your camels have been taken and servants killed.
 - 4. Your sons and daughters have been killed.
 - viii. Job tears his robe, saves off his hair, falls to the ground and worships God:
 - 1. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. As it seemed good to the Lord, so also it came to pass. Blessed be the name of the Lord." (**Job 1:21**)
 - 2. "In all these things that happened, Job did not sin against the Lord or charge God with folly." (**Job 1:22**)
 - ix. The story continues (which I will summarize).
 - x. Satan allowed to strike Job's health. He is in terrible condition, his wife tells him to curse God, and he has these three friends who come to him and spend the next 18 chapters telling Job that God is good and is punishing Job because Job was unrighteous (even though this was not the case).
- c. Job's defense. We pick up at **Job 21**.
- i. Setting the scene
 - 1. Consider a courtroom, the prosecution has brought witnesses against Job, accusing him of all type of wrong-doing, when he is actually innocent. Heaping it on for hours/days. Finally, he is finished. Sits down. Now it is the defense's turn.
 - 2. Job steps up and delivers his defense: with integrity, honesty, and truth, silencing his accusers.
 - 3. In this passage, Job is describing his personal righteousness in various areas of his life.

4. This provides a wonderful view window into the type of righteousness that pleases God.

ii. Sexual Purity

1. Read **Job 31:1-12**. What things do I learn from Job about his righteousness?
2. "I have made a covenant with my eyes, And I will not think about a virgin."
 - a. He is talking about sexual purity, in mind and thought.
 - b. "A covenant" = "a contract".
 - c. This is what he will allow and this he will not allow to enter his eyes and into his heart.
 - d. Keep in mind Job was a powerful and wealthy man.
3. "What has God apportioned from above, And what is the inheritance of the Mighty One from on high? Is not destruction for the wrongdoer, And alienation for those who do lawlessness?"
 - a. Job equates what he allows into his heart, and what his eyes see, as appropriate for judgement, punishment, and alienation from God. Job understands that God cares about the heart, what is on the inside.
 - b. The righteousness of the Pharisees was about their external appearance, and they looked pretty good on the outside. But on the inside they were filled with dead men's bones.
 - c. We see how far greater Job's righteousness is than the Pharisees.
 - d. This is exactly what Jesus taught on the Sermon on the Mount (after Jesus said your righteousness must be greater than the Pharisees).
 - i. Read **Matthew 5:27-30**.
 - ii. Righteousness regarding sexual purity will impact your salvation. Being unrighteous in this area can cause you to go to hell.
 - iii. Righteousness starts with what we look at and allow in our hearts.

- iv. Jesus shows us how radical we ought to be about addressing the sin of sexual impurity: pluck out your eye.
- 4. “Will He not see my way and count all my steps? ... May He weigh me therefore with a just scale, For He knows my integrity.” (**Job 31:4,6**)
 - a. Job realizes he can’t hide anything from God, God sees everything and will weigh him in a just scale. Also, God will be fair.
- 5. God desires His children to treat others with complete purity and respect. This is important to God and He calls His children to be righteous in this area.
- 6. Job was able to say I made a covenant with my eyes and I was righteous in this area!
- 7. For us:
 - a. May we make a covenant with our eyes (what we look at) and what we allow in our hearts, including television, internet, newspaper, books, magazines.
 - i. Is what I am reading helpful to my mind? To my heart?
 - ii. If my wife, or my son, daughter, or close friend knew what I was looking at (or putting into my heart), would I be ashamed or convicted?
 - iii. Does this please God, who sees what I am doing?

iii. Humility

- 1. Read **Job 31:13-15**
- 2. Job allowed his servants or handmaids to judge him, critique him, bring a complaint against him.
- 3. These are likely people who knew him best, saw his day-to-day, when his guard was down, how he really was.
- 4. This is what I take away from this passage – Job’s logic:
 - a. I am no better than they, God made them just as he made me.

- i. Job is humble, not looking down on anyone, despite his high position, wealth, wisdom, and righteousness. (see **Job 29:7-25** regarding Job's high stature.)
 - b. Also, if I won't listen to and take correction from them, I will likely not listen or take correction from God when he tests me.
 - i. Reminds me of **1 John 4:20**: "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"
- 5. Job's righteousness is characterized by humility.
 - a. Jesus says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.... Blessed are the meek, For they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."
(**Matthew 5:3, 5-6**)
 - b. Job was able to say I am completely righteous, that I always listen to those around me for correction or judgement. How about us?
- iv. Care for the poor, weak, and vulnerable
 - 1. Read **Job 31:16-23, 32**.
 - 2. Job's care for those in need
 - a. Helped the widow and shared food with the orphan.
 - b. Clothed the naked and weak with the fleece from his lambs.
 - c. Practiced hospitality, to any stranger who needed a place to stay.
 - 3. Similar to what Jesus said in **Matthew 25**:
 - a. "For I was hungry and you gave me food.... I was a stranger and you took me in.. I was naked and you clothed me..."

- b. For those who did this: “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world....”
 - c. This means so much to God! This is God’s heart to take care of those in need. To do these things is to be righteous.
 - d. For those who do not do this, who are not righteous, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels....”
- 4. Last week, talking with a brother who lived out in the country, very rural location, about evangelism. He asked me: “Where do I find them” (referring to non-Christians) given relatively small population and most of the people he lived around were Christians.
 - a. I was thinking: brother, you need to go out and find the lost, get out of your protective bubble. There is a dying world out there, and you are in the middle of this beautiful place, ignoring the millions of people who need God, many located in the cities.
 - b. However, I had to take a hard look at my own life, regarding my concern for the poor and those in need: where do I find them (the poor)? I live in a nice neighborhood, and commute to work to an even nicer neighborhood. I must go out and find them, get out of my little protected bubble, or look harder within my sphere of influence, to find those in need and meet those needs.
- 5. God’s righteousness, which Job and Jesus embraced, such a beautiful picture of caring for those in need, seeking them, finding them, and bandaging them up.
 - a. Job was able to say he was completely righteous in providing for those who were in need in his life.
 - b. We are each called to the same: to deeply care for strangers, those in need, orphans and widows. This is an aspect of God’s righteousness, displaying his great heart of love and kindness.
- v. Job is not deceived by, nor did he put his trust in wealth

1. Read **Job 31:24-28**

2. Summary: I did not put strength in gold, trust in precious stone, nor did I rejoice because of my wealth, nor sought after treasures, nor did I allow my heart to be secretly deceived, this would have been a lie to God.
3. In the parable of the sower, Jesus speaks about the third soil: "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."
(**Matthew 13:22**)
 - a. I grew up in a big house, around people with lots of wealth and even bigger houses and more wealth.
 - b. Money provides lots of things.
 - c. It also deceives. The rich man can get faked out, but eventually it catches up with him: death.
 - i. "As for a many, his days are like grass, As a flower of the field, so he flourishes; For the wind passes through it, and it shall not remain...."
(**Psalm 103:15-16**)
 - ii. Death comes for all, and when you realize that money cannot keep death away, cannot save you, this is a terrible reality.
 - d. Jesus came to provide eternal life. But this is accomplished only by His blood, and our faith and righteousness.
4. **Matthew 6:16-21, 24.**
 - a. Can't serve two masters.
 - b. This applies to those with lots of money and those with very little! (The rich, like Job, can put their trust in God, or not; and the poor can put their trust in money, or not!)
5. Goes on in **Matthew 6:25**, "Do not worry...." Another sign that we are not putting out trust in God.
6. **Matthew 6:33**, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
7. Job was able to say he was righteous; that he did not trust in wealth or riches, but only in God.

vi. Did not wish ill of or curse his enemies.

1. Read **Job 31:29-30**
2. Jesus: read **Matthew 5:44-48**
3. An upward call to do good to, and not retaliate or curse those who do us wrong.
4. Job was able to say he was righteous, and never cursed his enemies.

vii. Confessed his sin

1. Read **Job 31:33-34**
2. Job did not cover his sin, but instead confessed it, not seeking to protect his reputation with the crowds.
3. “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” **James 5:16**
4. Lessons for us:
 - a. Job’s humility via confession is a great example
 - b. The prayer of a righteous man avails much (powerful prayer is conditioned upon our righteousness).

IV. Job’s Righteousness was essential to His Salvation

- a. The faith-only version of the Gospel, gives us a free-pass on God’s expectations for righteousness.
 - i. This would be fine if God does not really intend to hold us to the standards he has laid out in Scripture, including Jesus’ teaching!
 - ii. A great lie of Satan, that all we need to do is believe, and we do not need “to do” anything, that we don’t really need to be righteous.
 - iii. This directly contradicts what we see in Scripture, including what Jesus taught.
- b. Read **Ezekiel 14:12-20**
 - i. God is speaking through Ezekiel addressing the sin of Israel. These are God’s children, who have been unfaithful to God and are leading unrighteous lives.

- ii. God is going to bring four punishments on the land because of their disobedience: famine, wild animals, the sword, and death.
- iii. Says that even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, “they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”
- iv. These three righteous men would be saved by their righteousness (faithfulness and obedience to God), all others would be destroyed.
- c. “After this affliction, Job lived one hundred and seventy years, and all the years he lived were two hundred forty-eight; and Job saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days. It is written that he will rise with those whom the Lord resurrects.” (**Job 42:16**)
 - i. Job provides a tremendous example of a faithful life lived for God.
 - ii. Ultimately, Job’s faithfulness and his righteousness result in his salvation.
 - iii. Job understood the things that were important to God, including:
 - 1. Having a pure heart, being careful what he allowed his eyes to see and what went into his heart.
 - 2. To have a humility before men and God.
 - 3. To care deeply for the weak and those in need.
 - 4. Not to put his trust in wealth, but in God alone.
 - 5. Not to wish ill of his enemies.
 - 6. To confess his sin, in humility, to be healed.
 - iv. God said Job was “the most noble of all the men of the East.”
 - v. May our righteousness be like Job’s, flowing out of a faithful heart, and by God’s grace, result in glory to God and our own salvation.