

TOTALLY RIGHTEOUS OR TOTALLY UNRIGHTEOUS

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In these last hours before the Coming of the Lord for His Bride, Church Natural has done all in an effort to misconstrue, change, or cover over the scriptural teaching that **“There is not one righteous man on Earth, no not one.”** (Rom. 3:10) The pride of the modern church is such that most will not confess the plain words of Scripture that **“All the world is guilty before God.”** (Rom. 3:19) Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament the Word of God straightly declares man to be guilty past the point of no return, as far as his own efforts are concerned. Isaiah, speaking for our Creator, said, **“We are all unclean, and ALL our righteousnesses are as FILTHY RAGS, and we ALL do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”**

These scriptural descriptions of fallen man are too distasteful to the modern church to be accepted at face value. The unenlightened mind of man will not believe that, **“There is no good thing in his flesh.”** (Rom. 7:18) Until the Sword of the Word of God cuts into the heart, man will continue his effort to obey the rules laid down by his church, and when he supposes he has made a good score, he is at rest, but when he has failed in some point or another, he returns to his state of unrest. He has not known, or else has misunderstood the scripture that states, **“By the deeds of the Law (by man’s efforts to keep all the Law) there shall NO FLESH be justified in His sight....”** (Rom. 3:20) The truth that this single Scripture sets forth is very clear, but at the same time very distasteful to the proud mind.

How very hard it is for the moral, proud person to confess that after all

his following of good habits, and after all his abstaining from filthy habits, that he has still failed to keep all the Law perfectly. How hard it is for such a person to agree with God’s statement that He made through James, **“For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend IN ONE POINT, he is GUILTY OF ALL.”** (James 2:10) Can any person stand and say with an honest heart, **“I have never violated one point of God’s Holy Law?”** We know that no honest person can make such a confession. This being true then, we will bring another Scripture to light. Gal. 3:10, **“Cursed is everyone that continueth not in ALL THINGS which are written in the BOOK OF THE LAW, to do them.”**

Can we believe the Word of God? Can we believe that man born woman is not capable of keeping all of God’s Holy Law, and thereby claim Righteousness by having done so? We must believe that this is our predicament. The Law of God is Holy, it is unchangeable and no respecter of person. It makes no allowances for our sins and failures, but demands PERFECT obedience to it from our first hour of accountability to our last breath! Therefore, all men have come under the declaration of God wherein He has said, **“Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the**

Book of the Law, to do them.” Notice; EVERYONE is under this curse, because there is NO ONE who has ever been able to keep the whole Law all their life. (That is with the exception of ONE MAN, whose name is Jesus Christ.) The “everyone” in this Scripture includes the church man who is moral, clean-living, and respected in his church and community. This is true because it is not good enough to just keep the Law in a general way in our daily walk. The Law insists that our obedience to it be PERFECT in every jot and tittle. To be made righteous by the Law, our performance of it would have to be PERFECT in every degree, and without any violation of it, at any time. So Holy and Righteous is our God that His Law must, of necessity, also be perfectly Holy and Righteous, and being so, He must pronounce a curse on the slightest failure concerning it.

The teaching of Scripture, as we have just given, is meant to cause the BEST of us, as well as the WORST of us to cry out of a heart convicted of sin, **“Lord, what would you have me to do?”** What must a man do in order to reach the Heaven that awaits the Righteous? If no man can keep your Holy Law well enough to make it in, what provision have you made for sinful man to escape the **“Curse of the Law”** and come under your blessings? We will pray that some

who read this sermon will be convicted of sin and will cry out with the Psalmist, **"My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments."** (Ps. 119-120)

Those sins that to our natural mind may seem small and only trifles will not be tolerated by our Holy God. Because so many church folks are not aware of this fact, they have a false hope of Salvation based on what they can do, or stop doing. In plain speech, they trust in their own righteousness. I trust you will bear with me while I tell you some ways in which a man may be lost! It is drastically important to understand that you may be lost while thinking you are saved. Some of you are very good citizens, moral people, and you never did much that was wrong, perhaps a few things when you were young, but nothing in particular that bothers your conscience now. In your mind you are past those things.

You have a notion that you will enter into Heaven, for after all, you are no worse than your neighbor. In fact, you are better than most of them, and if you are not saved, then God help the others! If you don't make Heaven, then who will? I say this is how many of you think, especially church-going folks. But friend, you are forgetting that God has warned us all, **"Your righteousness is as filthy rags."** (Isa. 64:6) So, we need to decide your case in light of the Scripture. Since you are ashamed to count yourself as unrighteous, and therefore lost, the Gospel cannot reach you, for it was sent to save the lost! There is no Blood of Christ to wash those who trust in their own righteousness. We are either totally lost or totally saved, completely righteous, or completely unrighteous, as far as going in the Rapture!!

Those who trust in their own righteousness will miss the Rapture of the Bride and be left to go through the Great Tribulation period. True,

some will be saved during that time, but what a terrible price they will pay to be purged of their unbelief!

There is another group that we must speak to. They confess that they are guilty of some things, but think that by ridding themselves of some more bad habits and therefore keeping God's Law as best they can in the future, that they will do away with the sins of the past. "I will start to church, and I believe by paying more attention to right and wrong I will be received by the Lord." But wait, Christ came not to suffer and die for those who can save themselves. As long as you think *that*, the door of Mercy is closed to you! Jesus came to live a perfect life in our stead, and then offer us **"The Robe of Righteousness"** as a free gift from Heaven. (Rom. 5:17) This Robe is not for those who wear one of their own making. In Eden, God stripped Adam and Eve of their robes of fig leaves (Gen. 3:7) and clothed them with one of His own making. An innocent lamb died for them typing the death of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

When face to face with God, they knew their sin was still there and hid themselves. And still today, our sins show through our self-made robes of righteousness. It takes faith in the Blood of God's righteous Lamb to do away with our sins. In Eden, God killed an innocent lamb, pointing to the death, He Himself, would later die in our place. Jesus lived a perfectly sin-free life, and then credited that life to our account.

A third group of people is unchurched and hard-hearted, knowing they are sinners, but loving their life of sin so that they will not even discuss forsaking them. Though Heaven is offered to them, with its Life Eternal, and though Hell is belching beneath their feet, they choose to satisfy the lust of the flesh for the short season they are on

Earth! No doubt some of them think along this line, "I will go a while longer down this path of pleasure before I leave it." Perhaps some even think, "I will change tomorrow" forgetting, or not knowing, that God has said, **"...Now is the day of Salvation."** (II Cor. 6:2) We may not be here tomorrow!

The good news of the Gospel, the news that is higher than all other supposed good news, is that God has made known in the Scriptures a Perfect Righteousness for us all, and all men are in need of it. After making it known in the scriptures that all men are unrighteous through their failure to keep the Holy Law, it goes on to say, **"But now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe."** (Rom. 3:21-22)

This is God's Perfect Righteousness, which does away with all sin once we receive it by Faith. The following Scripture must be taken by pure faith. II Cor. 5:21, **"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him."** The meaning of this verse is clear and as powerful as it is clear. God would not have us fail to understand it. It is our hope of the Rapture. Let's examine it carefully. **"For He hath made Him...."** (God has made Christ) **"To be sin for us..."** God chose to live in a flesh body and name Himself, Jesus, then take our sin load upon Himself and pay our every debt. Though He knew no sin, He agreed to become God's guilty Christ.) **"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."** (Can we believe such a thing? Do we understand what God has said here? Everyone who will believe has been made as righteous as God, Himself!)

But without this believing, we are as if we had broken the whole Law. (James 2:10)

Does this not stagger our minds? Can a mortal man be as righteous as God? Never! Not by his own works! But notice, the Scripture said, "That we might BE MADE as righteous as God." Not that we made ourselves, but that HE MADE us. Our own efforts to live above all sin miss the mark as far as the Heavens are above the Earth. But He, in His flesh body, did not miss the mark! He lived the Law perfectly, every jot and tittle of it, becoming a Perfect sacrifice for us. In the laying down of His life, we WERE MADE RIGHTEOUS IN HIM. If we had set out to make ourselves righteous, then the enemy can undo our works, but the revelation we have is that the devil cannot undo any of the WORKS OF GOD.

When we simply believe the plan He made and then carried out, we have become Eternally Righteous in His eyes. "...Even so by the Righteousness of One, THE FREE GIFT CAME UPON ALL MEN UNTO JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE." (Rom. 5:18) Because we believe, then "The Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested in us." (Rom. 3:21) We do understand that our God knew that man born of woman, through sex, could never keep the Holy Law Standard perfectly. Since we had no choice concerning our birth into sin, God, to remain Righteous, had to provide for us a Perfect Righteousness. This He did by becoming sin for us! God in Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God.

The teaching of the scriptures concerning righteousness is in direct contrast to the thinking of carnal minds. First, the carnal man will not admit that he is totally depraved without God, "born in sin and

shapen in iniquity." (Ps. 51:5) He supposes that there is some good in him somewhere if he can only manifest it. He will not believe the plain teaching of scripture that says, "By one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon ALL MEN, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) He will not believe the sweeping testimony of God that says, "There is none Righteous no not one" but that ALL the World stands "Guilty before God." (Rom. 3:10-19)

And so, we say again that God's plan for man to become righteous comes against the conceit of carnal man, and he is constantly seeking to clothe himself with a Righteousness that is man-made. There is no human solution to the problem of man's sin. The answer did not originate in the mind of man, it defies his wisdom. The solution was a divine revelation out of the Mind of God, Himself. Since God made laws so Holy that man cannot perfectly keep them, He planned to keep them Himself, in our place, and He did so perfectly! Then when we believe it, He credits it to our account!

And so, we find ourselves confronted with the Word of God that declares, "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." (Rom. 3:20) In plain speech, once again God is warning us that by our struggle to keep His Laws we will never be justified. But do not misunderstand! Never do the Scriptures teach that we should not "struggle" to keep the Law. Surely we must do our best, but we must realize that our "best" has fallen short. We are not upright beings who can claim Righteousness because we have earned it, but we are sinful creatures who must claim it by Faith in the One who earned it for us. It is not by our obedience (Though we try hard!), but by His obedience who came down!

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (To keep the Law in your place) (Mat. 5:17) Abraham "believed" on Him that justifieth the ungodly." (Rom. 4:5). Our inability to keep the Law rendered us "ungodly" but His keeping of it justified us in our ungodliness, and now we are Godly through Faith. If there could have been a simpler plan, our God would have brought it into play, for He knows all things. Do not allow the simplicity of the plan to dim out its truth and power!

In the beginning of our sermon, we mentioned three groups of people who are in danger of being lost. But we must speak to a fourth group, the ones who believe God's End-Time Message. We agree that it is commendable for the natural mind of man to believe that God sent an End-Time Prophet. But it is not belief in a Prophet that renders us Righteous. No matter how educated a man may be in the Scriptures, and in the Message, he is not saved until he confesses himself to be a helpless, hopeless, hell-bound sinner. It is quite possible to "Believe the Message" and still be dead in our attitude and faith toward God.

This warning must be given. There is a danger that knowledge of the Message can be taken as proof of the New Birth. But along with that, we must have a radical change in our nature. When the Holy Ghost comes in, He is our new nature. Before that time we only have one nature and it is bad. After that He comes in, we have two natures, the nature of God in the heart and the "Law of Sin" in the flesh, which was not destroyed by the New Birth. (If you have our DEWITT TABERNACLE TEACHING SERIES, VOL. III, please read the sermon "Salvation for Message Believers") Our love for souls com-

pels us to preach Salvation through the Blood of Christ, and though we believe the Prophet's Message, his blood was not shed for us!

What then should be our mind-set concerning the righteousness that God requires of us? We must forsake the natural inclination to live the Christian life in our emotions. This is the trap that all of us must be delivered from. In the beginning of our Christian journey, we are mostly controlled by how we FEEL about certain truths. But God does not judge us by our emotions, but by what we CHOOSE to believe. He honors our choice to believe His promises while our emotions clamor against what we say we believe. This is a life-saving revelation, if the Lord will grant it to us.

Let me make reference to the title of our sermon "Totally Righteous or Totally Unrighteous." We are one or the other. There are no white-black birds, no drunk-sober men. We are as righteous as God or else we are as unrighteous as condemnation can make us. That is why Paul stated in Rom. 8:1, "**There is therefore NOW NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus.**" He knew he had to be on one side of the fence or another. If he accepted condemnation for his failures, he was totally unrighteous, because one fly in the soup spoiled the whole bowl. On the other hand, if he refused all condemnation, He was totally righteous through Faith in God's plan for Righteousness.

So, our mind-set must be as follows, we must believe we have been made righteous while we are still guilty of sin in our flesh. We must

believe what God has said about us while we are well aware of the Law of Sin in our flesh (Rom. 7:23). While we are still ungodly in our flesh, we must believe that God daily justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). While we still feel the arrows of condemnation we must "**Cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ** (The Word)." We must believe what God says we are rather than what we know we are!

Some might call this "Blind Faith" yet it is not blind, for it is based on the Scripture. It may be blind as far as our being able to understand the Love that declares a guilty one to be innocent, but thanks be to God, he does not require perfect understanding before it be truth! One of the many titles given to the Holy Scriptures is "**The Word of Truth**" (II Tim. 2:15).

What did our Prophet, William Branham, say about our ability to be Perfect? He had very much to say on the subject. We will give some statements in the Hebrew Book, Chapters 5 and 6.

QUOTE: HEBREW BOOK PAGES 177-179-180-190, "Now: *THEREFORE* having....*leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection*;... (That stumbles them doesn't it? Let us do what? Let's go unto perfection)...*not laying again the foundations*....

Watch this: let's get this word "perfection." Do you know there's only one way you'll stand in the Presence of God? That's perfect! God cannot tolerate unholy things!"

QUOTE: HEBREW BOOK PAGE 179, "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. (That was Jesus' commandment) Be ye so...*

They say, "Nobody can be perfect, the Bible said. "There is none perfect." There's your contradiction. Is it? All right, you cannot be perfect in yourself. If you're trusting in what you done, you're lost. So be ye perfect, even just as perfect as God is perfect.

QUOTE: HEBREW BOOK PAGE 180, "Now: "Go on to perfection." Jesus said. "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.*" And we're, everyone, condemned. No matter what we ever do, we're condemned. We were borned condemned. Your mama and papa was borned condemned. Your....all your ancestors was borned in sin, shaped in iniquity. So, how you ever going to get it? How you going to be perfect? If you never done a thing (never stole, never lied, never done anything in your life) you're still condemned."

QUOTE: HEBREW BOOK PAGE 190, "And by foreknowledge He seen you and I. He knew what we'd live in. He knew what we would be. Therefore, by election, he chose us before the foundation of the world, to be with Him without spot.

Now, if He chose us before the foundation of the world to be in Him without spot, and we're borned all spotted and nothing else can....nothing can cleanse us, how we going to be without....how we going to be without spot? "*He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not have an end of life, but have Eternal Life.*"

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