

RIGHTEOUSNESS

PETER TAN

1. The Struggle for Righteousness	2
2. The Organ of Righteousness	16
3. The Gift of Righteousness	29
4. The Scepter of Righteousness	43
5. The Seed of Righteousness	52
6. Yielding to Righteousness	64
7. The Transformation of Christ	76
8. The Revelation of Christ	88
9. The Touch of the Mind	102
10. The Scepter and the Oil	117

1. STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lets turn to Rom. 5:17, For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

It says here that those who have received an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in this life through our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, if you understand the keys of grace and righteousness there will be nothing in this life that will not come under your subjection and authority and dominion. There will be no circumstances, no problems, no situations that will not come under your rule and your reign. The bible did say in the book of Revelation chapter one that we are kings and priests in our Lord Jesus Christ. And on this planet earth, we all have authority over sicknesses, diseases, demons and over the natural world, so that this natural world will not affect you. But rather, you would affect the world around us.

But it seems to be a conditional promise that it is for those who understand what it means to receive an abundance of grace. And the other thing is the gift of righteousness. So, as we look at this series on righteousness we want to consider righteousness in its various ways and various forms. In this message, we will just introduce the subject of righteousness and show the importance of walking in righteousness. Now we realize that Paul mentions the gift of righteousness. But before we can look at the gift of righteousness that we have from Jesus Christ we need to understand what righteousness is and what it involves in order for us to appreciate the gift of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

It concerns me in my observations and in these years of ministry how important righteousness is. Righteousness involves many things. It involves being consistent with the principles and the beliefs that we have in our life. One of the problems that I have noticed in many lives is what I call inconsistency. We believe something but act differently. We believe in something but practice a different thing. The other form of inconsistency is being some person in public and being another person in private. I believe in consistency. Whether in public or private we are the same person. Whether we are in front of people in a crowd or whether we are all alone in a room or with one person or two persons, we would remain the same person that God has made us to be. We would be as righteous and as holy as if we are in the presence of God and in the presence of multitude of people. I believe that it is inconsistency that afflicts many Christians' lives and prevent them from ruling and reigning in Jesus Christ. And that is why I felt and I prayed that we understand this concept of righteousness.

Part of being righteous and understanding what righteousness is has to do with living according to our conscience. Lets turn to the book of Acts 23 in a statement made by the apostle Paul. This took place somewhere in the middle and latter part of his ministry. He has completed three missionary journeys. The Roman soldiers have arrested him. When there was a riot, he tends to make his stand known. Paul stands after ten years of conversion and several years of first missionary journey plus several years of second year of second missionary journey plus completion of a successful ministry in the city of Ephesus, which affected the whole of Asia Minor. Now he has come to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey and he had done some Jewish custom that they were told to do. In the midst of that, he was arrested.

Now as the crowd cried against him to the Roman soldiers who has just arrested him, Paul stood up and made this statement in Acts 23:1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. All those years that he had lived in God, he has strived to walk according to the dictates of his conscience. What a powerful statement. We would expect a powerful statement to be something like a person sharing about the power over devils, power over sickness and disease. But I believe it’s as powerful to live a consistent life.

Although living according to one’s conscience is something private and quiet but there are a lot of things that are quiet and steady and yet are very powerful too. The things that are powerful may not be noisy. Sometimes people could be noisy and loud in their personality, but they have no consistency. I believe in being quiet, steady and consistent. No nonsense, no side track, no back tracking, but being consistent day in day our week after week months after months, year by year holding on to the principles that God will speaks to us, holding on to what is righteousness and what is right in our conscience. Consistency is an important principle in righteousness. Righteousness is not just doing something right once. Righteousness involves a consistent application of the principles of God in private and public. Righteousness has more to do that just obeying the Ten Commandments. It has to do with accuracy in the application of our conscience. Our conscience will tell us things that are outside God’s will. There will always be small little gray areas that we have to deal with. There are always little decisions that we must be consistent with. There are probably thousands of situations in our lives where we are tempted to compromise with our conscience and our principles that we hold fast to. During times that we do not compromise, it is because we know it is the righteous thing to do.

There are many times when there are small little decisions to make. And many times when the rubber hits the road, I always make my decision by asking, “What is the righteous thing to do? What is the right thing to do at this time that will be consistent with my conscience and consistent with the principle that I believe?” And that will always be the factor of how I make my decisions in life, regardless of whether it brings persecution or misunderstanding or favor or applause. The most important thing in life is to stay true to our conscience and true to our principles. These are very powerful things. They may be quiet. They may be in the secret places of life, in the very private areas of life, but they will be the nuclear bombs that will change the world.

Let me point to someone whom you and I will be familiar with - the Lord Jesus Christ. Lets turn to the book of Matt. 3 just to prove to you that righteousness includes more than the Ten Commandments. It includes many little areas that we need to make a decision on principles and always ask what is the right thing to do. What is right in our conscience? What are the principles to hold to? It’s not a question of whether people will come under it or not. It’s not a question of whether people will clap and give applause for that. Or whether you will gain more favor or be in disfavor. The most important thing is to live true to our conscience and principles that God has revealed to you.

Everyone has different levels of revelations. Everyone has a different degree of development in our conscience. But we all need to live true to our conscience and true to our principles. Here is Jesus Christ at the end of thirty years of private life. But for

thirty years He hasn't start His ministry yet. He hasn't healed anyone. He hasn't preached a single sermon. This period of time was known as the silent years of Jesus. It was not quite completely silent because we know something was recorded when He was twelve years old. When you think about Jesus, you think about His signs, His wonders, His great preaching, and all these wonderful things. But I want to bring across a very important point. It was the consistency of His life for thirty years that resulted in the three years of powerful ministry. If He were not successful in His thirty years, you would never see the last three years. But His first thirty years were lived behind the scenes.

Sometimes we have the impression that what we project in front of people is more important because we are used to what I call a Hollywood kind of culture. We are used to a culture where even Christian conferences, televangelists, churches and ministries employ slick Madison Avenue type of professional advertising. We assume that a Christian product must be good if it gets into the limelight and hyped up by the media. We are in a society where there are a lot of great pretenders. In a culture where acting is highly esteemed some of the world richest people are actors and actresses. This is the twentieth century society. It is so empty, so false, so plastic, and what they act is not what they are in their true life. True Christianity is consistency. We need to be true to the principles that God teaches us. Whether we receive applause and recognition or not has to do with righteousness.

For thirty years, Jesus lived a consistently righteous life behind the scene that pleases God. All the little decisions that He made He chooses the right thing to please God. The bible did say in the book of Hebrew that Jesus was tempted like you and I was but yet without sin. Now don't ever have the impression that the temptations only took place in His first three years of ministry. We know that after He was anointed by God He was tempted for forty days and then after that in His ministry the devil tempted Him from time to time. But it's not those kinds of temptations that count so much. It's the kind of temptations that take place when you are alone.

Jesus stood before the Father at the age of thirty years and in the prime of His manhood as He was about to be baptized in water. In Matt. 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Now was He talking about the Ten Commandments? No. He was talking about doing the right thing at that time. John's baptism according to the bible is called the baptism of repentance from sin. Jesus had no sin legally.

Now lets talk about legalism. Some people are so legalistic they forgot that there are principles that are beyond legalism. You can be so legalistic that you ignore the principles. The Jews, the Pharisees were so legalistic that they forgot the purpose of the Sabbath. Their Sabbath laws made people suffer rather than rejoice. They forgot that the Sabbath was made for people to rejoice. They made the Sabbath so miserable. You could be so legalistic to the point you forgot the purpose behind the law. And that's not righteousness. Being righteous is not being legalistic. Being righteous is to follow the conscience and the principles behind all the laws. That's what righteousness means. It has nothing to do with the letter of the law. It is more than that.

And Jesus said it is fitting to do it now. Let's look at the legal sense. Did Jesus legally need to be baptized by John? No. 1 He had a greater ministry than John. He was the Son of God and the Son of man whereas John was only a prophet. In position, legally He did not need John the Baptist to baptize Him since the one who baptizes is usually above the one who is being baptized. Legally He doesn't need to do it. A lot of us are caught in a legal situation and say, "Legally I don't have to do it so I am free." Let me tell you sometimes legally you are not required to do it but morally you are. You have a moral obligation even though you may not have a legal obligation. In position, legally He doesn't have to be baptized by John. In the form or type, the baptism that's being given the whole purpose of John the Baptist's baptism was repentance from sin. Jesus was sinless. He absolutely has no sin. Nor has He committed a single sin. Legally based on the actual baptism He does not have to be baptized. The whole baptism was meaningless if you understand what I mean. It represents repentance from sin. It's meaningless because He had no sin. There was no meaning to do it. But Jesus said it is a right thing to do.

Lets see what does He mean by the right thing. No. 1 although He was sinless He would like to do it on our behalf. He was going to be the Lamb that takes away our sin and the sin of the world. It is a prophetic picture of what He is doing for us. Secondly it is an example for all of us to know that some times you can be bigger than somebody else in position and social status or in any area, legally you don't have to do something but morally you have and it may be the right thing to do. Jesus was the greatest of all but He washed the disciples' feet. There are some things that are beyond the law. If all we have is the law, we are miserable. The law was made for man and not man for the law. All the laws of God were made for man and for our joy and for our happiness. They were not made for our destruction and condemnation. If we understand the purpose and the principles behind the laws, we would be able to fulfill them with joy.

Jesus said it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness. As we analyze it, it was the right thing for Jesus to do. Now there is rightness to some things. There is rightness in the way we correct somebody. There is rightness in the way we deliver a prophecy. There is rightness to the way we worship God. There is rightness in the way we pastor people. There is rightness in the way we counsel people. There is rightness to everything. And we need to seek after that rightness. And then that is called righteousness.

How do we define that rightness? That's where we say the minimum requirement for righteousness is living according to our conscience. What is our conscience? Our conscience is a part of us that makes us feel right and wrong. There is a sense of what is right and a sense of what is wrong that we need to be aware of. Our conscience must be thoroughly developed if we want to walk in righteousness. Let me assure you the higher developed you are to this sense of righteousness you will walk before kings and Prime Ministers and great ones on this earth. But if you don't walk correct in that you will never rise up in life. Those who walk in righteousness walk with the royalty and will rule and reign as kings in life.

There is a rightness that we need to understand. The law did not compel Jesus to be baptized in water. But righteousness does. Let me give a few more examples so that you understand this part of following our conscience that gives us the feeling of rightness. There is a right way for you to approach people. There is a right way for

you to apply for something. All these are the sense of righteousness that we must develop.

In the book of I Cor. 8 let me show the rightness and the wrongness. It has to do with the conscience and righteousness. First, we state the problem. The problem is over the eating of food offered to idols. Some people believe that they can eat it and some people believe that they can't eat it. And both groups are quarrelling. And Paul has to settle the matter. He says here, first he points to what is theological view. Now righteousness goes beyond the theological view. First of all, we saw in Matt. 3 that rightness goes beyond the law. Sometimes we could be legally right but morally wrong.

Lets say for example, you are a soldier and you are serving under Hitler or under Stalin. You were told to shoot a believer. Lets say you came across a group of Christians and you are believer. You were told to arrest and shoot. What would you do? By the law of the land, you are to obey the command. But morally you know it is wrong. What would you do? I would rather die than kill that person. I would rather be killed than kill that person. But there will be some people who would justify and say, "God will forgive me," and kill the other person. All these have to do with sense of rightness. To me it is too wrong to do. It is also wrong that I would disobey a command if I were a soldier under my commanding officer. I would rather pay the price for my disobedience than to shoot an innocent person.

There was a trial conducted after the Berlin wall fell down. The Berlin wall separates the communist sector from the democratic sector in the city of Berlin, Germany. Many people ran from the communist sector and crawled to no man's land to seek freedom. A lot of them died as they tried to go through the wall. The strange thing that happened after the Berlin wall came down was that some of the soldiers who were responsible for shooting people who escaped were put on trial. That case interests me because it has to do with a conflict between legalism and morality. The poor soldier was obeying orders to shoot to kill. But the civilians were not escaping from lawlessness. They were not escaping from their crime. They were not escaping from a wrong thing. They were running for freedom. And the soldiers were ordered to shoot to kill. Some of the soldiers carried out their orders perfectly and killed the escapees. Now the war tribunal judges were not even Christians. And when the Berlin wall came down some of these soldiers were brought on trial. And the trial looked at the rightness and wrongness of their killing. The soldiers' argument was that they were under orders and command. But the moral argument was, is it right to kill people who hasn't stolen, murdered, raped or done any evil things. All they wanted was to live a life free from this oppressive system. And in the end, the soldiers were pronounced guilty and sentenced to prison. The only thing that I felt wrong about that is the war tribunal should have hauled in the commanding officers too. I mean those soldiers were mere puppets. They were the scapegoats of somebody else's wrong command.

But in life, we have a lot of these situations where we have to determine what is right and what is wrong and make choices accordingly. And if you choose righteousness, you will live and reign as a king. If you choose otherwise, you may never rise up in life at all. The power to break the gravitational pull is the law of righteousness. In Matt. 3, it was a struggle between the law and righteousness.

Now in chapter 8 of First Corinthians, it is a struggle between theology and rightness. You could be legally right but morally wrong. And here you could be theologically right and morally wrong. You say I thought everyone who is theologically correct would be morally correct.

Let me tell you a few stories on church history. During the Reformation period, a lot of people believed in pre-destination. Some others developed a theology of what is holiness and what is not holiness. Although they may justify it, they ended up killing a lot of innocent people who didn't agree with them theologically. In fact, some of the most famous reformers like John Calvin, who taught the doctrine of pre-destination, was a dictator in his actual life and anyone who disagreed with him would be arrested. John Calvin went around with groups of people and arrested those who didn't keep the Sabbath or did something wrong. That was the way they conducted Christianity. The theology may have a certain truth but the way they do it is wrong.

In the early days, church services became so dull that people became religious without knowing why. They invented a way to keep people awake. They came out with batons that were made from velvet but it's hard enough to knock somebody and soft enough not to cause permanent damage. So, the ushers would carry batons and walk up and down the aisles. If anyone were asleep, they would approach from the back and that give that unfortunate fellow a knock on the head. That would be an interesting way to keep people awake in church. If you don't want to be knocked, you keep your eyes open. When you look at it, their intentions were good but their actions were wrong. I don't think that is a righteous thing to do.

Then the way they collect the offering – they would put the offering bag attached to a long stick and if the people didn't give any money, the ushers would put the bag nearer to them in a threateningly manner. I don't think this would be cheerful giving. We can be theologically correct and yet wrong in our action.

So on one side, we have the conflict of legality versus morality and on the other side, a conflict of theory versus praxis. The ideal and the reality don't agree.

So lets look at this problem of eating of idol food. Paul was trying to resolve a problem. To resolve a problem you must determine what is right and what is wrong first. I don't believe that you should remain in the gray area when you know what is right and wrong. I don't believe that you should be evasive about being right and wrong. For example, if I teach the Second Coming I would tell you what I believe. I can teach the different theological views as proposed by different schools of thoughts but I will have to be honest with you and tell you what I believe. In those matters, I don't believe in taking a neutral stand. We need to have a stand. Paul brings out the theological avenue first. First, he must tell you what is theologically right and wrong. Notice what is theologically right and wrong is different when you come to the application of what is right and wrong.

So he tells them in I Cor. 8:4-6 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

Paul tells us that food offered to idols shouldn't affect us at all since these idols are nothing in the world. If you eat the food offered to idols, it doesn't affect you. Theologically Paul makes a stand. So, as far as the idol food is concerned, it shouldn't affect you at all because we believe in the one true God the power of the blood of Jesus is more than enough for you.

Paul makes the theology clear. However, his application was different. He says although this is a theological view but the right thing to do he says here is in verse 10 and 11 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weaker brother perish. Although theologically it's O.K. but practically it's not O.K. because some people whose conscience is weak will be stumbled by your actions.

These people whose conscience is weak do not understand the nothingness of idols yet. Many of these new believers had come from a pagan background where they had accepted and believed in the presence of their former "gods" or demons as they know them now in the statues or idols. They have not yet truly come to a greater understanding of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His triumphant victory over Satan and his cohorts. They have not understood that demons have been vanquished by Christ's death and resurrection. They do not have Paul's understanding that "we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one." Maybe in time to come they will understand and then their conscience will not condemn them when they eat those things offered to idols. But for the present moment, when their understanding is still rudimentary or infantile, Paul exhorts the stronger ones to refrain from eating food offered to idols for the sake of the weaker brothers and sisters in the Lord. Doctrinally and theological, it is right to eat these foods offered to idols but it is unrighteous to do so if you cause others to stumble by your actions.

One constant source of conflict in the Body of Christ is when some members have made important biblical and theological discoveries in the Word and the others are still lagging behind or slow in accepting these new discoveries or revelations. One of the greatest struggles in real life ministry is when theology is ahead of the universal acceptance since it takes time for people to accept the theological revelation. We need to understand the right timing to apply something. Theologically a revelation may be correct but whether something is right in timing is the question.

That's where righteousness comes in.

Paul says although theologically it's all right to eat foods offered to idols since it won't harm you but practically speaking, you should not eat it because it stumbles the weaker ones who don't have the understanding. You see that is where righteousness comes in. What is right and what is wrong is determined by what happens to your fellow Christian when you eat that food. Look at verse 12 he says, But when you thus sin against the brethren. Why is he now calling it sin? Something that is theologically correct now becomes sin. How can it be? He is measuring the rightness and the wrongness of an action against the good or evil that is done to a brother or sister in Christ. It is not the doings that are judged but the fruits of the doings. The act is right but the result of the act in causing another Christian to stumble makes it a sin. You have to understand the law of stumbling is involved.

I realize that sometimes you just can't help it. You have to choose between suffering unnecessarily or suffering some misunderstanding. What do I mean by suffering unnecessarily? You see there are times when we have to make a stand in order for us not to suffer lack and need. For example, we registered our ministry as a company under the laws of the country. Now it was a new way of organizing a ministry and we had people running us down for doing so. I may stumble people but in the end, I have to think that I have a family. I need money to pay expenses. I don't receive any salary from anybody. I do not ask the church to pay for me and my family upkeep or anything else. I need to get organized. If I sell my books and tapes and it generates some income, I have to account for it to the Government. I have to pay my taxes where taxes are due. If I say, "Well, I don't want to stumble anybody so I better don't register my ministry as a company. I will just live by faith." Ten years down the road, the Income Tax department may come after me and the same people who run me down for registering my ministry are going to laugh at me. I am going to suffer unnecessarily because I was afraid to take a stand. As far as my conscience is concerned, I will make a stand as long as I know that is right. But where the stand will cause suffering to people I will withhold myself. But if the action would not cause others to suffer but rather would cause me to suffer unnecessarily, then I would make the stand accordingly. For example, if I don't organize my ministry properly I may not be able to have the finances come in. And if the finances do not come in my family may not have enough food to eat. I may not be able to pay my bills. And I will be suffering unnecessarily. So I have to be practical and organize my ministry properly in the way God showed me. This is the way we can organize it so that we can grow in our ministry. Sometimes when you do that, some people may misunderstand your intentions and are stumbled by this. I am sharing that part to show that sometimes whatever you do, people are still stumbled.

Even in my present life at the moment, people give me things that are valuable. People want to give me Bally shoes and a ten thousand dollars Rolex watch. I said, "No I don't want all those things." And yet, when I choose simple shoes that are comfortable, some people can still deride me for doing so. "Hey, pastor, you teach on faith. How come you are still wearing cheap local shoes?" I mean we could exercise our faith for branded and expensive shoes but that would stumble some people who associate worldliness with luxury items. Sometimes we have a gathering of church members in our house and the place is just too small for the meeting. We could exercise and stretch our faith for a bigger place. Let me tell you I have faith to believe God for a bungalow but I don't want to because I don't want to stumble people. Don't even say a bungalow, when you exercise faith for a double-storey terrace house yet some people will still be stumbled. I don't know what people expect you to live. Some people expect pastors to live in bungalow, which I disagree. Some people expect pastors to live under the coconut tree. Even that, some people will stumble. Whatever you do, you will stumble some people. I don't wear rings on every of my fingers. Some ministers do that. I do have an expensive watch given to me by a Singaporean. At the most, the value is a thousand dollars. Sometime back, I remember I had another watch that I gave to one of the bible students publicly. I mean whatever you chooses, in the end we want to live according to what our conscience tells us is right. And when you do what is right some people may still not agree with you and may be stumbled.

Of course, most people will be stumbled if we make choices. I choose not to drive an expensive car. However, whatever you drive, some people will still stumble. They will only be satisfied when you live in a manger and riding on an ox. But thank God, the majority understands.

So, I have determined in my life to do what my conscience tells me is right. It must be theologically correct. It must be legally correct. It must be biblically correct. And your conscience must be correct. And when you conscientiously feels that something is right to be done but if the timing is wrong, and some people will suffer from that action, then bide your time and wait. The time is not right. But when it is correct and when you don't do anything, you will die or suffer unnecessarily, then you have no choice but to go ahead to do what is right.

This is the same way we used to tell some people who get stumbled over Christians trying to exercise faith for church buildings. I said, "We waited for ten years and now is the time to go ahead with the project." One businessman offered to give free office premises. We can't sit and see the rent go up. We rented our house for ten years and saw the rent going up during that period. If you believe God for the rental, you can believe God for the mortgage payment. When the rental payment goes up to the point where it equals loan repayments, it makes more economic sense to take a bank loan and buy up the house. In that way, what would have gone into paying rentals would now be used to reduce the bank loan. And we get to keep the house. In the same way when we were looking for premises for our church the most important thing is ten years down the road, we would have paid off the bank loan and the church would have some peace of mind without some outstanding loan over its head. But some people don't understand. "Why should pastor get involved with this? He should concentrate on his spiritual duties." If I do not look into this matter, who would do so? That is my question. I would be most happy if somebody come to me and say, "Pastor you don't have to worry about the new building. We will take care of finding a suitable premise for the church." One person came to me and said, "Pastor the church needs a bus. I want to donate a bus." I looked at him because I know a bus costs between a hundred and a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I looked at him and asked, "Are you talking about a new bus? He said, "Yes." I said, "By next week I would come to you and tell you what model we want." By next week, he was not around. Up till now, there is no bus yet.

Let me tell you there is something in the ministry if you don't act on things, nobody else will do. We thank God that there are people who will help to do the job but we have to search our conscience. And I can assure you in my twenty years in the ministry, we have seen our ministry extending all over the world. There are a lot of times we made sacrifices to accomplish different things. When we moved to our present premises, we had to sell our car to raise money for the down payment. If we don't stretch our faith, we can never move. And that is why sometimes we have to search our conscience to check what is right and what is wrong. I tell this story because it's just a joy to see all the things that God as done. Thank God, things are moving on nicely. Just remember this I have lived my life like Paul following my conscience to do what is right to change this life and to change the world around us. And it's important for us to understand that we need to be sensitive to the rightness of things. And we are sensitive to the rightness of something. Sometimes we waited very long. We wanted to give people the opportunity to do things for God. Some people

asked us why did we wait so long? We tell them that we wanted to give people a chance. Then when the time is up and they have not done anything at all, then we will take action ourselves. But we have waited and we did wait for the proper time. At the end of the proper time where no work is done we will step in and initiate action. Too many souls are being lost because of negligence and the work of God has to go on. People change; people can come and go but let me tell you we understand what it means to stay through until everything is completed. We don't believe in a half completed job. When we do something for the Lord, we must build a ministry so that it will last until Jesus comes.

So, in 1 Cor 8 here Paul is saying that even if your understanding is theologically correct but your action has caused the stumbling of some brethren, then it is a sin. We need to consider the factors of appropriateness and timing. What do we do? We have to wait for its proper time. And its important for us to remember that as long as it doesn't cause people to suffer, as long as it is in proper time, as long as it is theologically correct, then you go for it. And you eliminate stumbling people as much as possible. I don't believe you could eliminate it a hundred percent. Some people will be stumbled anyhow you choose. But you eliminate the unnecessary stumbling of innocent people. But those who are just trying to find fault in anything that you do you can't be bothered. You just got to push the gospel and do the work. This is why I assure those in the ministry I said whatever people say, whatever people think we know what we are doing. We know where we are going. In ten years time we will produce what we have set our goals to produce, that's important. Get your theology and the application part correct.

Now what are the principles behind these applications? As you can see it involves what I call self-sacrifice. Look at the verse there he says all these feel good to eat but for the sake of your weaker brother you don't do it. This is why I have advised many ministers not to drive Mercedes or B.M.W in this country. We are not in an affluent country where such cars are considered affordable. When you drive such cars, you may be losing many innocent souls. Some church members may complain, "I pay my tithes dutifully to the church; I make financial sacrifices for the building project. Now I see my pastor driving around in an expensive car." My advice to many ministers is choose what is moderate. In other words, if you live so poorly, people may look at you and the ministry and say, "If God can not take care of His servants, can God take care of me? I am not even serving God fulltime." People will laugh at God because of you. At the same time if you live too richly then people will look at you and say, "It looks like this world is your home and heaven is not your real home." We have to live on an average. We have to live where we can still touch the high and the mighty and the rich and the famous but we have to live in such a way that we can touch the very poor. We have to reach in between. Those of you in business are in a different realm. Some pastors preach against Christians driving luxury cars. So if you drive such a car, you would slip into their church with a guilty conscience. No, if you are a businessman, you are there, and you know that by doing those things people are not stumbled. I mean people look at you differently but when ministers of God drive luxury cars, the church members get stumbled. Those of us in the ministry have to be a bit more careful with the way we do things.

So, we would compromise to the level where it doesn't cause the family and children unnecessary suffering. I don't want my children to grow up and ask, "Why must the

ministry cause so much lack and hardships?" I want them to have as normal life as anyone who is a professional out there. Then my children will grow understanding that God is a good God. So, the line that is drawn is that it must not cause unnecessary suffering. There is sacrifice involved but it must not cause unnecessary suffering where the children would rebel against the Lord because they saw so much suffering. My wife sometimes goes to a hairdresser. When this hairdresser found out that my wife's husband is a pastor, she cried, "Alas, poor thing." The hairdresser is not a Christian so my wife slowly witnessed to her. The hairdresser's brother had gone into the ministry and her brother's family suffers. Sometimes they do not have enough food to eat. Then this hairdresser sometimes helps the brother out. Obviously that would be unnecessary suffering. Some ministers' children grow up not wanting to have anything to do with their parents' Christianity. Such situations occur because the parents didn't apply the Word and organize their life correctly. Their children grow up and even though some of them had a call of God, they don't want to serve God. I feel sad because the ministry need not be that way.

Some pastors don't understand stewardship and moderation. They go overboard by wearing expensive gold chains, two thousand dollars suit etc. I won't do this sort of things. My conscience will not permit me to do it. We need righteousness. I know some ministers who say, "I have a right to these things. I am redeemed from the curse of the law and from the spirit of poverty." Yes, that is theologically correct but whether it is the righteous thing to indulge in extravagance is a different matter. Righteousness needs to develop in our life.

As we shared it, you can understand it involves all areas of life. It's the theological aspect verses the practical aspect. The legal aspect verses the moral aspect. All these are the struggles of righteousness. If we do what is righteous it's powerful. It changes life. It touches people. As Paul says, "To the Gentile, I am a Gentile. To the Jew I am a Jew." He will reach down to their level in order to preach the gospel. Some of you wear sarong when you are in causal wear at home. But if I am preaching in an area where only sarongs are the accepted form, for example in tribal areas and in Myanmar, I don't mind wearing a sarong to preach. We have to come to that level. If that is the only thing that they understand then lets come down to that level to preach the gospel. We have to come down to people's level in order to minister Christ to them. Righteousness is the key to reigning and ruling in this life.

It's obvious to our hearts and minds that righteousness goes beyond keeping the law. I hope that you have erased from your understanding the mistaken notion that righteousness and following the law are the same. The above two examples I have already given showed you go beyond the law. Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisee, Jesus says you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God. Apparently, He wants us to develop righteousness that is beyond the legalism followed by the Pharisees.

Finally lets look at Romans to see the struggle of righteousness in other areas. In Rom. 14, Paul had a different problem. In verse 5, he says some people eat only vegetables and some people eat anything. He has to give theological solution again but in different area. In verse 2 For one believer, he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. He shows us that as far as God is concerned, there is nothing wrong. That is why he calls those who eat only vegetables as those who are weak. Verse 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him

who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord, and he who does not observe the day, to Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks, and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives in himself and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. Verse 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith, for whatever is not from faith is sin.

In verse 5, we take note of the word fully convinced. The other word is in verse 23, faith. Now righteousness is not just what you don't do. Righteousness is what you do and you exercise faith on that. What makes it righteous is that your faith and your conscience meet together. Based on I Tim. 1:19 having faith and a good conscience. So, what are the ingredients of righteousness? They must be faith and they must be in line with the conscience. The question that arises is, "Is it possible for the conscience and the faith not to go in line." Yes, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. But conscience is sensitive to both the Word of God and to the people around us. Conscience is considers the rightness and the timing of an action. Not just the rightness but also the timing. The conscience senses the timing and not just the rightness of the action. So, what is right done in the wrong time is wrong. And only the conscience can sense that. But faith alone doesn't sense that and that's why we need both faith and conscience.

Sometimes a Christian says, "I am believing God for a house." Look at them and you know they don't even have faith to believe God for a room. Something is wrong somewhere. There is something wrong about his faith. Some pastors say, "I am believing God for a Mercedes Benz," and you look over at their congregation, you will find that their church members don't even have faith for a second hand car. Something is wrong. These pastors are not sensing their conscience. We are not saying that they can't have that kind of car, but we are only saying they shouldn't have it now when their church members are still struggling with poverty. A day will come when everybody in the church will prosper. Our society is reasonably prosperous. We need to understand that as society prospers it's different. Lets take for example, if I am in New Zealand and if God blesses me in a New Zealand church and enables me to buy a bungalow in New Zealand, do you know to the New Zealanders it's normal since ninety percent of the houses there are bungalows? But if you have a church in India and the people are so poor then you must look at what is average and make sure it doesn't stumble them. What I am saying here is situational ethics. It is where the rightness and wrongness of something has to be felt with the conscience. You can not take what is suitable for your local situation and apply the same standards to Christians all over the world. I can not take what is normal and suitable in our church structure and apply to another culture.

In the book of I Cor., it also applies to marriage, divorce and re-marriage. In I Cor. 7:10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord. A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. But to the rest I, not the Lord. Can you see Paul says this is thus says the Lord then he says this is my advice. Now what is this trouble that he is talking about? This is a struggle of righteousness - to do what is right in the situation in their time. You can not take a divorce in a particular case and apply the same to every case. You can not say, "Why do you treat this person this way and the other person the other way?" Every case is special. I can not take a hundred percent of everything that I do in my church and ask you to do exactly the same. The principles may be the same but the situation may be different. On top of that, the Lord may have different purposes for different churches. So your church shouldn't be a carbon copy of my church – you will have to seek God's purposes and plans for your church.

But even those of us parents know that each of our children is different. Some would cry before you cane them. Some would keep mum when you cane them. A wise parent knows that you may have rules and principles but when you apply it, you need to be sensitive to your conscience. Let's say you have two children - one is a tough type and needs three whacks before he repents and cries. But the other is the soft one - all you have to do is look sternly at him and he would cry. Then one day you lose your temper. You take the cane and whack both children. It looks like you are right but you are wrong because you did it in anger. But lets say you were right to be angry but you could still be wrong in your severe disciplining and that night you can not sleep because the Lord told you, "You should not have been so hard against the soft one." Don't look at me that way – I am not talking about me. It's a cooked up story.

Paul wrote to Timothy and said God has not given a spirit of fear. Some bible teachers say therefore Timothy was a fearful person. Somebody prophesied over you that God is going to bless you and meet every need. The others hearing that prophecy rashly conclude that you must be very poor. What kind of conclusion is that? Let me get back to the story. God told you, "You should not have been so hard on the soft one because it breaks his spirit. And you may have injured the person's soul the rest of his life. This is where the conscience comes in. This is where righteousness comes in.

So today, I just introduce you to the subject so that you understand why we touch on this area. Righteousness is more than just observing the law. Righteousness is more than theology. Righteousness has to do with conscience and timing. It has to do with the sense of righteousness that we develop in our life. The more mature we become the more we can sense what is the right thing to do in a situation. It is important for us to understand the struggle for righteousness is going on in our life. And those who would allow the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness to rule and reign in their life will rise up in life to become a great person in God. Let me talk about greatness as an honor from God. Don't seek honor from man but seek honor from God. God will raise you up as a leader to the human race. God will raise you up as leaders who sit in the company of kings and prime ministers. Many kings, presidents, heads of states, prime ministers and leaders are struggling with right and wrong. The top businessmen in the world, both the good ones and not only the bad ones are struggling over rightness and wrongness. And whoever has the wisdom to know what

is right and wrong will become their leader. That is why you will rule and reign if you develop righteousness in your life.

2. THE ORGAN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

We have already made known that the fight of righteousness is more than just obeying the commandments of God - it has to do with a rightness in our being, a sense of rightness and in the right things to do, even in areas stipulated beyond the Ten Commandments. In our daily life, there is always some righteousness to observe, some right way of doing certain things and some right thinking, right attitudes, right behaviors, right perceptions to follow.

Rom. 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. In order to have victory in this life we must understand two things, the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. And we all are supposed to rule and reign in this life.

Also look at I Cor. 8:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge, for some, with consciousness of the idol until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

I wish to make known to you at this point that the word conscience and the word consciousness are from the same Greek word *suneidesis*. So let just for a moment be consistent in the translation - we either use the word conscience or the word consciousness. In this series, we will use the word consciousness by replacing the word conscience with the word consciousness, and see what meaning we can bring out from this passage.

Verse 7 again However, there is not in everyone that knowledge, for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to idol; and their consciousness being weak is defiled. Also verse 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the consciousness of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?

Now the word conscience means consciousness. And if we were to look at the word consciousness replacing the word conscience, we note a few facts here like in verse 7 that our consciousness can be affected. Sometimes when you have spent a lot of time with God, or in the presence of God in a prayer meeting or in a worship service, you carry that consciousness of God with you throughout whatever you do. And when you leave the church or prayer closet, there is still that consciousness hanging over you. But it says here that the consciousness can be affected. That consciousness can be defiled. That consciousness can be weakened. When you go out and encounter some people you don't like or come across some incidences that bring some painful memory to you, your consciousness gets affected. So there is such a thing as consciousness that we can carry around with us.

The secret to ruling and reigning in Jesus is to maintain that consciousness 24 hours a day. That consciousness is the result of the gift of righteousness that we can partake of in God. The gift of righteousness imparts a sense of consciousness of God.

Now cross reference to the book of Jn. 16:8 And when He has come He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Then He points in the next

verse that conviction of sin has to do with those who don't believe in Him. Verse 10 conviction of righteousness has to do with those who understand that Jesus has gone to the Father and we see Him no more. Conviction of judgment has to do with the ruler of the world that is Satan being judged. Here in verse 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the gospel of John 16, there are three types of conviction. There is a conviction of sin, which many of us know experientially. We were convicted of sin. The conviction of sin brings certain feeling of remorse and brokenness and certain consciousness of guilt, condemnation and failures. Conviction always brings a part of the consciousness of God. Most of us know what a conviction of sin is like.

But there is another conviction called the conviction of righteousness and it brings a different dimension. There is a conviction of judgment, which is a sense of victory over the devil. Notice that these three types of convictions are progressive. We first learn to be sensitive to the conviction of sin. Then we learn to be sensitive to the conviction of righteousness. And as that becomes more and more a part of our second nature, we become conscious of our victory over Satan that Satan is completely defeated. So, these convictions are progressive.

Now lets look at the second one the conviction of righteousness. Jn.16:10 and of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more. Now what has Jesus going to the Father and us seeing Him no more to do with the conviction of righteousness? It has to do with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life. He says that unless He goes, the Holy Spirit can not come. So He was talking about a new presence, a new measure of the Spirit that comes upon our lives where we will be free from guilt and condemnation and we will only be conscious of whom we are in God.

Conviction of sin makes us conscious of what we have done wrong. Conviction of righteousness makes us conscious of who we are in God. Conviction of judgment makes us conscious of the defeat of the devil. Each conviction brings a different dimension of consciousness of God.

In our anniversary, we talked about the history of this church. This church has various phases. It was started in 1986 and 1996 was the celebration of tenth anniversary and Isaiah 59 has been the chapter for us in the first ten years.

Presently Isaiah 60 is the chapter as we enter the second phase from 1996. However, we will not presume to state how many years this second phase will be in. Our church has a platform to the international scene and has its place in leadership in the body of Christ throughout the world. So our destiny is tied up to the destiny of the body of Christ.

When our church enters its third phase, Isaiah 61 will be very prominent where there will be the first new anointing to prepare for His second coming that will come upon the church in here and in the whole world.

In the fourth phase of this church, Isaiah 62 will be very prominent. Now Isaiah 61 talks about the second coming and a new anointing and Isaiah 62 talks about moving into the Jewish dispensation. I believe that Jesus will come somewhere in the fourth phase of the church.

In 1996, the church entered its second phase. It took ten years for us to complete our first phase. And in this second phase if you read Isaiah 60 it's a realm of prosperity both spirit, soul and body. And when you read verses like that, you might as well read it as promises given to you since it is very good. I like each one of you businessman and ministry to claim Isaiah 60 for yourself from 1996 onwards because it will be true of your life, true of the church life here and true of the church in the world. May be one or two of those verses will apply more to your life than to another person. But the whole chapter is relevant and will hold true for this second phase.

Isaiah 60:

Arise, shine; For your light has come!
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.
For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth.
And deep darkness the people,
But the Lord will rise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.
Lift up your eyes all round and see;
They all gather together, they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side,
Then you shall see and become radiant;
And you hear shall swell with joy.
Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you.
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to your.
The multitude of camels shall cover your land.
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come;
They shall bring gold and incense.
And they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord.
All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth
shall minister to you;
They shall ascend with acceptance of My altar.
And I will glorify the house of My glory.
Who are these who fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts?
Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me;
And the ships of Tarshish will come first,
To bring your sons from afar,
Their silver and their gold with them.
To the name of the Lord your God.
And to the Holy One of Israel,
Because He has glorified you.
The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls,
And their kings shall minister to you.
Therefore your gates shall be open continually.
They shall not be shut day or night.
That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles.
And their kings in procession,

For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish.
And those nations shall utterly ruined.
The glory of Lebanon shall come to you.
The cypress, the pine, and the box tree together.
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I will make the place of My feet glorious.
Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you.
And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet;
And they shall call you The City of the Lord. Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you.
I will make you an eternal excellence. A joy of many generations.
You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles. And milk the breast of kings.
You shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior.
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.
Instead of bronze I will bring gold.
Instead of iron I will bring silver.
Instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace. And your magistrates righteousness.
Violence shall no longer be heard in your land.
Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders.
But you shall call your walls Salvation. And your gates Praise.
The sun shall no longer be your light by day.
Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you;
But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light.
And your God your glory.
Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the Lord will be your everlasting light;
And the days of your mourning shall be ended.
Also your people shall all be righteous. They shall inherit the land forever.
The branch of My planting, the works of My hands, that I may be glorified.
A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.
I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time.

That's a powerful scripture. That's for your life. That's for your business throughout the next ten years. That's for your ministry throughout the next ten years. That's for this church here throughout the next ten years. That's for the church in the world throughout the next ten years. The church is moving into a different dimension from the world.

Now when we look at the above scriptures, we can sense an excitement and expectation but strangely sometimes we also can have a sense of unworthiness, a sense that we don't deserve it, a sense that we haven't fully been faithful to receive the promises. And this consciousness, which comes from the conviction of sin, must be dealt with. Let me remind you that what's going to happen will be because of the gift of righteousness. The gift of righteousness is not experienced just because we have done good works. It is a consciousness that occupies our life when we continuously yield to the Holy Spirit and that can set us free from the conviction of sin. I am not saying that the conviction of sin is wrong. From time to time, as our lives grow in God and God reveals different rooms in our life to be dealt with, that conviction of sin will be there. Before repentance, there is conviction of sin. Before

someone can acknowledge that they are wrong, they must sense this sensation, this consciousness that they are wrong. And that leads them into repentance.

But we need to disassociate that conviction from the conviction of righteousness where God will bring His blessings into our lives. You will never ever be good enough to receive this blessing. You will never ever be able to bring yourself to the position where you deserve this blessing. The gift of righteousness is a gift of God. That's why we are teaching this series on righteousness. It is a sense, a consciousness of who we are in God. How wonderful it is that every time you worship God and come to God we are just conscious of who He has made us to be and what we are in Him. Even though you may not be where you should be doing what you should be but it makes no difference. Let that consciousness of righteousness come first.

Now let's look at conviction of righteousness, which is a consciousness of who you are in God. Unless you are conscious and convicted in your consciousness of who you are in God you can never move into the blessings that are there from that conviction. The result of the conviction of sin is repentance and restoration. But the conviction must come first before you receive whatever the conviction is to produce. In the same way, there must be a consciousness that we deserve all that God has for us because Jesus paid the price for it and not because of what we have done. There must be a consciousness that the blessings of God are ours because of what Jesus has done. Yes, they belong to you. Yes, it's God's will for you. Yes, God has these blessings for you and no matter what happens, you are conscious that they are divinely yours. And when that comes into your life, you will receive what that conviction came to give. For too long the church has been conscious only of sin, that is, her sin consciousness is very strong. We need to be conscious of righteousness. And righteousness doesn't depend on what you and I do. Strangely, in the Christian life, you feel more righteous if you lived a number of days, of hours, of weeks, free from what you feel to be sin. And the longer you have done that the more you sense you really feel "good" or "holy" or "righteous". For example, you could be a Christian on the way to perfection and you lived your life for months right with God. You attended all the prayer meetings you have, fellowship all you can, and then at the end of three months you just yielded to your weakness, boom, suddenly that very day or the very next day that consciousness of righteousness is gone. Three months of building up spiritually is gone like a bird flying. How can it be? Why should it be? Then when we look at Isaiah 60 many Christians look at it and say, "I haven't done anything to deserve the promises of Isaiah 60." As long as you are not conscious of the gift of righteousness and you keep on having that kind of state of mind you will never receive the blessings of Isaiah 60.

My question is, when will you ever come to this state of mind to receive these blessings? When we have lived right for ten years? When you have lived right to the age of seventy? You will never get it that way. That consciousness is a gift of God to be received through the Holy Spirit by faith. Let me look at it this way. There are a lot of people out there in the world, let say ungodly men or women in the business world, who accumulate millions and billions of dollars when their lives with ten thousand weaknesses are not even half as right as the weakest Christian. And it hasn't kept them from accumulating wealth. I am saying that they spend their time in accumulating wealth and their life is not right with God at all. Some of these artistes, celebrities and movie stars are not living right with God. They are openly living in sin.

But yet, they have plenty of Isaiah 60 happening in their life, with the wealth of the world flowing into their hands. Why should it be that although you are generally a good Christian with some weaknesses here and there, you feel condemned when in Isaiah 60 God promises that He is going to bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles? You could be a businessman and God says, "This year and the next ten years I am going to bless you abundantly." And then you just had one tiny little problem - you are bad tempered. You lost your temper, you banged the table and you said, "O there goes my million dollars." How is the million dollars associated to your losing your temper? Why have you always been thinking that you can only receive based on your merit? If God has ever given anything to us on merit, none of us would have received anything. Up to now it is because of the grace of God. And that's the point that we are driving home - that there is a consciousness that we need to enter into to receive what God wants us to receive. I call that a state of being and a state of mind. It's a conscious state of mind where you are no more conscious of your weaknesses, of your sin, of your past, of your failure. But the conviction of righteousness makes you only conscious of your destiny. Conscious of what you are there for; what you are there to be; conscious of what God wants to bring to your life. You are only conscious of that.

Let's look at Rom. 4 at Abraham's life. It says in verse 2-3 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what do the Scriptures say? "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. We are going to look at the story of Abraham and see how he grows in this consciousness. It is just like the conviction of sin comes and brings repentance and then we repent and there is restoration and it's supposed to disappear because you are right with God. And you are supposed to move into the dimension of the consciousness of your rightness with God. Now that consciousness and sense of righteousness can grow. I mean many of us have experienced soaking in God's presence and coming out of the presence of God with a tremendous sense of who we are in God in our life. There is not one tiny bit of the consciousness of sin. And you came out of that it's a powerful realm to be in. You have to spend time with God. All my mornings I usually set aside for God. I will spend time in the Word, meditation and prayers. It gives that consciousness of God into my life. Now that consciousness if you notice it in your life is strong at times and then its weaker at other times based on the things that are happening around you. We need to learn how to yield to it and to keep it going strong in our life. When we learn to yield to the presence of God and it becomes strong in our lives, it will cause us to grow in our spiritual and Christian life. The sense of rightness develops in us.

Turn to Heb. 5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, Now he is talking about those who only drink milk. Those who drink milk are baby Christians. They haven't been able to handle this righteousness yet. They have only been able to handle the conviction of sin and repentance and restoration. And many Christians lived their entire life in this world in this first realm of just conviction of sin, repentance and restoration. That is the only realm they ever lived in. They never move out of that. According to the book of Hebrews, you haven't grown unless you break free from this realm into another realm. You are unskilled in the word of righteousness, the word that brings the conviction of righteousness into your life. Apparently, it is a skill that we need to develop.

Verse 14 Solid food belongs to those who are of full age that is those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. I call it the organ of righteousness that senses right and wrong. Beyond the law is that sense of righteousness that needs to come into our life. Now the good news in the New Testament is that this sense of righteousness, this consciousness and this gift of righteousness is a free gift. You don't have to do anything to get it. You only have to believe and receive. You don't have to pray twenty hours in order to get a sense of it. You don't have to do good works for twenty years to get a sense of it. Although praying twenty hours does help that sense and although doing good works does increase that sense, but the fact remains that it's a gift of God for us.

Now observe carefully the progression of the gospel of Matthew. Lets look at the book of Matt. 3:15 Now Jesus always is developing that consciousness or the organ of righteousness in Him. He uses it in every situation and it will produce a greater consciousness of that righteousness. In the natural world, if you become conscious of any of your five senses, you tend to develop a greater sensitivity to that particular sense. Lets say you are a musician. You would have ears trained to hear the different notes, chords and scales. And right now, some of you are not hearing certain sounds because your mind would have filtered away these sounds to pay attention to the Word. But if you want to you could concentrate your hearing and begin to hear the humming sounds of the air-conditioner. You begin to hear the pitter-patter of the rain outside. You would hear people flipping the pages of their bibles. I mean when you pay attention to these sounds, you become more conscious to them. In the same way if you concentrate to see certain things and you are paying particular attention to certain things, then you can see more details. In the same way, as we yield to the organ of righteousness it will develop a greater consciousness of righteousness in our lives.

Now Jesus is yielding to that organ of righteousness in Matt. 3:15 He knew it was right for Him to be baptized by John the Baptist although it was legally not required of Him since He was sinless. Verse 15 Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. We have mentioned this before, legally Jesus don't have to be baptized because John the Baptist's baptism was a baptism of repentance and remission from sin. Jesus had no sin. Legally He doesn't have to undergo the baptism but consciously it was the right thing to do. And He yielded to that rightness to build that consciousness of righteousness.

In Matt. 5 Jesus says that people who wants to live beyond the legal requirements, beyond the moral demands and beyond the theological boundaries to do what they know its right, they would have to pay a price for doing so. What is the price? Matt. 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. If you want to live your life right that way, you will definitely be different from the world. The world always misunderstands and persecutes those who are different. But it is your choice whether you still want to yield to righteousness or not. And God says yield because it has a reward. It's O.K. to be different because Jesus was different. Or rather, you are different in a right way. Not different in a wrong way. But He says here if you want to live a life that is righteous because of that righteousness, you will receive persecution. But you will receive your reward and your inheritance in God.

Matt. 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. What is He talking about? Those who build righteousness and yield to the organ of

righteousness will have a consciousness of righteousness in their lives, a consciousness of who they are in God and they will have a sense of authority, and it will be like a heaven on earth. And wherever you are, you will have that consciousness that you are in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God rules and reigns through you. That is why those who have the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will rule and reign in Christ. Apparently, Jesus is interested in developing this organ of righteousness.

Matt. 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In other words, yield to the organ of righteousness that you and I have received. The day we were born again the gift of righteousness was imparted in our life and we could sense it and yield to it. And when you yield to it, it will produce a consciousness of God. That is important to receive whatever the conviction is to produce. And the conviction of sin is to produce repentance. The conviction of righteousness is to produce the blessings of God and what God wants to bring about in your life. You don't wait till the blessings come and then you receive the consciousness of righteousness. The consciousness must come first and then the blessings will come. The blessings will come for those who seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Lets look at Abraham according to Rom. 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Not of works but its of grace. You keep yielding to what is right, you don't see the reward yet, you are not trying to earn any reward either, you just know that it's the right thing to do and you keep yielding to it. It will yield certain results. It says Abraham believed God and it was counted for righteousness. Now what is important for us to do is to see where this righteousness that was imputed on Abraham took place in scriptures. All you have to do is to look at your cross references and you will find that it ties you back to Genesis 15:6 and see how Abraham received the gift of righteousness in his life.

Gen. 15:6 And he believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Was God talking about anything to do with his past failures and his problems? No, all God was talking to him was about who He wants him to be. God gave him a promise. Abraham asked God a question, "Lord you have given me no offspring, indeed one born in my house is my heir." And the word of the Lord came, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then verse 5 The Lord brought him outside his tent. Then the Lord told him this. How personally involved can the Lord be? He brings Abraham outside his tent. Remember Abraham could be conscious of his failures. Has Abraham failed up to this point? Yes, when God first told him to leave his homeland, he didn't obey and leave the land of Ur. He followed his father, Terah to the land of Haran. It was only after Terah died that Abraham finally obeyed the second time God called him again in Gen. 12:1. Acts 7 tells us before Abraham dwelt in Haran God told him to get out of the land of Ur and he didn't fully obey. He was still under the dominion of his father until Terah his father died. According to Joshua 24 Terah was an idol worshipper. So, Abraham was not fully obedient. Then when he came out he still was not fully obedient because Lot was with him. God told Abraham to leave his kinsfolk but he brought Lot along with him. He hasn't fully obeyed the commandment of God. And God kept dealing with him in his life. Then there was the time when he was in Egypt. He told lies to Pharaoh

and he almost lost his wife to him. I mean Abraham had his share of failures and mistakes.

Don't you think Abraham should feel unworthy? Humanly he could have. But yet, God never brought up his past. God didn't come to Abraham and said, "I remember what you did in Egypt. I know that you are not obedient to me when you followed Terah your father to the land of Haran." Did God know all these things? Yes. God knows every inch of us. He knows all your little naughty deeds and all your good points - He knows everything. But God was not concerned about these things. God wanted Abraham to develop the organ of righteousness on his inside. When Abraham said, "Lord, I have no heir," God brought him outside and said, "Abraham, look now towards heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them." He didn't just bring Abraham out and said, "Abraham your descendants will be like the stars." God was very good in His presentation. He just brought Abraham out and said, "Abraham, can you number the stars?" and there was a pause. Abraham must have replied but the reply was not recorded in the bible.

Remember you and I have the advantage of looking backwards. But Abraham didn't know what God was going to say next. You may say that Abraham should know that God had promised that he would have many thousands of descendants when God called him in Gen. 12. Yes, it is true but apparently, that consciousness was not there in him yet. Because up to Gen. 15 verse 1 and 2 Abraham was still not assured. And he had no idea what God was going to say next. What would you do if God came to you and brought you to the R.S.P.C.A. and said, "Can you number the dogs and cats?" Would you be arguing with God? No. If you are a normal obedient person you would probably start counting. Most of us won't be asking question; we would start counting immediately. Now God brought Abraham out and didn't tell him what is the next sentence and God said, "Can you number the stars?" Then Abraham said, "Lord there are so many."

When Abraham experienced the overwhelming fact and truth of the great number of the stars and as he had experienced the emotional feeling of the greatness of the galaxy and the stars in heavens, it would have sunk into his consciousness as God told him that his descendants would be as great and numerous as the stars. If God brought you to the Niagara Falls and said, "Look at this great river. Can you contain it? Well the financial blessings coming by your way will be as great and flowing as this big river," you will be bowled over! You would be flabbergasted. It would take a long time before your consciousness can take it in. It would be overwhelming.

We realize that Abraham had that sense of the greatness of God. "Lord, You mean all my descendants will be as numerous as these stars?" Remember there was a pause in between and that pause was for Abraham to experience emotionally the overwhelming number of the stars and then God said, "Your descendants will be like the number of the stars." And Abraham chose to believe God. "Lord, You said it, I believe it and I receive it," and from that day onwards it was counted as righteousness. As long as Abraham had consciousness of the facts that God brought to him, the promise will be fulfilled. And that consciousness must grow and develop in his life. What I want to show here also is that by the time Abraham reached Gen. 15 there was a level of consciousness that he had grown into. He was yielding to the organ of righteousness and it was growing stronger and stronger in him. The more you yield to the organ of righteousness the greater the righteousness is developed in your life.

Abraham had a moment of failure in Genesis 12 when he allowed Pharaoh to take his wife Sarai into his harem. God intervened by sending plagues to Pharaoh and his house so that he had to return Sarai back to Abraham. God had to protect Abraham's seed in Sarai for His purposes. But in Genesis 13 Abraham did what was right when there was strife between him and Lot in verse 7 and 8. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. What do you think is the right thing to do when two brethren are in strife? What is the right thing to do and what is the legal thing? Abraham legally had the authority over Lot. Abraham could have said, "Lot, you go off and take all your livestock away with you. We bless you - go." That would have been the legal thing to do. He could have exercised his authority by saying, "Lot, since I am older than you in age, I have this right to order you off." He could be right and yet wrong. Legally he was right but morally he was wrong. He could have used hardness to solve this problem but Abraham didn't. Although Abraham legally had the authority over Lot, he didn't exercise that authority but instead gave Lot the first choice. He would not allow that strife to remain. He says, "Lot if you go to the left I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I go to the left. Lot I allow you to make the first choice." Don't you think that was very good of him? Don't you admire people like that? We could say this man has integrity. This man has uprightness. I mean in the natural he may lose out by settling for second-best whilst Lot takes the best. But spiritually Abraham was a giant. He got something inside him that money can not buy. He doesn't have to do it. But he chose to do it. He was yielding to what was right. He knew that he couldn't be short-changed because God was in control.

This Lot didn't even think about Abraham. He is selfish. He looked around and chose the best land. Lot didn't have the sense of telling Abraham, "I think you better take some of the good land as well." Sometimes you go to a church camp and a buffet-style lunch is served. There is a particular dish that everybody loves. But the amount of food on that dish is such that if you take two or three portions, the dish won't be enough for all, especially for those at the end of the queue. You know that for everybody to have a chance you should only take one portion. But your stomach says, "Take three portions, please." So what do you do? You could yield to your greediness and say, "First come first serve," and quickly with two or three scoops take five portions. But definitely, you have not yielded to the organ of righteousness. But you could also think of others, "Since this dish is not enough for all, I will just take one tiny little bit so that others will have a chance after me." And that is your righteousness.

That was Abraham's character. But Lot was not like that. Lot would be that kind of person if there were only one drumstick and he loves drumsticks he doesn't care about others. He says, "Thank you; first come first serve," and grabs that drumstick. So, Lot looks around and the bible says Genesis 13:10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan was well watered. He saw the best place. Have you ever had the experience when some profits, inheritance or prize money had to be divided with a few others, the greedy person who grabbed a bigger share may seem to gain immediately but he loses ultimately. The person who is generous seems to lose on the short end but he gains in the long run. And Lot just doesn't care about Abraham for he just grabbed the best part. Of course, he ended up the loser. He says, "Abraham you see that river there and all that lovely things. I want that part."

Did Abraham felt hurt? I know some of us will say, "Alright take your share." We are trained with a social ethic to share and share alike. We know that we share the one dish that everybody like. We know that it is the right thing for everybody to share. We know that it is the right thing for others to take first and for us to take last. We say to others, "Please take your share first." Then that person actually took your word and took all his share including yours. You said, "I should have taken my share first." You should not, Abraham never felt that way. If you are exercising the organ of righteousness in your life, you will not feel the loss. You will say, "Never mind it was a risk I took." When you give people the freedom, it is a risk you take that they will take advantage of you. Lot just grabbed the best part of the land. That was one of the incidences the bible recorded. I am sure there were many more incidences that are similar.

Abraham yielded to righteousness in giving the first choice to Lot. By the time Abraham reaches chapter 14 of Genesis, he was more conscious of what is right. He is now trying his best to yield to righteousness. In chapter 14, a war took place and Lot was among those captured. Abraham such a good man in spite of all that Lot had done to him. Verse 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. Abraham could have sort of say, "It is none of my business. He took that part. He took the risk. It is now his problem not my problem. Remember I divided it and he took that part. He faced the risk. It's none of my business now. What will be will be. Too bad for you, O Lot, what will be will be." No, Abraham saw this thing happened to his brother. What was the right thing to do? To do nothing is wrong. He took upon himself. It costs him money. It costs him time and he risked his life to go and rescued this Lot who didn't think about him. It was the right thing to do. In the bible if you study the word righteousness, God Himself always rewards the righteous. Just to show you how highly developed his organ of righteousness was, he fought and he won and rescued Lot and the people who were with Lot.

Then the king of Sodom came to Abraham in verse 21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons and take the goods for yourself." Now Abraham had a legal right to take the loot. The loot was now actually his. He had won it by warfare. In those days, warfare was the way they establish territory and goods. He had fought and he won it. Abraham knew that although he fought and won it, it was actually not his. He just rescued them. And the king of Sodom recognized the law of the land at that time. He says, "Abraham, give me the people but all the goods and the spoils are yours." Legally the spoils belonged to Abraham but morally he doesn't want to keep it. His organ of righteousness says, "No. I don't want to prosper by going out in a war and fighting and killing and destroying and taking some people's goods and making these goods my own. I would be sitting down at home looking at this loot everyday and knowing that it belongs to somebody." Abraham says, "If I want prosperity, I want it to come from the hand of God."

Look at his organ of righteousness. Don't you think it was highly developed? And he told the king of Sodom in verse 22 I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing from a thread to a scandal strap. I wouldn't want to take one tiny shoelace. Abraham said, "I do not want it. Take it and go." Why do Abraham do things like that? He was yielding to his organ

of righteousness. There may be many occasions but I have shown you how three times Abraham yielded to the higher consciousness of righteousness.

Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. It means, when you have this kind of righteousness, you wouldn't care about your legal rights that the laws of the land would entitle you to. You wouldn't care what the king of Sodom is offering you. You want to be conscious of the righteousness in your life. If you are not sure whether it's right or wrong ask God. I know something can be legally mine but it may not be spiritually mine. And Abraham yielded to that consciousness three times. And when God see these things God is pleased. If you want to please God and gladden God's heart, yield to the organ of righteousness. There are countless situations around each one of us when we have to face the same challenges to righteousness that Abraham faced - in the ministry, in the business and professional world, in the marketplace, at home, in court, with the government, in international relations – the list is endless.

But if you will yield to the organ of righteousness one day God will say this to you like He said to Abraham in chapter 15:1 After these things, what things? After all these opportunities for Abraham to test out his organ of righteousness. After all these tests and trials where God was watching him how he will re-act in every situation. When Abraham kept choosing the higher law God says, After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." If you yield to this organ of righteousness, God is your reward. And when God is your reward, there are no boundaries. Your reward is as big as God. It may take time to come but when it comes, it's going to be powerful. God is watching. And that was when Abraham got these golden opportunities that we talked about.

When God now wants to reward him, then Abraham looked around and said, "Lord that's not much that I have. I may have all these wealth in goods, livestock and servants but I have no heir." And to Abraham that was the most important thing in his life. What is the most important thing to your life that you consider as a reward? I mean all the herdsmen, the cattle, the gold and the fame meant nothing to Abraham because he had no son. That was Abraham's reward that he wanted so much. What is the reward that you are looking for that is most important to you? God brought Abraham outside the tent and said, "Abraham, look up. Can you number the stars?" And Abraham may have just paused for a moment and said, "God they are too numerous." God said, "Abraham your descendants will be like the stars." Remember Abraham is childless up to that point. Everything in the natural was not in line with what God showed him. Sarah was barren and he was an old man. In the natural, there was no way that could have taken place. But Abraham believed God and it was counted for righteousness.

Now you see what righteousness is. It is believing what God says about you. Even though in the natural it's looks like it is not true, it looked like a lie but righteousness is believing what God says about you. Righteousness is access through faith. Rom. 4:21-22 And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And there it was accounted to him for righteousness. That's the key that God brought forward the gift of righteousness. Now we go to Romans 3:21-22 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed being witnessed by the Law of the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all

who believe. For there is no difference. That is the gift of righteousness that He seeks to impart. Then Romans 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. And it's very clear from all the statements in the book of Romans that the righteousness of God is received through faith.

This means that if you have faith in what God promised you of the stars in heaven, you will have the gift of righteousness that will cause you to reign in life. Each one of those stars represents a part of God's will in your life. All you have to do is believe it. Even though in the natural everything around you doesn't look like it but if you believe it, it will bring you into the position of righteousness and will bring a consciousness of that righteousness into you and God could work in your life to bring His grace. The first step is believing by faith followed by the consciousness of righteousness and then receiving the abundance of grace from God. So through faith you have access into the consciousness of righteousness. And in the consciousness of righteousness, it produces the abundance of grace. And grace is based not on your works but based on the works of Jesus. It is called the gift of righteousness.

Each one of you is standing like Abraham outside his tent. And God has asked you to look up and see whether you can number the greatness of God and all the stars in the heaven. God is not asking you to look into your life but to look up to see all those things that God can do in your life. And God says these are all the things He has for you. Can you believe it? If you can believe it, it is yours. And He will work it out for you.

3. THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the last message, we spoke about the organ of righteousness and how Abraham was sensitive to doing the right thing at the right time. We saw how God prospered him and brought him into the revelation that God had in store for him.

Reading from Gen. 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." And Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring, indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now towards heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him. "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

Up to that point, we have covered some of the verses in the last message. In this message, we want to go on to the other verses and some other things that have to do with this work of righteousness in Abraham's life.

The next question that Abraham asked was very important. Verse 8 Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" God had showed him what He would do. God took him out of his tent and he looked up to the heavens above. Usually in a desert area, the skies are very clear with very few clouds. And he saw an innumerable multitude of stars. As he looked up God said, "Your descendants will be as numerous like the stars." That was an astounding promise that God gave him. There is no way in the natural he could obtain what God showed him that will happen. Many times God has spoken to some of you and given you visions, dreams, promises and words about what He wants to do in your life. All of us have a destiny. And all the time what God showed you is what you are never able to achieve on your own. Like Abraham, you look at the vision and the dream. You know it's physically impossible and maybe scientifically, economically, logistically and spiritually beyond you. Yet God says, "This will come to pass." You have no idea of any possibility but God said it, you believed it and that settles it. It says that Abraham believed God and it was settled. God accounted it to him righteousness.

But here comes Abraham's second question, which you and I need to answer. He is not asking this question because he didn't believe. I know that you can prove to me in chapter 17 how he doubted, how Sarah introduced Hagar to "help" God fulfill His promise of an heir and they brought forth Ishmael. These were acts and signs when they were faltering and struggling in their faith but right at that time when God told him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars, Abraham believed. His mind may have doubted here and there but his heart believed in what God said. He just didn't know how it was going to take place.

Now in that state of faith, in that position of belief in God he asked the next question. Verse 8 Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" What is the seal of the promise that You have for my life that it will come to pass? How does God assure him that it will definitely come to pass and there is no doubt about it? God taught him the

blood covenant. Verse 9 So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year old heifer, a three-year old female goat, a three-year old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the cultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Remember all this happened in order to answer that question, “How will I know that I shall inherit this?”

Verse 13 Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge, afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.

Now when you say there was a smoking oven, don’t imagine some electronic gadgets floating around. In those days, an oven was just a place where there was a fire. The smoking oven was a pillar of fire that went right in between the carcasses.

Verse 18 On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram. Abraham has walked with God for some years. Remember he left the land of Ur in Gen. 12 when he was about seventy-five years old. By Gen. 16, he was about ninety years old. By the time he came to Gen. 17, he was about ninety-nine years old. That means that in Gen. 15 he could possibly be around eighty-five years old. About five to ten years had taken place since God first called him out of the land of Ur. And this is the first time that God made a covenant with Abraham. Because he asked God the question, “Lord, how will I know that I will inherit it? How can I be assured? What is my assurance? Where is the guarantee that this promise would take place?” God answered his question by the blood covenant. A blood covenant is basically an exchange of your life for God’s life given to you. In a covenant, there is an exchange that takes place where we give our all to receive God’s all. If there were no exchange, there wouldn’t be any necessity for a covenant. And God was in a sense saying that it will be based on His ability that He puts into you. A covenant is a gift from God you can receive. A covenant is something made and not based on works. It’s something that looks forward to Jesus Christ the ultimate covenant the Lamb of God. Blood is necessary because blood is a symbol of life. And in a covenant, there is an exchange of life - God’s life for our life. And what God was saying in a sense, “Abraham it will be my gift to you. Abraham it is my present for you. Abraham it is something that depends more on Me than on you. All you have to do is to trust My Word and My covenant. Abraham you don’t have to earn it. Abraham you don’t have to work for it. Abraham it is my gift to you.”

And we want to talk about the gift of righteousness. The force of righteousness is powerful. If you look up the concordance and check up the word righteousness you will find many, many blessings that are associated with righteousness. For example, the Lord will not let the righteous be forsaken. But when we talk about righteousness, we know that the other law of sowing and reaping also operates. There is a cause and effect in everything in life. When you do the right things, you reap the right results.

When you do the wrong things, you reap the wrong results. But the law of sowing and reaping is a different department from the gift of righteousness because many times when we look at righteousness or try to be righteous, many of us tend to miss the whole point. We tend to work up righteousness by our own efforts instead of yielding to the gift of righteousness by God's grace. We want to become righteous by the law of sowing and reaping instead of yielding to the gift of righteousness by the law of grace.

This is why I need a special illustration to convey this to you. Righteousness affects different aspects of life. It's a powerful force. The force of righteousness is what makes kings rule. The scepter of his kingdom is the scepter of righteousness. Righteousness helps kings to rule. Righteousness sets a person high before God. Righteousness brings a person to a powerful position and place. Positions are obtained through righteousness. Righteousness is a powerful force since it rules the nations of the world. Righteousness is a force so powerful that the whole earth is controlled by that force and anyone who flows with that force will reap the benefits of that force.

Righteousness is like a coat. Let's assume that God has given you this blue coat and it represents the gift of righteousness. Righteousness is a gift from God. It attracts goodness, mercy and all kinds of wonderful blessings that will happen when there is righteousness. Based on the law of sowing and reaping, when you are constantly sowing seeds of righteousness, you would reap different harvests of blessings. But what God is giving is not just a blessing based on righteousness. He is actually giving us the gift of righteousness. This gift from God would attract the different blessings of goodness, mercy, prosperity and healing. Goodness, mercy, prosperity and healing will always follow the gift righteousness.

Let's assume that this black coat represents our human righteousness, works and efforts. No matter how hard we try, we will not get these blessings of goodness, mercy, prosperity and healing to follow our human righteousness because this black coat represents works and efforts. It represents our attempt to earn goodness; to earn mercy; to earn prosperity; to earn healing. Now if you want to get these blessings to follow you, you will have to take off the black coat of human righteousness and put on the blue coat of God's gift of righteousness. Once you get hold of the blue coat, these blessings can follow you. They are just attracted to the gift of righteousness.

Let us look into the book of Romans. We want to focus on the word righteousness and understand the full import and power of Romans. We may need to look at Rom. 1 God is not talking about our righteousness. He is talking about a special gift that has a price paid on it that will produce results. Now to get that level of righteousness and make it a gift takes effort. Jesus had to come, live a righteous life, obey all the laws for us etc.

In Rom, 1 it shows us what God's purpose was all the time. Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation (the word salvation includes prosperity, healing, redemption and deliverance from the path of darkness and eternal life etc.) for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God. It's not human righteousness because later on he tells us that there are none righteous. But he tells us that there is a righteousness that is not human righteousness but it is God's righteousness that comes from the throne of God. That righteousness is revealed in the gospel.

That was his basic subject in Romans and he brings us to Rom. 3:21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference. Notice it is not just righteousness. Don't eliminate the other two words - of God. It's the righteousness of God. It is God's righteousness that He wants to give us through the blood covenant.

Rom. 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. Verse 9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. Verse 13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. That is a righteousness that is received by faith not by works. It's a righteousness that is obtained through faith. It is not the righteousness of our own but it is the righteousness of God given to us.

Rom. 5:15-17 But the free gift (the free gift that comes to us through the blood covenant that Jesus made for us) is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive (not those who earn, not those who try but those who receive) abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Paul's whole purpose in Romans was to tell us about the righteousness of God that is now free. Paul's purpose in the book of Romans is not trying to tell us how to be holy. I know the gift of righteousness will lead us to holiness but his purpose was not trying to tell us that. His purpose was to bring to us a revelation of the gift of righteousness that is now ours – this righteousness is so high and so powerful, that millions of human endeavor could never produce the same kind of righteousness. But through one act of His death and resurrection, the Son of God gave the gift of righteousness to us. It is not just righteousness but it is God's righteousness.

II Cor. 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Notice again the phrase - the righteousness of God. Do you realize that Jesus wants to make you the righteousness of God? He doesn't even just want to make you righteous. I know its good to be cleansed, good to be free from sin, good to be touched by the blood of Jesus. I know it is wonderful to have the forgiveness of God, its wonderful to have condemnation removed from our life by one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ. But Jesus didn't just come to clean you up. He came to make you and I the righteousness of God. If it is that simple, why can't we see it?

Let me illustrate it with the negative first before the positive. Lets look at II Cor. 5:21 and look at the other part. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God. From that verse we can go to Isa. 53 and I Pt.

2:24 etc. where it talks about Jesus taking all our sins and our sicknesses and everything upon Himself.

Lets look at the negative part on how we get forgiveness for sin. If anyone of you right now has done anything wrong, the moment you pray you are forgiven. In twenty years of ministry, if I can recall, there were two times that an individual has told me, "Pastor, I think I have committed the unpardonable sin. I can not be forgiven. I have blasphemed the Holy Spirit." I looked at that person. He doesn't look like the devil at all. I asked, "Why do you think so?" He said, "This is what I have done and this is how I lived my life." I said, "If you have committed that sin you won't be here holding my hand and talking to me about it. If you really have committed that sin, you would be right now somewhere out of the kingdom of God rejoicing and having nothing to do with Jesus. But if you could come down to the fact to think that you could have committed that sin you haven't."

Now, how long does it take for God to forgive our sin? Very fast. It is as fast as your prayer. You want to pray slow motion, you can also do that for more dramatic effects. It depends on how fast you pray, how slow you pray. Sometimes you don't have much time to pray. Peter was walking on the water and halfway he was sinking. He had only time to scream. He couldn't say, "O gracious heavenly Father, Lord and Master of the universe, the Uncreated Creator, Thou whose throne is surrounded by the multitude of heavenly hosts etc." By the time he finished, he would have been under the water. He had only time to cry, "Jesus help." And immediately Jesus was at his side holding him. How long does it takes for God to forgive us? Just the moment we pray with all our heart if we really mean it. When you really blew it and you really missed it you pray with all your heart, "Jesus forgive me for my sins," you are immediately forgiven. I know some of you have made promises like, "I won't do that again." And then you go out and do it again and then you pray for forgiveness all over again.

There is revelation that you miss that I am sharing with you today. The moment you pray, you are forgiven from heaven. The fact is many of us don't feel forgiven. The greater the sin the less forgiven you feel. The longer you have been in sin the longer you feel less forgiven. And something in you is not convinced that you are forgiven. The guilt in you sometimes haunts you and the memories still sometimes are there. And Satan dangles it in front of your eyes. Every time you close your eyes, he dangles the picture in front of you. But did God forgive you? He did. Why didn't we feel forgiven and why are we remembering those things? Do you know where the problem actually lies? We couldn't see that that the sin is on Him yet. We can not see that He has taken our sin and transgressions. We keep seeing that the sin is still inside of us hiding in one corner. It says that He made Him sin for us. That's the other side of the picture. He took your sins; He took your sicknesses. He took your iniquity. He took your trespasses. Did He take all the sins of the world? Yes. And the moment you pray, your sin is laid there on the cross. But why don't we feel forgiven when God has forgiven? The problem is we can not see ourselves there at the cross. We can not see our old man on the cross. We can not feel our old man at the cross. We can not feel all the worse part of our being on the cross. That's our problem. No matter how great your failures, how long your failures have been the moment you pray God forgives. But the revelation that your sins and trespasses were on the cross was not complete. You know that the sin is there but you don't feel it. Every time you close your eyes, you can't see your sin laid there on the cross but you could see your sin with you. You

are still carrying it instead of allowing Jesus to take it. And that revelation takes time. Some times it takes fasting and prayer to bring ourselves to feel good about ourselves again. I am trying to help you to receive the revelation that your sin is taken to the cross and your forgiveness is done. You must receive the revelation that your sins and trespasses have been placed there.

Now let us look at the positive side. How is righteousness imparted into our life? The same problem exists. We can not see that the righteousness of God is already in us. It is not a future tense; it's a past tense. Because it takes time for the revelation that we are the righteousness of God and that revelation hasn't sunk in our consciousness, we keep trying to be righteous by our own efforts. It is just like on the other side where you keep trying to earn the forgiveness of sin. You keep trying to make up for it. As long as you don't get the revelation of God's righteousness, you will be trying to obtain righteousness by your own efforts and works. Righteousness is a gift that God has given to us. Jesus is the fullness of the righteousness of God for the church. Even though you may understand that the gift of righteousness is yours to possess, you may not feel the righteousness yet. In that case, you won't be able to see the fullness of righteousness in your own life yet. But you must believe that it is there. Just like on the other side the key is you must believe that you have been forgiven. You hold fast to the fact that when you have confessed your sins He is faithful and just to forgive all your sins. You believe, and then your feelings of being forgiven come later but you must start with believing. On this side, you must believe in the gift of righteousness. As you continue to believe in that gift of righteousness, it will be like that coat that will become more a part of you. In the end, it is continuously learning how to see the gift of righteousness and yielding to the gift. If you don't believe that the gift of righteousness is freely given to you and imputed to you, you won't be able to yield to that gift.

Lets read II Cor. 5:21 again For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And that's what God is waiting for all this time. He is waiting for us to accept, to receive that righteousness and not try to earn it. It is not earned through good works or merits. We are talking about righteousness and it is not earned through Christian activities. It is a gift from God that we accept into our lives but the revelation of it needs to grow in our lives until we see it thoroughly. It is like the blue coat. If you want all those blessings associated with righteousness to come to you, you must wear the blue coat of the gift of righteousness, embrace that gift of righteousness, receive it with your whole heart, keep thanking and praising God for it, walk in that gift of righteousness until it becomes a part of your mind and heart and consciousness. The prayers of a righteous man are effective. I mean it has tremendous power in the spiritual world. If you want it, the key is how to draw upon this righteousness, not trying to earn it but to receive and accept it and trying to yield to it.

Lets look back at Romans and I need to put three words in its perspective. Rom. 3:22 Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference. This righteousness of God is given to you not through your works but through your faith.

There is righteousness, there is faith and then there is grace. Look at Romans 4:4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. Verse 16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace so that the promise might be sure to all

the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

So we have faith and then faith draws and believes in that righteousness. And when you enter into that revelation of that righteousness the grace starts operating.

So lets illustrate it as three steps. Step one faith, you need faith in order to believe it, accept it and receive it. So you step into faith. That faith is to believe in that second area righteousness which is a gift of righteousness from God. It is the position that you have as heirs and joint heirs with Christ. It is the position that Christ has brought you to be in. And all those positions are yours. You have access to them through faith. You develop your faith and your faith helps you gain access into that second area of righteousness. You begin to gain access into that position of righteousness and authority as you accept and receive the gift of righteousness. The reception is done through faith. So between faith and righteousness is reception - you got to receive it. You acquire it through faith and not by works. You don't do something for it; you receive it. You don't earn it but you accept it.

In the natural, we know the difference between a gift and wages. If your employer gave you a check and says that it is for your salary, you would know it was not a gift. That check was your wages. It was what you have earned throughout the month. It is your right. Supposing that another check was added on the top of it and your employer said, "This extra check is a gift for you." You know the difference. You know that you did not deserve the extra check. You know that you did not do any extra work to earn that extra money. I am not talking about working overtime. You still earn wages for working overtime. You know that your qualification did not merit you that. And some times, you are given gifts that are outside your ability to earn. When you get the gift, you didn't look at yourself and say, "I am receiving this gift because of all my qualities." You do not look at your qualities.

When you receive a gift, you thank God for the giver. A gift depends on the giver and wages depend on the laborer. Your capacity to earn depends on your capacity to work. Wages depend a hundred percent on the laborer. Gift depends a hundred percent on the giver. If the giver is a doughnut seller, he may say, "In the spirit of Christmas I am giving away free doughnuts to all orphanages and old folks homes." It depends on his capacity to give. When we talk about helping the needy, we help according to our ability. We don't mean that you have to help until you yourself become needy. It would be like digging a hole to fill up another hole and you got another one to take care now. Nobody wants you to be inconvenienced when you are helping somebody else. But you help as you are able to as God enables you, so that by helping one another we eliminate the needy and poverty in our midst and not create a new one. So the ability to give and the gift depends on the giver. We never in the natural for a moment think about our ability to earn when we receive a gift.

Then why is it that when we talk about the gift of righteousness we oftentimes think about our ability or hard work or efforts to merit that gift of righteousness? In the world when you are given a gift, you don't think that it was anything special you did to receive that gift. You don't think about this. You just thank God for the gift. Yet, when it comes to the gift of righteousness, do you know what most Christians are thinking? They think they have spent much time in prayer. They think they have done much bible reading. I do not say those things are not important. But we have to leave

that for some time towards the ending and just focus on this now. We start think about our Christian requirement, Christian ability and all that. Why do we do all that for? A gift is a gift. All you have to do is to appreciate the gift and say, "Lord, thank you for your gift of righteousness."

Right now, if you receive the gift of righteousness, you are as righteous and able to pray the prayer of the righteous as much as someone who has spent forty days fasting and praying. If you understand this area, you will always walk at that level. I don't undermine spending time with God in Bible reading, meditation, prayer, worship, intercession and fellowship. There is an area there that I will talk about afterwards. But if you understand this gift the moment you wake up you can cast out one hundred demons. The moment you wake up in the morning you know that the world belongs to you. Praise God the blessing of God belongs to me. But some of us the moment we wake up, we go out and do our work, and if the blessings of God didn't come on our work or if the project we are working on didn't go through, some will say, "I know why God is punishing me. I didn't do my morning devotion before leaving the house."

Remember earlier I said that goodness, mercy, prosperity and healing follow the gift of righteousness. Let me remind you once again. I believe in prayers. I spend hours in praying waiting on God. I eat one meal a day. I believe in all those things but do you know what? There is nothing I can ever do to earn a tiny little ounce of power to heal a flu. Nothing we ever do can ever earn the authority or power to do God's work. If we had succeeded that way, we would have already succeeded. If it were that way, the Jews would have already succeeded. That was the revelation the Paul gives, healing, prosperity and all other blessings you can add follow the gift of righteousness. I can show you that even in the Old Testament where Judaism involved more works than grace the same is true. Ask yourself, if God wanted to give blessings to us through our works, then why did the bible conclude that nobody could earn the gift of righteousness? Those who got this gift of righteousness obtain it through the blood covenant. Do you think Abraham deserve those blessings? He got them through the blood covenant. I am trying to show you an important truth that runs this universe. Everything we receive from God is a gift. Now there is a place for the role of works in our Christian lives. I need to touch on that to be balanced. But we must remember we can not earn the gift of righteousness. It is something that can not be earned; it's a gift of God.

I believe David prospered because of the blood covenant and not because of his works. God liked his works but he prospered because it was God's gift. You remember when David did something wrong with Bathsheba God said, "You were a nobody. You were a little shepherd boy."

We are nobody and we don't need God to remind us that. We need to remind ourselves that. No amount of works can earn the results of the gift of righteousness. That is why when you accept the gift of righteousness and the fullness of the working of faith is in you, it will bring you into the righteousness of God. You will see God's righteousness working in you.

When the revelation of the gift of righteousness is not fully revealed in us, we won't have the full comprehension and fullness of the working of righteousness. Then No. 3 grace can not operate. The abundance of grace can not flow in our lives. On one side

is the principle of sowing and reaping. On the side is the principle that if it is of works, then it is not of grace. If it is of grace, it should not be of works. And both principles must harmonize. When you bring two things together, you must see their relationship.

We are harmonizing these two theological schools that for a long time theologians have been trying to harmonize. It has been the same way when we harmonized the five-fold ministry with the nine gifts of the Spirit by putting the five-fold ministry above the nine gifts. The nine gifts empower you to stand in one of the five-fold offices. To harmonize you need to see the relationship between the two streams.

How do we harmonize the law of sowing and reaping with the other law that says if it is grace, then it is not works and if it is works, then it is not grace. The two laws need to harmonize. Here is where the harmony is. On my right hand is the law of grace versus works – that is, if it is of grace, then it is not of works. If its of works its not of grace. On my left hand is the law of sowing and reaping. You reap what you sow. If you honor God, God honors you. All these sub-laws are under the main law of sowing and reaping. Now we bring the two together. Surprisingly the law of sowing and reaping is under the law of grace versus works. Let me prove it. If you don't receive the grace of God first before doing your works, you will be like Cain. You can till the ground. The sweat is coming from your brow. You harvest your crop and you carry them to bring an offering to God. I know his heart was not perfectly right but there was some effort and at least he should reap something. If he were really that bad, he wouldn't bring the offering in the first place. If he were really that bad, he wouldn't have done anything. And all his works were like filthy rags because he didn't use the blood. The other reason is that Cain didn't offer his firstfruits to God. But let me emphasize the blood is important.

Now in Rom. 4 it says that the seal of the gift of righteousness in Abraham's life in the Old Testament was circumcision that came later when he was ninety-nine years old. That's found in Rom.4 and Gen. 17. God called Moses in Exodus 3 when God appeared to him in a burning bush. He gave Moses signs, powers, and miracles to carry out His work to deliver the Jews from Pharaoh. But in the very next chapter, we find that God sought to kill Moses because his children were uncircumcised. What does that tell you? Before you can think about doing any work for God, you better enter into grace first. The law of sowing and reaping doesn't work until you understand and enter into the realm of grace. I know there is a lot of sowing and reaping done by even among those who don't know God. But let tell you it is subject to the law of grace. No matter how hard you try, if it's not God's will, do you think you can benefit from the law of sowing and reaping? If it were so, the law of sowing and reaping may bring you to be what God doesn't want you to be. And sometimes people overdo it instead of yielding to it. Like Jacob he didn't have to tell lies in order to get all those blessings. I don't believe that's the proper way. He could have been honest and inherited all those blessings.

I read the story of Pontius Pilate. He was a crooked, sly man. He gave bribes to obtain positions. He was a skillful politician. And by his scheming, by his crooked ways, and by his pulling strings he maneuvered himself into position and power. That's what history records. When Jesus was standing in front of him on trial, he said these words to Jesus, "Don't you know that I have power to crucify You or to set You free?" Do you know what Jesus said? He said, "You can have no power over Me except what is

given to you from above.” Jesus could have continued and said, “You can have no power even if you bribed, schemed, pulled strings, if God never had a plan for you in that area in the first place.” “You don’t have to scheme and bribe your way to the top. If you have God with you, you would have attained that position anyway. If God didn’t predestine you to have that position, you would never have gotten to it even if you did all the dirty tricks.” Sometimes your great efforts to reach God is like building the Tower of Babel. Mentally we seem to be doing that. God will not permit it and sooner or later, He will bring your Tower of Babel down.

So I bring before you the two theological truths again. The law of sowing and reaping is subject to the grace of God. You know what that makes us - it makes us feel so small. You may want to build the largest church, the most prosperous Christian enterprise and the most ambitious missionary project. To accomplish that, you can fast for eighty days, read the bible for eighty years in order to try to do it but if God never wanted you to do it, He still wouldn’t give you the grace to do that. I have established the fact that the grace of God is above the law of sowing and reaping. Now the grace of God does not remove the law of sowing and reaping. That’s the other extreme. Don’t think it has been removed. It is subject in this manner. The law of sowing and reaping is still operating but it’s subject to the law of grace. What does it tell you when something is subject to another thing? Make sure you observe the first things first before you go to the second. If some things are greater than another, you treat the greater first before the lesser. The law of grace is more important than the law of sowing and reaping if you understand the realm of grace. And that is the realm that very few Christians understand and many Christians have put the order in the reverse way. They wrongly place the law of sowing and reaping above the law of grace. You can never become what God never wanted you to become. You can only be what God wants you to be. The law of sowing and reaping is still operating because if its not there, then grace would be automatic and that wouldn’t be fair because some efforts to labor through the grace of God are still involved.

Now we close by talking about how that effort is brought forth. The key word for the word effort is the word yield. It is allowing the grace that God has for your life to help you to make those efforts. Yieldedness is the key. That means it is not the problem of righteousness. Righteousness is a gift and you must dwell in it until it becomes part of your consciousness. Although you can have the knowledge of it, it has not become part of your consciousness yet. It is just like you can pray for Jesus to forgive your sin - straight away you are forgiven but you don’t feel forgiven. It may be good to spend some time meditating on all that Jesus had done for you until the revelation and feeling of forgiveness is found by your soul as much as by your spirit. It’s more the delay of revelation coming into your consciousness and not so much as God’s part in delaying His forgiving you. In the same manner, there is the gift of righteousness. You understand that is yours. You accept it as yours. You are willing to believe that is yours. But you need to take time to look at it, to behold it, to explore it, embrace it, until it becomes your consciousness. It is yours. It is just like the secret of Christian life in the meditating on the grace of God that He has for you. It works in every area. Lets say in your own private life. All you have to do is to sit down and meditate that Jesus is in you, the Holy Spirit is in your spirit. Even those simple words are so powerful when you meditate. And you sense Him in you. It has an effect on your spirit, soul and body. When you look at righteousness, it is yours. You study scriptures on the fact that it is yours. You meditate on it, you confess it, you believe it,

you receive it, you embrace it it's yours. It is not even your righteousness. It is the same coat that Jesus wore the righteousness of God. The same coat is now yours. That is why Jesus says that the works that I do you will do also and greater works shall you do because I am going to My Father and there is an increase of the supply of the Holy Spirit. The same works because the same coat of righteousness has been given to you.

Lets look at I Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. You know what the labor is. The labor was the labor to yield. Yielding is something that we learn. It takes labor to learn to yield to the righteousness on your inside. It is already there in you but you are learning to yield to it on your inside. To allow your consciousness to tap on it and understand that it's already on your inside. Paul says in Gal. 2:20, It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. The key to this and similar verses is yieldedness. And in the end, it's all tied to the word exchange. We learn the secret of yielding to Him by focusing on Him. We learn the secret of letting go; letting go is an effort. Try teaching someone who doesn't know how to swim. To let go takes a lot of effort on their part. Part of learning to swim is to learn to let go. Learn to relax, to be at peace. The moment you feel the struggle in swimming, it won't work and the learning becomes difficult.

There was an article about some scientists who analyzed the amount of effort that human beings use in order to carry heavy objects. They analyzed the amount of energy that human beings expend when they carry a haversack on their backs. Then they also analyze the villagers who carry heavy loads on their heads. Which do you think is more energy-efficient - to carry on your head or to carry on your back? That is the question that these scientists wanted to find out. Have you seen some of these tribal people and the way they carry things on their heads? When they cross the road, they look right and left and then they cross the road with the heavy loads still on their heads. Some of those things on their heads are huge and big. But they walk with such grace. It came out in a travel magazine called "Discover" some time ago. One curious scientist wanted to find out which takes more effort. He found out that it takes far less energy to carry a load of say, 50 pounds, on the head as compared to carrying that same load of 50 pounds on the back, which takes up far more energy. And yet, you would find most shoestring travelers preferring to carry their haversacks on their backs. Curiously enough, they are called backpackers. They would see more of the world with more energy if they carried their haversacks on their heads, like the natives.

Having answered that question the next question is important. Why does it take less effort? The reason is called the parable of the cockroach. Cockroaches have six legs. Can you imagine how you would run if you have six legs. The same scientists wanted to find out how the cockroaches run with six legs. They took a video camera and videotaped a cockroach running to see how cockroaches run. Surprisingly they found out that when cockroaches are walking, they walk on all six legs. But when they are running, they run on two legs.

Now I am going to tell you why carrying with the head is easier and better than carrying on the back. It is because when we carry loads on our heads, we have to constantly play the balancing act. Some times when the head is tilted forward a bit

and as the object is falling forward, one of our legs goes forward to balance the load up. As the load is falling forward all the time, the body has to maintain a constant sense of balance. In a sense, the body is flowing with the law of gravity. As the gravity pulls the object downwards and forwards, the legs have to keep going forward and so the body will feel a little bit of the weight of the load. But when you carry the load on your back, one hundred percent of its weight is on you. And the gravitational force is pulling the weight of the load through your body. That is the reason why it takes just a small energy to carry a load on your head as compared to carrying it on your back.

Let us illustrate it on the spiritual side. Sometimes when you don't know how to labor correctly in the spiritual realm, and you do not know that the law of sowing and reaping comes under the law of grace, you would be wasting a lot of your labor. You may be expending ninety percent of your prayer trying to get something that is already given to you through the grace of Jesus Christ. Instead, we should be just spending ninety percent of our time with God learning how to yield and this is a different thing. We should be teaching people that the secret of obtaining spiritual things is to let go and learn how to flow with the force of righteousness that is already your birthright. The law of gravity is already there. In life, we have to expend much effort. But we need to know the force of righteousness is already on our inside. It is like a force that is already propelling you. If you spend ninety percent of your devotional time praising and thanking and worshipping God for what He has given, you would find that His blessings are easily flowing into your life. But you would find it very strenuous and weary interceding and groaning for God to release His blessings to you. Besides that, it may even take a longer time for His blessings to flow to your life. You don't intercede and groan for His blessings but you do intercede and groan for sinners and for the nation. You praise and thank God for His blessings but praising and thanking God for sinners are not appropriate. See the difference? Many Christians apply different rules of prayer to different needs and petitions in a wrong way.

Let me point to this fact. If God predestined you to do something don't you think all the energy, resources, influences and all the supply to do those things are already a part of God's provision to fulfill that predestination? If I send my children for camping, I would supply them all the necessary things that are required for camping as much as I know how. If I am preparing them to go camping and if I didn't pack any torch lights, sleeping bags, tents, nothing except for a towel and swimming shorts, don't you think I have prepared them wrongly? Spiritually and naturally, whatever God's will is in your life, there is already a force of righteousness and the destiny of God arranging every supply to fulfill that will. All you have to do is co-operate with God and not resist God. By doing nothing but listening to God trying to find His will, you are already positioning yourself to find out what God has already prepared you for. He will not ask you to do something that He has no intention of providing the necessary supply to you. He gives the talents, the personality and all those things that are required part and parcel of His call for your life. It has to do with our talents, our temperance, our behavior, our abilities, our gifting, all these things God will prepare you for it. There is still effort and there is still labor. But there is a difference when you labor under the grace. You learn to flow and yield to what you know is the right thing. There is still an effort to yield. That is why the bible calls it the labor into the rest. You do not carry the load on your back, heaving and panting and utilizing your

own strength and energy to fulfill God's will. Instead, you let the Head carry the load and as the Body, you flow along with the gravitational force of righteousness.

So I close with Eph. 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved,) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (All these summarize your position in God.) That in the ages to come, (which means in our time. In the times right up to the glorious church all ready for the rapture.) In the ages to come He might show, (not your greatness, not your righteousness, but,) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship. It is God working in us.

Every time I read the book of Acts, I don't see it as the acts of the apostles. I see it as the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles. Every time when a person shares a testimony of what God has done, it is not what that person has done in God but what God has done through that person. And everything in your Christian life, you should never ever see it as your effort. Always see it as what God has done through you and with you. It is always God working in our life.

It says For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. Now if Paul didn't continue that verse with the phrase for good works, it would give rise to some theological misunderstanding. Because it looks like we have been saved by grace and there is no more need for good works. You must enter the position of grace first and understand that you are created for those good works and if you stop there, people might say that they are saved by grace but there is no need for good works. We have to have works but in the manner of what Paul says in I Cor. 15:10 it is the grace of God in me that does it. Paul did make efforts. You read I Cor. 15 again it says he did labor abundantly through the grace God has given but he says, "Yet not I." The key is the word yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.

The heavy burden that you have if you understand that is God's will in your life, if its in the right place, right position, it will be effortless for you to carry it. Some people say that being a pastor a very difficult job. I will say, "Yes, realistically and naturally, the job of a pastor is difficult but when God gives you that calling, you would enjoy being a pastor." I may feel tired at times, I may feel that I wish I had more time, but I still enjoy the office of a pastor. I enjoy ministering to people. I enjoy counseling people because I am called to this office. There is an effort. But it's a joy in that effort.

Now the secret is in verse 10 which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Do you notice the works are prepared and you just walk in them? You still have to walk but it is already done. You just have to wear them. God never ask you to make the coat. God never ask you to go and buy the cloth. God never ask you to make all the effort. God never ask you to sew it. God says all you have to do is wear it. The works are already done prepared beforehand before you and I were born. Now if its God's will for you to be a swimmer God would have provided the swimming ability. Do you know it still takes effort to exercise that swimming ability? But here it is the good works that God has prepared you just walk in them.

Let me summarize for you the keys again: faith, the gift of righteousness, the abundance of grace. Exercising faith in the gift of righteousness that God has given will release the abundance of grace to reign as a king in life through Christ Jesus. We must receive all these three keys. Those who receive them will see the fullness of what God has for their life. What is God's will for your life? Even when you are doing nothing about God's will every instrument, every person that is required to help you fulfill the will of God, every amount of finances required, everything is already prepared. All you have to do is to discover it and flow in it. That takes effort. But it's a different kind of effort. It's a labor into rest. When you are in it, it will find that it is like a harmonious flow. Paul says I labor more abundantly yet not I but the grace of God was with me. A lot of people can see the first part but they can not see the last part because they are not yielded to the gift of righteousness and His grace. If you yield to them, the first part and the last part of 1 Cor 15:10 becomes operative in your life – I labor more abundantly, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

4. THE SCEPTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the last message, we concluded with what it means to have Christ living in us. It is not we but Christ who lives in us and we have spoken about how that the secret of the Christian life is in yielding to Jesus Christ living in us. In this message, we want to look at righteousness and show forth how righteousness could cause us to rule and reign in Him.

Our key verse is taken from the book of Romans 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One that is Jesus Christ. They will reign in this life. They will be kings and priests before God over every circumstance, problem and over every mountain. They will rule and reign not in the next life, not when they go to God in heaven, not after the rapture but they will reign now in this life with Christ Jesus because of the gift of righteousness.

Let us look at Heb. 1, which has a quotation from the book of Psalms. We see why and how righteousness causes us to reign. Heb. 1 and this quotation is taken from the book of Psalms 45. Heb. 1:8 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. A scepter is a symbolic representation of the authority and power of the king. That scepter is not a physical scepter. It is a spiritual scepter that is called the force of the power of righteousness that comes to us as a gift through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord and King of the universe. The scepter of God's kingdom is the scepter of righteousness. And that is why righteousness causes us to rule and reign. That's how kingdoms are born and kingdoms are established. The book of Proverbs tells us that righteousness exalts a nation. It is the force of righteousness that is the real power of kingship and authority in this life, in the natural world, and in the spiritual world because God made this world after His pattern.

Now kingly authority is any form of authority and influence that God gives to us in our life, whether in the business world or in the political arena or church ministry. The key to the authority you have to lead people is in righteousness. Your scepter is a scepter of righteousness. As long as righteousness rules in your heart, you will forever be a ruler. Do you notice before Joseph became the Prime Minister to Pharaoh, he already had righteousness ruling in his life? When he was in Potiphar's house Joseph was faithful, diligent and righteous. When he was tempted by Potiphar's wife to commit sin he said, "No, I will not sin against God." Why did he do things like that? It was because righteousness reigned in his heart. And my friends as long as righteousness reigns in your heart one day you will reign as a king. And God will cause your righteousness to rule over others to help them to establish others. Righteousness is what builds a nation. When a person is in prison, how much lower than that can you get? Shut up as a criminal for a crime he did not commit, righteousness still ruled in his heart. You could be a lowly worker in any place, or a slave, or be in any position in your profession in your life, in your ministry, but if righteousness rules in your heart then you will rule and reign one day. God will promote you. You will rise up above others because God always promote righteousness. The scepter of righteousness is the scepter of God's kingdom.

We see Jesus having the same scepter of righteousness in Heb. 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. Why, because He love righteousness. It is good to have righteousness. There is always a right way to do certain things. We thank God for ___ who came home on Christmas and got right with his family. Tomorrow he is going to rectify and register his marriage so that he can have children the proper way. In the eyes of the Government, he would in a sense be recognized in his family. But it is the righteous thing to do to get his marriage all registered and done with. And God will bless you ___ because you get all these things right. It is correct to do it for righteousness' sake. When we walk in righteousness and righteousness rules in our heart then God will cause us to rule and reign in this life.

Lets look at some examples of righteousness and how it helps some people rule and reign. Lets look at David's life and see how righteousness rules in his life. We could study the Psalms to see David in his righteousness. Psalms 112 he talks about his heart being fixed or established in God. Verse one, Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. Who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth. Look at that all your children will rule and reign. Blessed is the man who obeys the Lord's commandments, who follows after righteousness.

His descendants will be mighty on earth. God will even cause your children to be mighty upon this earth. The generation of the upright or righteous will be blessed. As long as we are righteous, we will be blessed.

Wealth and riches will be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. How powerful is the force of righteousness. No matter how dark the times can be - recession, depression, political turmoil, upheavals, wars etc. can hit the world, yet in the midst of darkness the righteous shall have light. Remember, the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of God's kingdom. We will rule and reign as long as we are righteous.

Unto the upright there arises light in darkness. He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he will never be shaken. The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established he will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies. He has dispersed abroad. He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. His horn will be exalted with honor. The wicked will see it and be grieved. He will gnash his teeth and melt away. The desire of the wicked shall perish.

God will promote those who love righteousness. And David love righteousness. David lived his life in righteousness as much as possible. I know David had his failures. But overall, David loved righteousness. I want to encourage you that as long as you love righteousness you may fall here and there but get up as quickly as David did. The moment David realized that he was wrong he got it right quickly and went after righteousness. And God loved him. In fact, every succeeding king after David was measured by the standards set by David.

Look at the book of I Kg. 15 although king Asa did not ascend to the heights that David scaled, but yet there was a measure of greatness in his life. I Kg. 15:11 Asa did

what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did his father David. Now the story of the kings after the death of Solomon was very interesting. All the Northern kings were evil kings. But some of the Southern kings were evil and some were good. The interesting thing is whenever a good king comes the Southern kingdom become great. Then when a good king dies and the next king is evil, the nation would fall apart and degenerate. Then another king can inherit a mess created by the former evil king. And if the king is good, out of the mess God creates a good kingdom again. When I read about these kings coming and going, some great, some evil, some righteous, some mediocre, but one of the things that we see is this. It was not really the kings who rules. It was the righteousness in their heart that made them rule. It was because they were righteous that they became great kings for God. And as long as their hearts were righteous and righteousness reign, the kingdoms were blessed by God. Then there were several bad kings in a row, followed all of a sudden by a good king. Which good king wants to inherit a kingdom destroyed by evil from his forefathers? Any normal person would be discouraged. But when a good king comes along who loves righteousness, that scepter of righteousness would promote him and exalt the nation. Righteousness will rule and reign. You can inherit a mess and your righteousness will turn the situation around and make it beautiful. You can take over some chaotic situations caused by unrighteousness and it can become beautiful. It is righteousness that reigns. The scepter is a scepter of righteousness.

Lets look at some of the good kings and how they rule and what took place. The next king is king Hezekiah that we jump forward to look at. Remember king Hezekiah inherited a broken down kingdom. And during king Hezekiah's time, the Northern kingdom was wiped out. I mean it would have cause great fear among the Israelites. Imagine there was a Northern kingdom with ten tribes and the Southern kingdom got two tribes. Imagine as you inherit the throne of the Southern kingdom the whole Northern kingdom was already wiped out and conquered. What is the situation? Don't you feel small? To make matters worse, the state of the kingdom he inherited was bad due to a series of bad kings who left behind a legacy of corruption, moral disorder, anarchy, Baalism, idol worship, poverty and many other abominations.

It could be almost like inheriting war torn and badly scarred Bosnia now. People look at it and say, "What a mess. How can we build the nation up again?" Yes, you can because the scepter of righteousness is a scepter of God's kingdom. You can inherit the worse things in the world today and who knows there could be leaders hearing this message. And you could be inheriting a terrible state of affairs but as long as righteousness rule in your heart God can restore greatness to your little nation again. And he who loves righteousness will reign in this life.

It can be applied to any situation. Maybe you inherited or took over some business that is messy. And you say there is no way you could redeem it. But wait a scepter of righteousness is a scepter of God's kingdom. You are going to bring God's rule and reign there. And as long as righteousness comes and you bring righteousness in I don't care how messy it is those who have inherit the gift of righteousness and the abundance of grace will rule and reign over every situation in his life.

And king Hezekiah took over at the age of twenty five years. II Kg. 18:2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. Now

you notice David was the measurement of righteousness. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut off the wooden images. Let me tell you when a king does that don't you think it will annoy some people also. He may upset some people. If you are a leader you don't think about upsetting people you think about whether you are pleasing God and doing what you know your conscience tells you the right thing to do, doing what you know to be the righteous thing. A leader who is afraid to make righteous decisions can never be a leader for long. But if you know what is right, what is righteous and you follow it after your heart even to the point of sacrificing your career, God will take care of you. David says he has been young and he is old but he has never seen the righteous forsaken nor left without food or bread. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger but they who trust the Lord will never lack any good things as righteousness will prevail. Just do what is right in your life, follow after your conscience like the apostle Paul says that he has always lived right according to his conscience. Whether it was a popular thing to do or an unpopular thing to do, do what is righteous and God will bless you. God will take care of popularity, God will take care of criticism, God will take care of all that people throw at you. As long as you walk after righteousness God will line up everything because His kingdom is the kingdom of righteousness.

Seek the Lord, seek His kingdom, seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added onto you. Righteousness is a powerful force. II Chron. 32:23 And many brought gifts to the Lord at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter. Imagine he inherited nothing and he became something in one lifetime. It doesn't matter what your inheritance is. It doesn't matter whether you were born with a silver spoon or wooden spoon or even born without any spoon. It doesn't matter whether you have education or no education. It doesn't matter whether you had it easy in life or had it hard. The most important thing is if you allow righteousness to rule your heart right where you are, from nothing God will make something strong, beautiful, and prosperous.

Many a time as a pastor, I have counseled and pleaded with some people who I know were going into sin. I have told businessmen who were about to do something wrong, "Even if you are about to lose everything because of righteousness, let it go because God will still bless you." It is hard for some to let go and obey their conscience when what their eyes see and what their sense knowledge tells them are so tempting. Yet sometimes some people feel so hard to give up what is wrong. They are afraid to lose money, rankings, status and popularity. It is worthwhile giving everything up for righteousness. If you live and die knowing you lived for righteousness and you have done the right thing in your live, you will be able to rest peacefully. Sometimes people say, "I want to get all these things first then I will think about God." That's the opposite. If you think about God now, then God will help you get all those things. And some people just don't want to live for God. They say, "I live for God later. I want to do this and get all that I desire then I think of God." But instead, they lose everything.

But you think about God first and say God is first, His commandment is first, let's obey His commandments, let the other things take care of themselves. Isn't it very easy? God doesn't make it very difficult. God never ask you to go and climb Mount Everest. All He asks is listen to your heart, listen to your conscience, listen to Jesus in

you, listen to the righteousness in you and yield to it. And in your most difficult times to make a decision, it's not difficult. Just listen on your inside and do what you know your conscience says on your inside. And the rest will take care of itself. Even though things may seem darker and gloomier, if you follow righteousness in the end it will all work out together for good because you love God and you are called according to His purpose.

Let us look at another king here after Hezekiah. Sadly, there was a bad king Manasseh who almost destroyed everything until he repented towards the end of his life but that was too late. Then you have another king II Kg. 22 again a series of bad things take place. By the time Josiah reigns, everything has been destroyed. II Kg.22:1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. He followed after righteousness. In his time, the temple was so neglected that there was a great rubbish dump in the temple. Even though he inherited a dumpsite of a kingdom, totally destroyed and annihilated, because he loved righteousness, God promoted him. Some of you could be called to the ministry. Maybe you are called to pastor, evangelize or take over a ministry that is all messed up. Remember if you love righteousness the rest will take care of itself. God can turn a dumpsite into a kingdom. The scepter of righteousness is a scepter of His kingdom.

In the bible, God did provide guidance for the kings so that righteousness can reign. He told Moses to write down commandments for the kings. When a king starts reigning, the first thing he must do is to write down the rules and regulations of God. Look at the book of Deuteronomy. God was concerned. God knew righteousness is what helps kings to rule. In Deut. 17:18 Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom. Now that could represent anything. Maybe God is going to bless you until you become the President or a CEO of a multi-conglomerate company. Or God is going to promote you in your department or whatever you are in charge. Remember don't take pride in that. The first thing to do is humble yourself before God and thank God for the greater responsibility He gives you. One of the first things you should do is to set your heart to follow after righteousness. The higher you are the more the pressure is against you to follow righteousness. But you have to follow righteousness. And when you sit on the throne of your kingdom or the throne of your position the first thing you must do it says in verse 18 Also it shall be, when he sits on throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted about his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and then he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

God gives us the situation. It is not the king that rules - it is the righteousness that rules. If the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of His kingdom, whoever holds the scepter is king. If you want to be king, you must get hold of the scepter of righteousness. You get hold of the scepter. If you want to rule and reign in your life get hold of the scepter. And the scepter is not mysterious. The scepter is a scepter of

righteousness. It is something that the common man in the street can do. It is something that we can do in our life right now. Get hold of the scepter of righteousness and the scepter will lift you up and promote you and build you and God will cause you to reign in your life, in your ministry, in every work of your hand.

Now an interesting note for us to pay attention to is the fact that in the Old Testament people needed guidance because they were not born again. Moses gave them this piece of advice in the book of Deut. 12:28 Observe and obey all these words which I command you that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God. When you do all these things, God will prolong your days.

Turn over to the book of Judges, which is the story of what happened after Joshua died and the Israelites inherited the land. Anarchy and disorder set in which should not have happened. These words or phrase occurs several times in the book of Judges. Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. The people decided for themselves what was right and did it. But they need a standard. They need an absolute of what is right and what is wrong. Many times the problem is that each one of us feels right differently. Therefore, we need a standard; we need the Bible. We need the Word of God to tell us the standard. Otherwise, everyone will be saying, "I think this is right." And that was what happened in the book of Judges. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes. They had no king to rule with a scepter of righteousness.

And in Deut. 12:8 You shall not at all do as we are doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes. God said, "Don't do what you think is right. Do what the commandment of the Lord said is right." And that's what David understood. You know what David said in Psalm 119 David asks, "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed to God's Word." When you hide God's Word in your heart, God's Word will be the righteousness that guides us.

The difference in the Old Testament was that they had no new born again nature in their being. They needed an external guidance and they needed the Word of God. So God told them in Deut. 12, "Observe and obey all these words which I command you. The standard I give to you are the standards of right and wrong. Don't every man do what is their own thing and decide for themselves what is right and wrong. What did my Word say?" What did the bible say? The bible is the absolute standard of right and wrong. If you want to rationalize and intellectualize any moral standards, you can justify almost any sin, for example even making homosexuality acceptable. The fallen mind can not find what is right and wrong because fallen man has no yardstick of morality. Only our Creator tells us what is right and what is wrong. We have to accept His absolute standard. God says, "This is right and that is wrong." His Word is right. So in the Old Testament they were slightly different. In the Old Testament, the gift of righteousness had not been revealed yet.

So God says don't every man do what is right in their own eyes. God gives them the Word and He gives them kings, prophets and priests. And some of the prophets were bad. Some of the kings were bad. Some of the priests were bad. But there were some good ones who could lead the people. As long as there were good ones to lead, the nation rose up in strength and power. When there were bad ones the nation fell. They rose and fell like the waves of the ocean according to the tide of righteousness. When

righteousness came, they rose. When righteousness receded, the nation fell. Righteousness is what helps us rule and reign.

In the New, it is different. Something took place in the New Testament. In the New Testament God reveals the gift of righteousness. Turn with me to the book of Rom. 3:21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. That means that God was already pointing to the righteousness of God through the law of the Old Testament. God was not pointing to your righteousness or my righteousness. If we were in the Old Testament and we kept the commandments of God, we would be considered righteous. We would reign by our own righteousness. And God was not pointing to our righteousness. No, in the Old Testament He was witnessing, He was telling by the law and the prophets that the righteousness of God was coming, that even our own standards of righteousness can not be accepted. Since even our conscience has been defiled by sin, we have to accept God's standard and God says, "Meditate on My word, obey My commandments, follow My commandments."

Now I showed you earlier that the estimation of each king was based on David's righteousness. David did what was right in the eyes of God. The next question is, "Was David's righteousness due to his keeping the law?" You and I know that David was not perfect. So by what ability did he have? David was the one who brought Israel to its greatness. Every king after him was measured against the standards set by David. David became the standard by which every succeeding king was measured. How did this come about? Let me share a secret that David found. Even David in the Old Testament had a glimpse of the gift of righteousness. And that glimpse was enough to establish a force in his life. It was not David's righteousness that he reigned by. He had a glimpse of the gift of righteousness. He had the righteousness from God that he received by faith.

Look at Romans. You see Abraham was not the only one who saw the gift of righteousness, by which righteousness was imputed to him and not earned. In Rom. 4:6-8 Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart of works. Look at that it's the gift of righteousness that he had a glimpse of. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven. And whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin. He discovered the gift of righteousness. I am here to tell you that every man and woman of God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament were holy and righteous not by their own holiness. They were holy and righteous because the gift of righteousness affected them, changed them, changed their emotion, changed their thought pattern, changed their lives. It was the nature of God in them. It was a gift of righteousness. And that gift was not revealed in the Old Testament except to a few. That is why God said, "You shall not do what is right in your own eyes. You shall follow My Word." But those who love Him, follow Him and have a heart after God, God reveals the gift of righteousness.

Just one glimpse of the gift of righteousness changed David so much that he understood, "O God I have sinned, O God no matter how I live I can never please You. O God no matter what I have done for you I can never reach up to your standard. O God blessed is the man to whom you count as sinless. In other words, righteousness in Your sight is by Your gift." And that revelation of the gift of righteousness that David had is what changed him. David yielded to that righteousness as much as he

was able to in the Old Testament. And after that, every king after him was measured by that righteousness.

From time to time when he first became the king he yielded to the right thing. He knew the right thing to do was to bring God's Ark back into the capital city. He did what was right. There were times when he fell when he didn't yield correctly. He yielded to the wrong passion. But there were times when he yielded correctly. It was not David. When the Old Testament said that such-and-such a king did right as their father David did, it was not referring to the righteousness of David. It was the gift of righteousness given to David through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not in him. He was upon him, influencing him and imparting the gift of righteousness. So that as David yielded to the gift of righteousness, he did the right thing. And that ability was still there. Because if it was only David's righteousness, that would mean that when David died, he would have taken his righteousness with him to his grave. But if it's the righteousness of God, any king after that can continue with that same gift of righteousness, that same scepter of righteousness and reign by constantly yielding to that gift and scepter of righteousness. Now you know why every king's reign was measured against the reign of David. David had yielded to the gift of righteousness to the highest measure, and now God expects every succeeding king to equal or exceed that measure.

But God promised something even more beautiful in the New Testament. Look at Heb. 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother saying, know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. The reason in the New Testament for the gift of righteousness to exist is to let it become a part of our heart and our mind.

II Cor. 5:21 Jesus became sin so that you and I can become the righteousness of God. This is something that the Old Testament people couldn't have. And He didn't ask you to live your life according to your ability. He says the scepter of righteousness is a scepter of His kingdom. And He says that His scepter is now a gift to every one who will receive. He didn't say that you have to make yourself qualify as a king before you get the scepter. It's the scepter that will make you a king. You will rule and reign through the gift of righteousness. You don't have to wash yourself, cleanse yourself, do good works, although those things we will continue to do because of His love and compassion flowing. He says if you want to rule and reign in life, the secret is the scepter of righteousness, which is the scepter of His kingdom. What do you need to do to rule and reign? Do good works and try to follow His commandments? No, all you need to do is to take hold of the righteousness and hold it to your bosom. Let it saturate into your heart, saturate it into your mind and let it change you. Yield to it and it will cause you to rule and reign in your life. What a tremendous gift God has given us! David had a glimpse of it. But my friends you don't have to just have a glimpse of it. God has promised us this gift of righteousness under the new covenant. The promise in the new covenant is the promise of righteousness working in your heart and mind as a gift. The same promise is repeated again in Heb. 10. And the

secret of a Christian life is in yielding to the gift of righteousness and allowing it to change your life.

5. THE SEED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The main purpose of teaching a series on righteousness is for us to develop a consciousness and conviction of the gift of righteousness in our life, in our talk, in our walk, in our work and in our action. We want to be conscious of the authority and presence of God that flows through us as a gift so that we will know that we rule and reign in this life. We have authority in Jesus' name over every sickness and disease, over every demon and power, over all the natural forces in this life, over every mountain and over every valley. We want to be conscious of His authority and righteousness of God that He has placed in our lives. That we stand before Jesus without condemnation. That when God looks at us He looks as if we were Jesus walking on this earth not because of our works, not because of what we have done but because the gift of righteousness has been imparted into our lives.

Rom. 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

We talk about ruling and reigning in righteousness in Jesus. It is the gift of God. God gives it to us as a gift. It is given free to you to rule and reign. And we need to be conscious of that gift that we have received.

In this message, we want to look at what we call the seed of righteousness. In other words, we want to look at the growth of righteousness. It is not the growth of merit but it's a growth of a seed. Righteousness is a gift of God that He deposited into our heart.

Lets look at Rom. 3 and we want to tie it back to the last message and pick up from there. Rom. 3:21-24, But not the righteousness of God apart from the law. Please note the righteousness of God is apart, separated, different from that which is from the law. You see there is an area of righteousness from the law that pertains more to the righteousness of works. When God says in His Word that your righteousness is as filthy rags, He is talking about two kinds of righteousness - a righteousness that comes through the law and a righteousness that comes as a gift from God. Both are related in that the law came from God and can only be fulfilled by God's grace and strength. But there is a law that is revealed through Moses. But it says now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed. It is now revealed in Jesus. Jesus has become our righteousness. Jesus is the revelation of the fullness of the righteousness of God. The first statement that he made here is the righteousness of God apart from the law.

Note the second phrase it says here being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. That means that even in the Old Testament there was an evidence of the gift of righteousness being imputed upon His people. The word imparted has the sense of receiving inside. The word imputed has the sense of receiving as a covering. Even though the time for Jesus has not come yet to reveal the fullness of the majesty, holiness, righteousness of God, yet even in the old covenant there have been glimpses of that righteousness of God, which is not the righteousness of man or that of the law. So you have two phrases. The first phrase is apart from the law. That tells you its different. Its something that is different. Its not produced by the law. The law does not manufacture it. It is apart from the law.

The second phrase that Paul brings to you is that it is being witnessed. It has been seen. There were glimpses of it in the Old Testament. Some Old Testament folks like Abraham and David saw flashes of that gift of righteousness and even experienced the gift of righteousness of God apart from the law. There were little glimpses that God gave to them until the day of Jesus' first coming. It just like you give presents to your children on Christmas Day and since they could only open the boxes on Boxing Day, they would wonder what's in the box. Your son would eagerly ask, "Is it a toy car? What shape is it? Is it something to play?" So he wants to find out what it is. He may even want to shake the box to hear what it's inside the box. There are glimpses of the gift of righteousness in the Old Testament that God showed in order to reveal His ultimate Christmas present to us in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. But there were glimpses of that righteousness from God in the Old Testament.

I bring to you the revelation that Paul had - no one could be righteous through the law. There is no one who could actually live to fulfill the law. The law was given not because we could fulfill the law a hundred percent. But the law was given to prevent the world from coming to further destruction. It acted as a barrier, a barricade to hold back further lawlessness for a moment of time. For example, if this pulpit were falling in my direction, I would hold it back for a moment. But by my holding it back is not a permanent solution. It's a temporary solution until some of you come up and help me to put it back properly. Sometimes you have structures that are in danger of falling down, like the Tower of Pisa. The engineers may have to put up temporary supports to prevent the structure from falling further. Now the temporary support is for a short time. It is important for it to come. You may ask, "Then why did God give the law?" It was necessary because if the law didn't come the world may not survive till Jesus reveals Himself.

As Paul explained in the book of Galatians, the law is given to hold back the process of sin and delay it. But God knew that no one could ever fulfill it. So tells us in Rom. 3:22 even the righteousness of God; through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; then verse 23 includes man of God, woman of God, people who knew Him in the Old Testament, people who knew Him in the New Testament he says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

In Romans 1, it tells us here in a different way. Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. He talks about the revelation that was about to come.

Romans 3 again he concludes in verse 10 onwards As it is written: There is none righteous no, not one; there is none who understands; No one, you ask, "What about the Old Testament folks?" None of them was able to reach what God really wanted them. Some of them have done the perfect will of God but none could reach into the heavenly standard that God has for man to be reconciled to God. So how did these other men in the Old Testament function? How did all the prophets, the priest, the kings, and the good people function? They functioned through a gift of righteousness. They had a small little impartation of the gift of righteousness but it was not given as much as in the New Testament.

In Rom. 4 it tells you. In the last message, we showed how David had that gift of righteousness. It was the same with Abraham. Rom. 4:2-3 For if Abraham was

justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now isn’t that a gift of righteousness? It is. It is not in the full sense of what we can receive of the revelation of Jesus Christ. But it is definitely a gift. Abraham didn’t own it. These were some of the glimpses of the gift of righteousness that Paul talked about when he mentioned that the Law and the Prophets witnessed to. It was the righteousness of God apart from the law that is being revealed.

It was the same with Noah. Of course, Noah was a god-fearing man compared to the other men of his time. But when his life is compared to God’s standards of righteousness, he still would not qualify to be saved. That is why the book of Genesis did not say, “Noah was a very godly man who never did anything wrong. Therefore God was obligated to rescue him from judgment by means of the ark.” Instead, the book of Genesis says, “Noah found grace (or favor).” When the bible says, “Noah found grace,” what does it mean? It means that Noah had the gift of righteousness imputed to him because he believed God. That was one of the early glimpses of the gift of righteousness found in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament heroes of faith had the gift of righteousness. I use this word as carefully as the bible uses it. In the Old Testament, the gift of righteousness is imputed but in the New Testament, it is imparted. Even Paul used the scriptures very carefully. In Rom. 3:22 he says to all and on all. That is imputing and an imparting. In the Old Testament, the gift of righteousness can not live inside them. They only received a small little token of that gift of righteousness and it was imputed on them.

In the last message, we also counted David among those who had that revelation of the gift of righteousness. We talked about the scepter of righteousness and rule and reign of righteousness. Righteousness will cause you to reign. Its not really the king himself that reign – it is the righteousness that gives them the ability to reign. Now Paul wrote in Romans 4:6, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man. Paul did not say the blessedness of the man who earns righteousness nor the blessedness of the man who keeps the law and therefore merits favor with God. But he says the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works. Even David had an understanding and a revelation of the gift of righteousness and to receive it from God. He allowed it to flow in his life and therefore he ruled and reigned.

What we are saying before you is one of the greatest revelations of Christianity. Even some Christians today study Paul’s writings but don’t understand the revelation he has brought. The revelation is that the righteousness of God is a gift that we need. No one can function without that gift of righteousness, either in the Old Testament or New Testament. So all the Old Testament heroes of faith had this gift of righteousness imputed upon their lives. It was in a sense not them but it was the gift of righteousness of God that caused them to be what they were. That is quite a revelation. In other words, they were what they were because of the gift of righteousness. They received that gift of righteousness first and then they became righteousness by yielding to that gift. They didn’t become righteous first and then receive the gift of righteousness later. The same principle that as many as received Him to them He gave power to be the children of God also applies here. As many as receive the gift of righteousness from God, He gave power to be righteous. There must be reception before becoming. The receiving comes before the becoming.

All the Old Testament folks, Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel etc were unworthy, every one of them. They were what they were not because of their genetics. Not because they were born of the right lineage. Not because of any ability on their own. They were what they were because somehow they have learned how to yield to the gift of righteousness that God desires to give to His people.

Now your next question would be, “Did God give this gift of righteousness only to those people or was He willing to give to everyone?” For God to be God and to be a fair, God He has to be willing to give it to all.

Then our next question, “When is He willing to give it to all?” Through the blood covenant. Not everybody receive but He always left the blessings there. He told them the way to get themselves into the position. To receive means you got to be in the right position. This is just for illustration. Now I am going to give this man sitting here this pen. As I give it to him, he has to stretch out his hands to take it and then he has to be in a position to receive it. I am not changing my position but he is changing his. He has to be in the right position. What happens if he doesn't put his hand out to receive? Obviously, he has to do the minimum to receive it. “Bill, this is for you. Take it, Bill.” He must do something to receive. I am not asking him to run two hundred rounds around the building or to leap over the wall and run to the tree. It depends at least on the minimum that is required for him to do to receive the pen.

The other thing that is required is what I call position. Sometimes we are like a little teddy bear. God loves you and you are cute. Sometimes God is working in your life and God will only work in a certain way. But you are in the wrong position so when God is working, He is rubbing your fur. And you don't like it because He is rubbing your fur the wrong way. What are you going to do? I mean it is just like someone rubbing your hair the wrong way. Imagine someone keeps rubbing your hair the wrong way. God is God and He changes not. Yesterday, today and forever He never change. So if you find that your fur is rubbed the wrong way you know what you should do. You turn around. So if you find that you are not receiving you are not in the right position. There is a minimum requirement and adjustment to bring a person to the position to receive. That is what the law and the blood covenant are for. The law didn't give us the ability to accumulate the merit to receive. But the law was the minimum requirement, so that it could position us in a position to receive.

Let me show Paul's illustration in the book of Galatians on the law. Gal. 3:23 But before faith came we were kept under guard by the law kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring to Christ. Not to save us the law was to convict us, to prepare us so that we are ready to receive Christ. In a spiritual sense, the law was the minimum part to get you to put your hands up and say, “God I need you.” To put your hands up and say, “God I surrender. God I can not make it on my own. O God here are my hands. Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to the cross I cling.” That was the minimum for Bill to receive the pen. It was our tutor.

Galatians 4:1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all. Listen very carefully if you do not get hold of this revelation of righteousness even though it is yours, you will live like a slave although you could be a master in the affairs of life. Paul is illustrating that way that we were under guidance until the time appointed by the Father. The law was the guidance but we were slaves although we were supposed to be masters in God. The

job of the law is to get us to the position to receive. That is why God is a fair God. He gives to everyone even in the old covenant a conscience and some measure of law. Paul says in Romans even those who do not have Moses or like the Jews in other countries of the world existing in that time they have a law onto themselves, revealed in their conscience.

Do you know this is a strange thing? All over the world, people understand the blood covenant, even without the revelation of Jesus. Animal sacrifices were present even before Moses' time. Animal sacrifices were present in the Chinese culture, in the Indian culture, in the Malay culture, in Africa, in the Mayas. Let me tell you it is God who saw to it that the world understands something about blood sacrifice. Of course, some of them added their pagan worship into their ceremonies and animal sacrifices. But the basic concept of blood sacrifice is there. You could go all the way into the interior jungles of the Amazon and right in the midst of the people separated from all mankind technology and modern civilization you will find a tribe that understands that shedding of blood is necessary and powerful. God had implanted the revelation of the blood covenant to all men firstly through their conscience and secondly by a measure of the law. The blood covenant may not have been revealed through Moses because they don't have Moses. It would have been revealed through their philosophers or traditions somehow preserved from the time of Adam right through the time of Noah and Noah's children. The Lord revealed the blood covenant from the time Adam and Eve fell into sin when He covered them with the skin of an animal. The blood of that animal covered their sin.

Do you know why the revelation of these blood covenants was given to peoples of all time? They were the minimum requirements to bring us to the position to receive the gift of righteousness. I can show you in the bible that whenever there were people who had the Spirit of God working in their lives, there was a measure of the gift of righteousness or gift of God working in their life although they didn't yield fully to it - yet they had it. Such people include Balaam. Balaam was not an Israelite. Do you realize that Balaam was called a prophet? Balaam knew God and he had communion with God and he was not even an Israelite. He doesn't know anything about Moses. But Balam did receive the general gift of righteousness that God desired for everyone to receive.

The first question is, "Why does God want to reveal to us this gift of righteousness when we come into this world?" In this life, we only operate by His gift of righteousness. We can not be what we want to be unless God gives the gift first. We must receive first from His hand before becoming what He has given to us.

The second question is, "Did God give everyone a fair chance to receive this gift of righteousness?" Yes, He did. And even on judgment day, He will still judge on this basis of how we have yielded to the gift of righteousness that He has given to everybody.

Now the third question is, "If that is so why do people like Balaam becomes so unrighteous?"

That's the question we want to deal with - the growth of righteousness. You see God wanted to reveal that no one can be what he or she is unless the gift of righteousness comes into his or her life. The gift of God in some spirit form comes in us first. And

it's almost like asking the question, "Which came first - the chicken or the egg?" If you believe in the bible, you got the answer to that question. The chicken came first because when God made the birds of the air He didn't make thousands of eggs. He made the flying creatures and then they lay eggs. In the same way physically, each one of us will to a certain extent look like our physical father. This is because you have inherited physical genes from your parents. And physically you took on part of their structure. It was their genes that made you what you look like. It controls the programming of your physical body. If the genes are affected then the change starts happening. But the seed of your genetic make up comes first. In the same way look at the Old Testament people or just the New Testament but all the people in the Old Testament too all of them were what they were because somehow they received the seed of righteousness. And it changed them and made them become what they were. Now not all who received the seed of righteousness became righteous because they didn't know the principles that we are going to teach today about yielding to the gift of righteousness.

Let me show you one man: his name is Saul in the book of I Samuel. Now he definitely couldn't be king by himself. He is the example of an extreme case. He had no ability to rule and reign over any nation. He was a person who had lots of personality flaws and problems. Could he become a better person? Yes, because God has a will for everyone. And with that will, He gives different gifting and different workings of His angels and Spirit even on the day you were born. Read John chapter one. You will find that Jesus is the Light that lighted every man that came into this world. Somehow, God did try to bring that gift of righteousness to Saul. We either resist that gift, or turn away from that gift or we don't know how to receive that gift. If Saul had received it, he would have been slowly changed to a more likeable person instead of being what he was.

Now David was trained to be a fighter for God. And even in his young teenage years, he had occasions where he developed bravery and courage in his life. And he passed all those tests, the tests of defeating the lion and the bear. By the time he faces Goliath he was a very brave and courageous man. How many young men would want to go and fight against Goliath who had a sword and shield and you have only five stones and one sling. No wonder Goliath said, "Do you think I am a dog?" But there was something in David, some gift in his life that made him brave. He yielded to that seed and that seed grew in his life.

Sadly, there are some like Saul. When God gave him a fresh dose of the anointing of God, he didn't know how to use it. This is what God said to Saul in I Sam.10:6 Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. That's what the gift does to you. That's how powerful the seed of God could be.

Today scientists are tinkering with very dangerous tools more dangerous than before. Man has discovered how to tinker with genes. It can be dangerous because we don't understand everything yet. You may have discovered a gene that causes something and when you tinker with it, this gene may also produce something else. They ran tests on mice using altered genes to stop them from producing nitro oxide. Now nitro oxide is important in the functioning of some gland in the brain. The purpose of this test is to see whether this can relieve the nerves. They breed it so that the mice could have a shortage of that acid. They found a side effect. They found that the mice grew

abnormally long hair, faster than normal. If they can create freaks of nature using altered genes, the field is thrown wide open for them to produce Frankensteins, miscreants and other abnormalities.

If mankind continues toying with the genomes for the next two hundred years, I don't know where mankind will be heading for. They would be daring enough to try to produce a super race or some mutants that once only existed in the imagination of artists from Marvel comics. This is where the danger is. God has made all genes in its perfect state for balance. Scientists may produce a champion but in the process, that champion may lose some essential parts of intelligence or conscience. He may end up a fiendish psychopath. We may never know the physical side effect. It's the most dangerous realm that man is dealing with. But it is such a powerful realm. Who would have thought that altering one little tiny structure in your gene could change other parts of your being. And that is from one tiny genetic seed.

It is the same way in the spiritual realm. When God imparts into our lives and spirits the seed, it could produce different things. You will literally become another man. Isn't that the story of Christianity in the New Testament? What is the New Testament message? II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. Don't we go to sinners, robbers, all kinds of people who are struggling in their lives, who are having all kinds of problems, and didn't we come to them and tell them all they have to do is to accept Jesus? Somehow, when they accept Jesus they will be able to take out that old man. Sadly, that doesn't seem to happen to all Christians. You see a sudden change in some Christians but in other Christians, you see that they change slowly. In some areas, it is very immediate and in some, it is slow.

What is the problem? Some people solve this problem by telling themselves, "Since I am rather slow in this area, I must use good works to speed up progress here." No, the solution to that problem is that we need to teach people how to yield to the gift of righteousness. You can not change yourself. But your spiritual genetic must be altered first and the gift of God had to alter it. We need to learn how to yield to the gift. That gift will turn you into another man. In the Old Testament, they had a temporary measure of that. But in the New Testament, the potential is there to change a person genetically spiritually. God says to Saul in I Sam. 10:6 then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands, for God is with you. This is a different story and not the story of Dr. Jackal and Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jackal is a good benevolent man. He goes to his laboratory, drinks some compounds, turns into a monster and becomes Mr. Hyde.

Here is a yielding to the Spirit of God. Remember who Saul was. He was a cowardly, shy man and has a very low self-esteem. But the Spirit of God came on him and he turned into another man. Now the problem is not whether that change can not occur, but whether the change can be permanent. Now I want to point to a truth in our lives, to encourage those of you who may be struggling in different areas and habits in your life. The problem is not that the change can not be done but that the change doesn't last. I can talk to any Christian who is struggling in any area in his or her life. Now that were times when you were strong and you could overcome temptations easily. There were times when you were weak and you fell. Then you got up, became strong again but in a moment of indiscretion, you fell into sin again. You pray to God, "Lord,

forgive me,” and then you went on again. Then you were strong again. The problem is not that you don’t have the desire to be weak sometimes. Sometimes after being charged up and strengthened in a prayer meeting or worship service you could take on the world, you could live sinless, holy, and pure. You have no desire for anything in this world but God, God. Monday you are O.K. Tuesday, Wednesday your eyes start looking at the world. On Thursday, your eyes inadvertently saw some unbecoming pictures on the Internet and your heart turned aside. This is just a simple illustration but it gets the point across. It is not that the change never came. I know from time to time Christians receive a touch from God and under that touch, you know that you are nothing. But how do you keep it?

Saul had that change in his life but he had no ability to maintain it permanently because he did not learn how to yield to the gift of righteousness constantly. The secret is in understanding how the gift of righteousness comes to your life. When you understand plants, you know all the plants have different abilities. All plants have different abilities. I discovered that different plants are good for different things. There are some plants that you can put indoors but there are some plants that you can not. Some plants like watery ground and some plants like dry ground. So for your gardening to be successful you must understand the plant. You must understand what the seed is for. And how that seed can grow. How it can produce. An experienced gardener told me that all fruit plants need a lot of sunlight. We tried planting some tropical fruit tree indoors and it died. Being a persistent person I said, “May be it’s the soil.” And we planted another one and it died. Then I say, “Lets try planting a guava tree and it nearly died.” But the point is every plant and every seed have different requirements. We need to understand its requirements and meet its requirement so that it will bear fruit.

We receive many types of seeds from God. The seed of righteousness brings us into a position of walk with God. We must understand how to allow it to change us. I am talking about character transformation and not just gifting. It is the same like the anointing of God. There are different types of anointing. You must understand each type of anointing because each type of anointing operates differently. For an anointing to preach a message in a stadium requires a change in personality to do different things. An anointing to counsel people is different. Anointing for healing can not operate for other areas. Each requires a different perspective. It is the same with seeds. The seed of righteousness needs certain requirement for us to yield to it.

Lets look at the bible and see how scriptural it is to refer to righteousness as a seed and righteousness as a growth. Lets turn to Isa. 61 Here it talks about the anointing of God that is upon Jesus. But there it suddenly has a reference to our lives.

Verse 1-3:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me.
Because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted.
To proclaim liberty to the captives;
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound.
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
And the day of vengeance of our God.
To comfort all who mourn.

To console those who mourn in Zion.
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
That they may be called trees of righteousness.
The planting of the Lord that He may be glorified.

Now if righteousness can be symbolized as a tree then there should be no problem for righteousness to be symbolized as a seed too. All trees come from seeds. The bible has always illustrated us as trees. The bible even illustrate that we are the fertile ground. The Word of God is like a seed that comes into our hearts and God plants it and helps us to grow.

We now look at the book of II Corinthians and I want to point to a certain progression of Paul's teaching about righteousness. II Cor. 3 Bear in mind that this is the second epistle to the Corinthians. In the first epistle, he has already spoken to them about Jesus being our wisdom and righteousness. Now he comes to chapter 3 and he says in verse 8-9 How will the ministry of the Spirit note more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. Now he talks about righteousness coming forth in our life as a ministry, the ministry of righteousness.

Then he moves on to II Cor. 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. He is not talking about our righteousness. He is talking about the impartation of God's righteousness to His people.

Then as we move on to II Cor. 9:10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness. That means that righteousness can grow. Righteousness is a fruit. Righteousness is a tree. Righteousness begins as a seed. And as we nourish and cherish it, it grows to a tree and a tree produces fruit - fruits of righteousness.

In the book of Phil. 1:11, Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Isn't it firmly established that righteousness is a gift and righteousness is a seed. Our message today is that righteousness is a seed that can grow into a plant. In the last message, we saw the scepter of righteousness. Even here, you can find the consistency. Remember Rom. 5 that those who have receive the gift of righteousness and the abundance of grace shall rule and reign in Christ. If you look at II Corinthians very carefully the passage that we read about the fruit of righteousness increasing he talks about both also. He says here in II Cor. 9:8 God is able to make all grace abound towards you. Verse 10 increase the fruit of your righteousness. Same thing. It is the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness that helps you rule and reign in life, spiritual life, natural life, physical life, business life, every area of life. Abundance of grace and the fruit of righteousness are all tied up together.

Righteousness is a seed, is a tree and is a fruit. We have established the fact that righteousness is a seed. It's a gift from God into our life. We are what we are because of the seed that God has planted in our life. The secret is how to receive it. And then how to keep it until it produces fruit in our life and changes and makes us become

what He wanted us to be. Now how does that process take place? The secret is in yielding to the gift on our inside. Yielding is a powerful gift. In the natural world and in the spiritual world the key to excellence is in yielding.

Lets say you are a badminton player. You have a talent for playing badminton. Yet a gift has to be trained and developed. If you hold the racket with too much energy, you can not play well because you are not supposed to use your energy to grasp the handle tightly. Your energy should be used to hit the shuttlecock. So if you tensed yourself in holding the racket, a lot of energy is wasted. Even if you have a talent for a particular game, you must also learn how to get into the “flow”. Sportsmen and women know what a flow is like. Even when they play there is a rhythm they enter into. It becomes beautiful. And even in dancing, there is a flow. Of course, when you worship the Lord it doesn't matter whether you have a good voice or a bad voice, we all can worship the Lord. But when it comes to ministering to people, it comes to a gifting. Some people have a gifting and when they operate that gifting, it is so beautiful. See in the secular world they call it a flow.

It is similar in the spiritual world. There is a divine flow that you learn to yield to. And when God wants to do anything, you have to enter the flow of what He is doing. And you learn to discern what God is doing and you flow with it. The secret is in yielding. In the natural world if you learn something, you yield to your gift. When an artist wants to paint a picture, he must flow with the talent and gifting in his or her life. So the secret is learning how to tap on the gift.

How do we maintain the gift of righteousness permanently? It is important to understand that flow. It is all in the key word yielding. How do we yield? The yielding is more from your soul side. Let us look at Romans. There are just two points I want to give on this subject of yielding. The first word is the word that I call it reckoning. Rom. 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should be no longer be slaves of sin.

Now how do we bring that out? Paul comes to verse 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now reckoning involves a mental process. It involves our mind. The first is to understand the truth of nothingness. Unless you know that you can do nothing without Him, you know you can do some things with Him. Understand and accept that it is not us but His. We have to accept it mentally; reckon it mentally. There are several sub-points to this key. The first key is the key of reckoning. Part A is that reckoning involves that whatever sin or habit or weakness has moved you into sin and ruined your life had been dealt with, - somewhere deep inside you may not feel like it but you must believe it. Abraham didn't feel any children. He didn't even see any children. He didn't even hear the sound of children. He looked at his own poor withered body and found that there is no way he could have a child. He looked at his wife past her reproductive years and knew that there is no way she could have a child. You know what they have to do. Accept what God said. They must believe what God said. You must believe that you are no longer the old person that you were. Many time people try to make it stick to you, “O you are always like this.” And when you accept what

they say about you, you are finished. Part of the reckoning involves believing that the old part of you is dead. That's the A part.

The B part in verse 11 but alive to God in Christ Jesus. What you are sensing on your inside bubbling in you is no more you but that Christ in you. You are still conscious of being alive.

The second key is found in Romans 8:1 There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Then verse 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Here it says to be spiritually minded. The word spiritually minded has a special expression of its own as we look at in this series. But for now as we introduce the subject the word spiritually minded talk about also a consciousness of God on your inside.

Let us look at the consciousness when you accepted Christ. Chapter 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. So there is a delight on your inside. So the first part is the reckoning. You have to believe it. Your mind must be brought into the position to accept and believe. It is no longer you that live but Christ who lives in you. That somehow the old nature has been dealt with in a powerful way.

The second part is to feel for Him and sense Him on your inside. It is just like this light. This light produces heat to a certain extent. In the natural world when you stand under this kind of spotlight, there is actually a higher temperature. Then under this fluorescent light, you don't have much heat coming to you. You have a lot of light but not much heat. Normally when you walk up and down, you are not conscious of it. But if I were to tell you, "I want you to sense the difference of the heat under the fluorescent light and under the spotlight," then you would be able to feel it. Before that you can not but when I tell you its there you believe its there because it is the truth and when you seek to sense it, you are able to find it. It is just like it takes one person to discover that oxygen is the main combustible element that causes things to burn. Straight away all over the world, scientists conduct the experiment to prove or disprove it. However, that oxygen was there all the time but we didn't realize it until somebody discovered it.

Now in the spiritual, it's the same way. When Christ comes to you, He lives in your spirit man even though you may not feel different. I guarantee you if you sense His presence in you and you yield to His presence, you will find Him thinking and speaking and doing things through you.

The second key is what I call the consciousness. First is reckoning, second is consciousness. Because if you don't reckon you won't even pay attention to the consciousness. We have to believe first. And as we are conscious of God and you practice the consciousness of God, that seed of righteousness grows more and more on your inside. Then it can become stronger. And it becomes stronger because you are feeding it with the Word of God. You could sense the anointing of God. And as you learn to sense the anointing of God in your prayer life, in your worship time, after sometime when you are out there, you will naturally flow in the anointing of God wherever you are. In the supermarket, of course, your mind is still busy looking for the items you want or the best prices but you are not thinking about the anointing of

God. But if you want to you could be conscious of God. When we become conscious of that seed sometimes that seed can actually be speaking to you and saying, “I like to be in this part of your life now.” You could see it bubbling on your inside. He says, “I want to do this part. Will you let me do that part?”

And Paul learned to yield to that. It says here in the book of Acts 18:5 When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. He was constrained by the Spirit. In some translations, it says he was stirred. Jeremiah the prophet says that the Word of God was burning in him and he can not but speak forth. But its based on these two key verses that you are familiar with. On one side Paul said by the grace of God I am what I am yet not I but the grace of God in me do what it is. He is conscious of himself and he is conscious that it is God. On the other had he says, “It is no long I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live..” Now he knows that he is still alive. He says, “..it is the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” If you sense Christ is in you and you sense that Christ wants to flow out in everything that you do, it is very difficult to do the wrong thing. It is just like when you are in God, falling sick is a difficult thing to do. I mean before you know this, you think that every year you need your annual flu. And you will have your annual bout of sickness and disease. But in God, we don’t expect these things any more. We don’t expect to be sick. We expect to be in good health. It’s the opposite.

In the same way if you understand this truth, it will be the opposite of the usual worldly expectation of falling into sin every now and then. It becomes very hard to fall into sin. The consciousness that Christ and the gift of righteousness are in you would push you away from sin. It’s the key of consciousness. The other is reckoning. These two combine powerfully. We have seen how the seed of righteousness can grow on our inside. We have studied the fact that righteousness is a seed. It needs to be nourished, cherished and taken care of. And that seed will take care of you. It becomes a tree and it becomes your life. It becomes your personality. In that way, God’s character and God’s seed become your character and personality.

6. YIELDING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

We are making a study on righteousness and we have shown how in the lives of Noah, Abraham, David and other Old Testament saints, there were glimpses of the gift of righteousness from God. Paul gave us the revelation that no man can be righteous through the law, and therefore in the New Testament, God has to reveal the fullness of the gift of righteousness through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. (1 Cor. 1:30)

Rom. 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Now the word much more is important to be considered in as much as we see how sin has dominated this earth. Sin has taken possession of many areas on this earth. When you turn on the T.V. there is sin. You look in the newspaper there is sin. You walk on the street there is sin. You travel all over the world there is the same kind of sin that afflicts mankind. As much as we see how sin and death has dominated mankind on this planet earth, Paul says much more we will see the grace of God abound and affect this planet earth. This has not taken place yet. But more and more in these days as we begin to understand the grace of God and enter into the grace of God we will see how the grace of God affects everything on this planet earth until the day we meet Him face to face. When the glory of the Lord covers the earth, the grace and the mercy of God shall be known through the earth.

We know from the book of Ephesians chapter 3 that there is a time when grace will abound upon this earth. Even much more than sin abound. The apostle Paul brought forth some of the mysteries that he had revelation of. Eph. 3:8-11 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God has reserved a day, a time and a generation when He will show forth the grace of God and the mercy of God. Now look at Eph. 2:7 that in the ages to come. Now Paul was looking forward to many centuries ahead into the last days, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. You see God has been longing to show His grace all the time to our lives.

When He made Adam and Eve He wanted to show how gracious, how merciful, how kind and how loving He was. There is a local church here in Malaysia whose pastor sends some of his church members in the spirit up to heaven from time to time to make study trips, as the Holy Spirit directs him. On one of the visits, angels told them that Adam and Eve lived thirty years in the Garden of Eden before they fell into sin. These Christians had seen the exact replica of the Garden of Eden in heaven and they said that it was so beautiful and heavenly, even more beautiful than many other parts

of heaven. God showed His love by creating a piece of heaven here on earth for Adam and Eve. But unfortunately, Adam and Eve fell and that communion with God was broken. God could not show man the same grace that He had in store for mankind when He created Adam and Eve. All through those thousands of years in the Old Testament and nearly two thousand years in the New Testament God has only been showing a small little glimpse of His grace. Even Paul says in all the ages before He has never had the chance to do it. Now that Jesus has come, God is waiting for His people to understand the righteousness of Jesus, the grace of Jesus and to partake of the loveliness of His gift for us. It is God's desire that we just enjoy His goodness. When God made Adam and Eve He did not call Adam and say, "Adam, come here and make your report. Eve come here and make your report. This is the job description that I want you to do. I want you to do all these things. You don't work you don't eat." All those things happened only after the Fall. After the Fall and the spread of sin and death in creation, the trees were unable to produce as they did before the Fall. The animals began to display ugly characteristics. But before the Fall, all God wanted was for Adam and Eve to just enjoy His creation. Up to this day, God had wanted to show His grace. Even in Paul's time, he says God has kept it until the New Testament. And in the New Testament, He wants to show His grace but how few understand how greatly God loves us. O how He loves you and wants you and I to enjoy Him. Not to work for Him because no one can really do what He wants. But to enjoy Him and be all that He wants us to be and allow Him through His gift in us to be what He wanted us to be.

Now there are two verses that I want to bring up at this point because we are going to touch in detail on those areas. Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Doesn't that sound like a paradox? First, he says that it is no longer that I who live but it is Christ who lives in me. Then he turns around and says and the life which I now live I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. So here is the paradox. It is no longer that he who lives but Christ who lives yet he says he lives. He is dead and yet he is alive. Paul learns how to yield to the right "I". There was an "I" where he says it is no longer I who live. Then there is another "I" that says the life which I now live.

See there are several "I"s here. I have been crucified. So there is a first "I" that has a past perfect tense placed on it. It is no longer I who live. We take it that the second "I" here is the same one who has been crucified. Therefore being crucified he can not live now; he is no longer living. Then he says but Christ lives in me. Then he says and the life which I now live. So there was an "I" that says I have been crucified. And there is an "I" that says I now live. In other words, there were two "I"s. One "I" has been crucified. The other "I" says I now live. Obviously there are two "I"s in that one little passage. One was dead and one is alive. The strange thing is that Paul says both are inside him. He has to consider one dead and the other alive.

Now look at the book of I Cor. 15:10 where he brings out the same paradox. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. I believe he is talking about the good "I". There is a bad "I" and there is a good "I". As we examine the good "I" its not really the good "I". It is Christ who lives. It is

not only the good “I” but it is the grace of God that does it within him. That causes this good “I” to move, to function, to labor and to do the kinds of things that glorify God.

In the previous message, we looked at righteousness as a seed and how righteousness grows in our life by yielding to the gift of righteousness and the presence of Christ in us. The key to the grace of righteousness is in yielding and learning how to yield to the right “I” on our inside. Because there is one “I” that belongs to our old nature and there is one “I” that belongs to our new nature. I know there is also a devil and there is also a God. God can speak to us and the devil put temptation on us. But that is coming from outside. I am talking about within. It is more the battle within that is more essential to success in victory than the battles without. If you win the battle within you will definitely win the battle without. And we need to differentiate the two “I”s. Both “I”s are still somehow within us in some manner and we are conscious of both of them.

The secret is in the word yielding. Righteousness or unrighteousness is a matter of yielding to the right one or wrong one on our inside. And the secret of yielding to the right “I” is to let the grace of God inside of us do the yielding. Let the Christ in us live through us. It is no longer our ego, “I” living but Christ living in us. Learn how to yield to Him on our inside and let Him function in us.

In the previous message, I mentioned two points from the book of Romans. I mentioned the first point is to reckon yourself dead and that’s an important part of yielding. Lets examine the word faith. When I talk about faith, most people remember that faith is believing for things that can not be seen. Based on Heb. 11:1 faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. So our faith and visualization is something produced by God on our inside. Nothing can be seen yet. Nothing can be touched. It is intangible. But it is there and because you hold on to faith, that faith will produce and bring to substance in the natural realm what you believe in the spirit realm. So, the substance is there in the spirit realm and your faith materializes it in the natural realm. You believe it in the spirit realm and the natural realm will result. In a sense, the definition of faith is based on Heb. 11:1 faith is believing something into being. That’s how many people define faith as.

But there is an opposite aspect of faith that we need to take note of. Mark 11:23-24 says, “For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” This kind of faith is called mountain-moving faith, based on Mark. 11:23-24. Do you realize that it is a different aspect of faith? This aspect of faith makes something that is visible to become invisible and disappear.

The other aspect of faith in Heb. 11:1 is making something invisible to become visible. Can you see both aspects? Faith works both ways. It is believing something that is not there into being in the physical realm. You get it into invisible and you bring it into the visible realm. The other is to handle something that is visible and believe that it will be gone and then it is gone. So it is converting something that is visible into an invisible realm and is eradicated. These are two different aspects of faith.

As we spoke in the last message about growing in the gift of righteousness, I mentioned Rom. 5 that we have been baptized onto death in Christ and raised up alive onto Him. How the old man has been crucified and dealt with. To do that, you need the two aspects of faith. You need the aspect of faith from Mk. 11:23-24 where you have to believe that your old man has been dealt with. And you have to believe even though you feel it sometimes. Even though you feel your old man and old nature saying, "Give in to me. Do this wicked thing. Do that evil work." Your old nature is saying, "Do wrong, do wrong." You have to believe that that old man has been dealt with and it will be eradicated from your life. But for it to happen you have to believe that it is done. That is why we emphasize from the book of Romans the other aspect of faith where you reckon and believe the old nature you had is gone. I am not saying that we just play wishy-washy games and do anything we like. I mean you go to the balloon and say, "Balloon, I believe you disappear," and you play around like a magician. I am not talking about that. Faith can only function when it comes from God's Word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. In other words, if God's Word doesn't say anything about it then it is just wishful thinking.

But if God's Word says that if any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things are passed away, behold all things have become new, then you must believe this is true. And faith comes by hearing and hearing and hearing by the Word. If the Word of God tells you that your old man has been crucified; the Word of God tells you that your old things are passed away; the Word of God tells you that your old nature has been dealt with; the Word of God tells you that the nature of sin has been dealt with even though you may feel it, sensed it, you must believe that the Word of God is correct.

And if you line yourself up with the Word of God the aspect of faith that believes something that exists into eradication and nonexistence takes place. Now the struggle that many Christians have is this. They don't believe that the mountain is gone. Every time that nature in you says, "Sin, sin, sin," the old man is still alive in you. You don't believe that it's gone because you feel it, you sensed it, you think it. And by acknowledging it and encouraging it, we using the other aspect of faith to bring it back into existence from nonexistence. But faith requires us to believe that the mountain is gone without feeling because the Word says it, I believe it and that settles it.

In Rom. 6:4 We were buried with Him. We have to exercise faith that our old nature has been dealt with. Verse 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin. Consider that you are dead even though the passion of sin is still running loose in you. How do I deal with those things? How do I explain this sort of thing? I will give you a good example. Treat them as the echoes of the past that somehow are still resonating on your inside and they come out in your memory and imagination. Sometimes they are recorded in certain parts of your flesh nature. Right now, we all know for a fact that Richard Nixon the former President of the United States is dead. Is that a fact? He is dead physically. If I play a videotape of him on TV, you see him moving and you hear his voice speaking, would it make you think that he is alive? Yes, if you don't know that he is dead. So what does the videotape represents and what do those sounds that produced represent? Echoes of the past that were recorded in magnetic form. And sometimes on our inside there are little mini tape recorders in

our flesh that somehow carries the echoes of the past. And at different points of weaknesses, the recorded part of past sins and behaviors seem to play out the sounds.

All the time you must believe that your old man is crucified and dead. It has been dealt with. Reckon yourselves dead. Use the other part of faith found in Mk. 11:24 that makes mountains disappear and not the faith in Heb. 11:1 that brings substance into being. You must believe in the fact that the old man is only an echo of the past. You are a new creation now, a new creature in God, even though you may feel that sin nature in your body or sense it in your mind - you must believe that God is right when He says that you have been crucified with Jesus. The Word of God says it, that settles it, you believe it and this mountain shall be gone. And if you hold on to that perspective of faith, your mountain of sin nature will be gone.

There are two parts to yielding. Look at Rom. 6 one part is reckon yourself to be dead, the other as alive to God. Can you see that two parts? One side is the bad "I" the "I" that has been crucified. The other is the "I" that has been resurrected, the one that Christ lives through. The one that Paul says its no longer I but the grace of God. So there are two parts of our being that we need to consider. The word that we want to consider is especially how to regard ourselves as dead and hold on to that fact. If we are not successful in reckoning ourselves dead and that old man is dead, we will not be successful in reckoning ourselves alive. It is no longer you who live but Christ who lives in your inside.

The key word is the word yieldedness. The word yield is used by Paul in Rom. 6 where he says now do not yield your physical body to unrighteousness but now yield it to righteousness. And he used the word yield several times in that manner. The word yield is the word paristano. Now the word yield or paristano has a very significant root word. The root word means to stand fast. Stand fast in what? Stand fast that it is done. You see part of yielding is not trying to do something. Part of yielding is resting. Resting on an accomplished fact that it has been done and just standing fast on the fact that it is done. Let me point to you some usages of the word paristano. We won't turn to all the verses. The word paristano has been used in Rom. 6:13 and Rom. 6:16 where it says neither yield your members to unrighteousness. Then he says in verse 16 to whom you yield yourself that you will be a servant of.

Now the word paristano in its other form, paristemi is used in many ways. Like for example in Matt. 26:53, "Or do you think that I can not now pray to My Father, and He will provide (paristemi) Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" Paristemi is translated here as provide. In Mk. 4:29, But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come (paristemi). Paristemi is translated as come because the harvest has come. Then in Mk. 14:69 it is translated as stood by. The word stood by or stand by is used many times. I just run through Mk. 4:29; Mk. 14:47; Mk. 14:69; in these verses, paristemi is translated as stood.

The part that I like you to turn to is Lk.1:19 remember this is the same root word paristemi or paristano which is normally translated as yield. Look at what Gabriel said that would give us the fullness of the meaning of the word yield. Verse 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God." I am Gabriel who paristemi in the presence of God. Now if you were to put the word yield there it does not make much sense. That is probably why the English translators used the word stand instead of yield. I am Gabriel who yields in the presence of God.

Yet it has a certain meaning. But that verse is translated as I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God. That's the same word translated yield. You see yielding is not a struggle. Yielding is not trying to do something. Yielding involves being in the presence of God; in the presence of your established fact and just positioning yourself in that position that God has given to you and just remaining steadfast there.

Now the word *paristemi* also have the meaning of to give or to surrender. And yielding is more or less surrendering or giving to God - giving of ourselves to God. And the secret of a Christian life is yieldedness, the surrendered part. For Gal. 2:20 and I Cor. 15:10 to take place that is its no longer I who live but it is Christ who lives in me. When the grace of God is working in me the secret of letting it come forth is in our surrenderedness. So what must we do? We must give ourselves to God. Just remain in that presence of God.

The same Greek word *paristemi* is used in Rom. 12:1 where Paul says present your bodies as a living sacrifice. It has the same root word yield - yield your body as a living sacrifice. Now it carries with it the meaning of being positioned for a length of time not doing anything but just giving ourselves to God. Now you know why many people are not transformed. Why is it that Christ who lives in them doesn't seem to be alive? They are not spending much time in the presence of God and giving themselves to God. The more we give ourselves to God the more chance the seed of righteousness, the grace of God on our inside has a chance to come forth. You see neither you nor I can live the Christian life. The Christian life is an impossible life to live in the flesh with our natural mind and natural strength. The Christian life is impossible to live in our soul. The only way to live a Christian life is to allow the seed of God that has been placed in us to help us live that life. And the only way for the seed of God to live out through us is to give time to allow the seed to grow. And it means *paristano* or *paristemi*, which means to just yield yourself to God. Every time when you spend time with God, something takes place on your inside. Every time you leave the church after worship, you feel different. Every time you leave a prayer meeting, you feel different. What is causing you to feel that difference? In the presence of God that seed on your inside is being nurtured and it comes forth.

Remember that we have two "I"s - the "I" that has been crucified and the "I" that is new, made alive when we were born again. Every time you *paristano* in God that new "I" gains strength. And even though its still you yet its not you - its your new nature in you coming out. But if you never present yourself to God and stand in the presence of God or present your body as a living sacrifice or yield to God, this good "I" is silent and the other bad "I" seems to be dominant and alive. And that's the struggle many Christians have. The real struggle is not that they don't have the gift of God or the seed of God on their inside. You know what the real struggle is. They don't give enough time to God. They don't wait on God. That makes the Christian life very simple. All you have to do is spend time with God. And somehow, the good "I" on your inside gets ignited every time you do it. Is spending time with God that difficult? No, even if you are a very busy person it is very easy, just cancel some of your appointments.

Spending time with God is not so hard. The difficult part is having the grace and energy to live the life God wants you, garnering the life and strength to do all that God wants you to and having the wisdom to do all that God requires. Yet the new "I" has all these grace, energy, life, strength and wisdom to do all that God expects. The

new “I” has been made in the image of God and has the wisdom of God, the strength of God, the ability of God; the energy of God and the zeal of God – in fact, everything necessary to live a godly and holy life. But if you don’t spend enough time with God that good “I” won’t have enough energy to energize you for Christian living. It is just like putting a motorbike engine in a Rolls Royce. Imagine a 60 c.c. motorbike engine in a Rolls Royce. It just won’t have enough energy to push that heavy metal car. But if we were to spend time with God, you build up the c.c. energizer and then you find that living a Christian life is easy.

See many people are mistaken as to where the struggle is. They feel that the struggle is they don’t have enough wisdom to do what God wants them to do. They complain they don’t have the gifting, the energy and this and that. That’s not the problem. Those things, if I can say so, are automatic because they come from the good “I”. It is second nature to you because it is part of your new nature. The problem is giving enough time to allow it to energize. That’s yielding. It is just a matter of having enough time with God in public and in private. And if you are not motivated enough to do it alone, do it in a group. Do it in a church meeting. When people are praying together and spending time with God, you go and spend time there. It does something to your inside.

Turn to II Cor. 4 it talks about your new man. See the whole key lies in the new man coming out. II Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. It says here the inward man is being renewed day by day. The word renew is the Greek word anakainoo. The word ana means again. The word kainos means new, not recent but different. You put it together it means to be made new again. And how often does it say? Day-by-day it is being anakainoo. That means every day it is made new. It is renewed, refreshed. Take for example, some of us have gone without sleep when we work very hard. I have gone for twenty fours without sleep. I still continue to do so from time to time. In fact, last Saturday I only slept for about one or two hours. But when you go without sleep for some time you know that at some point you need to catch up on your sleep. You may be tired to the point of having hallucination. I mean if you go for forty-eight hours without sleep, you sometimes don’t know which is real and which is not real. You are hardly walking and you are dreaming. No matter how sleepy and tired you are even if you have twenty minutes of rest remember how fresh you wake up. I mean you could be very tired and sleepy but when you just have a short little nap, you can wake up and feel energized once again. That is speaking about natural or biological energy. Your body is refreshed physically. Of course, if you top it up with a fresh shower you get even more energized and you can go out and take on the world again. Our body is made in such a way that it needs physical rest. You can go for certain period of time without sleep but you don’t try to push it too far. You break natural laws. Its nice when you have worked very hard and every part of your body energy drained up you just lie down and sleep. And the next morning you get up refreshed. That’s the physical part.

In the spiritual realm, our inner man was not created omnipresent and omnipotent. That is the only part of us that can not be like Jesus. We are like Jesus in every way except those omni(s). Our inner man was created with a dependency on God. And Paul says that the inner man is anakainoo everyday. Your inner man needs energizing.

It needs to get into the presence of God. It needs to wait on God. Then the fresh grace of God will enter your inner man.

Now let's analyze Paul's statement in Gal. 2:2 when he says it's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. How did Paul allow Christ in him to live? Paul spent time with God. He believed that his old man has been dealt with, crucified with Christ. As he spent time with God, the new man in him is energized and then he goes out on his labors. I Cor. 15:10 he says he is what he is by the grace of God. And that he labored more abundantly than they all. Yet not I but the grace of God which was in him. Now how did he have the grace to labor? By spending time with God. And as he waited on God, the energy comes from his inside. And living a Christian life is not difficult if you spend time with God. What do you do when you spend time with God? You present your body as a living sacrifice. Remember Rom. 12:1 you present your body.

Now we need to examine the process of presenting further by looking at some translations of the word present. It has been translated in Rom. 6:13 as yield yourself to God, verse 19 yield your members, Rom. 12:1 you present your bodies as a living sacrifice. Then Rom. 16:2, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you. Present is translated as assist. Isn't the word present a very big word? It's translated as yield, stand, assist, give, and all these shades of meaning contribute to the root meaning of the word present. So one translated word in English is not enough to convey the Greek word present.

Then the word in II Tim. 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The word present is the word present. So present in a sense is waiting on God. But it is not just spending time on God and waiting on God. No, there is a process taking place. There is a process as you wait on God you yield to the consciousness of His presence working on your inside. See all these words, stand, yield, present, give, assist tell you something about the words present and present. I emphasize the first part that is spending time with God. But what do you do when you are spending time with God? I know what we all will normally do - pray, praise, read the Word, meditate, confess, etc. All these are different things that you are doing. But what is the state of consciousness when you are spending time with God? And that's important. The state of consciousness is a state of consciousness of yielding to the one on your inside. This means that you consciously draw strength in your inner man. You consciously draw the renewal in your inner man. You don't just pray. You don't just praise. All these you should do because they have a role to play. When you pray it has to do with petition and intercession. When you worship God, it has something to do with entering God's presence. When you read the bible, it has to do with feeding your spirit and also gaining the knowledge and wisdom from the Word of God. But there are some more things to do. And that is to consciously be drawing strength from God. That is the word present - you are consciously yielding to God.

Let's say you are getting ready to punch me on my hand. I consciously tense my hand. I am conscious and I am tensing my hand. It is a part of my concentration to absorb that punch. I am conscious of my muscle tensing to absorb the punch that is coming. Now if I don't get ready and you give me a punch, it would be dangerous to me. Even

magicians and stunt men are able to manipulate their bodies to squeeze themselves out of tight situations. Even Houdini, the famous magician, had the ability to contract his body to absorb punches. He could escape all kind of chains and keys by twisting and turning his body in a way that most of us can't. Not only that, he has trained his body in such a way that he can absorb very strong punches. You could punch him hard and he could take it. Do you know how he died? Some person heard about his ability to take punches. He surprised Houdini by suddenly saying, "I heard you have this ability to take punches," and gave him a punch before he was ready. And he died. He was not ready for that punch. If he were ready, it would have been a different story. In the same way, I am talking about a consciousness of yielding. You deliberately make yourself conscious of yielding to God to receive anything from God. There is such a thing as developing a consciousness of yielding to God constantly.

Let us look at Romans and examine the consciousness of yielding. Rom. 7 talks about this struggle between the good "I" and the bad "I". In Rom. 7, he makes this statement here in verse 15 notice there is a lot of "I" in this passage here. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. Now look at him, he said it is no longer I who do it. If I am doing the bad thing, it is sin that dwells in me that causes me to do it. Then verse 18 For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. Then there is another one that wants to do good. For I (this is a different I,) delight in the law or God according to the inward man. Did you see the inward man there again?

Remember the inward man is the part where II Cor. 4 is renewed everyday. This means that yesterday's renewal is not good for today according to the inward man. Now he is pointing to the good "I" the inward man. Verse 23 I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Please note there are the body, the mind and the spirit. The spirit is the inward man. The body is where sin dwells. Then between them is the mind, which is the conscious part of our being. And he says I see another law in my members, - now the word members refer to the body. That, that body is warring against not the spirit but against my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

He says O wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. What he is talking about is the inward man is good. Now he says our physical body needs constant guarding over. And he says that with the mind he continues to serve the law of God. In other words, that the law of God is continually active in his mind while the law of sin is still active in the physical body. That is why this physical body can not go into heaven. We need a new body to enter into heaven. This physical body is too defiled although now it can be preserved as the temple of the Holy Spirit. That is why there is a consciousness of sin and yet there is a consciousness of righteousness, and both of them are battling against each other.

The center of the battle is the mind, which is the conscious part of our being. If the mind doesn't submit to that body of sin, then you have won and the Spirit can flow out. Now Rom. 8 develops this subject further. Verse 5 and 6 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. I tried to find out the word "set". The word "set" is not actually in the Greek. It is combined with the word mind. It actually says for those who mind the things of the flesh are fleshly and those things of the Spirit they become spiritual.

Paul uses the word phroneo and the word phroneo is not talking about the mind, brain or organ of thought. The word phroneo is more of a process or work. For example, the word think refers to a process of the mind and not just the mind. The word brain refers to your physical biological mind. The word mind refers to your soul part of your think tank organ. The word think refers to the process.

Now the word phroneo is not just the word mind. It is a process. I define that process to be consciousness. Whatever you think of, you become conscious of it. If you think about roast turkey straight away, your saliva may drop. Even though that roast turkey is not physically present, yet by saying that word, a consciousness of that roast turkey comes to you.

Now to insert this meaning of consciousness into the word phroneo into Rom. 8:5, we may paraphrase this verse as, For those who live conscious of the things of the flesh are fleshly. And those who are conscious of the Spirit are spiritual. For to be carnally conscious is death, to be spiritual conscious is life and peace. It brings out a different meaning.

What is this consciousness? Remember the word consciousness is the same word that has been translated conscience. You may be conscious of the idols in your life or you may be conscious of God. Now that word consciousness is the main player in the middle between your body and the spirit. Therefore one purpose of spending time with God everyday in prayer, reading the Word, etc is to allow your consciousness to settle on the spiritual and to renew your inner man. Many times people struggle with that because their minds are not trained. Their minds are so conscious of the natural world. But that's where the secret of the Christian life lies. That's where the root of our problem in Christianity lies - the flesh consciousness versus the spirit consciousness. And if we could remove our consciousness away from those fleshly and worldly things to the consciousness of God, then the inner man will be relieved and renewed and the Christian life will be a breeze.

Therefore part of paristano, is being conscious of God when you are spending time with God and standing before God. I have reduced a big theological truth to a simple fact. What do we do when we paristano and wait on God and spend time with God? We allow the inner man to rise up on our inside with the gift of righteousness and the consciousness of Christ and allow the old nature to be reckoned as crucified and dead to sin.

How do prayer, praise, reading the Word and other devotions help us? Now these spiritual exercises help to bring our consciousness to focus on God. If you could develop your consciousness to be conscious of God every time you spend time with

God, you are renewing your inner man and allowing God to flow through your being. You become more conscious that its no longer you who live but Christ who lives on your inside. You are conscious of your inner man becoming alive with the gift of righteousness. When you develop such a consciousness, your spirit man will grow in energy, holiness, wisdom, grace, zeal, strength to overcome the daily challenges and temptations of your Christian life.

Now examine what Paul says in Rom. 7 he says the law of sin is fighting against the law of the mind. He is trying to pull that consciousness that side. That's why Paul says in II Cor. 10 that our battle is not with flesh and blood. A lot of people think our battles are out there, fighting against flesh and blood. Our battles are not there. Our battle is not with carnal weapons fighting against flesh and blood. But it is with spiritual weapons taking every thought captive on to Jesus Christ and replacing all consciousness of carnal things with consciousness of God. And when we succeed in the consciousness of God the inner man is able to take on sin, temptations, challenges and problems.

Now it takes effort, like just earlier I illustrated by concentrating on tensing my muscle and that is a conscious effort. Some areas of our lives are involuntary and some areas are voluntary. God will protect us from areas that are involuntary to us. For example, God commands His angels to watch over us against demonic attacks in our work, in our sleep, in our daily activities. We may not be aware that there are some spiritual battles by our angels against some demons while we carry on our lives blissfully.

But in areas that are voluntary that has to do with our will, we have to choose to be conscious of God. It is more like resting in God, sensing God's presence, meditating on His presence and being conscious of His presence renewing you on your inside. The next time you spend time with God try to feel God not with your physical being but with your spirit man. Remember God is there. And the next time you are with God, you could feel and sense God. Now when I use the word feel, it is not the outward feeling. It is more an inward sense of God. God is a person and He can be sensed through your internal organ.

You may not know where to start. You are wondering whether you should visualize God's presence in you. You don't try to visualize anything. He is already on your inside. There are many spiritual exercises you could do, like praying in tongues. And as you are praying in tongues, you try to sense the bubbling of energy, the infusion of divine light, the flashes of divine revelation, the impartation of wisdom, the empowerment of strength and grace. When you are praying in tongues, your spirit prays. And as you began to sense these spiritual energizing coming, it gives you a consciousness of God's presence in your spirit man. We need to sense that presence of God on our inside. We need to sense it each time we spend time with God. The moment you make contact, the energy from the Holy Spirit flows into your spirit man. Can God be felt? Yes, with your spirit not with your body. You say, "I have been a Christian for so long and yet, I have never felt God." Then you need to pray until you do. Or you need to get into a prayer meeting or church service where there is a strong sense of tangible anointing. That may help you sense God. I know faith is above feeling but we are talking about feelings of the natural being. But there must be a sense of God on our inside quickening our spirit man up. That is paristano.

And the moment you can sense Him then only can you yield. You yield to Him, you yield to that sense of well being, the sense of goodness on your inside that flows forth. There is a sense of God that we develop in paristano and that is the key to the word yieldedness.

Let me summarize what we have been touching on - the seed of righteousness and the gift of righteousness. Righteousness and grace are living forces on the inside of our spirit man. They dwell in our spirit man. We need to stir up our spirit man to make a conscious effort to contact God. If your spirit man hasn't make contact with God, you haven't start the real walk with God yet. I mean a soldier out in a war needs to keep contact with his commander. The moment the commander loses contact with his soldiers, he has lost the war. We need to stir up our spirit man to make contact with God. When your spirit man does so, you can start yielding to God's presence in your spirit man. When you paristano and yield to God's presence and the gift of righteousness, your spirit man begin to absorb the energy, the grace, the wisdom, the revelation, the divine light, the strength from the Holy Spirit. In this way, you are renewing the spirit man on your inside. Every morning when you wake up you know what to do, make contact with God. The first thing you do when you wake up, cause your spirit man to make contact with God. Use whatever method that works for you. Some people start with prayer. Some with worship. Some people start with reading the bible. You use different application. And when you made contact with God, yield to Him and let Him take over. The spirit man on your inside is anakainoo and is made new. Your spirit man has the wisdom to guide you in your profession, whether you are an architect, engineer, medical doctor, anything. Your spirit man has enough wisdom and all these things have been stored on your inside. Proverbs 2:7 says "The Lord stores up sound wisdom for the upright." When you yield to God's presence, to His gift of righteousness, you become upright. Then the sound wisdom that the Lord has been storing for you will come in like a flood and you will have good success in life. But we need to make contact. And God is not very far. He is near us.

7. TRANSFORMATION OF CHRIST

Confess with me and say, “Righteousness is a gift received from God not by our works, not by our merits, not by our achievement, not by our own sanctification, not by our own holiness, not by our own dedication, but it is a gift of God received freely through Jesus Christ.”

Rom. 5:17 For if by one’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Here the word life refers to our spiritual life, our physical life, our social life, our business life and our ministry life. When we understand the gift of righteousness, which is tied up to the abundance of grace, we would have a different walk, a different way of thinking, a different life-style, a different manner of speaking and a different manner of conduct. It will affect us if we understand what the gift of righteousness is all about. We have been covering on several points on how righteousness works in our life.

In this message, we want to talk about the transforming work of righteousness. Lets look at Rom. 7 and understand that it is bringing us into the key of righteousness that we have talked about. We spoke about the fact that the Old Testament saints accomplished the will and purposes of God not because of who they were, not because of the gifting, not because of their own talent, but it is because they have got hold of the gift of righteousness. We showed that was true in the life of David; it’s the same in the life of Daniel, in the life of Joseph. When Daniel was given credit for interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams, Daniel quickly acknowledged that it was God who is able to interpret dreams. So what they have tapped upon was the gift of God.

Under the New Testament, God has given us the fullness of the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we should have a deeper understanding and revelation of that gift of righteousness and should be able to partake of the gift of righteousness in a stronger, greater, more powerful manner that the Old Testament saints. The book of Romans develops that subject. It establishes the fact in Rom. 3 that no one can please God and no one can really do what God wants us to do. The wonderful thing about God is when He calls us, He doesn’t look for our ability but He looks for our availability. And that’s only half the story. He wants us to avail ourselves to Him. The other half of the story, and is the good news is that He gives us His the ability to do the work that we avail ourselves to. And so, in the end everything is through God, by God, in God, for God. That’s the story of the Christian life and we need to understand how that flows in us. It is very easy to constantly be drawn back to the old way of doing things, the old way of thinking, through own human efforts and struggles, instead of depending on Christ in us doing it.

In Rom. 7, Paul talks a bit of the struggle that he experienced. We know Christ is in us and there is a struggle of the goodness that God has placed in the inner man trying to come up against the outward man and the passion of sin that live in the outward man.

Rom. 7:15-17 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do that I do not practice, but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Now I like to compare Rom 7:17 it is no longer I who do it but sin who dwells in me with Gal. 2:20 where Paul says I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. He says I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.

Now that is a direct contrast with Rom. 7:17 where Paul says, "It is no longer I who do it but sin who dwells in me." In Gal 2:20 Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Something has taken place in Paul's life. He has grown in the understanding of how to allow Jesus to flow through his life. The secret of a Christian life is learning how to yield - how to allow Jesus in to be built; how to allow Jesus in us to be strong; how to allow Jesus in us to be wise; how to allow Jesus in us to be mighty. That's all that is to the Christian life.

Whenever we forget that Jesus is in us, we are no better than the disciples of Jesus in the little boat that was about to sink. Jesus was lying on a pillow and sleeping in the boat. All the disciples were panicking because the waves were tossing and turning the boat. Some of the water was spilling in. Remember they were all fishermen. They were used to the sea. They had seen this kind of thing before. When they used their own human effort to save themselves from that storm, it was practically useless. They tried, they cried and they woke Jesus saying, "Master save us." That's quite O.K. but the second sentence they said was not O.K. "Don't you care that we perish?"

That is an unfair insinuation on Jesus' personality and kindness and love. Of course, He cares.

Does Jesus care for you? Of course, He always does, twenty-four hours a day.

But that second phrase is a revelation of what they have forgotten. They said, "Master don't you care that we perish?" If Jesus were sleeping in the boat and if the boat sinks, they said they would all drown. Don't you realize that if Jesus was in the boat He would have drowned too? Don't they care that Jesus would have drowned too. Of course, they did, it was just in a time of weakness they lost their right frame of mind and uttered their fears of drowning and dying. Don't get discouraged when sometimes in times of weakness, you say things that you don't really mean to say. When you do things that you don't really mean to do. Jesus will never forsake you just as He never forsook His disciples. When He got up the disciples gave Him the first accusation, "Don't you care that we perish." Jesus didn't even bother to answer that question because there was no time to answer questions like that. They were sinking and it was time to still the storm.

What did the disciples forget? They forgot that Jesus was there in the boat. They also forgot to have faith in Jesus. He said, "Let's us go across." They forgot many things. And we could try to find ten points what they forgot. That's not our topic. The most important is that they forgot that Jesus was in the boat with them. If they sank, Jesus would sink along with them. If they died, Jesus would have died in the boat too. Anything that happens to them would happen to Jesus. They forgot that Jesus was there. Say, "Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there." The moment they forgot, all their reactions, thinking, feelings, and hand and legs began to operate as if He is not there. See every time we forget that He is there your mind, your feelings and your body began to operate as if He is not there. How important it is to have a conscious

knowledge that He and you have become one. And anything that happens to you will happen to Him in a sense. Anything that happens to Him happens to you. You are one with Jesus. Jesus is in your boat - the boat of your life.

And the reason why I compare Gal. 2:20 with Rom. 7:17 is because they are directly opposite to each other. Gal. 2:20 says, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." Rom 7:17 is the very opposite; he says, "It is no longer I but sin that dwells in me." If you read Rom. 7:17 by itself without Gal. 2:20 coming in, this is the understanding that you probably have. When Paul says, "But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin who dwells in me," you would have the mental picture that the forces and the energy of sin were so powerful in that life that he is describing that it overcomes him and bound him up. So much so, you imagine that the real Paul was a helpless person tied up by chains and bondages and energized by sin that dwells in him. Would that not be your picture? You wouldn't imagine sin as just a small litter puppy crawling in him and causing him to sin. From the way he described sin in Rom. 7:17, you would think that sin was a mighty force stirring up lawlessness, wrongdoing and evil in his life until it controls him. How is it that when we read Gal. 2:20 where Paul says, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me," we never see that there is an energy force coming out of Paul's life. The Christ living in him is a powerful energy of life, of joy, of peace, that directs him everywhere he went, everything he did and everything he says. It controls him, it consumes him, until he says verse like in Acts 20 he says, "I go bound in the spirit." Until he says it is not I but Christ who does it. Until in I Cor. 15 he says that what he is he is what he is by the grace of God. Yet not I but the grace of God he tells us. He is a man possessed by a good force the Spirit of God.

You know how many people read Gal. 2:20 where Paul says its no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me, they see Paul standing one side and Jesus one side and they were just holding hands. But when they read it on the negative side, they see the power of sin. When they read it on the positive side, they do not see the power of the energizing force of Jesus coming out to their life. But that's the correct picture because light is greater than darkness. God is more powerful than Satan. The kingdom of light is more powerful than the kingdom of darkness. Far too many people's mind and thinking are so established that they keep thinking the devil is a powerful person. He has power through deception but the smallest member of the body of Christ can crush him up. It is God who says in Lk. 10 that you shall tread on scorpions and serpents and that they shall by no mean hurt you at all. The reason why many people don't have this concept is because of a lack of understanding of the righteousness that they have received in Jesus. Yet that is the correct picture that Paul is trying to give.

As we look at Rom. 7, we will see that, that is the direction that he is leading us into in this passage. Verse 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, again he repeat it, this is the second, repetition of verse 17, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the

law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Now the second repetition in verse 20, “It is no longer I who do it but sin that who dwells in me,” gives a power picture of the force of sin in his life. Let me point to this fact if that powerful force that he calls sin is removed he will certainly feel a big vacuum on his inside. If it is that powerful to influence him, to affect him, to motivate him, to cause him to feel certain feelings, to cause him to think certain thoughts, it must be a powerful tiger on his inside. If that tiger is shot dead or removed obviously he is going to feel a big vacuum almost like the vacuum that Isaiah felt when in Isa. 6:1 it tells us the year that king Uzziah died he saw a vision. You know why he did. Uzziah at that time was a big spiritual leader and when he died, it left a big vacuum in the nation. He was such a mighty and influential leader that when something happened to him, the whole nation felt a keen loss and vacuum. It is like a nation without a President, a nation without a Prime Minister, a nation without a king because that was a ruling force. He was king and you don’t just remove the king. You replace the king. You can not just try not to think bad thoughts. You have to think good thoughts to remove the bad thoughts. We can not exist in a state when we have a blank something ruling our minds. Man was created to always have God ruling in his life. If it were not Almighty God ruling in his life, it would have been other gods. We were created with a vacuum for God. And when God doesn’t fill that vacuum, the devil fills it. Looking at the force so powerful obviously, God doesn’t just remove the sin and then you have a skinny little “I” there. No, God replaces it with a powerful force that directs us. And Christians have yet to discover the fullness of that powerful force. It’s a living life giving, power generating, healing life of Jesus that He comes to bring into us. Notice it was not just a revelation that freed Paul but the sum of all revelations found in one person called Jesus Christ.

Look at Rom. 7:25 finally he gives us the solution. After talking about the struggle of the power of sin trying to control him versus the power of goodness that is in him, he says I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. It is not just a revelation of a truth or principle, it was the revelation of Jesus. It was a revelation of Jesus inside us that freed us. And that revelation that Jesus is now on his inside directing him, moving him and motivating him. The force is so powerful that Paul reveals it as, “Its no longer I who live but Christ who now lives in me.” The good “I” becomes stronger whereas the other bad “I” become weaker and weaker. In God’s eyes, your new nature is being built up. So, the secret of living the victorious Christian life is that flow of righteousness and revelation of Jesus in us.

But there are many degrees of the revelation of Jesus. If there is any problem in your life, a weakness, a flaw in your life, what you need is not another book that teaches you ten steps to overcome it. Sometimes that helps because that book will lead you to a revelation of Jesus. All truth and all theology must lead us to Jesus. It is not just that. Nor do you keep telling a struggling person to pray more and make new resolutions to be good. And yet, you will find nothing changes. You see this is the advice constantly dished out by Christians. They forgot the principle of the indwelling, “It is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me.” The secret is learning to yield to Him and not trying to become a better person. You don’t become a better person on your own – you become a better person by coming to Jesus. In the

process of yielding to Him, we are changed. We don't change and then become like Him and do like Him. In the process of yielding to Him, we become transformed. It's a revelation of Jesus. When you were born again and saved, it was the first time you met Jesus as your personal Savior. Sometimes for some Christians, it was only time they ever had a revelation of Jesus. There are continual revelations of Jesus in our lives. There are many rooms in our lives that need the light and revelation of Jesus to come in. You ask, "How long does it take?" In one instant when He reveals Himself. It doesn't take an eternity. But why does it take long in some people? Because sometimes it takes us long to position ourselves for His revelations. I will describe that later but before I do let me tell you about the possibility of instant transformation. I can choose more than two lives to illustrate this point. I choose one from the Old Testament and one from the new, one who could be and the other who became.

Turn with me to the book of I Samuel 10 Samuel the prophet had just anointed Saul with a flask of oil. And he told Saul certain things that will take place in his life. He says, "When you go to a certain place you will meet a group of prophets and the Spirit of God will come upon your life and these signs will occur to you to assure you what God has pre-destined for you to accomplish." I Sam. 10:6 among his instructions he made a very powerful statement. Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. The Spirit of God will come upon you and you will prophesy and be turned into another man. Something happened to Saul when the Spirit came upon him. He was no longer the same person as long as the Spirit of God is upon him. Now we all know the sad story of his life's ending. But let me emphasize his potential. What would have happened if he learned to yield to that constantly? He would forever be a different man. Since the promise of the Spirit in his life was that, "When the Spirit of God in upon you, you will be turned into another man," if he learned to yield to that twenty-four hours and he would continually be another man. His old man would have died and he would be a new man that his friends can not recognize. He may look the same and still has some of the same old personality. But he would definitely be a different man. He could have but he didn't. The fact remains that there is a realm in God, a power in God where it can come and turn us into another man. Paul calls that a new creation.

Now in the New Testament there is another man whose name is also Saul who later became Paul. Look at his personality and his life in the book of Acts. Let us see some of the things that he did before he came to know the Lord. Acts 8:1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Verse 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. I would say he was a very fierce gangster. When gangster Saul comes to town, everybody runs for their lives. He was a brilliant planner and plotter too. He knew how to get legal authority. He had such a bad reputation that when he was converted nobody believed it. Why didn't anybody believe it? Nobody believed such a Christian-hating Jew could ever change. It was Saul the persecutor ingrained in the people's minds, even if they were Christians who knew the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. They knew Jesus could save a person, they knew that Jesus could touch a person's heart. But when it came to Saul, they were not sure whether Jesus could touch Saul's heart at all. In fact, they were surer that Saul would never change. Forever he will be like that. A gangster he is a gangster he will be.

Recently I saw a little article in the newspaper where one of the greatest footballers in the world Maradona said he was a drug addict; he will forever be a drug addict. Something in my heart says he doesn't know about the new creation. Let me tell you Jesus didn't come just to renovate you. If He did, He will be out of the renovation business thousand of years ago. Renovation won't last long and people will be disillusioned after some time because the renovation work will fall apart and they find they are back to their old selves again. Jesus came to make a new man out of each one of us. The story is not, "What will be, will be. The future is ours to see, Que Sera Sera." If that is what life is about we don't need a society. We don't need education because nobody can change. If nobody can change, why bother to change? You know that kind of philosophy will not make great nation. No, change can come. But there is only one way a person can change. The key is to discover and yield to the life of God that in the Old Testament could turn Saul into another man and that in the New Testament had a greater power because He can now live permanently in us and turn us into another person.

Paul declared in II Cor. 5 if any man is in Christ he is a new creation old things have passed away behold all things have become new. That was Saul a gangster, a religious bigot, an authoritarian, a legalist, sophisticated, educated, nobody believe he could change. Preaching didn't change him yet. It may have a subtle effect where the Word was sown in him like a seed. I believe in the power of preaching to change too. But it wan not enough. He had heard Stephen preached. He was among those who heard the anointed preaching of Stephen and consented to his death.

Theology didn't change him. He was the most educated person. Education didn't change him. Sophistication in society didn't change him. He was among the most sophisticated people. Culture didn't change him.

Do you know what changed him? One day this gangster was riding on a donkey breathing threats. Acts 9:1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. He must have killed some people. Its like you kill one it becomes easier to kill more. The way the bible described it he is breathing threats. Murder was in his heart and in his mind. Nothing has changed him. On his way breathing threats, the light of Jesus shone on him. So bright was the light that Saul fell to the ground, blinded. The people all around him were shocked. And he became blind after seeing the great light above him. He had the revelation of Jesus. Jesus revealed Himself where no culture, no education, no persuasion, nothing could change him. One revelation changed him. Not a doctrine or a principle but a revelation of Jesus. He met Jesus. He met the One who went to the cross. He met the One whose side was pierced. He met the One who walked the shore of Galilee. He met the One whom the Word says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that who so ever should believe in Him should not perish." And the man Jesus the Son of God did not even rebuke him for his past in a sense, did not even condemn his life of hell. But all the Son of God did was to say with a voice full of love and compassion what Saul did to Him.

He said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"

That one revelation of Jesus turned Saul around. Years of education couldn't change him. Years of culture, teaching, persuasion, friends, religiosity, didn't change him. But the few seconds in the presence of the Master, a few words from the Master, and

Saul said, "What do you want, Lord?" I am trying to bring forth to you the secret of a Christian life. What we need is not more renovation of life, a little resolution here, a little resolution there with a greater frustration here and frustration there for breaking the resolutions. What we need is not more trying and more human effort. What we need is the revelation of Jesus Christ. If there is an area in your life that you are struggling with, it is not because you missed the ten steps to overcome it. Why do we human being always think that we missed the ten steps? Why do we human always think of human effort, of climbing the ladder to reach God? It is because after the fall of man, we have become creatures of works not creatures of grace.

The key to change in your life is for Jesus to reveal Himself to you. He revealed Himself to you once when you were born again. My friends that revelation must continue to grow. Sometimes He may need to reveal Himself several times in a particular room in our life. Until we can not take it any more and we become changed. Transformation is by the revelation of Jesus. And it's a continual process. Remember when you first accepted Jesus although not everything changed but something changed instantly. Maybe in some lives ninety percent of the things have changed for the better. In some other lives fifty percent for various reasons. But I want to tell you the secret of the continual change. If you were one of those who were born again, seventy percent of your life is changed, and thirty percent left to be changed, why do you think that the thirty percent that has to be changed is different from that seventy percent. If you were one of those whose life changed fifty percent and another fifty percent yet to change, why do we have to think that the fifty percent to be changed has to be changed differently from the first fifty percent? It doesn't. The way of change is still the same. I believe in good preaching, good teaching, good fellowship, good walking in the counsel of people, but all these things are the methods that God use to reveal Jesus to your heart of hearts. He uses friends, He uses preaching, He uses teaching. But the whole purpose is that He may reveal Himself to you. And if your life has changed fifty percent, seventy percent or ninety percent, and there is another fifty percent, thirty percent or ten percent that still need to be changed, I want to encourage you not to despair. You may fall from time to time, you may struggle from time to time, but my friends the change that works in salvation is the same process that changes the next fifty percent, the next thirty percent or the next ten percent until you are perfectly like Him. In other words, what we need is more of that presence, that light, and that person of Jesus to be revealed in us. The moment He succeeds in revealing Himself within us, we are changed.

Paul says in the book of Gal. 1:14-16 And I advance in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceeding zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me. The real change took place in Paul's life when God revealed the Son of God to the inner chamber of his room in his life. And that changed many areas of his life. Firstly, his theology became different. He starts thinking of Christ in a different way. And he starts preaching differently. His character became different. He is gentler now. Everything about him changed all through the revelation of Jesus on his inside. Now Jesus continues to be revealed on our inside. Remember it is how you position yourself in God when He reveals Himself to you as salvation. That's all you need to do to position yourself to Jesus, and if there are rooms in your life that has not changed yet, you allow His life to change you.

In the book of Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Now these Ephesians Christians were already born again. They probably were baptized in water and baptized in the Spirit too. And Paul said he pray that their inner man will be strengthened that Christ would dwell in their hearts and be revealed in their hearts because there is more Jesus for every room to encounter. We have established the fact that change comes more by the revelation of Jesus than by reformation or renovation.

Look at II Cor. 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. Look at that staring at you from the bible – there it is, the secret of your Christian life becoming victorious and transformed and every sinful habit in your life broken. The secret does not involve making resolutions, reformations, renovation, not in our human effort, the secret is to position yourself so that He can reveal Himself to you. I assure you no one can meet Jesus and go away the same person. It is not possible to meet Jesus and not be changed. Even when the apostles were doing all their works the Pharisees observed that these were all uneducated people, yet they worked miracles with such power. Peter said it's not by our own works or by our holiness that it is done but by the name of Jesus. And they observed that they couldn't find any answer from their learning to explain the apostles' new way of life and power. In the miracles, signs and wonders, they couldn't find an answer in any other force except God has been working there. But they didn't acknowledge God. In the end, they found one key. They had been with Jesus. That's all they have been with Jesus. They spent three years with Him. And when He was resurrected, they spend forty days with Him. When they spend time with Jesus, they were different. The revelation of Jesus had got hold of their hearts and minds. The revelation of Jesus is a transforming force in our life.

Now we will look on in II Cor. 4 that the glory of God is really indeed the revelation of Jesus. Because it describes here in verse 6 For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It's the revelation of Jesus that transforms us from glory to glory and grace to grace until we are no more the person that we had been.

Now continuing on that basis it tells us in II Cor. 5:7 For we walk by faith and not by sight. We don't go by the natural now because there is an internal revelation has transformed and revolutionized us. The revelation of Jesus transforms, reforms and revolutionized our life but it begins with the revelation of Jesus. Then Paul tells the disciples of Corinthians in II Cor. 5:16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

We don't look at the historical Christ although there is an aspect that we can learn from the historical Christ. We look at the living Jesus who is alive today. He says that he who loves Me keep My commandments and I will reveal Myself to him. I will manifest Myself to him. When He does, you are changed. He says we don't look at the religious Jesus we look at Jesus from our heart, from our inward man. And allow the revelation of Jesus to flood every room, corner, part of our spirit, soul and body,

until we are changed. The truth sounds simple for Jesus to reveal Himself to us and we are changed. But to position ourselves for Him to reveal Himself to us is an important key.

Look at II Cor 3 the pre-requisite to looking as in a mirror the glory of the Lord and being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. The pre-requisite is in verse 18 But we all with unveiled face. If our face is veiled, we can never have the revelation. In II Cor. 3 he talks about how in the synagogue the Word of God is constantly read. But he says even now in verse 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their hearts.

We must behold Him with unveiled face. That's the important thing. The revelation of Jesus can only come when we behold Him with unveiled face. How do we behold Him with unveiled face? Heb. 4:1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest. Or entering that rest that he is talking about. That rest he introduce from Heb. 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies, and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Now Jesus wants to bring many sons to glory. So that's the gist of his story. And the author of Hebrews talks about what Jesus has done to the devil in destroying the devil.

Then in chapter 3:1 he says therefore, chapter 4:1 he says therefore, and he brings us to the subject that is the same subject of entering into the righteousness of Jesus. Entering into the rest of Jesus there is a labor. But when you enter into the rest of Jesus, the labor ceases.

Heb. 4:9-10 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Lets us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fail according to the same example of disobedience. Then suddenly he talks about the Word of God. It looks like verse 12 is inappropriate for that theme. But it is not. There is a key involved. Verse 12 For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

My friends it's the Word of God that opens the veil. It's the Word of God that cleanses us. It is the Word of God that washes us. You see the perfection of the church of Jesus Christ in the book of Eph. 5 in talking about the bride of Jesus it says in verse 25-26 Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word. When the Word of God constantly cleanses our lives, pierces our hearts and removes all those things we are positioned to receive Him.

In a way when you accepted Christ, what happened was that the Word was spoken to you first. Somebody told you about Jesus. Somebody told you about what Jesus had done. How He died on the cross at Calvary for your sins and my sins. And all that He did was not for Himself because He is sinless - it was for us. And finally, they came to the finale. Would you accept Him right now? If all our works and preaching lead to

the decision and in that decision if they cry out to Jesus and there was no Jesus to come it would have been all in vain. However its not in vain because when you preach the gospel anywhere in this world to any people, and you announce the gospel to them and ask, "Would you like to receive Jesus?" No matter how sinful the hearers have been, no matter how condemned they were, if they accept the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts, He would now come into their lives and start cleaning up their lives.

Mary Kathleen Baxter visited both hell and heaven and she has written two books on her experiences, one about her experiences in hell and the other about her visit to heaven. In her second book, she mentioned that when sinners receive the Lord Jesus Christ into their lives, she saw angels going into a special room in heaven where their records are kept. After taking down these particular sinners' records down from the shelves, an angel would take a piece of cloth dipped in the Blood of Jesus and start wiping away the records from their books. The pages of their records would start out as a clean slate. All their past sins were indeed washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

The hearers could like the Samaritan woman with five husbands and the one living with her is not her husband. They could have committed murder like Saul did. They may have committed all kinds of things. But we don't tell them to clean themselves up before Jesus comes. You know what we told them. We told them all they have to do is give Him all their sins, pains, heartaches, sufferings and He will come into your life. When He comes in you will know that He is real and we will change. Yet there are many rooms in our lives that we are still struggling with, perhaps fifty percent, or thirty percent, or the ten percent that still need to change. We need to learn the same key. It is not in a sense of accepting Jesus but in a sense of welcoming Him into your room. And you must believe in the Word. You must believe that He changes us and not we change ourselves. If you have a billion years to change yourself, you will never be able to do it on your own. You have to accept Him into your heart and mind. You can not change the rest of your fifty percent or your thirty percent or your ten percent on your own. You must acknowledge that you can not do so without the help of Jesus.

Do you know that some people you preach the gospel to who will not accept Jesus because they feel they can change themselves? They feel they can run their own life. They feel that they don't need Jesus. They feel that they are the bosses of their own life. And so, Jesus stays away from them until they are willing for Him to come in. The same way if we don't acknowledge that we can not change ourselves He can not help. When finally after the millionth time you tried to change yourself, you failed and you know you failed, you are back to square one where you started. You realize only He can change you. But that is the first step to Him changing you. Finally, you realize there can not be any change through any reformation or renovation, unless there is a revelation of Jesus. And finally you bow yourself before the Almighty God and like the publican you come to Him and say, "O God I am a terrible sinner, I tried and tried but now I know that all my self-efforts are useless. I need You, Lord to come into my heart and reveal Yourself to me."

The Pharisee boasts of all his good works and Jesus said when they left the temple it was the publican that was changed and not the Pharisee. Part of acknowledging Jesus and the righteousness of Jesus is recognizing that we are nothing. That we can do nothing, that we can achieve nothing. All our human efforts are nothing. All our human righteousness is nothing. All our human wisdom is nothing. Finally we come

to that state where we say, "Lord it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. Jesus You know my strength and my weakness. Jesus You know my bad temper. Jesus You know my pain. Jesus You know my heartache. Jesus You know my worries. Jesus You know my anxieties. Jesus You know my bad habits. Jesus You know my smoking problem. Jesus You know my drinking problem. Jesus I can not change myself but I want to welcome You to change me." And finally you bow to Jesus and say, "Jesus I am not changed because I haven't got the revelation of You in my life."

And all He asks is a willing heart. Are you willing to let Him reveal Himself? If you are willing, all you have to do is to acknowledge Him. Say, "I need You, I thank You, reveal Yourself to me right now in my very life." If you have a drinking problem right now you are about to fall pray right up to Him say, "Jesus I can't by myself I need you to reveal Yourself to me strong," and He will. If you have a smoking problem right where the cigarette was there when you are shaking hands and you are about to fall call upon Him. When you are about to do anything wrong because of your weaknesses right where you are call upon Him. And this is what happens at first you sense a difference coming on your inside - a new kind of understanding of Jesus' love and power.

Let say you got a drinking problem, at first you feel a bit uncomfortable calling on Jesus. Then as you keeping calling on Him, you feel more and more uncomfortable with drinking until finally it becomes distasteful to you. And you just don't want it any more. This happens through the grace of God. Some of us are so ashamed of our failures and our weaknesses that we never bring them to Jesus. Some of us are so ashamed of our failures that we never dare to talk about it to Jesus. We only ask for His forgiveness we never ask for His revelation.

You ask, "Why do I need the revelation?" I give you a theological answer. Behind all your weaknesses are some flaws that have developed in your life that even you yourself do not know. For a person who has an alcohol problem, it is not the lust for alcohol that ties him. It is that vacuum that he felt before he got into the alcohol that has become established in his life. Later the alcohol represents something else that was the vacuum in his life. It's not just the taste of the alcohol, but its something deeper than that. A lot of homosexuals have that problem because they are crying for a father. And they feel they could be satisfied with men's love. A lot of lesbians are crying out for motherly favor. A lot of people who are alcoholic could be crying out for security. There is some need in your sub-conscious that even you yourself do not know. You were not born that way. And only the revelation of Jesus so gentle, so beautiful, can slowly reveal itself on your inside and touch you. At first, you are not conscious of Him touching you. Why? Because He is healing your inner most part first. And as it rises out on your inside suddenly it the part where you desire for those wrong things and it disappears. Jesus starts from your inside. Let me encourage you, do not be ashamed of your failure or your weaknesses. Give them all to Jesus. Then surrender yourself, position yourself for Him to reveal to your inside.

You can do it in many ways, in worship, in prayer, in listening the Word, in reading the Word. But remember those things themselves don't change you. But those things position you. And what is happening the veil is dropping from you. The veil that has been built all those years slowly drops off and the light of Jesus shines into a new room in your life and you are turned into another man. And you find new things in

you that you never found before. You find new strength in you that you never found before. You find new understanding in yourself that you never found before. You found new wisdom in your life that you never found before. Because now it is Him who is living through that room since with unveiled face, you are beholding the glory of the Lord.

8. THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

In the last message, we spoke about the transformation of Jesus Christ in our lives.

Every problem in our lives that we can not overcome is a problem of the lack of revelation of Christ. On the New Year's day, many people make resolutions to try to change their lives. They try change to themselves through their will power, their intellect, and all kinds of methods. The bible reveals that we are like leopards with spots and no leopard can change its spots. And no one can change himself or herself. We can influence one another and be influenced by different factors to a certain extend. But real heartfelt genuine transformation only comes from God. And one revelation from Him is enough to change us. We showed that even though we accepted Jesus in our life as personal Lord and Savior yet the transformation in our life is continuous. It is not finished yet.

In the book of Rom. 8:28-30 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. No matter what has happened in your life, no matter what situation you face, the bible says all things work together for good to those who love Him and to those who are called according to His purpose. Now it did not say that all things work for good to everyone. It says that all things work for good only to those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose. And that's inclusive of every situation in your life good and bad things that you can control, things to come. That is a powerful promise.

Before we came to know God or have just begun to know God, things may have happened beyond our control. If you keep your heart full of love for God and do your best to live the will of God in accordance with your knowledge and with your conscience things will always work out for good. All we have to do is to make sure that we love God. We have to make sure that we do our best in walking according to His call and His will. We may make mistakes here and there but if you love God, it will always end well. Isn't it wonderful? To know that your ending is a good ending. To know that when you conclude your life's story that it will be a happy ending before He says, "Time's up. Your life has come to its end." It won't be a sad or a tragic ending. Thank God that if your heart is full of love for God you will always have a good ending. That is why the bible says surely goodness and mercy follow those who keep the Lord as their Shepherd. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want and one of the promises is surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life.

Lets read on verse 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called, whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Basically, in verse 29, whether you are called to the five-fold ministry or you are called to the business world or to the professional world or to any secular vocation that God has for you, that's all with one purpose - that you would become more Christ like.

Look at it in verse 29 we are predestined to be conformed to His image. We are predestined to be like Jesus. We are called, justified, glorified in Him and predestined

to be in His very image. That is the call that God has for every human being. He wants all of us to take on the image of Christ Jesus. That means if God calls you to be a businessman remember your main goal is not just earning money and bringing finances to the kingdom of God. That is part of your call. Not just that. Those are some of the things that you do. But what you do and what you are need to be correlated. He wants us to be Christ like. So whatever we are called to be - apostle, evangelist, pastor, prophet, teacher, or businessman or schoolteacher, or whatever circumstances surround you – whether easy or not so easy, you must see that the main goal is to become more Christ like. And part of the process is by allowing the love of God to fill us.

Many people ask that question, “Pastor, what is the will of God for my life?” The will of God for your life is to be like Jesus. That is the No. 1 goal. And if right now you don’t know some of the detailed practical things about what God’s will is for your life just walk in whatever will you already know. Walk in the most Christ like manner you know how. And it will always end up in the fullness of His will.

Now in Rom. 8, it brings to us what we call a process. Its not completed yet. Our transformation to be like Jesus is not completed yet. We are still being changed into the image. And from the way Paul writes it, that will be fully completed at His coming.

Turn to Col. 3:3-4 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. We will appear with Him in glory. This is a powerful phrase about being Christ like.

Turn to I Jn. 4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. As He is so are we in this world. All these verses talk about our union with Christ. How perfectly He wants us to be one with Him even on this earth in His very image. Now here is where the problem is. We could be at some point of transformation in our earthly life and Christ’s coming may take some years from now. We have Jesus in our hearts when we accepted Him as our Lord and Savior. But there is yet a long way for us to become like Jesus Christ. Quite often, either ignorantly, foolishly or willfully, Christians have made mistakes. And in different ways, they have stumbled different people about what real Christianity is about. But in your life, you should never allow anyone to stumble you from walking with Jesus. Remember that your eyes must be on Jesus all the time. You follow after Jesus with all your heart, mind and soul.

So here on earth, we are on the way to transformation. Those of us who know Jesus Christ are at different points of transformation in our lives. We want to reach the full goal, when the whole church of Jesus Christ to be transformed in His image. Each one of us individually is conformed to His image.

Let us consider Paul’s prayer for the church of Ephesus in Eph. 3:14 onwards. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ.

Now he is talking to Christians. He is not talking to people who do not know Jesus. He is writing this letter to the church of Ephesus. The church is made up of Christians who have been baptized in water, born again, baptized in the Spirit and received many different gifts and graces from God. Now Paul is telling them in his prayer that he is praying that God would strengthen their inner man; that Christ may abide or dwell in their hearts through faith; that they be grounded and rooted in love; that they may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ.

So here is another interesting paradox. We have received Christ into our hearts and yet Christ continues to dwell in increasing measures in our life. We continue to have Christ dwelling in our hearts in different measures. This is an area that we can not try to understand with our finite minds. How can Christ be already in me and yet continue to come into me? I mean He is already in our hearts, how can He come and dwell again in us? We can also ask another paradoxical question - how can Jesus dwell in your heart and in my heart and in all believers' hearts at the same time? These are all things of the spirit realm. If you want to try to understand that paradox intellectually, meditate on God's omnipresence. The power of omnipresence is the ability to be in more than one place at the same time in the same power. So, it's the power of God's omnipresence.

There are three things that we can not be like Jesus, omnipresence, omnipotent and omniscience. However, in all other areas Jesus does want us to conform to His image. We realize that although Jesus is in our hearts yet Paul is praying that Jesus may dwell even more in us. And theologically we have always said you accept Christ only once. But you continue to draw on His life and His Spirit into you until He is fully formed in you.

We have mentioned that every problem that we have in our life to correct it, to change it, only requires the revelation of Christ. One glimpse of Christ is enough to change a hardened sinner into a saint. We showed in the last message in the life of the apostle Paul. Before he was called to be an apostle, he was a cruel religious man who was persecuting the saints. Nothing changed him. But when Jesus appeared to him on the way to Damascus he was changed. Imagine if that appearance were continuous, he would be changed continually. And the key is how to have Jesus to be revealed in our hearts continually. I am not talking about having an open vision or spiritual vision. I am talking about the inner workings of Jesus' revelations in our hearts.

Turn to Gal. 4 the Galatians were having a problem. They were struggling in their Christian life. They were Gentile Christians who were struggling to keep the Jewish laws, customs and traditions because of some Jewish Christians' teachings, which Paul did not recommend. In trying to be good, they were not succeeding. They were becoming more and more miserable. And Paul knows about their problem and wrote the letter of Galatians to them. Galatia is a whole province and covers all the churches there.

He did not only deal with their problems, doubts, unbelief, struggles that they were facing, he also pointed out the mistakes that they have done and the things that they should know and do. An example is found in Gal. 3:1, O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Just more glimpses of that are in Gal. 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another. Then he talks about the works of the flesh in verse 19 adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelries, and the like, all these things that he told them they should not practice. So there were many things, many problems the Galatians have faced to a certain extend. Primarily they kept falling back onto traditions and customs and struggling to be a Christian. And the root problem Paul said was that they forgot that Christian life is by grace and not by works. Just as salvation is by grace and not by works, in the similar way Christian life and Christian living is by grace and not by works. And you know what Paul said about them. In Gal. 5:4 he didn't mean that they lost their salvation but he means that they lost some essential truth of the Christian life. He says in Gal. 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace.

The song, "You are the vine I am the branches," is a quotation from Jn. 15:1-5. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. We must abide in the vine. We are the branches and we must abide in the vine. And Paul was saying that spiritually the Galatians were not abiding in Christ anymore since they were abiding in their own works. See the phrase that he used, "you have become estranged from Christ." Part of his meaning means you have become a stranger to Jesus. Jesus is no more living in your heart. In a sense, He is there but He is no more allowed to live through you; you are living your own life.

Then his other statements you who attempt to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace. We all use the word fallen from grace to mean lose salvation. But Paul uses it in a different way. He doesn't mean that they lost their salvation. He meant that they have lost their art of Christian living. I would rather call Christian living an art. Because art is something that you can define to a certain extend yet there are some things that you can never define. Christian living is not just 4, 5, 10, 20 principles and we have programmed these principles inside us like a robot. Christian living is not just that intellectual process. Now the intellectual process, renewal of the mind, is important. But it's an art. Worshiping God is an art. You can say well these are the good things to do. When we lift up our hands, the book of Psalms tells us it represents the evening sacrifice. When we dance onto the Lord, we are rejoicing in God. Jesus did say to do it in faith because in Lk. 6 Jesus tells us to rejoice when you are troubled and persecuted. You may receive teachings on worship but when it comes to actually worshiping, it is a different thing. Doing worship brings a greater understanding of worship.

It is just like when you learn to drive a car. You learn how to drive the car on first gear. If your car is on manual gears, you must press the clutch first then you change the gear from neutral to first gear, and so on. Every time you need to change to another gear, you must press the clutch first. But then everybody who drives a car knows that. After you have passed your driving test and secured your driving license, you start driving around in your car. At first, you were still unsteady but after awhile, you are at ease driving anywhere. You have to master the foundations and the basics before making driving an art. It is the same with learning music or learning to paint. You have to master the basic foundations before you can proceed to making it an art. Your peculiar artistry will be revealed in your driving, music or paintings. I notice one

thing everybody drives the car the way their personality is. People who are jumpy tend to drive the car the same way. People who are very steady drive their cars very steadily.

Likewise, Christian living is an art. The Galatians were so concerned about pleasing God that they kept falling back on the Jewish laws and customs to make themselves right with God whereas God wanted them to look to Jesus and develop a relationship with Jesus. Regard Christian life as an art. We learn the principles but remember you don't reduce Jesus to a sort of principle. You don't reduce Jesus to 25 doctrinal statements. He is a person. You learn everything you can but when you relate to Him, He is a person. And you know what Jesus wants. Jesus wants you to relate to Him as an art. Just as when you learn to play the piano, you learn all the elementary things. You may make some mistakes but you are trying to play a song. And you play your first song. It may not be the best song but you are learning the art. After some time, your playing goes beyond that and you move into the higher realms of music. Christian life is that manner. We can learn the principles of Christian living but when it comes to our relationship with Jesus, it develops into the finer art of relating and fellowshiping and communing with Him.

And here the Galatians were learning all these principles of trying to do this and that to please God. Even the Colossian Christians were guilty of that. They fell into the same fundamental errors that began to make Christian life miserable. They fail to realize that Christian life is an art and not an intellectual process. So Paul told the Galatians, "You have fallen from grace. You have pulled yourself away from Jesus to some sort of religiosity that Jesus had no part." And he told them that they must again return to Jesus. Now they don't need to be born again. They were born again once. But they need to understand how to relate to Him. And Paul in his compassion in Gal. 4:19 says My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. Do you know what the root problem was? Christ was not fully formed in them yet.

The word form is a special Greek word here. It is not the normal Greek word for form. The normal Greek word for form is the word *plaso*. The word *plaso* is where we get the word *plasma* in English. The word *plaso* has been used in Rom. 9:20 and I Tim. 2:13. it means what it means - a real form. But here the word form in Gal. 4:19 until Christ is formed in you is the word *morphoo*. Another prefix is added to the word *morphoo* to make it *metamorphoo* and it is translated *transfigured* in Matt. 17 and Lk. 9. *Metamorphosis* is a process of transformation. When Jesus was on the top of the Mount of Olives praying, He was *transfigured*. His form was changed until it was brilliant and shiny. That's the word *morphoo*.

And if we bring that same usage into Gal. 4:19, we will see how the meaning is brought out clearly. My little children for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is *transfigured* (or *transformed*) in you. See Christian life is allowing Jesus to live in us until He shines brightly in us. That's why it's an art. We learn about Jesus. We learn how to yield and we learn the principles of renewing our minds but basically, it is yielding to Jesus living in us.

Yielding to Jesus living in us is tied to righteousness and this is the gospel or good news about Jesus. The gospel is Jesus Himself. Not just His teachings although His teachings are part of the gospel. Rom. 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of

Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

There are two types of righteousness. One is the righteousness of the law, which humans try to get human righteousness. The other is the righteousness of God, which is a free gift from God. And the gospel is the revelation of that free gift. For thousands of years mankind has tried to be righteous. We try to be good. We try to be this and that and we all fail. And God says that He is now giving us His gift of righteousness that changes us. We can not change by ourselves because no one can be righteous without God. Remember we have shown that even the Old Testament saints had a glimpse of the gift of righteousness. You name any famous saint in the Old Testament and they were what they were not because they were more fantastic than the rest of the people. They were what they were because they had a glimpse of the righteousness of God. Noah found grace in the eyes of God. Abraham found favor in the eyes of God. Joseph found favor in the eyes of God. They managed to have a glimpse of righteousness and therefore they were changed.

We have given some examples in the book of Romans. In the book of Romans, Paul talks about the righteousness that is our faith versus the righteousness of humans. Rom. 4:2-3 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what do the Scripture says? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” then in verse 6 Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works. So what God was giving was not just righteousness it was the righteousness of God. He was not just washing our sins. He was giving some quality of His nature into us. In the Old Testament, they were a few people who had a glimpse of His nature that He straightaway put into their lives to turn them around. And that was how they existed in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, this revelation is supposed to increase. We are not talking about righteousness because of the law. We are talking about God’s gift of His righteousness. II Cor. 5:21 tells us that Christ was made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God. So, it’s a different quality that we are talking about.

There are two types of righteousness one is the righteousness of the law and the other is the righteousness of God. Lets focus on Rom. 3:21 just to follow the theme to show you it’s the gift of righteousness. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. That means, the law and the Prophets of the Old Testament had a glimpse of the righteousness. And every time the prophets prophesy, they talked about the righteousness that is to come and the righteousness of God that will be revealed among man. It was not something that man could attain but something that man can receive. This righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ is available to all and on all who believe, for there is no difference. Again, I submit to you that Paul was talking about a different type of righteousness, which is God’s righteousness a gift of God.

Rom. 10 again emphasizing that there is a righteousness of the law and the righteousness of God. Verse 5-6 and just looking at these two verses tell you that there are two types of righteousness. One that is of the law and one that is of faith which is a gift. And the law can never reach to the level that God wants. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things

shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way. See he is contrasting the righteousness of the law versus the righteousness of faith. The righteousness of the law can only bring a person to righteousness to a certain extent but it can not bring a person into transformation. And therefore, God in His mercy revealed in Jesus the gift of righteousness.

Now Christianity is a faith that still seeks to bring holiness and righteousness into us. But the process is different. It's not by trying to be good. It's not by building up good works. It is accepting Jesus into our hearts and letting Him live through us. And keep welcoming Him to live through us. And in the process of allowing Him to live through us, that would change us. It is just like the way a car is driven depends on the personality of the driver. A car would become fast and aggressive if the driver is fast and aggressive. But a car becomes stable and steady if the driver is also stable and steady. In the same way, when we yield to Jesus and let Him control us, our life, our spirit, our soul and our body begin to be transformed. When the devil was controlling us we were willful and disobedient to God. And the key to righteousness in our lives is to yield to Jesus Christ and resist the devil.

Rom. 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, (and many Christians are trying to do,) have not submitted to the righteousness of God. Have you notice the words they used. The righteousness of God is not something we can earn. It is something that you can never change you can only let Him change you. You submit to it. But the righteousness of the law is different. You are trying to accumulate merits in God. Look at this it is the righteousness that we must submit to. It treats righteousness as if it's a person you can submit to. It treats righteousness as if righteousness is a person who can talk and say, "Righteousness, take over my life now." And indeed righteousness is not merits alone righteousness is a person the person of Christ. And God is telling that the fullness of Christian life is not to live your own life but to allow Jesus to live through you. And we forget to let Jesus live through us. Whenever we fail in our Christian life, we just forgot to let Jesus live through us. But if we began to let Jesus live through us, there will be a change to bring us to complete transformation.

I emphasize again that we have to submit to the righteousness of God. Rom. 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

It didn't say that your obedience would make you righteous. It didn't say that the church's obedience would make us righteous although we need to learn obedience. But it says by Jesus' obedience we were made righteous. Do you know what many Christians are trying to do? They are trying to obey God. As you're trying to obey God its not your obedience that brings you righteousness. It is Christ's obedience that brought righteousness. We must learn to be obedient as we are being transformed. But it is more learning to yield and submit to the righteousness of Jesus in our life. No amount of your obedience can earn righteousness. Obedience in prayer, obedience in devotions, obedience in the bible, obedience to do good works, obedience to church,

obedience to fellow man, obedience to parents, all these are good things but they don't earn righteousness. One Man's obedience earned the righteousness. If that righteousness is already earned, paid for, we need to learn to receive it. If we don't learn to receive, we will be still struggling to earn. And you can not do two things at the same time. You can not be trying to earn and trying to receive. You either receive it or you try to earn it. Yet many are trying to gain merits with God.

Let me bring an illustration to bring it across. Let us say this man sitting here, Bill, has his hands full. He is holding a coat in one hand and a briefcase in the other hand. Then he is also trying to hold a book under one armpit and an umbrella under the other. The briefcase, the coat, the book and the umbrella represent different aspects of Christian life. Lets say this bible represents the gift of righteousness. He is already carrying so many things. And I said, "Bill, can you take my bible here?" There is no way he can take my bible. His hands are already full. Can you see the struggle? He is trying to hold on to all these other things that he can't receive the bible. And that's what our life is like. We are trying to be a good Christians. The briefcase represents our trying to be a prayerful person. The coat represents our trying to pray in tongues more. And we are trying to keep doing all these things but first you must receive the gift of righteousness and let it balance from there then everything else will balance up. In fact, he can't even unload himself now. It's difficult trying to put down everything. So we got to help him to unload all those things. We can see that sometimes we are so involved and engrossed in exercising the different aspects of Christian living that we forget that the most important is to receive the gift of righteousness.

Now the gift of righteousness will be like a huge box and you can throw everything in. It's just a matter of organization. How many things did he carry? He carried a briefcase, a coat, an umbrella and a book. Here is the good news: when you received the righteousness of God, you received the ability to carry all those things properly. It's a matter of organization. Lets say he received the gift of righteousness first. The gift of righteousness teaches him how to organize his life. It is now an art, no more a struggle.

There are so many factors in life that we won't know how to function in them if we do not have the gift of righteousness. You learn 21 points of Christian life – worship, intercession, praying in tongues, meditation, repentance, love, waiting upon God, etc but when you apply them, you find that you need the 22nd point. But the 22nd part is the part that makes the difference – it teaches you how to organize the 21 points and put them in order. The 22nd point is the gift of righteousness that tells you what to do first and so on. Without the 22nd gift of righteousness, you would be confused and wouldn't know where to start among the 21 points you have learnt.

Now Bill put all his things in the box and his hands are free. He still has the same amount of things but now it is a different arrangement. Now his position is different from the previous position when he was carrying all his things all over him. He is still carrying the same amount of things but he can re-organize it in a better way.

Now Bill wears his coat first because Jesus in him teaches him how to do it. And then he takes his coat and he wears it too. But do you know in his new position after receiving the gift of righteousness, he can now wear his coat, which he couldn't earlier when he was so confused carrying so many things. Now Bill knows how to put the book in his briefcase instead of carrying it under his armpit. Then he takes the

umbrella from under his other armpit and holds it with his right hand like a dignified gentleman. The bible gives him the knowledge of how to balance everything. Human life is an art. If it's not an art, we will all be robots. If you put everyone through the same regimented training without concern for individual aptitudes and talents, they will all come out the same robots. You can send one thousand students to the same school, studying the same subjects and they will still come out different because human life is an art. Human life has never been a form of robotic slavery.

In the same way, if we forget to put righteousness in its proper place we are out of balance. When you are out of balance, it is like a tight rope where you can not balance other things in your life. Now the balance factor comes from knowing that it's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. When Christ is alive in us then you know He can tell you a lot of things, He can tell you the things in between the lines. Although you learned ten points, you won't know how to apply the ten points unless He teaches you that point two can help you to apply point one. Jesus can teach you sub points one and two that the preacher couldn't cover because no matter how you teach, everybody has their finer peculiarities that still need special personal attention from God. And that is why it's an art.

But here is an important factor we must always remember - that righteousness is a gift. And you start from that perspective. Then starting from that perspective you learn how to walk your Christian life. It is just like when you go for singing lessons. Do you know that your first lesson in singing is not really singing? Your first lesson is when the teacher teaches you how to relax. If you are so tense, how will you sing properly? You may think your teacher will teach you how to sing the do-re-mi notes. I can guarantee you the first thing the teacher would teach you is how to relax, how to sing from your diaphragm and how to breathe properly. These are the first lessons because unless you get these things right your vocalizing will either strain your throat or it will just warm up your throat. In the same way by getting righteousness in the right perspective, we are able to balance our life. But we must always see that not we trying to get it but its already there and we believe its there and from there it flows through our life that's the first.

Look at Rom. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Verse 6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) what does he say the word is near you even in your mouth and in our heart the word of faith. Verse 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness.

The first key is to believe. To believe that it's yours, it's your free gift that you are righteous, that you are cleansed, that His righteousness is in you, that you are accepted in God. I find that trying to get to believe that is difficult. For some reasons, people don't want to believe that God accepts them. Because of our iniquities, our shortcomings, our failures, it is very hard for humans to believe that God accepts them. God loves you; God likes you. Not many Christians can feel that God likes them. Yes, theologically they know that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes should not perish but shall have eternal life. It's a theological thing. Deep in their hearts, the theological part is O.K., the principle part is O.K. the understanding part they know. But the art part that really in their heart God loves them, they find it hard to accept and believe.

Do you know that is the first place we must always start in life? If you don't have God's love in your heart the vacuum will always pressurize you. You always start everyday by saying to God, "Lord, You love me." I know some of you are so spiritual that you always start with, "I love you, Lord." Remember it is God who first loves us and therefore, we can love God. We can never out love God. So always start the day by saying, "God loves me, God likes me." You are not trying to do some psychological or positive thinking in your daily life but it has to sink down into us that God really loves me, that God really likes me. It doesn't matter if you think some people don't like you but if you know that God loves you and God likes you, after some time you can believe that people do love you and like you too.

When you tell people you are righteous in God, some people might ask you what concept of righteousness you have. Righteousness is basically that you can go to God and just sit on God's lap and don't feel anything. But some of us won't dare to approach God. We will ask, "Is He going to beat me up? Is He going to strike me with a lightning bolt?" What does it mean that we are righteous? Doesn't it mean that God looks at you like He looks at Jesus? Can Jesus run up and sit on His lap? Can Jesus just approach God and say, "Father, let's discuss the world situation?" Of course, He can. God's righteousness as a gift to us means that God loves us, He likes us. He really likes you, you that you see in the mirror every morning that even you yourself may not like. But He likes you; He is so in love with you.

Now that consciousness is something that we need to get more and more. John 3:16 is not just a verse for non-Christians. It is a verse that we must have not only in our heart and in our mind but be in the resources of our being that God so loved. It didn't just say, "God loved the world." The word "so" was put there for the extra emphasis. God so loved the world. God did not just love but He so loved you and I. And it's something you and I can never earn. He is just our Daddy. He gave birth to us through His Spirit. And we cry Abba Father which means daddy. That's what the bible is trying to bring forth.

It is supposed to be fun to live in God, not miserable and pitiable. Rom. 8 it says in verse 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear. What kind of fear? We fear God. We still fear God and respect God in a sense. But it's the wrong kind of fear whether we please Him or not, whether we are doing the right thing or not, whether we deserve judgment or not, whether we are going to be punished or not. All kinds of fear. We didn't receive that spirit of fear anymore. It says that you receive the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba! Father. In the Western world, they call daddy; here in Asia we use papa.

Whether we actually cried, "Daddy," to God is irrelevant. But that's what it means is that the day you were born again, behold old things have passed away all things have become new. And God's Spirit came into your life and you cried, "Daddy," and it brings a smile in God's face. And God says, "O my little child." From that day onwards, God has always loved you. Yes, you may be a naughty little toddler, but God says, "That's my son and daughter." Even though your children may fail here and there, you are still a daddy and a mommy to them. It goes beyond theology - they will always be your sons and daughters. And we will always be sons and daughters in God. That's the way God wants us to be. We must always start from that platform in our life. You are righteous. You don't have to do anything more to please God. Not one more thing you need to please God. Some people will think if I teach like that

then they won't need to pray anymore. They won't need to read the bible anymore. In a sense, theologically yes. You don't need to do all these to please God. But let me tell you what happens. When you discovered God loves you, you want to read the bible even more. You want to pray to Him even more. You want to talk to Him about everything. I know sometimes preachers think that if you teach like that and teach people what the Word reveals about the righteousness of God that Christians will become lazy in a sense that God has given everything and we don't need to do nothing more.

But when people claim to be that way, they don't have a real revelation yet. When you know on your inside that Papa God loves you, you want to please Papa. When you know on your inside that Daddy God loves you so much that if you hurt your little toe He will take you in His arms and comfort you, it makes you want to talk to Him about every little thing. Just like my son always do when he does something new. I am one of the first one he wants to show me. Even if I am talking to somebody, he will run down the stairs and say, "Papa come and see this." Why, because I love him and enjoy what he does. It is the same way in your relationship with God. When you know God loves you, you will do whatever little thing you can to please God. This kind of truth won't make Christians lazy if they have the true revelation. And you are not seeking this as an excuse to live your own life. But if you really have the revelation of how much God means to you and how much you mean to God and what God has given you, you will never be the same. It will make you want to talk to God. And every time you want to do something you always automatically talk to God and say, "Father God can you guide me in this area?" It makes your Christian life different. It makes you want to pray more. It makes you want to read the bible more to discover what are the good things Papa God has for you. It doesn't have the opposite effect if you have the revelation of God in your life. The key is faith. Believe in the righteousness of God that in one Man's obedience you are made righteous. Even though the time frame can be different but righteousness is a spiritual force that knows no time barrier. It flows from Calvary into the new millennium.

Lets turn to the book of Romans. See the whole book of Romans is full of this contrast between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. Rom.9:30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. You can never reach it; you can only have it by believing. You can not have it by any other way. Believers believing what God tells them receive it. There have been times when words have not been able to express how moved I feel in the presence of God when I meditate on how He loves us. And it makes you want to do more things for God. After our worship time when we love God and we know how much He loves us and we rejoice in Him until tears flow from our eyes, what does it make us feel? It makes you want to live for God. It doesn't make you lazy. It makes you more diligent and hard working. But yet we work hard not because we want to earn our righteousness. We work hard because we received the strength to be able to do something for God. And we know that what we do we don't have to try. We just allow Him to live through us. And we know that it's the works that He created for us to walk in.

Rom. 4:21 Being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore, it was accounted to him for righteousness. He just got it

through believing. It is so simple and yet so difficult for man to be able to just come to God and believe in His great love for us. When you believe the next thing is to receive the revelation of His love. Now what is the best picture of the love of God? There is only one picture. Long ago, there was a play made by one very gifted person. It's a secular play with a Christian theme. The play was about mankind, trials, suffering, tremolos, and the life of mankind. All through the play, the film showed scene after scene of mankind's difficult moments. Moments when mankind were at war. They showed scenes of World War I, World War II. They showed scenes of famine, scenes of man's achievements, modern cities, gardens, beautiful creations. Then they showed more suffering. They showed earthquakes, and all kinds of tragedies. They showed all kinds of people dying. All the suffering you can name and think of. They showed scene after scene for nearly two hours. Then at the end of the show there is a person who came up to the stage and said in anger at God, "God, don't you care for us?" Then he walked out of the stage. There is only one little light shining on the stage. And the light focused on only one little picture and it formed a cross. The greatest picture of love is Jesus. Think about love in a visual form. You probably think about someone who is loving, your mommy, your daddy. What was your greatest moment of love? Your husband, your wife, your father, your mother, but you know there is no greater picture of love than Jesus in all His suffering on the cross on Calvary. There is no greater picture of love than Jesus walking on this earth going to the cross to die, buried and raise again the third day, only Jesus.

The second thing that needs to happen, as you believe in God's love for us is to receive a picture of revelation of Jesus inside us. I am not talking about a vision of an actual picture. By a picture, I mean it could be an emotional picture. It could be a feeling picture. But it's some sort of knowledge that you have met Jesus. Jesus can be met in many ways. When you came into this church, Jesus was here. You may not have seen Him or have any image or vision of Him but you felt His presence. See the second thing that needs to happen is this - there is no greater picture of God's love that can re-vitalize our heart and energy than the picture of the love of Jesus.

In the book of II Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. Now the only way you can change is by seeing Him. If you don't see Him, you can not be changed. I am not talking about people with vision or the gift of discerning of spirits. But it's the revelation of Jesus in our hearts. Jesus says in Jn. 14 If you love Me keep my commandments and I will manifest Myself to you. He says in Jn. 14 also the world will not see Me but you will see Me. Because I live you will live also. Do you notice that the phrase, "Because I live you will live also," is followed by the phrase, "The world will not see Me but you will see Me." You will somehow have knowledge of Jesus. Not just intellectually but spiritually there will be some sort of knowledge of Christ that comes into us beyond intellect beyond emotions, beyond our soul, but some spiritual revelation of Christ deep in our hearts and we are transformed.

No. 1 believe. No. 2 receive the new revelation of Christ in you. We always need a new revelation of Christ. You may have walked with Jesus for twenty years. But when Jesus reveals Himself He always reveals some part of His being more that still touches you. And every time He touches you, you cry out like Job, "Now I see Him I

bow in ashes and sackcloth before Him.” Before he met God and God showed Himself he complained he did this, he did that and he argued that he has not done anything to deserve the calamities in his life. But when he met God, he said his lips are sealed.

The revelation of Jesus needs to come into our hearts. In II Cor. 3 the word “transformed” is the same word metamorphoo Christ is formed in our heart by the revelation of the glory of God inside us. II Cor. 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Ten thousand years would not be enough to see all His glory. Even if everyday you have a fresh revelation of Jesus in your heart and you live a hundred and twenty years you will have only touched on one aspect of Jesus. He is the Lily of the valley. The Fairest of ten thousands. Bright as the Morning Star. The Alpha and the Omega. The One who is and who was and who is to come. He is called by a thousand names. He is loved by millions and millions of human beings. The revelation of Jesus must enter our heart. And when He enters your heart, you will never be the same. All your chains will fall before Jesus. All the tears of your eyes will fall before Jesus. All your bondages will flee. Every demon has always fled at the utterance of Jesus’ name. When Jesus comes, the demons cry. No disease and no sickness can stand in the presence of Jesus. He is the answer to all of our life. But we need the revelation of Jesus in our heart.

We can read the bible ten thousand times and you will always find one more aspect of Jesus that you never saw before. No. 1 believe He loves you and He gives you His righteousness. No. 2 receive the revelation of Jesus in your heart and in your life.

Watchman Nee in one of his books “A Normal Christian Life” and some of his other writings spoke about how in a revival meeting, a bible scholar prayed a great theological prayer about the names of God, the power of God, the omnipresence of God and all the greatness of God. He prayed from Genesis to Revelation from pre-destination to foreknowledge but nobody was touched. Then a little girl comes and all she did was say a simple prayer, “Lord Jesus I love you. I love you with all of my heart, all of my pain.” And she wept and cried. But in a few seconds, the whole congregation was in tears. You know who had the revelation. Not the scholar but the little girl. It’s the revelation of Jesus in her heart that touched the people.

Jesus in His parable says that two men came for prayer. One was a Pharisee who prayed great prayer. He said, “God I have fasted three times a week, I have done this and I have done that. I am not like the Publican over there.” But the Publican came to God and said, “O God forgive me. O God I want you. O God help me. I need you.” And Jesus said the Publican went away changed but the Pharisee remained as he is. For in his bible knowledge he has no revelation of God.

The revelation of God is not something we can define with our intellect. Not something we can define with our emotion. It is something deep in our spiritual core of our being, when we believe how much God loves us and we receive Him not by our works but by grace. Then we allow Him to reveal Himself in our being. Like the song says, “In my inner most being, Jesus the Christ appears.” When He appears deep in the corridor of your soul and your spirit you will never be the same. And that’s where true transformation is. That’s where the power of Christianity lies - in the

revelation of Christ in our heart and in our mind. And until He comes, He will continue to reveal Himself in our heart.

May our hearts be tender and soft for Him to reveal through us. When you believe and then you receive His revelation, you will be transformed. Christ will be formed in you. As you behold the face of Christ in the glory of God, you will be metamorphoo into another degree of His image. Then when you look around, you find that the chain that held you, the bad habit that clung to you, have dropped off without even you realizing it. Because you have found Him and the revelation has changed you. And Paul says in II Cor. 4 that everyday there was a revelation of Christ. He says our inner man is being renewed everyday. Everyday of your Christian life you can know the presence of the abiding Christ in you. Everyday He wants to live through you. But you must believe and you must receive His revelation. And the rest of the works He will live through you.

9. THE TOUCH OF THE MIND

Turn to the book of Romans. We have quoted several verses and showed how Jesus is the end of our everything and He is our righteousness. He is the end of the law in Rom. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Not forgetting II Cor. 5:21 it says for He became sin that we might be righteousness of God. And righteousness is a gift from God. We have been exploring how that righteousness works and what happens to us as we allow this gift for righteousness to be quickened in our life and transform us. We have taught on the transforming work of Christ. Now this morning we want to talk about some of the intricate processes that take place in our personal transformation. Looking at the force of righteousness, we want to look at the touch of Jesus on our minds.

In Rom. 7 Paul is speaking about the righteousness of God when he described the struggle between what is good within him and what is sin nature in his life. In verse 20 onwards Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now notice that there are three laws that are operating. One is the law of sin, which is operating through the physical body. The second is the law of the mind. It tells us here in verse 23 that the law of sin was warring against the law of the mind. Then thirdly there is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus comes into our life and the bible tells us in Rom. 8:10 if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin or the body's passion and the law of sin that is in the body is cancelled and annulled. So that it says here that the Spirit is life because of righteousness. So the law of the Spirit of life imparts the revelation of Christ into our life and it causes the gift righteousness of God to abound in our lives. And that cancels out the law of sin that is operating in our life but what about the law of the mind? What happened to the mind? The law of the mind is the law of transformation. The law of the Spirit keeps working upon our mind until our mind is transformed in Him and we are perfectly like Christ. In other words, the law of the mind had no power against the law of sin until the law of the Spirit of life comes in and annuls and cancels out the law of sin in the body, then the law of the mind could operate in harmony with the law of the Spirit.

Cross reference to one more verse Rom. 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Now there is a phrase here that we want to explore. It says be transformed by the renewal of your mind. The word transformation is from the Greek word metamorphoomai, which we have studied in this series earlier. Metamorphoo is

translated transformed. Here it says that the transformation that Christ is in our life but that transformation is taking place by the renewal of the mind. The word renew is from the Greek word anakainoo which means to be made new again. Therefore, something must happen in our minds in order for that transformation to be sealed. Christ is inside the heart of every Christian who accepts Him young or old. But how we allow the Christ in us to touch our minds will be the key to that transformation. And today's message is called the Touch of the Mind.

We are not talking about mental power or positive thinking or metaphysics. But we are talking about some real work from the Spirit how He touches something on our inside and causes our mind to be renewed. When our minds are renewed, we are transformed in our nature. Something must touch us on our inside.

And for us to see it clearly I like to draw a story from the bible from the book of Luke 15:11 A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in the land, and he began to be in want.

No money, no friends and nobody to turn to. Did he turn back to God yet, no?

Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into the fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

Imagine sitting there, feeding the pigs and watching all those pigs eating. I think he is the only one who has ever envied pigs for the food. None of you would go over to a pig sty and look at some of those things they are eating and say, "O how I wish I could have those food for lunch." But he was so hungry that he wished he could eat the pods. Did he change yet? No. When the father gave him the money, did he change? No. When he spent all his money, did he change? No. When the famine came, did he change? No. When he was sitting there looking at the pig's food, did he change? No.

But one day in verse 17 But when he came to himself, you see change comes from inside not outside. You can imprison criminals but you can not change them. You can hit them on the outside and sometimes you can punish them on the outside but still people will not change. All change of any human being comes from internal realization. One day as he was looking at the pigs suddenly his mind is touched. The touch of the mind. It must have been the Spirit of God working. The bible says he came to himself.

He said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father and will say to him, "Father I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.

He came to himself and then he started reasoning. I believe something happened to his mind. Something struck him; something touched him. For once, his reasoning was clear. Do you know if we don't have clarity, if we don't have light we will be like the

three blind men? They came before an elephant and the first blind man felt its body and says, “An elephant is like a wall.” That’s not true. Its not really a true picture. Another grabbed the elephant by the leg and said, “An elephant is like a tree.” Is that statement correct? No. The other blind man grabbed the elephant’s tail and said, “An elephant is like a rope.” But the blind were blind. But if their eyes were just opened, they would see what an elephant looks like. So something must open first.

The mind must have some divine light touching it. It is not by our brilliance, by our ability, by our training, by our education, that we could fully move into the fullness of the wisdom that God has for His people. It takes the Spirit of God to touch a part of our soul on our inside and scales would drop from our eyes. We would be able to see correctly.

Now looking at the prodigal son, it says that he came to himself. That means before that he was not himself. I am sure when he came to the father and said, “Father, I would like my inheritance now in advance,” the father would have reasoned with him and tried to explain why he shouldn’t do it. But in his mind, he has a mind of his own, he was determined to do what he wants to do in his life. But he was not himself. His reasoning was incorrect. Wrong perspective produces wrong reasoning. Wrong facts produce wrong conclusion. So the most important thing is get the correct facts or spiritually speaking, get the revelation first. Then the reasoning would come correctly.

The prodigal son had made up his mind. He would demand from his father. The father’s reasoning did not move him. And he was not without a mind. But his mind was not touched. Something happened that touched his mind when he was sitting in the pig’s sty. I know it’s easier to hear God here in this church when you are worshiping God among believers. The presence of God is so moving that we weep in His presence. We could cry. We could laugh. We could rejoice. But all the prodigal son heard was the sound of the pigs. And here he is trying to hear God, trying to think clearly. And yet the Spirit of God broke right through all those barriers, touched something on his inside and his reasoning became clear. When everything was clear and nice in his father’s house his reasoning was unclear. Now when everything around was dirty and filthy his reasoning was clear. When he came to himself, he began to see things correctly. He began to see the truth about himself, about his situation, about God. Only the truth can set you free. Jesus says that you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. If you continue in the truth, you shall be His disciples. That is true spiritually and that is true naturally.

Do you know that if right now in your heart, in your mind, any knowledge that is inaccurate is producing bondage in your life? Any facts that are inaccurate are producing a wrong attitude and bondage in your life. We must have the truth for the truth to set us free.

Paul says it differently. He says in the book of II Cor. 10 how important what goes on in the mind of each one of us. II Cor. 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Then and only then can we confront the powers of darkness. It’s important to get at the truth. There is always the truth. In all accords in this land and in every nation, the

lawyers debate and present the cases of their client. The judges sit trying to determine what is the truth. Because only when the truth is known can the real people who are innocent be set free. Truth is so powerful. Only the truth can set us free. That means right now every principle in our life, every inaccuracy in knowledge, every inaccuracy in facts, are producing bondage. That is why only the truth can set us free. A revelation in the Spirit, revelation in the natural of what is really true can set us free.

In the natural world, long ago Dr. Spoke came up with a book and said that its not really very civilized to discipline children. So it became an in-thing. Human beings are very clever and can come up with persuasive arguments. Yes, we are more cultured, we are no more barbarians and to discipline children is very barbaric. Only a few years ago Dr. Spoke himself said he was wrong. He should have caned the children when they need caning. When that philosophy went out into the world and was embraced by families you know what it produced. It produced a whole generation of rebellious people who had never known discipline. And all the time the bible told us that he who loves his child would not spare the rod. He who spares the rod actually hates his child. Discipline is an important part of a child's training. The bible is never wrong.

Nowadays homosexuals are trying to argue their so-called truth about alternative lifestyle. But remember the bible is never wrong. The bible is always telling us what is the truth. And when we don't embrace truth, we pay the price for it. Some people say it's hard to follow the truth. It's hard to stand firm on the truth. Let me tell you when time passes its going to be harder still not to stand on the truth because truth will last through time. But untruth will never last.

It's important to understand that Paul is talking about the revelation of God that touches upon our mind. When the prodigal son sees the truth all his reasoning became correct and it produced a correct response. It produced a correct attitude. You can tell whether people have found the truth. Because Jesus told us what the truth was. Jn. 14:6 he says I am the way, the truth and the life. And everything that is not in the nature of Jesus, not in line with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, kindness, and all the laws of God doesn't belong to the truth. So, when someone says, "I got the truth," and their attitude is anger, they haven't got the truth yet. The truth always produces a certain form of attitude and response that is in line with the truth of the Spirit.

When the prodigal son found the truth, he became contrite, humbled and recognized where he was. He recognized what he had done in the sight of God was wrong. He found the truth even before he went back to his father. While the prodigal son was still sitting with the pigs there and the revelation came to him, he had the touch of the mind. When his mind was touched, he began to see the truth. From that very second he was already being set free. When he determined to go back to his father, it was only the river of truth that led him more and more into freedom when he met his father. And behold when he saw his father, the father didn't rebuke him, didn't scold him, didn't despise him and didn't punish him. The father received him back with open arms. And he was restored. He found the truth and the truth set him free. He came to himself. There is a mental state that is produced by righteousness, a state of heart and a state of mind. When this revelation touches our mind, it is not in the realm of reasoning. We don't reason into it. Something touches us and then we see it clearly. We don't try to reason into it like the blind men grabbing an elephant. No, something

touches us then reasoning flows like a river. Reasoning and understanding are just side effects of revelation that touches the mind.

Let me give an example of the touch of the mind. In Lk. 24 The disciple had walked with Jesus for three years. They heard the teaching of Jesus at close hand. They even had private talks with Jesus when Jesus explained a lot of His teaching. They had shared a lifetime with Jesus. Now that Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected, they still didn't understand what was going on. Their understanding hasn't come yet. Reasoning still was dark and unclear. When Jesus appeared to them in Lk. 24:44 These are the words which I spoke to you, remember what their state of being was in verse 37 they were terrified and frightened. That was the state they were in when Jesus was raised from the dead. They couldn't accept it. Their minds couldn't operate in that realm. When God touches your mind, your mind began to operate in the spirit realm. Your mind operates in the natural realm but when God touches your mind, it starts operating in the spiritual realm and not just in the natural realm. This is the renewal of the mind.

Just to cross-reference on some of those things that were happening in the gospel of Mk. 16:11 And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. They didn't even believe the personal testimony of Mary Magdalene. Remember unbelief is also reasoning. When people say, "I don't believe in God," ask them whether they will have a reason. You see unbelief is not non-reasoning. Non-reasoning under philosophical classification is called agnosticism. An agnostic is someone who refuses to reason at all. But unbelief is reasoning into an opposing area called a lie and untruth. The mind is not inactive the mind is active. They did not believe because they were too naturally bound and they couldn't understand the scriptures, they couldn't understand what Jesus was saying. They couldn't understand all the facts that were presented. They couldn't understand the experience that they were experiencing. They need the touch of the mind.

Now in verse 12 He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. These were not strangers. These were the disciples of Jesus and who have been with Jesus for three years. Jesus had even told them before He died that He will be raised from the dead, and Jesus even told them, "Go, I will meet you in Galilee." Isn't it true sometimes you could experience some spiritual phenomena but you couldn't understand them? But yet God doesn't want us to remain there He wants us to understand. Understanding and wisdom is a part of the river of God that He wants to give to us through His righteousness.

Cross reference to Matt. 28 and remember the passage we read earlier in Mk. 16 where the two disciples on the way to Emmaus came to the other disciples and told them and they still didn't believe. And that was the situation Jesus found them in Lk. 24 when He met them and they were in unbelief.

Now in Matt. 28:16-17 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, there worshiped Him, but some doubted. Right up to the time some doubted. They just couldn't accept. Their mind got boggled. Do you know that all unbelief is basically a restriction of the mind? If we could be free from the mental restriction to see the way God sees, to believe the way God said it, we will move in a different dimension. God can do above

all that you ask or think. Our highest thinking, our highest conception is only one tiny atom in an ocean to God. It is the limits of our mind that bind us, blind us and put us into bondage. Only the truth can set us free. Every lie will put us in bondage. Lies can be seen sometimes like temporary truth. But they will put us into bondage and you will know it by their results.

Now you know the atmosphere the disciples were in. They had doubt, they had unbelief, they had all these questioning. Their minds were working but not working properly. What they need is the touch of the mind. Now He will touch the spirit first before He touches the mind. For only when the mind is touched and renewed, can there be a transformation.

Lk. 24:44 These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures. The touch of the mind. Was the touch of the mind through education? No. We are talking about supernatural things here. I know those of you who are trained to think scientifically, it would be hard for you to comprehend how that could be possible. But in the spiritual world things are imparted and not just trained. In the natural things are trained. A runner has to train very hard. The physical body needs training all the time. All our natural skills and things that co-operate with the body, soul and spirit need training.

When a child learns a piano, it takes many years to progress from grade one, grade two, etc. to grade eight. Even if they start learning the piano when they are seven they may be seventeen years old by the time they complete grade eight. Everyday they are mastering the basic foundations before they progress into performance skill and composition.

Similarly, there is a realm in the spirit of impartation. Don't take that as a short cut. God doesn't impart and make us lazy. With every impartation there need to be an acclimatization. Part of acclimatization to the God's gift seems to require training. However, we need to receive first before we can acclimatize. We can not do first and then try to receive. In the spiritual realm, you receive first and then you do. You don't do in order to try to receive. In the spiritual world God could just impart the gift of music and then suddenly you could play the piano. The singer Andre Crouch could play a bit of piano. His father was a pastor. One day his father was praying in a prayer meeting the anointing of God was so strong on the father's life. He went to his son, laid hand on his son and through the prophetic words says, "God now gives to you the gift of music." And the son went to play the piano just like that. Those are exceptional cases. But they are to tell us that God can do it through an impartation, through a gift.

And in the same way in one moment, the disciples' eyes were opened and then they began to reason clearly. God opened your eyes not so that you don't have to reason any more. After He imparts with all the things that arise you can see in the right order. The mind is still useful except that it's now used in God. It's the mind submitted to the law of God. And the reasoning is clearer. No matter how they tried to exercise their reasoning powers on their own - before Jesus touched them and after Jesus touched them were like day and night. The difference was very great. And on both sides, there were reasoning but when Jesus touched of the mind, their reasoning became clearer and greater.

Eph. 1:17 that God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of His glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe.

But how does this all take place? God gives the spirit of wisdom and revelation then the eyes of our understanding are touched. And then only we know. If I take this verse literally, it means that if the eyes are not opened then there is no knowing. There are two words that we want to focus on. First, he says that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened and then the other is you may know. The enlightenment comes first.

Now the enlightenment is what we call the touch of the mind. Have you ever struggled sometimes to convince people, try to tell people what is right and what is wrong? And you find it doesn't work. That is why the power of the Spirit and prayer is important. It is not you and I that can change people. We can not change people by scolding alone. We can not change people by trying to convince them, by reasoning. It is something deeper than human words and human vocabulary. It is the Spirit of God that works in everyone of us. And that lights up a person that when you say those words somehow the Spirit has already touched them and then the understanding. So the Holy Spirit is involved in bringing everyone to God. No man comes to God except by the Spirit of God. And no man can know God except by the Spirit of God. No one can persuade another man to believe. The choice to believe belongs to man. But the ability to see comes from the Holy Spirit. That is where our prayers play a role. My friends, it is our prayers that change people more than our words or our reasoning. So the next time you are praying for somebody to change don't just tell them to change. Don't just force them to change. Sometimes it could be a mother struggling to change a rebellious child. The key, somehow in your little son, he needs to see something on his inside. They need a revelation of God on their inside, and a touch of their mind. The moment they are touched, they see clearly. You don't have to tell them what is right and wrong. They know what is right and wrong. That's how powerful the touch of the mind is. And that's what we are talking about. The Spirit of God on your inside will produce the touch of the mind that will cause a transformation.

Rom. 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. These words here refer to the mind. The touch of the mind occurs progressively. In other words, God doesn't just touch your mind and instantly your mind is permanently and perfectly changed. No, it occurs by degrees. Just like the Ephesians already are born again, baptized in the Spirit have a greater understanding of God than before they were born again but yet Paul still prays for them for the Spirit to still touch their mind.

There are many touches that we receive. Not just one touch. And each touch is important. As we learn how to yield to God and allow God to touch our mind and to touch our spirit and touch our mind, we will be able to progress from glory to glory, from grace to grace and be transformed. You can believe God for that.

How will the mind be touched? What is this mind like? The mind is touched by an impartation of the mind of Christ. Christ did not just come to give us His Spirit. He came to give us His wisdom, His mind. How wonderful it is to have the mind of

Christ. He didn't come to just give His Spirit to us. He came to give us His mind. But there is a quality to the mind of Christ that we must remember. There are two forces that need to be married together. One is the sense of totally unworthiness. The other is the sense of conviction and authority in Him. What do I mean by unworthiness? You see the touch on the mind produces certain things and you know what the correct mind is. Like the prodigal son, you notice how he talked and how he reasoned. There must be these two senses. First is a sense of complete nothingness and unworthiness. Without God, we are nothing. The other is with God you can do everything God wants you to do. Now both must be strong for Him to work.

In Lk. 15 when the prodigal son was touched in verse 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. That is humility. Now the prodigal son has a humble mind. We have to humble ourselves in God. Remember I shared about the gift of righteousness, it's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. The only way that you can be successful is to realize that if you live life by yourself you can never make it and that in yourself without Jesus you are the most horrible wretch. As long as we think that we are very good, we will depend on ourselves. We are not good in ourselves. We are good only with Jesus inside us. Without Jesus, we will be the seed of the devil, accustomed to sin. We may not have sinned like many criminals have. But we are all sinners in His sight.

There must be a humble realization that we are the branches and He is the vine. The branch without the vine is good for nothing. It is useless, and destined only for the fire to consume them. So there is a sense of humility, a sense of knowing that no matter how the world admire your ability or your talent you must see yourself as nothing without Jesus.

The other aspect is to see that everything good in our life, everything wonderful in our life, everything marvelous, everything capable, belongs to Him and not to us. And we give Him all the glory, the worship and love.

So, these two forces must marry in the mind. One is the sense of total humility until we realize that we are just horrible without Jesus. Some people think themselves OK without Jesus. They have not touched on this realm yet. They are only living partially by God's help and partially by their ability. If you really want to live by the power of God, by the Holy Spirit, by Christ living in you, you must reach this stage of total unworthiness, until we can not even acknowledge every good in our life. We acknowledge that they came from Him. Then the other side is to acknowledge that in God, everything is wonderful, great and marvelous since all good things comes from His hands and not ours. And the sense of authority knowing it is Jesus that is doing it through us now.

Let me point to the fact that it's the mind of Christ that touches the mind of humility. Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. (The mind of Christ that He is imparting.) Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Let this mind be in you is the mind of humility. Today while you are sitting in this place and hearing these words, do you acknowledge that everything about your life from the time you were born nothing good dwells in you? If there was any goodness, it was because the grace of God and the gift of God were working in you. Without Him, you would be a wretch. But in His amazing grace, you can be a saint. That is the humble mind of Christ.

Now with that we can explore Romans 12 in a deeper way. There is a play on Greek word in verse 2 where in my translation it says for I say through the grace given to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought, but to think soberly as God has dealt with each one a measure of faith.

Even in the English translation he says don't think your own thought. Don't think above what you are. Realize that we are nothing. You can only think in terms of what God has given. That is, it's the grace of God. That is the gift of God. Everything about us that can be good, marvelous and wonderful is His gift, we take no credit for it. We need to be able to give it all to Him. And when you have this attitude Jesus can live in your life more powerfully. The power of the Spirit can flow through you mightily. It is not that Christ doesn't want to live through us. It is that every time you live for yourself He withdraws. But when you allow Him to live through you He comes forth.

Now there is a play on Greek words here that I like to read to you.

Rom. 12:3 For I say, through the grace which is given to me, to everyone that is among you, not to think of himself more highly (hupselophroneo, that is the Greek word for high minded) than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Hupselophroneo, the phroneo part is the same word for mind as used in Romans 8. Now he says don't be hupselophroneo means to be high-minded. Don't let the mind think highly of itself.

Four times the word phroneo is used in different forms. The first time it occurs, it says don't be high-minded, don't be hupselophroneo. Hupselo means above or high. Phroneo means mind, so hupselophroneo high minded. Don't be high-minded in your minding, in your phroneo he says.

Then he says but you must sophroneo, that is, you must be sober minded. This is a different Greek word here sophron, from sozo, "to save" with phren, "the mind". And many people look at the word sober minded as serious minded. No, it doesn't just mean serious mindedness. It means sound mind, healthy mind, a wholesome mind, sophroneo. Say, "Be sophroneo and don't be hupselophroneo.

So there is a play on Greek words. One on side is hupselophroneo, be high minded or think highly than you ought to think. That is the mind that functions without God. But let your mind function in God as sophroneo, a sound mind, a healthy mind, a mind that regards itself according to the grace of God. And everything that we are is the grace of God.

Now the word sophroneo is powerful word used all over in the writings of Paul. He tells us in the book of II Tim. 1:7 in his various usage. Now by various usages, it

means that the ending can be slightly different. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (sophronismos, which is sophroneo). This is the type of mind that we must have. God has given a sound mind. This is a mind that is humble before God, a mind that is submitted to God, yielded to God, and always drawing for understanding from God. And we acknowledge this fact that unless God reveals we can not see or understand. And truth is revealed progressively. We can not see everything at once. It is too huge and big for us. But God reveals truth progressively. And with each revelation, it changes us. It transforms us. And some of us ask, "Why doesn't God just reveal everything and we are instantly transformed to His absolute perfection?" Our physical body will die if He does it. It's too powerful. So to cater to the change of our soul He reveals one leaf at a time like peeling an onion. Every time there is one layer peeled, your tears come. Every time He peels, you cry because you are touched and you see more things in yourself than the prodigal son sees. More things to change, more things to transform, more things that are not perfected yet, until we become like Him.

He gave us His sophronismos, a sound mind. Now this sound mind is a requirement and it's the same Greek word used in the book of Timothy and Titus when he says that elders and deacons must be sober minded. They must have this kind of mind. A mind that is humble, not thinking about themselves about the gifts and that applies to all ministers. And that applies to every professional. No matter how recognized you are, what great reputation you have achieved, remember this: humble your mind. In God's sight everything that you are is not achievable if its not God's gift in your life. And we must always walk with that attitude of mind that its God's gift operating through us; that we have nothing to boast because without God we are all absolutely worthless.

Sophroneo occurs five six times in several verses of Titus chapter 2 and that makes it very important to look at that verse to show you how it ties up to righteousness because unless sophroneo comes the outward righteousness doesn't come yet. You know you could be inwardly righteous because the gift of righteousness is in you. But for it to come out you need that touch of the mind of Christ so that it changes your thinking. Believe me it is such a powerful revelation. If right now anywhere you are, in any area of your life, if you could have a touch of the mind you will come to yourself. You could see things the way God sees and that will change you. It can cause your habits to just fall off you. It could be any habit. It could be a habit that clings to you and causes you to be in a sense unrighteous for thirty years. It could be an old habit that keeps on pulling you into that bondage of sin. And you don't understand how it is operating. But when your mind is touched like the prodigal son's, suddenly you see yourself for who you are. Suddenly you see the right picture. Suddenly you see the truth of where this false energy is coming from. In one second, it can remove thirty years bondage. Just by one touch in the mind.

In Titus chapter 2 it says here all the different forms of the word sophroneo in verse 2 That the older man be sober minded (sophroneo), reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.

Now he is talking about the elderly folks. It can be that because they have a measure of sophroneo in them. Sometimes you see little children they are just in a hurry. Whenever we get in the car for long trips, at the beginning there is excitement. The children come into the car and settle down. Half an hour later, they cry, "Papa when

are we going to reach the place?" The journey may be four hours, and already they are asking when we are going to reach. Then the next half an hour or so they say, "Are we there yet?" If the journey is too long and you don't break journey from half an hour it becomes every fifteen minutes. After two hours, they will ask, "How long more?" But we adults know they are children so we can handle them. We don't lose our temper. We don't beat them up and scold them, "Why are you asking this question? Plaster your mouth until we reach there." We don't do thing like that because we are adults. We know that these are natural.

Sunday School teaching is a different style. When you deal with children, you have to use a different approach. You can not use the lecture method for three hours. When you teach Sunday School, your hands must flap like a chicken. We can be patient with children because we know we are more experienced and we know how long it takes.

Or sometimes it could be a younger man with an older man. The older man is more experienced and while driving past a lake, someone cries out, "Help, help." And the younger man is not a good swimmer but the older man is a champion swimmer. The younger man say, "Go help him." The older man doesn't do anything. That person is struggling. And finally when the struggle is more subdued and it looks like that is the last breath he has, this younger man is scolding the older man, "You call yourself a swimmer?" The older man knows that if he jumps in too early, he may drown because the struggling man may drag him down into the water as well. Instead of one person dying, two would die that day. So the older man is waiting till the person is not struggling because no matter how good a swimmer you are, that desperate person may grab you and just pull you down. But the swimmer says, "Wait." And he waits until the right moment before diving in and pulling him ashore. Finally, he explains to the young man. If he went in earlier, he would have died. But the young man doesn't know because of his inexperience. You see the experience gives the person the difference, the patience.

Sometimes you play chess you can easily notice the inexperienced players straightaway by the way they play the attacking game. The experienced player wipes everything the opponent has, one by one. You don't just attack. You must know what you must do to build up your defenses first. The same is true when you want to build a building. The blueprint must come first. If the blueprint doesn't come first, it is going to be messy.

So that is sophroneo. That is the experience to know how to wait on God for the wisdom of God to come forth. In verse 4 the older women that they sophronizo the young women. They impart that kind of mind to the younger women, teach them, share with them, so that they know how to behave to love their husbands. In verse 4 the older women teach the younger women how to love their husbands.

As a pastor and counselor to many people, sometimes a newly married couple has their first quarrel in their second year. It is the first time the husband raises his voice. Never before in their four years of courtship, never before in the one and the half years of honeymoon, it so happened one day the husband raised his voice for the first time in his life. The wife cries, "Woe is me, help somebody, help." That's only the beginning. In the world, they call it the five-year itch or ten-year itch etc. I don't know what kind of itch they are talking about. But the longer you are married the more you can harmonize. But the more recent you are in the marriage you got more things to

harmonize. When your marriage gets difficult after five years, hang in there and don't give up. And after another five more years you will be so mellowed that you will quarrel in different way. You quarrel by looking at your husband's eyes. Then you know the husband disapproves. You become more experienced with each other. It's important to hang in there.

That sophroneo is that kind of maturity that comes in your thinking. And there is a maturing and humbling process that comes. In verse 5 to teach them to be sophroneo, that is to have the sophroneo the new mind, the sound mind, good homemakers, obedient to their husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.

The young men also got it here in verse 6, Likewise exhort the young men. So you got the old men, young men, older women, young women, so everyone is covered. Likewise exhort the young men to be sophroneo, to be sound minded.

So, this kind of mind depends on God. What we are talking about is a mind that depends on God. A mind that seeks understanding from God and not to struggle to understand. Remember understanding and reasoning will flow like a river. We just need the light from God. And the light comes progressively.

Finally, Paul uses the same word again in verse 12, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly (sophronos), righteously and godly in the present age.

You notice that sophronos is followed by righteousness and godliness. It ties back to righteousness. When we have this mind of Christ that is imparted into our hearts and touches our minds, suddenly clarity comes. Now some things can be explained and it can be imparted like in the case of the older women teaching the younger women. But some things need the direct impartation of the Spirit to reveal revelation and understanding. In some things, no matter how you give ten thousand explanations, it wouldn't help. Only the Spirit of God can reveal them to our mind and we understand clearly. It just strikes you. If you examine it, the thinking process functions that way. It's like something lighting a bulb inside. You see something clearly then your reasoning becomes very clear. And that process is the work of righteousness inside. The force of righteousness rises out from our inside and it comes forth until God touches us. And then by the renewal of the mind metamorphoomai the transformation of the mind takes place.

Finally Eph. 4:17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.

See their mind is working but its futile, going round and round but never coming to an answer. You read more about it in Romans chapter 1 and 2. how God gave them up to a debased mind, a reprobate mind, a mind that can not glorify God, having their understanding being darkened being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts. So they were cut off from the life of God. The mind stops flowing.

Now when you link back to the life of God, righteousness comes in your life. Look at verse 22-23 that you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which

grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Now you understand what that verse means. The spirit of your mind means the spirit from your inside touches your mind and gives clarity that you never had before. And it comes in a powerful way. And it applies even to the secular profession. You could be struggling about a business problem. And all your thinking doesn't work. When you pray and ask God for wisdom, and as you wait on God, God gives you the wisdom. When it comes, in a split second, you can see everything fits together. It can be in the ministry. It can be in any area. That is the new way that we live. Some people ask me, "How can you be doing many things with so much energy coming out?" I tell them that is because I am not depending on myself. I am depending on God. Every time you pray and seek God, God keeps giving a flow of ideas. Every time you get stuck you pray, "God give me wisdom in this area and give me the mind of Christ in this area. What is the mind of Christ in this area?" And you wait on God. Some times the answer comes immediately. Sometimes it comes in one week's time. Sometimes in a few months or sometimes one year. But it will surely come. And sometimes we even must fast, pray and humble ourselves to wait on God for that enlightenment.

You see I have this discipline. I will not try to reason until the light comes. But when the light comes then I will have enough light to start reasoning correctly. I would choose not to reason, not to think of something until the light has come. And it is a different approach in life. In life, people reason first. No. You get all problems together and you pray. You wait on God. Sometimes the reason doesn't come and people ask, "What is the answer?" No word from the Lord. Just wait until God's wisdom comes and touches us and your mind starts functioning. And you began to see everything in its proper place.

So, we summarize in giving you some of the keys in this waiting process by looking at Rom. 1. We look at the negative and the positive would be the truth. How people were shut out from the flow of the river of God's wisdom. Remember just now in Eph. 4 we read that the Gentiles were futile in their minds. Here in Rom. 1:20-22 explain how they became futile. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

Now inside here is the key. It talked the negative side of how people can become futile in their mind but inside is the key. How did they become that way? God never created man that way. Man was created to be in the image of God. But it was twisted away and God wants to restore it to the way God wants it. Two things - they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful. The positive key would be worship and thanksgiving. Every time your heart and your mind are not in an attitude of worship and thankfulness don't try to think. It could be having the wrong thoughts. It will never be the mind of Christ. It will be your own carnal mind. Only when your mind is in an attitude of thankfulness and worship can you be tapping on the creative river of God. And I made it a point to always give thanks in everything. In that way, I would have a constant river of praise and worship. Think about it. Is there any struggle in the

business world or any area that you can not solve? May be you did it in an attitude of complaining and murmuring. May be you were having anger in your heart. And may be you were not in a worship mood. If that is so please, drop all your tools, worship God and give thanks. Until and unless you can give thanks to God and worship God, your mind will be wasting energy.

I believe in good thinking. I am not against it. I love to think. But I know what its limits are. And as long as there is no river of thanksgiving, praise, and worship that is coming I will shut my mind off. I say, "Mind, keep quiet, let the river of thanksgiving and praise come." And when it comes then only is the mind of Christ operating in your life. Every one of us has the mind of Christ. And as the river of praise comes the mind of Christ starts operating. When you do not glorify God, do not acknowledge that He is your God, you are His creation and depend on Him, when you are not grateful for all that He has given you, you actually lose the mind of Christ. All of us can be grateful to God. No matter what place you are in life there are always things you can thank God for. When you lose those things, you are back to your old carnal mind. We must guard thankfulness, praise, and worship in our hearts. Guard them and do not let anything steal them. Don't let anything pull your mind into complaining, murmuring, any wrong thought, negative thought about people, never because all those thinking would be wrong thinking. But always be thankful for everything around you. Even the people you find hard to relate you can find something to thank God for. And when you began to move into thanksgiving and praise and worship the river flows and the mind of Christ starts operating. That's No. 1.

No. 2 look on further down in Rom. 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting. Now the word debased is the word edokime. The word dokime is a word that means a document, or doctrine, something solid. So it is in a sense no doctrine, a debased mind. It says here when they did not retain the knowledge of God, God gives them up to their carnal mind.

So the opposite will be true. We need to saturate ourselves with the Word of Christ. And the words of Christ represent the bible. That's the second important key tap on the mind of Christ. You must take this bible and read it day and night. Read it in whatever time you have. Meditate on some of the wonderful promises and scriptures. But read this bible until it saturate you. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you, Col. 3:16. And as it dwells richly in you then the knowledge of God will be retained and the mind of Christ can operate.

So we have given two little keys in the tapping into the mind of Christ, one is thanksgiving, praise, and worship. We have described earlier what the mind of Christ is like - the two senses united, one a sense of humility and nothingness without God and a sense of total completion in God meeting together.

And the second little key that we have is saturating ourselves with God's Word. We will not think of anything that is outside God's Word. We will not entertain any thoughts or philosophy that violates and contradict God's Word. When you make that a rule in your heart the mind of Christ rises strong in your life.

You may be handling anything in your life, even things that you are not trained to do, but when you tap on the mind of Christ, you can do it as well as a trained person.

Anything in your life you can rely on the wisdom of God, the touch of the mind of Christ.

Now as you hang on to those two rivers, the river of the word, the river of praise and thanksgiving and worship in your waiting on God you will sense the light coming and it will touch you from time to time. Every time it touches you, you can see clearly what to do in your business, you see what to do now in your ministry, then you move on, you obey. Then you keep that river of praise and worship. I observed people in the ministry and how they can progress. Ministry can be blessed. God can promote you. But if at anytime you stop being thankful and worshipful and giving praise to God that's when growth also stop. It is the same in the business world. God could be blessing you. With more blessings, there are more responsibilities. With more responsibilities, there are more anxieties and concerns that fall on your shoulders. And if you don't learn how to give thanks and give praise to God you will block the very source of that blessing and you can not continue. But if you want to grow from glory to glory, and grace to grace, until Jesus comes and grow stronger and stronger by the day, then you must flow with these two rivers and allow God to touch your mind and all the wisdom you need in life is available for you.

10. THE SCEPTER AND THE OIL

We have explored many aspects of righteousness. We have emphasized repeatedly that even the Old Testament saints' lives were based on the gift of righteousness and that in the New Testament our Christian lives are also based on the gift of righteousness that is available to us through Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:17-21 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have also emphasized that before the gift of righteousness came through Jesus Christ there was a reign of death that began with the fall of Adam and Eve. When the reign of death came, sicknesses, sin, disharmony came into the world. All the whole planet earth was in turmoil. Perversity entered into the animals' mode of behavior so that they acted what they were not designed for. Animals were originally created herbivorous but with the fall of man, they developed a carnivorous nature and began to devour one another. The whole system of God's creation fell apart when the reign of death started when Adam and Eve fell.

The days of our reign of life began when our Lord Jesus Christ rose from death and was seated at the right hand of God. This is a reign that some people, though not all, have come to know. This is the reign that we proclaim when we share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many Christians have not realized in their lives that this reign of righteousness produces Christian victorious and overcoming life. And that's what we are talking about in the gift of righteousness.

In the last message, we talked about the touch of the mind and how the gift of righteousness of God, gives us a different mental attitude and perspective. It begins in our spirit but it affects our soul. And as we conclude this series, we want to look at two different areas. And those two areas are found in the book of Hebrews 1:8 But to the Son He says: Your throne, O God is forever and ever. Now if you examine this very carefully, He is not talking about the time before Jesus came to this earth. If you look very carefully in the book of Hebrews, the author of Hebrews was talking about the time when Jesus was raised up from the dead and He was seated on high in Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say; "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You?" And again: "I will be to Him a Father. And He shall be to Me a Son?" But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

The phrase when He again brings the firstborn into the world was not speaking about the first Christmas when Jesus was born in a manger, but about Jesus who rose up as the firstborn from the dead. Any cross reference in the book Revelations chapter one

and in the book of Colossians chapter one tells you that the firstborn from the dead is a title reserved to Jesus Christ when He was raised from the third day from death.

But to substantiate this scripture, we cross reference to the book of Acts chapter 13. It confirms the fact that when God talks about You are My Son today I begotten You, it is not referring to Jesus being born in a manger but it is used to refer to Jesus Christ being raised from the dead. Acts 13:33 and this is the interpretation that the apostles had of this verse. We should never stray away from the way the apostles interpreted the bible. It looks like this verse refers to the first time He was born in the manger but that's not the understanding. The understanding is that the particular verse refers to Jesus being raised from the dead. Acts 13:33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

“You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.”

Jesus is the firstborn from the dead. Before Jesus has been resurrected from the dead, Elijah and Elisha have raised people from the dead. Jesus Himself in His ministry has raised people from the dead. But this is the first time that anyone of the seed of Adam rose from the dead spiritually, overcoming spiritual death, annihilating forever the kingdom of hell and death and taking upon Him the keys of hell and death. Jesus is the last Adam representing the seed of mankind. He was both Son of God and Son of Man. This was the first time that spiritual death was overcome. And that particular verse refers to that resurrection from the death.

Let's look at Hebrews 1 again, understanding that the context was in reference to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. We see here that when He was raised from the dead God says verse 6-7 Let all the angels of God worship Him. And of His angels, He says: Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.

Now we cross reference to Phil. 2 how every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He commanded all to worship the name of Jesus.

When Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, He spent some time with His disciples. Of course when He was raised from the dead He went to present the blood first and then He came down and spent about forty days and forty night with His disciples before the day of Pentecost. Finally, He was lifted on high. And somewhere during the time of His resurrection, Jesus Christ was seated at the right hand of God. And God instituted a new rule and a new reign. God instituted a new realm of dimension in the spirit. And from that time onward Jesus said, “Go ye and preach to all nations. Go and tell what has happened now, that the enemy Satan has no more power and authority.” That it is now the rule of righteousness.

And it says here in Hebrews chapter one verse 8 But to the Son He says; “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

There are many truths found in the above verse but we want to look at just two aspects in today's message. What is involved in the rule and reign of righteousness that Jesus has given? It says here the scepter of righteousness. We have touched on that before but today we are going to look at it from a different angle. The other is the oil of

gladness. Today we are going to speak about these two aspects of righteousness. When a Christian receives the gift of righteousness, he or she can produce certain signs and evidences. When you received Jesus Christ into your life as personal Lord and Savior there is something that goes on in your spirit. A kind of peace, a kind of cleansing that you sensed quite tangible in your spirit. When you were baptized in water, your whole body is wet. You come out knowing that you have been immersed in the waters of baptism. When you were baptized in the Spirit, there is an evidence of speaking in tongues. Your spirit man is set free to speak in a new language to God.

When the gift of righteousness is ruling in our life there are signs and evidences in our life. And I like to give you two. One is called the scepter of righteousness and the other is called the oil of gladness. But I am going to re-phrase it to bring forth what these represent. No. 1 when the gift of righteousness comes into our heart and in our life and we are appropriating it, how do we know whether we are flowing and yielding to the gift of righteousness? How do we know that it's having free flow in our life? There are signs of that. Firstly, there is a sense of spiritual authority that comes into your life that if a devil came that you would dare to face him eyeball to eyeball. Because you know that, the righteousness is ruling in your life. There is a sense of authority that you know that you have authority and power over every sickness, every disease and every demon. That you are not afraid of the devil at all but the devil is afraid of you. A sense of spiritual authority, that's what the scepter of righteousness produce.

Secondly, it produces a state of being of joy. There is a supernatural joy. Do you notice that human works of righteousness doesn't produce joy? In fact, they take away joy. The Pharisees had no joy. They were legalistic but they had no joy. And Jesus said, "You bind heavy burdens on people. You make their lives miserable with your legalism." Now their intention was to make people conform to the law. But when you make people conform to the law minus the gift of righteousness, it is tough work. No one can be like Jesus except by the Spirit of Jesus. And human righteousness takes away joy. We need this barometer to test from time to time whether we have moved into our own righteousness or whether it is the gift of righteousness operating in our lives. Whenever a Christian gets weary working for God or Christian life has become a burden and a struggle, the gift of righteousness has stopped operating. Human righteousness has stepped in and replaced the gift of righteousness. They are pure human works operating without the gift of God. And it doesn't produce joy; in fact, it sucks away joy like a leech sucks blood. Thus secondly, the gift of righteousness produces a state of being of joy.

Now we are going to look at the sense of spiritual authority in the scriptures first. Look at the book of Romans 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Because of one man's sin, Adam's sin, death reign. And death includes sicknesses, diseases, demonic oppression and every affliction you could name. All these are included in the reign of death and terror when the devil took over. When righteousness came, a different rule and reign came. When righteousness comes there is power and authority over sickness and disease. In the book of Matt. 10, when Jesus commissioned His disciples to go out two by two to preach, heal and deliver, it didn't matter what type of disease they may come across in the people they were ministering

to. Even when new diseases and sicknesses arise to afflict mankind, all Christians who received the gift of righteousness will have a sense of authority over them. And when sickness tries to attack you, you know that you have the authority over that sickness and you just rebuke it and it leaves. Sometimes sicknesses and demons may be a little bit stubborn. But you allow the gift of righteousness in your life to produce the spiritual authority to cast them out in the Name of Jesus.

Matt. 10:1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Notice the word “all” includes everything, discovered and undiscovered, known and unknown. Jesus had authority and power over every sickness and every disease.

Now turn to Lk. 9:1 the same incident recorded by Luke. Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. Tall ones, short ones, fat ones polka dotted ones, those from Thailand, those from Malaysia, those from India, as long as they are demons, it says He gave them authority over all demons, over every demon that existed.

We know in the bible although the apostles received that power and authority, it took them some time to work out the authority. Because in the very same passage after that experience on the Mount of Transfiguration in Lk. 9 they had difficulty in casting out a demon. Just because they had a difficulty doesn't mean that they don't have authority. I mean you may be a fully qualified engineer and sometimes some projects are easy but some projects are challenging. For example, the whole idea of building a tunnel under the English channel was conceived by man many decades ago but was only recently completed. It is an engineering marvel. You know how some engineering projects are more difficult than others since they depend on so many varying factors, the soil condition, the environment, the terrain, the limited space etc. Just because you have difficulty doesn't mean that you can not do it. It just means that you have to draw on all your knowledge, resources and experience to accomplish that job. In the same way spiritually there are all kind of demons and demons have different personality. The demon creates different types of environment, sometimes it is slightly more difficult but at all times we have power over every demon. There is not a single demon that we don't have authority over.

In Matt. 10, it says we have authority over all sicknesses and diseases. In Lk. 9, it says we have authority over all demons. Now all these authority that Jesus brings forth came from the cross. Even though He had not died on the cross, yet it came from the cross because something happened at the cross that He could impart and exchange to His disciples. To prove that look at Matt. 8:16-17 When evening had come they brought to Him many who were demon possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken Isaiah the prophet, saying, He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sickness. That means that all the demons casting He did and all the healing that He did was based upon the cross of Calvary. And at the cross of Calvary, the most important transaction took place.

Just as the Old Testament saints could be saved on credit based on the coming work of Christ's redemption, so likewise, sicknesses and diseases could also be healed and

cast out based on the same coming work of Christ's sacrifice. Long ago, this kind of concept was very hard to teach and be accepted but nowadays it has become theologically acceptable and you could teach it without being labeled a heretic. For example, you can buy a car on credit and you sign a hire purchase agreement. Although you have the car, you are using the car, but the car is not yours yet. You are on your way to paying off the loan on your car. You got it on credit. The Old Testament saints could experience graces, mercies, blessings, answers to prayers, healing and miracles on credit, based on the coming atoning work of Jesus Christ. Even during the times of Jesus with His disciples, when Jesus had not died and risen yet, all authority and power that were exercised by Jesus and His disciples flowed from the credit of the cross. Remember when you use credit there is a payday someday.

In the book of I Pt. 2:23-24 Who, when He was reviled did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously, who, Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed.

Every time we read that verse I Pt. 2:22-24, many of us think that since Jesus has died for our sins, we are to go and live properly now. But that's not what that verse means. It means that from that day forward you could live by His righteousness. And in that gift of His righteousness, it will bring healing. His righteousness brings authority. His righteousness will bring power. And because of that righteousness that was imparted at the cross of Calvary we were healed.

Just to substantiate that look very carefully what took place on the cross. Do you know that there was one force that the devil could not destroy? It is that powerful force that Jesus Himself surrendered Himself to - the force of righteousness. Jesus dying on the cross was different from any other human being. Remember there were many other criminals who had died on the cross. It was the Romans' way of killing people. In fact when Jesus died there were two other thieves who were also crucified. And many had died under that kind of horrible death. But when they took Jesus Christ, stripped Him, beat Him, spit upon Him, nailed His hands on the cross and carried that cross up, He was different from other men. He was Jesus who knew no sin. Isn't that a difference? There was not one atom of sin on His life. Not one wrong word, not one wrong thought, not one wrong deed had He done. And they put a sinless man to death. It was not just a good man. Who knows in history there were good men who had died but they can not say that they were sinless in the sight of God. Never before had death ever touched a human body that had no sin, until Jesus offered Himself for you and I on the cross of Calvary.

It says in I Pt. 2:21 For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth. Never before had a reign of terror that began from the fall of Adam which allowed Satan and his underlings to rule over mankind causing sicknesses, diseases and all manner of destruction, never before had the spirit of death contacted one such a sinless man as Jesus. Even Pontius Pilate tried to release Jesus four times. He kept telling the people that Jesus had done nothing wrong. Yet the Jews shouted, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." He tried again and again to release Him but they still cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." He knew no sin.

My friend if you live righteously and suffered the force that is released in that suffering, you will have power to wipe out every cause that caused that suffering. Not only will it wipe out and conquer it will completely annihilate the forces that cause that suffering.

And Jesus Christ who knew no sin went to the cross willingly. And that day was a special day. It was twelve noon when a righteous and sinless man died a death that He didn't deserve. Do you know there is a law of God that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and the wages of sin is death? Where there is no sin there must not be any death. And Satan in his glee thought he has conquered. And all the forces of death rallied against Jesus. And at twelve in the afternoon at the time when the sun was at its peak, the skies were full of dark clouds. Even the planet earth, the weather, the clouds, the mountains, the leaves, the plants, all the kingdom of creation, knew that a righteous innocent man was put to death without one sin in His life. There was tremendous forces at work that day and for a moment when they surrounded Jesus to conquer Him, to put Him to death, in the darkness of separation from God that He took for you and I, Jesus Christ cried out "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He was left all alone because when sin came, do you know that Jesus died because sin pressed itself upon Him - our sin not His own sin?

Remember the law of God where there is no sin there is no death. And all the forces of sin and darkness pressed upon Him. And when He became sin God our Father has to turn His tearful face away from His beloved Son. And darkness flooded the spiritual plane and the natural plane.

Let me read II Cor. 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. And that day all the forces of sin were pressing upon Him and He absorbed them. All the sins of mankind from the first time that Adam fell into sin, through Noah, through Abraham, through David, through the prophets, and all the sins of mankind that mankind was ever going to commit in future were pressed upon Him and He became sin. But remember righteousness was flowing out in His life. And righteousness and sin met. And there was a cosmic battle. And suddenly right at the very time that righteousness was released. Righteousness came forth. It began as a river from the cross. And on the third day, Jesus Christ the righteous arose and now my friends, righteousness overcame sin. Good is more powerful than evil. Righteousness is more powerful than sin. And as righteousness came forth, it cancels sin, it cancels sicknesses and it cancels diseases. It cancels the handwriting on the wall that was against us, and it cancels the right of Satan over this world. It cancels the right of Satan over human kind. And Satan was destroyed. And all the principalities and powers in Col. 2:15 were stripped off their powers because righteousness is greater than sin. And on that day the forces of righteousness were imparted and in II Cor. 5:21 it says that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Now you understand that what happened that day was an exchange of righteousness. Jesus gave us His righteousness. He gave us the righteousness that by His act we were free. And the forces of righteousness came out from Jesus and flooded all over the world. And anyone who receives Him to them He can freely make them righteous. And that's what He means when it says in I Pt. 2:24 that He having taken our sins that we might live righteously because the gift of righteousness was imparted on that day. And from that day onwards, a new sense of righteousness has been imputed and

imparted on God's people. A sense of authority, authority over Satan, authority over demons, authority over sicknesses and diseases, have belonged to God's people. That is why in I Pt. 2 Having died to sins might live for righteousness, and when the force of righteousness rules in your life, by His stripes you were healed. From that day onwards no sickness, no diseases, no flu, no cancer, no new kind of affliction, has any authority over the people of God because righteousness now rules.

That same righteousness is powerful as seen in Romans 8:3-4 where it talks about what the law could not do but what the Spirit has done through the gift of righteousness. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin; He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled.

Might be fulfilled - it is not shall be, not coming. But whatever healing, freedom, deliverance are required in our life might be fulfilled through the gift of righteousness through the Spirit in us.

Then the second thing to know is "in us". It is not by us. It is not something that you and I have to do. It is not something that you and I have to try to work out by our efforts. But that gift of righteousness will come into our life by the Spirit when we confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and receive His righteousness on our behalf. Something came and it's fulfilled in us. What happens when the righteousness of the law become fulfilled in us? That means that automatically you have kept the law. If the just and righteous requirements of fulfilling the law are fulfilled in you, it means that it is as if you have done it. It is as if you have kept the Ten Commandments, as if you have kept every other commandment of God that God has laid down for this planet earth. It is fulfilled in you as if you have done it. Jesus done it for you and the righteousness of keeping the law has entered into you as if you have done it. It is as if all the time in your life you had never sinned, never had a wrong thought, never had a wrong word, never had a wrong action, that is fulfilled inside you. Even though outwardly it may not be fulfilled yet but it's in you. Scriptures say that it might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

And it tells you what to do now. All you have to do is to set your mind on the things of heaven, to be spiritually minded, to mind the things of the spirit. As you think about these things, the gift of righteousness comes out from you powerfully. And in Rom. 8:10 And if Christ is in you, but the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Every force of sin and disease is cancelled in your body as you learn how to release that power in your life. That is why Jesus said, "In My name they shall go forth, they shall lay hand on the sick and they shall recover." In Jesus' name, you shall cast out devils because of the righteousness that flows from your inside.. The sense of God's authority comes together with the gift of righteousness.

Now if you look at Jesus' life as He walks in that righteousness, you will find that He has complete authority over demons and diseases. You never find Him crying to God

for healing. You never find Him crying to God to cast out demons. All He has to do is tell the demons to get out.

And the demons were begging Him to let them enter into the pigs. I don't know why Jesus did it. You can ask Him when you see Him later. Jesus said go and all the pigs went into the pigs. But the pigs didn't like the demons. They rather commit suicide than to have demons living inside them. If it were the demons that drove all the pigs into the abyss and killed all the pigs, it would have been an illogical thing to do since they were the ones who asked to go into the pigs. Possibly, they may have done that out of their anger. I imagine the scene could have been different. I mean there was a man with a legion of demons. And there were so many demons in him that although they went and tied him up he always broke loose. Then when Jesus came and landed on the shore, there comes this naked hairy man running to them. And Jesus cast out those demons. And the demons were begging Him to please let them enter into the pigs. I don't know why Jesus allowed that. Maybe pork was not His favorite food.

And Jesus said, "Go," and the demons came out from that man, six thousand of them, one legion. And sometimes animals can see demons and sometimes they can't. Maybe at that time the pigs' spiritual eyes were opened. And the six thousands demons came out and demons don't look very handsome. They can try to be handsome but actually, they were all ugly fellows. And they all came out and they all start charging against the pigs. If I remember correctly, there were about two thousand pigs. That means that there were three demons per pigs. And these demons came charging at the pigs. I could imagine the pigs' leader hearing some sort of noise. The pigs' leader looked up and said, "What is that coming against us?" And the pigs' leader gave a signal to run. Now all these are my imagination. The pig's leader says, "Run for your life." And the pigs ran, and they got no place to run. And the pigs said to one another, "Where shall we go? The demons are faster than us." The pigs said, "I rather sacrifice my life than allow dirty demons to enter into me although I am a pig and I am also dirty." And they all jumped down. Two thousand pigs died in one day.

All the pig's herdsmen didn't hear all the conversation. All they knew was there were two thousand pigs and the next moment the two thousand pigs were gone. And they also ran and told the whole town. And the whole town came out to see the story of the two thousand pigs. As they came near the place, they could smell two thousand dead pigs. Then they saw Jesus and the man possessed by demons in his right mind. The word right mind is the same word that we have studied in the last message, "the touch of the mind."

There was an authority in Jesus life. When He comes to healing sicknesses and diseases, He never has to beg from God. He just says, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, be healed." There is no begging. He knew there was an authority in His life. It was the rule of righteousness. When righteousness rules it exercises authority over sicknesses and diseases and over demons. And the new rule has already begun potentially. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He told His disciples all authority, power has been given onto Him. And when He sent them forth, the disciples had to learn this authority and power.

In the book of Acts 3, the apostles had been preaching the Word and they have been having signs and wonders happening in their lives. And it was an ongoing thing. In Acts 2, there was a revival flowing and people were meeting together praying in

homes and in the temples. They continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread and prayers. They used to gather together in prayer. And one day in Acts 3 Peter and John went up about the ninth hour. And a certain man was lame from his mother's womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is call Beautiful to ask alms from those who enter the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him Peter said, "Look at us." So he gave his attention expecting to receive something from them. Look at what Peter said in verse 6 Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. He knew what he has. He knew he has authority. You see we must know our authority over sicknesses and diseases. When you go to the hospital to pray for the sick, it is not whether God wants to heal them. It is whether they believe that the rule of righteousness has begun. It is whether people can believe in the message. It's a different perspective. You have authority over every sickness and disease but whether we succeed in making the authority rule in another person's life depends on whether we can convince that person that the authority has already been given in Jesus. And the problem is getting people to believe - not getting God to act - and then the people will be healed.

Peter said, "Such as I have." What did he have? He had the authority of Jesus, the righteousness of Jesus, the sense of authority. You have to have authority to say thing like that. And flowing in his consciousness was a sense of authority. He knew who his God was. He knew his rights over Satan, over sickness and disease. Remember he was among the twelve too. They had seen it worked before this is nothing new. And in fact, everyday they had passed by that man on their way to the temple and this was not the first time. And everyday they passed by, the man could have got healed any day. But on that day, the man was in a better position to believe. Sometimes when you remain in an atmosphere of faith, your faith grows until you can receive. Just like when Paul was preaching the Word in Acts 14, he perceived that lame man could be healed. Likewise, one day as he passed by the gate Beautiful, Peter sensed that the flow of spiritual authority and exercised it to heal that lame man. And he said, "Silver and gold I don't have but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise and walk." And he took the man by his right hand and lifted him up and he immediately rose on his feet and anklebones received strength. So he entered the temple with them walking leaping and praising God. This is the result of the authority of Jesus ruling and reigning in our lives.

And everybody came around wondering how the healing took place. And Peter says in verse 12 Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. In verse 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Do you notice the faith that comes through Him? It was through the gift of righteousness. Righteousness gives a sense of spiritual authority, authority over sickness and disease. Now it doesn't mean that when you walk in righteousness you go about doing everything you want to, no. It just means that you know your authority

in the Lord Jesus Christ. And at any point when God commands you to use it, you will use it. And at any point when people believe in it and implore you to use it, you use it. You remember when Paul was on his way in Acts 16 while preaching the gospel in Philippians everyday, he lived in a certain house. He lived in the house of Lydia the seller of purple. And everyday he would go by the seaside and preach the gospel there. And everyday as he went to and fro there was this demon-possessed girl who followed him.

In Acts 16 we are told in verse 16-18 Now it happened as we went to prayer, that a certain slave and possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." And this she did for many days. Now do you realize that Paul knew that he had authority? This is the apostle Paul. This is not anybody else in the church. It is someone who knew his authority as an apostle. Why didn't he cast out the demon? He had no reason to. It doesn't mean that we have authority over sickness and disease and we go out to every hospital and try to clean out the hospital. Some people may not want you to do that. Some people don't really want to be healed. Then some people don't believe in the gospel, in the good news that is brought forth that they can be healed. Remember he is not new to these things. This is his second missionary journey. He has completed his first missionary journey and had seen powerful signs and wonders.

You see we don't abuse our spiritual authority. I want to emphasize this we do not ever have the right to dominate another human spirit. Nobody has the right to dominate over another human being's free will and free spirit. All humans are given free choice. And as Paul walked to and fro everyday to prayer and to preach and when he goes back this girl would be following him, shouting, "These men are the servants of the Most High God who has come to tell us of the way of salvation." And Paul was trying to pray in the riverside. While Paul was praying, "Father we intercede for the people of Philippi," this girl would say, "These men are the servants of the Most High God," and this was very irritating.

Do you know that Paul had the authority on the first day or the second day, or the third day? But he didn't exercise his authority until it was necessary. One day she must have gone too far. I don't know what actually transpired in detail. Maybe that girl got bolder and drew nearer and nearer to Paul and his team. It says in verse 18 that she overstepped her boundary and Paul was annoyed. They didn't ask him to cast out that demon so he didn't go and disturb that demon. That slave girl belongs to somebody else. And nobody brought her for deliverance. And the people who owned her didn't want her to be delivered.

So Paul was annoyed one day when she was irritating. But Paul, greatly annoyed turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. No more demon now, no more fortune telling. The question we ask is this. Did Paul have the authority on the first day? Yes. But having the authority of God doesn't mean that we go around pushing our authority. But what we do need to realize in our first point is that when the gift of righteousness comes upon our life, we know we have that authority. However, you may not use it because you are not called to use it. For example, when the devil came to Jesus and said, "Turn these stones into bread." I believe that Jesus had the power to

do it. If Jesus didn't have the power to do it, it would not have constituted as a temptation. Jesus had the power and authority. But He did not want to use it. He will use it only when the Spirit of God commands it. There is when the gift of righteousness comes into our life with a sense of authority. That you will know it since it burns on your inside. And once in a while flashes of lightening comes forth. And God commands you to use it. Then you use it. Then it comes forth and you do what you know is right to do.

When we moved to our new residence, there were two idol houses in front of our new house, one big concrete and one wooden. That night I had a dream. And in the dream, I saw this spider, held it and broke its legs. I didn't know what the meaning of the dream was. That morning when we went down to take measurements, the first thing I saw was many cobwebs and spiders. Then suddenly it occurred to me that the dream was reminding me that I had spiritual authority in that place. We found out that the construction workers had not removed those idols and in fact, have not even touched it since they completed the construction of the houses there. It was left in the position where the last person worshipped it. So together, we went in the name of Jesus, threw away the idols and overturned the wooden one because it was light enough to overturn. Then we prayed and called a tractor driver and said, "The idols have no more power. Go now and level the big cemented idol house." And it was only on that day after the tractor had crushed the idol house that the power and principality in that place were broken.

Now across the road and on the right side are two temples. We are not supposed to go there and disturb them. It is their land, their property. What they do on their side we respect their choice. But within our place and territory, we take authority plus we take authority over the air. It is important to understand that real spiritual authority exists all the time. And from time to time God tells us to do certain thing and go to certain places to tap on the authority but only as the Spirit leads. Where people had a right to worship idols on their own property, we have to respect their constitutional rights. We don't go there and enter into areas that don't belong to us. But where it is free, we can exercise that authority over the principality of that place.

I remember in my former residence, I used to take a walk to the field behind the house. Along the road, I saw somebody worshiping some tree, and somebody had built a small little red hut. I knew if nothing were done, some devotees would develop that little hut into a bigger concrete hut. And if somebody wins a lottery after praying to that idol there, he or she would come back and build a bigger house for that idol. Now I knew that it was an illegal structure. So one evening when I was taking a walk and it was kind of dark enough, making sure that I did not offend anybody, looking around I casually kicked it into the drain. I didn't want any principality and power or demon power taking root in area which we were supposed to exercise spiritual domain. In any area that you live, you have to exercise spiritual domain.

We thank God for some of you when you went on a prayer drive around areas with spiritual authority. We observed that something took place spiritually. As you drive over the place and take authority, you find that there was openness to the gospel. When we let the gift of righteousness comes forth there is a sense of authority. But we must use it in accordance to the will of God. Authority must never be used to impress a person or to rob a person of free will and free choice.

Now the second important sense is what I call a state of being. When this gift of righteousness comes into your life, sometimes you are like a mad man to some people. Because you are no more of this world, you become very strange to people in this world. Its like a river is flowing in you. Its like something bigger has taken over your life, something bigger than you. It's like God living in you and taking over your life. And to people you look crazy but your state of mind and your state of being is such that it doesn't matter. Even the most difficult task looks easy to you. Because it's a type of consciousness that comes that joy that fills you.

In the book of I Pt. 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. Verse 8 Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

He says with joy unspeakable and full of glory. When the gift of righteousness takes over your life, there is a joy and the oil of gladness and it changes your state of being and state of mind such that the world doesn't look like the same place any more. You feel like you have changed into another person. And the things that would normally disturb you don't disturb you anymore. It's the gift of righteousness ruling in you.

Turn to the book of Acts 5 it says here in verse 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. Now these people had just received a beating because of the name of Jesus. They suffered for Jesus. And if you suffer for Jesus and if it's not your own work but the gift of righteousness is in you, you won't feel disheartened for the beating. You just feel the joy. When they were beaten in verse 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. Look at that it is a funny situation. The joy of the Lord was on their life. They didn't feel the sorrow of being beaten and humiliated.

The oil of gladness makes you spiritually high. We Christians need the spiritual high. We need a spiritual high in God and then you won't feel the burden, you won't feel anything. Why do people go out and drink? To forget their problems. But it won't solve their problems because after the hangover the problems are still there. But in God when you get a spiritual high it helps you solve your problem. And when you come out of it, you say, "I didn't know I overcame that."

The second thing that these apostles had is the quality called the oil of gladness. It is the sense of a state of being of joy. It is this same joy that in Acts 16 that the apostles Paul and Silas had. Remember the story of how they cast out the demon in the girl. The people were angry with them. So they arrested Paul and Silas, beat them up and tied their legs up. In all the beating and physical suffering they received, they didn't complain. They never felt discouraged. They never felt let-down because the oil of gladness was on their life. And the bible tells us in Acts 16 at mid-night where all the prisoners knew that these two new prisoners had joined them, these two new prisoners were different from all the rest. All the rest struggled and complained. I don't know what state they were in when they were in the Lord. Remember when you have the joy of the Lord you don't feel your problem. You overcome your problem. Every time

someone put the whip on you because of righteousness you say, “Alleluia that’s good.”

You may not believe it but I am going to show you how Paul felt afterwards. When all these things came against him at mid-night when some of the prisoners were snoring it seems that all is quiet Paul and Silas were busy praising God. Maybe they couldn’t sleep. Let me tell you if anyone of you find it hard to sleep tonight, worship God. And suddenly they hear this voice of Paul and Silas, “Alleluia, praise the Lord,” and they sang hymn after hymn. They sang so loud that the whole prison heard them. They had a captive audience even if they don’t like it since they couldn’t go anywhere else. Acts 16:25, At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Two crazy fellows, now in the world they look crazy. What kind of fellows these are. You beat them up and they say, “Alleluia.” You punch them they ask, “How about the other side?” These are strange fellows. They just sing hymn after hymn. And all the prisoners were wide-awake. And as they listened, suddenly in verse 26 an earthquake came. No one had ever seen that before. And all their chains fell and there was tremendous power released. The jailor nearly killed himself but Paul stopped him. From that day, they knew Paul and Silas were no ordinary people. The oil of gladness was on their life.

Turn with me to the book of II Cor. 12 the kind of attitude that is produced by the gift of righteousness. Paul says these things he had to learn. Paul also had to learn about these types of things. Verse 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ rest upon me. So Paul had to learn and there was a situation in his life when he was facing hardship and difficulty that he had to tap on the strength of God.

Now verse 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities. The word pleasure is something you enjoy. After this Sunday morning service, all of you would go and take pleasure in your lunch. Now Paul says I take pleasure in difficulties. Why, because to the world he was like a mad man. He was filled with the Spirit and drunk with the Spirit. He was filled with the oil of gladness. Sometimes you read in the newspaper that when some people are drunk, they climb into the zoo and sleep with the tigers and lions. Only drunk people do that. You and I have been to the zoo but we never climb into the lion cage. By the time they knew it when they got a little bit sober in the morning lo and behold they found themselves sleeping in bed with the lions. And the lions mauled them. Only drunk people can do things like that.

Some of us need a greater measure of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you are facing a problem and you are working at your problem hard. Have you ever thought of tapping the gift of righteousness? When the gift of righteousness comes, it produces wisdom, it produces power and grace to do your work, it produces favor on your behalf and it fills you with the oil of joy. When you look at your work you say, “Alleluia this is fantastic.” And you could even be handling lions without realizing that the only difference is that the drunkenness in the Spirit is a different realm that solves your

problem. It doesn't just make you insensitive to the problem but it helps you solve your problem.

Paul says, "I take pleasure in infirmities." Infirmities don't affect him any more because the oil of gladness was in his life. He has entered into the state of being of joy. Do you know how Jesus went through the cross? How many of you agree that it's not easy to go through the cross? You and I have crosses to bear but none of our crosses can compare to the giant one that Jesus bore for us. Do you know how Jesus bore the cross? You read Heb. 12:2 Jesus looked forward to the cross with joy. Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. If you remove the joy Jesus couldn't endure the cross. But before Jesus went to the cross, He was at the Garden of Gethsemane and He prayed through. We always make the Garden of Gethsemane sound so pitiful. But when you pray through you know the result - joy. I know He agonized until the blood flowed down from Him. But the fact is He prayed through. When He prayed through the joy filled His life. When the disciples were sad and sorrowful, Jesus in the gospel of Jn. 14 said, "Let not your heart be sorrowful or be troubled." What did Jesus begin to tell them? "The joy that I have I give to you" because Jesus was infused with joy. He was ready for the cross. And because of that, He could endure the cross successfully.

If right now, you have nothing to look forward to, if you have nothing in life that makes you joyful or nothing that can make you happy, do you know life is not worth living? Even the simple joy of finding a good lunch or a good friend, or a good fellowship, or something but life is made from all these joy. If we don't have a single joy in our life or a single moment of happiness life is not worth living. Joy is an important source of life continuing in our life and doing greater and greater things with God. And when the gift of righteousness enters into you, it increases your ability to enjoy the joy of the Lord. As the oil of joy flows through your life, the capacity to rejoice is greater.

Now you know these two areas operate in your life when the gift of righteousness is in your life. Firstly, there is a sense of authority. If you have a sense of fear then the gift of righteousness is not operating. It's a sense of authority and faith. Secondly, there is the state of being of joy. And you know its no longer you who live but Christ who lives in you. And no matter what happens you just rejoice in the Lord knowing that in the end it all works out for good. All you have to do is hang in there with the joy of the Lord.