

Audio Transcript of Sermon  
July 23, 2022  
The Tree of Life

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. In the Garden of Eden were two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and these two trees were there among the many other trees given for food. It was eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that came with a stark warning, eating of it would result in death. Let's read the account in Genesis two beginning with verse eight.

**Genesis 2:8-17**

**8. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.**

**9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.**

**10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.**

**11. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;**

**12. And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.**

**13. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.**

**14. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.**

**15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**

**16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:**

**17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

Contrasted to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the tree of life, and looking forward to the Kingdom of God in a vision of what the throne of God will look like when there is a New Jerusalem on earth is a pure river of water of life with the Tree of Life growing that is always bearing fruit every month of the year.

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Today, when we think of fruit trees, we think of trees that bear fruit only during a limited time of the year, with most fruit growing in spring and summer with an autumn harvest, a very limited window of bearing fruit. With the tree of life, it will bear fruit during every month of the year. Revelation twenty-two verse one.

#### **Revelation 22:1-5**

- 1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.**
- 2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**
- 3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:**
- 4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.**
- 5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.**

Later in that same chapter of Revelation we are told that those who do His commandments are blessed as they have a right to the tree of life and entry into the city of New Jerusalem. Verse twelve.

#### **Revelation 22:12-15**

- 12. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**
- 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**
- 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**
- 15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**

To the church at Ephesus, a message is given that those who overcome will eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Revelation two, starting with verse one.

### **Revelation 2:1-7**

**1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**

**2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**

**3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.**

**4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**

**5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**

**6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

**7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**

The Book of Proverbs uses the term tree of life in multiple places with the wisdom it imparts. For instance, the fruit of the righteous is called a tree of life. Proverbs eleven verse thirty.

### **Proverbs 11:30-31**

**30. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.**

**31. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.**

We are told that hope that is deferred, waiting for something good to happen can be gut-wrenching, but that when we see what we are hoping for happen, it is like a tree of life. Proverbs thirteen verse twelve.

### **Proverbs 13:12**

**12. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.**

Proverbs also gives us a contrast between a tree of life and good and evil. Proverbs fifteen verse three.

#### **Proverbs 15:3-4**

**3. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.**

**4. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.**

Going back to the Garden of Eden, after mankind had taken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God banished mankind from the garden lest mankind also partake of the tree of life and live forever. Genesis three verse twenty-two.

#### **Genesis 3:22-24**

**22. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:**

**23. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.**

**24. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.**

We have this comparison between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life, and that comparison is something many still try to reconcile to this day because we are forced to compare the good of good and evil to life. We gloss over these names without understanding what is implied in the names. For instance, is it the tree of good and evil, or is it the tree of knowledge that happens to be about good and evil. Why is there the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and not the tree of the knowledge of life? Why is it one tree is about knowledge and the other tree is about doing?

Let's analyze this a bit. Where might knowledge of life be found where there is no life? We would probably look at the pages of a book or in some digital location on a device or the internet. Knowledge of life would be there, but that knowledge of and by itself would not be alive. If you were to ask your favorite digital assistant, whether it's Siri or Alexa, what is life, you will get a response based on some type of knowledge, and yet Siri and Alexa do not have life.

Yet throughout the Bible, it is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that leads to death. To confound matters, when we read of the exile of mankind from the Garden of Eden, it was because God acknowledged that mankind had become as one of them to know good and evil. Why is it that on the one hand God can know good and evil and live forever, but mankind's learning of good and evil leads to death?

Let's examine the prophetic writings of Isaiah to better understand why this difference exists. Isaiah records for us that God's thoughts are not our thoughts and God's ways are not our ways. What God thinks and does is much higher than mankind. Isaiah fifty-five verse eight.

#### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

**8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.**

**9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

We know God thinks differently than mankind, and one of those ways how God thinks differently than mankind is in the use of the knowledge of evil. You see God handles the knowledge of evil, from the knowledge of the tree of good and evil, differently than mankind will. Unlike mankind, evil has no controlling impact on God's thoughts and actions. As appropriate to lead all men to salvation, God may respond to evil, but God is not controlled by evil, nor is God controllable by evil. With God, there is no remote control device based on evil where God's buttons can be pushed. With mankind there is, there are many. With mankind the remote control devices based on evil is like walking into a living room where all table surfaces are covered with remote control devices. Mankind is controlled and controllable by evil in many different ways. Like the sands of the seashore, too many to count. God is not controlled by evil; God is not controllable by evil. God does not use evil to control or influence mankind. James one verse thirteen.

#### **James 1:13**

**13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:**

Job tells us that God will not do wickedly or pervert judgment. Job thirty-four verse twelve.

### **Job 34:12**

**12. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.**

In giving direction to the children of Israel, God compared life to good and death to evil, and yet in the Garden of Eden, eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a death sentence. In Deuteronomy, the children of Israel were told to love the Lord their God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, statutes, and judgments. Deuteronomy thirty verse fifteen.

### **Deuteronomy 30:15-20**

**15. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;**

**16. In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.**

**17. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;**

**18. I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.**

**19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:**

**20. That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.**

In the Garden of Eden was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that tree was a tree of knowledge. The kind of knowledge that tree provided was knowledge of good and evil. Knowing something and acting on it are not the same thing. For instance in a math problem, if you know that two plus two equals four, and yet you equate two plus two to equal five, you will get the wrong answer. If

you know you are supposed to look both ways before crossing the street, and you do not do that, you are much more likely to get hit by a car, truck, or bus. What we just read in Deuteronomy shows us that doing good will lead to life, but from Genesis we also know the knowledge of good and evil leads to death. Knowledge of and by itself is insufficient for salvation, even when we have the knowledge to discern between good and evil. Knowledge of good and evil, the ability to discern between good and evil, without purposeful intent to do good results in the proliferation of evil.

Our purposeful intent in doing good begins and ends centered on God the Father and Jesus Christ. In an earlier passage of Deuteronomy, God told the Israelites to do all that they were commanded as they took possession of the promised land remembering the forty lost years of wandering in the wilderness, taking to heart that mankind does not live by food alone, but must also live by every word of God. Deuteronomy eight verse one.

### **Deuteronomy 8:1-3**

- 1. All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers.**
- 2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.**
- 3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.**

Jesus Christ is the bread of life we must eat. Like God the Father reminded the children of Israel that they could not live by bread alone, Jesus reminded those who followed Him that they could not be into Jesus just for the food, just having the needs of the here and now met. The followers of Jesus had to also be focused on eternal life, and that those who devoted themselves to Jesus would never spiritually hunger or thirst. Through Jesus, our spiritual needs will be met. John six verse twenty-six.

## **John 6:26-37**

**26. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.**

**27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.**

**28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?**

**29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**

**30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?**

**31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**

**32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.**

**33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.**

**34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.**

**35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

**36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.**

**37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**

Knowing that our spiritual needs will be met through Jesus as the bread of life, and knowing that knowledge to discern between good and evil is insufficient for salvation, that our actions must be aligned to do God's way, our focus cannot be on the here and now. We cannot confuse the here and now with the Kingdom of God. We also cannot ignore the here and now as we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness.

We are told to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven. Too many ministers have co-opted this passage to coerce the giving of money from those in their church. God doesn't need our money in heaven, and this is not a passage about giving money to the church. If we value things found in heaven, we will be focused on

those things found in heaven, and if we value things found on earth, we will be focused on those things. Instead of focusing on money, physical possessions, and wealth, we are told to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness and when we do this, our needs will be met. Matthew six verse nineteen.

#### **Matthew 6:19-34**

**19. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:**

**20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:**

**21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

**22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.**

**23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!**

**24. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

**25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?**

**26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?**

**27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?**

**28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:**

**29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.**

**30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?**

**31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?**

**32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.**

**33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

**34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.**

Seeking the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness is different than having knowledge of the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. When we seek, we have an active interest, and when we have knowledge we have a passive interest, active verse passive. We cannot be people who only have knowledge of the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, we must be people who seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. And for those who follow the flow of the language, if we are seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness it is implied that there are things we will be seeking second, third, fourth, and fifth. As Christians we will be focused on our target, the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness as we live a life of activity rather than passivity in all we do, and in all we do we will rely on God knowing that God knows what we need.

As Christians we will not be living a life just of knowledge, whether that be knowledge of good or evil. We will be actively living a life of life, righteousness, seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and the active part of our life will be doing righteousness as contrasted to sin. We will not merely have a knowledge of good and evil, we will reject evil and do good. First John three verse seven.

**1 John 3:7-9**

**7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.**

**8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.**

**9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

James gives us guidance on how we can assure we are aligned to the path of righteousness that leads to life, while avoiding that which is evil. Those who are bitter in their heart who seek to divide the brethren are on the path to evil and death. Righteousness can only descend from God and Jesus Christ, and can be

identified because it is pure, peaceable, gentle, approachable, merciful, filled with the fruit of the spirit, giving no favoritism, being without hypocrisy, but of all of these remember, righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Righteousness is not sown in war, conflict, and turmoil. James three verse thirteen.

### **James 3:13-18**

**13. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.**

**14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.**

**15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.**

**16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.**

**17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**

**18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.**

Rejecting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil requires us to seek the tree of life, where we do not just have knowledge of good and evil, we earnestly seek righteousness in what we do. God's eyes are on us as we live our lives. Will God determine we are living a life within the confines of the knowledge of good and evil or will God determine we are living a life that is reaching for and seeking righteousness?

Peter shows us that righteousness is not knowledge of good and evil. Righteousness hates and distances itself from evil and does good while deliberately seeking peace. As we evaluate whether we are living within the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or reaching for the tree of life, we should be examining ourselves to see if we have compassion for each other, if we are a blessing for each other, or if we are living a life of evil where we find fault with each other and see the hardships of others as the justice of God. First Peter three verse eight.

### **1 Peter 3:8-12**

**8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:**

- 9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.**
- 10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:**
- 11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.**
- 12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.**

In writing to Timothy, Paul pointed out that the words of the Bible can be used in part to teach on righteousness, to bring all to salvation. The Bible is not a source of evil that is weaponized against others who are non-believers. Second Timothy three verse fourteen.

### **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

- 14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;**
- 15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**
- 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**
- 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

To the Romans Paul wrote we are not to judge each other, but are instead to self-evaluate our own actions to make sure we are doing nothing that can be spiritually problematic for another person. Whatever religious principles we hold ourselves accountable and responsible for as it applies to this physical world in which we live are for us to apply to ourselves. When we think of how we impact those in our lives, whether believers or non-believers, our focus should be on righteousness, peace, and joy that comes through the Holy Spirit. Romans fourteen verse thirteen.

### **Romans 14:13-17**

- 13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.**
- 14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**

**15. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.**

**16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:**

**17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**

There are many in this world who are considered by this world to be holy people, people of righteousness, people of faith. Some may look to the Pope and others to the Dali Lama. Back in the day of Jesus the people looked to the scribes and Pharisees as the religious elite who were righteous. We know from the words of Jesus that Jesus did not see these people as righteous, and instead saw them as hypocrites. Jesus then went on to tell those listening that unless their righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, they would not be part of the Kingdom of God. What was seen by others as righteousness in the scribes and Pharisees was religious hypocrisy. If we want to be part of the Kingdom of God, we cannot live a life of religious hypocrisy, outwardly appearing to others to be righteous. We must pursue righteousness as if we are reaching out to the tree of life. Matthew five verse seventeen.

#### **Matthew 5:17-20**

**17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**

**18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**

**19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

**20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

Isaiah the prophet expands our thinking on righteousness. Beyond the righteousness that we think of as linked to faith, Isaiah shows that righteousness also includes hating wealth that is gained by oppression, not using entrusted positions within the community for personal gain, refusing to hear character assassinations, and refusing to entertain evil. Isaiah thirty-three verse fourteen.

### **Isaiah 33:14-16**

**14. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?**

**15. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;**

**16. He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.**

Proverbs shows the way of righteousness is life. The tree of life and righteousness are linked together. Proverbs twelve verse twenty-eight.

### **Proverbs 12:28**

**28. In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.**

As we focus on rejecting the knowledge of good and evil and embrace righteousness, we cannot allow ourselves to be deceived where we think righteousness gives us salvation. Salvation is a gift of God and linked to mercy through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Titus three verse one.

### **Titus 3:1-7**

**1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,**

**2. To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.**

**3. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.**

**4. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,**

**5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**

**6. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;**

**7. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

It is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that allows us to have salvation through a gift of mercy, and it is the very same that allows for us to become righteous. Without Jesus, there is no pathway for righteousness. Second Corinthians five verse sixteen.

### **2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

**16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.**

**17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

**18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;**

**19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**

**20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.**

**21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

Jesus told his followers that those who hungered and thirsted for righteousness would be filled and that among these very same would be those persecuted for righteousness. Matthew five verse three.

### **Matthew 5:3-12**

**3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.**

**5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**

**6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**

**7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

**8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**

**9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**

**10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.**

**12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**

In writing to the Philippians, Paul expanded the concept of hungering and thirsting after righteousness by explaining that they be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which come through Jesus Christ and God the Father. Philippians one verse nine.

### **Philippians 1:9-11**

**9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;**

**10. That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;**

**11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

In the Garden of Eden two trees were placed, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Having knowledge of good and evil is insufficient for salvation and when Adam and Even ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they found themselves banished from the garden lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever. Just like there could be no mixing between the two trees then, we cannot mix knowledge of good and evil and righteousness today. If all we have is knowledge of righteousness, we have signed our spiritual death warrant. Righteousness is never something we annotate and record in the pages of a book, just to put that book on a shelf and forget about it until there is a convenient time. Instead, we must embrace and seek righteousness in all we do as if we are reaching out for the tree of life rejecting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as we diligently seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.