

Audio Transcript of Sermon  
May 20, 2023  
Righteousness

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Righteousness is a quality that all of us must have in order to be part of the Kingdom of God. It is not optional, or something that is highly recommended. Righteousness is a quality that we must not only have, the righteousness that we have must exceed the righteousness of those who are seen as the religious elite. Righteousness is not a quality that is only for those who are the religious elite, the religious leaders, those who teach us of religious ideals and values. Righteousness is a quality that each of us must have. This is what Jesus taught, and he linked his teaching on righteousness to doing what is written in the Bible. When Jesus taught on righteousness, He also taught that righteousness as it is linked to Jesus does not come with tossing out what is written in the law or the prophets of the Old Testament, and is linked with following the commandments, and teaching others to also follow the commandments. 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.**

Verses like what we just read can sometimes be hard to understand if you are a person who makes every effort to do what is taught in the Bible, holds yourself accountable to that standard, and are severely disappointed in yourself when you know you fall short, because sometimes we overlook that even though there are many like us who have this focus in our faith, there are others including among the religious elite who are to use the words of Jesus, hypocrites, who do not do

what they teach others to do and people who marginalize what is expected of us by the Bible and teach others to also live by this marginalized expectation.

For those within the Church of God, some have looked at the verses we just read and have determined that using my words, not theirs, we are to become Super Jews. We are not called to be Super Jews or even Jews. I have deep respect for all of my Jewish friends and the richness of their faith, but there is nothing about our faith that makes us a Super Jew. There is no requirement for a Christian to be a much better Jew than a Jew is. We are called to be followers of Christ, and many who are called to be followers of Christ are not of Jewish descent, or of another tribe of Israel, and would be considered a gentile by those who are Jewish.

Paul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, desired that Israel would be saved through Jesus Christ, but he also knew they were ignorant of the righteousness of God, and because of that ignorance, tried to define righteousness not through knowledge of God but through human understanding of righteousness. What Paul knew was that Jesus is the result of the law for righteousness. Romans ten verse one.

#### **Romans 10:1-4**

- 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.**
- 2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.**
- 3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**
- 4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.**

Righteousness is important for each of us to have, and yet also of importance to each of us is getting through this physical existence we call life. Getting through life means taking care of life itself, what we eat and drink, the clothes that we have, and where we call home. There is no denying that on the physical level we all have need, and if don't have immediate need of these things, we will have need at some point in the future. Having need of physical things is not a matter of if, but when. Jesus taught His disciples that God knows we have these needs and will provide for our needs. He then taught that instead of focusing primary

attention on these things, to focus on the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and our physical needs will be supplied. Matthew six verse twenty-five.

### **Matthew 6:25-33**

**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 today is, and tomorrow 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.**

As a younger minister, Timothy was taught by Paul to flee youthful lusts, and to follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace with other believers, while avoiding foolish and speculative questions and debates that cause strife, because as children of God, we are not here to spiritually fight with each other, but are to be gentle to all having the ability to teach and be patient teaching people who are conflicted who do not know God so that God may lead them to repentance and know the truth, and be freed from the bonds of sin and Satan. Second Timothy two verse twenty-two.

## **2 Timothy 2:22-26**

**22. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

**23. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.**

**24. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,**

**25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;**

**26. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.**

As Timothy was taught to follow righteousness, Jesus taught that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, will be blessed and have their thirst and hunger for righteousness filled. Matthew five verse three.

## **Matthew 5:3-6**

**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.**

In his first letter, John wrote of Jesus Christ and how those who deny Jesus as the Son of God are antichrist and showed that only those who acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God also know God the Father as well, and reap eternal life, if they continue in the faith. We not only know that Jesus is righteous, but also know that all who do righteousness have a spiritual birth through His death and resurrection. First John two verse twenty-two.

## **1 John 2:22-29**

**22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.**

**23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.**

**24. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.**

**25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.**

**26. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.**

**27. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.**

**28. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**

**29. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.**

John also shows that in life we have a choice between righteousness and committing sin. As used by John, the Greek word for committeth, as in committeth sin, is Strong's Greek Word 4160 meaning that one abides with sin, is content with sin, continues with sin, fulfills sin. John shows us that we have a choice between righteousness, to pursue it and fulfil it, or to pursue sin by committing sin and fulfilling sin. We cannot do both. It is when we do righteousness, when we act with righteous intent, when through our actions we fulfil righteousness, we are righteous, and to the degree we are righteous as Jesus Christ is righteous, we are like Jesus. First John three verse one.

### **1 John 3:1-11**

**1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.**

**2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.**

**3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

**4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

**5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.**

**6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**

**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.**

**10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.**

**11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.**

It is through Jesus Christ that we have been given this ministry of reconciliation that we who were alive to sin can become servants of righteousness, that is made possible through the forgiveness of sin. As we have been reconciled to Jesus Christ through forgiveness of sin we share with others this incredible opportunity, and as Ambassadors for Jesus Christ, we become reconciled to God, that through Jesus Christ we are made the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. 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.**

Those who have the Spirit of God do not live in the flesh but in the Spirit, and it is through the Holy Spirit that comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we are made free from the law of sin and death, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us as we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. We are to be spiritually minded and that will bring life and peace to us. Romans eight verse one.

### **Romans 8:1-9**

- 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**
- 2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**
- 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**
- 4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**
- 5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**
- 6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**
- 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**
- 8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**
- 9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us as we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh, and the righteousness of God is revealed from acts of faith to acts of faith, as we the people of God live a life of righteousness that is not by us or anything we do, but through the Holy Spirit that gives us purpose to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. It is through these acts of faith that the righteousness of God is revealed. Romans once verse sixteen.

### **Romans 1:16-17**

- 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

**17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**

In writing to the Philippians, Paul wrote that he prayed that their love may abound in knowledge and judgment, being filled with the fruits of righteousness. Paul again affirmed that these fruits of righteousness are through Jesus Christ. These fruits of righteousness are born as we live with acts of faith leading to other acts of faith. 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.**

While we live from act of faith to act of faith, righteousness always comes through Jesus Christ. James shares with us that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace. The fruit of righteousness will not lead us to be boastful or arrogant, but to have works shown to be based in meekness of wisdom through good use of language. The fruit of righteousness will not lead us to bitter envying and strife. 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.**



The words meek and weak rhyme but do not mean the same thing. A person who is weak is without power and must submit. A person who is meek has power that can be used, and instead of choosing to use their power, submits, often to avoid bitter envying and strife.

To the Galatians, Paul makes perfectly clear that we are not justified through works of the law. We are justified through faith, acts of faith that acknowledges that it is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that makes possible our salvation, because it is through Jesus Christ that righteousness comes to each of us, never through the works of the law, lest the death of Jesus be in vain. Galatians two verse fifteen.

### **Galatians 2:15-21**

**15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,**

**16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

**17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.**

**18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

**19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.**

**20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

**21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

In his first letter, Peter writes that if we are followers of Jesus Christ, we should not be focused on the harm that others could bring to us, and that if we should suffer for righteousness' sake, we should not cave into any feelings of terror or guilt they try to impose on us, even if they try to bring false accusations against us, as they did Jesus. First Peter three verse thirteen.

### **1 Peter 3:13-17**

**13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?**

**14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;**

**15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

**16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.**

**17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.**

It may be best not to even suffer for righteousness, but if we have to suffer for righteousness or for doing evil, it is better to suffer for righteousness. David, a man after God's own heart, frequently wrote of righteousness and knew that God would bless the righteous, that God would defend the righteous. Psalm five verse eleven.

#### **Psalm 5:11-12**

**11. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.**

**12. For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.**

In another psalm, David wrote how he trusted in God to save his soul and how God tried the righteous. For some reason today we seem to have a negative connotation about a trial from God, probably because of how criminal legal systems works in an attempt to convict of guilt. When the Bible talks of trying a righteous person, the Bible is showing that God is proving or confirming one's righteousness. God is not trying to establish that this person is not righteous. In his Psalm, David contrasts God trying a righteous person to hating the wicked and those who love violence. When God tries a righteous person it is not because of hate. Psalm eleven verse one.

#### **Psalm 11:1-7**

**1. In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?**

- 2. For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.**
- 3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?**
- 4. The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.**
- 5. The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.**
- 6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.**
- 7. For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.**

A focus on what is negative will lead a person to think more about walking through the valley of the shadow of death, than the words immediately preceding those, of being led in the paths of righteousness. We have to have confidence that God will provide for us as we first seek the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and that God will lead us in the paths of righteousness. Psalm twenty-three verse one.

#### **Psalm 23:1-6**

- 1. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**
- 2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.**
- 3. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**
- 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**
- 5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.**
- 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

We will be led in the paths of righteousness in good times and in bad times because God remains focused on his people who today are the called, the chosen, the faithful, the righteous. When life is challenging for us, God will respond and intervene so that which is evil, and those who are evil do not bring evil to the righteous. Knowing that God will prevent evil from being forced on the righteous,

does not mean the righteous will not have their share of troubles, but even with their share of troubles, God will deliver the righteous from their troubles. Being righteous does not mean a life without hardships, but God will deliver the righteous from those hardships. In a prophetic verse, God would not allow the bones of Jesus to be broken during the crucifixion, and yet there is no debate that Jesus died an agonizing death. It was through physical death that Jesus was delivered from this final trouble and hardship. Psalm thirty-four verse eleven.

### **Psalm 34:11-22**

**11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.**

**12. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?**

**13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.**

**14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.**

**15. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.**

**16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.**

**17. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.**

**18. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.**

**19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.**

**20. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.**

**21. Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.**

**22. The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.**

The Book of Proverbs contrasts righteousness to wickedness, and shows that it is righteousness that delivers from death. Proverbs ten verse two.

### **Proverbs 10:2-3**

**2. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.**

**3. The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.**

Righteousness delivers from death and directs the way of the upright. Wicked people tend to be caught up in wickedness. Proverbs eleven verse four.

#### **Proverbs 11:4-10**

- 4. Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.**
- 5. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.**
- 6. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.**
- 7. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.**
- 8. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.**
- 9. An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.**
- 10. When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.**

Righteousness leads an upright person to be focused on that which is righteous, and keeps them in the way of righteousness. Wickedness tends to overthrow a wicked person as wickedness builds upon wickedness. Proverbs thirteen verse one.

#### **Proverbs 13:1-9**

- 1. A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.**
- 2. A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.**
- 3. He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.**
- 4. The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.**
- 5. A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.**
- 6. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.**
- 7. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.**

- 8. The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.**  
**9. The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.**

Righteous people are described to have certain qualities by proverbs. One of those qualities is the words that they use. The words of the righteous lead to life while wicked people tend to be focused on that which diminishes life, like violence. This well of life that oozes from a righteous person will not only lead other people to a better spiritual place, but would also in the short-term, lead people to a better physical life here on earth. Proverbs ten verse eleven.

**Proverbs 10:11**

- 11. The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.**

Proverbs also shows that a righteous person will not act with deceit. Wicked people will try to deceive other people through their words, and that shouldn't come as any surprise as even the serpent in the Garden of Eden used subtly of deceit to trick Eve. Proverbs twelve verse five.

**Proverbs 12:5**

- 5. The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.**

A righteous person regards the life of their animals. If you have a farm or ranch, you are taking care of those animals. Many will have pets, and will regard the life of their pets. Wicked people tend to act through deceit, and even when they are doing something that on the surface looks kind, evil lurks below the surface, and just like an iceberg, what little that looks good above the surface is much less than the evil that lies below the surface. Proverbs twelve verse ten.

**Proverbs 12:10**

- 10. A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.**

A righteous person considers the real life situations of others including those who are the weak in society, such as the poor. Wicked people don't care about others,

unless those others are in a position to somehow benefit them, because wicked people tend to be solely focused on themselves. Proverbs twenty-nine verse seven.

### **Proverbs 29:7**

**7. The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.**

It's important to righteous people to provide the best response to any situation. Because wicked people tend to be focused solely on themselves, wicked people will throw out anything without regard to if it is evil or not. Proverbs fifteen verse twenty-eight.

### **Proverbs 15:28-29**

**28. The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.**

**29. The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.**

Righteousness is not something we ascribe to ourselves, but is a determination that God makes based on how we act through faith in Jesus Christ. People tend to think they are correct in whatever situation they find themselves, and yet it is God who considers each of our hearts. God knows the human heart is desperately wicked, and God looks at what we set out to do as what is more acceptable than asking for forgiveness. Proverbs twenty-one verse two.

### **Proverbs 21:2-3**

**2. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.**

**3. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.**

As we follow righteousness and mercy, we find life, righteousness, and honor. Proverbs twenty-one verse twenty-one.

### **Proverbs 21:21**

**21. He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.**

Each of us has been called to the faith, which Hebrews describes as a race that is set before us. In Hebrews, we are encouraged to run that race with patience looking to Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith, the alpha and omega of our faith, who endured the agony and shame of the cross for the joy of the righteousness that is developed in each of us through the Holy Spirit.

We are not promised an easy race but a race filled with the challenges of life. For those of us on this race of faith who look to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith, these challenges may try us, and to God these challenges confirm our faith and the righteousness that is being developed in each of us. Hebrews twelve verse one.

### **Hebrews 12:1-11**

- 1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,**
- 2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**
- 3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.**
- 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.**
- 5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:**
- 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**
- 7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?**
- 8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.**
- 9. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?**
- 10. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.**



**11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**

Each of us is called to a life of righteousness. We are taught to seek God's righteousness as we seek the Kingdom of God. We cannot live a life of hypocrisy as the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time did and must live a life bearing fruits of righteousness that comes through faith, knowing that Jesus died and was resurrected so that we can have eternal life. Focusing on righteousness will not excuse us from the troubles of this world. We do have God's assurance that we will be delivered from these problems knowing that whatever situations of life we may face prove our righteousness to God.

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.