

FAITH AND THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

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There are a couple of areas where we need to be careful. Sometimes we might think that God might not answer our prayer because "I'm not good enough". Perhaps I'm not worthy of God's response ... I don't pray/study/fast enough. I'm not a very good Christian.

Sometimes we might think that Faith is primarily about quoting scripture ... talking to our mountains ... standing on promises. It is impersonal. Sometimes people refer to it as, "the Force of Faith". That is not entirely a wrong description ... but we have to be careful not to be focusing on the faith part. **IT IS FAITH IN GOD THAT IS THE KEY.** Faith is not academic knowledge ... it's not merely a formula we follow. Faith is based on our personal relationship with God or our trust in His Word and His integrity. Faith is not an impersonal force.

We need to clearly understand our relationship with God. We don't want to be hindered by doubts as to whether we are good enough to receive from God.

We need to see the Author, the Being, the Teacher ... behind the words. The Bible is not just a text book ... it is a revelation of a Divine Being and One you and I are to know personally. Do we see God ... The Father and Jesus when we go to The Word ... to the scriptures?

John 5:39-40

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they **which testify of Me.** But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

John 5:39-40 THE MESSAGE BIBLE

"You have your heads in your Bibles constantly because you think you'll find eternal life there. But you miss the forest for the trees. **These**

Scriptures are all about me! And here I am, standing right before you, and you aren't willing to receive from me the life you say you want.

John 5:39-40 NLT

"You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

You have to go to the being behind the Words. The scriptures point to a person ... to me (Jesus).

John 5:46-47

For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for **he wrote about Me.** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

The first five books of the Bible more or less talk about Jesus.

Luke 24:13-18

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

Luke 24:25-27

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" **And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**

Luke 24:28-32

Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

And they said to one another, "**Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?**"

All of the scriptures ... POINT TO A PERSON ... POINT TO THE FATHER ... POINT TO THE SON.

We ought to bear in mind that God is a God of Love.

1 John 4:16

And **we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

Do we know His love for us? Do we believe? Is it personal to us? Do we feel and experience God's love for us? Or ... are we awkward around God? Is God's love more like a religious platitude?

Where do we look when we endeavour to walk by faith? Ourselves ... or to the God who is Love?

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,** (the

Greek implies looking away from other sources ... and looking only to Jesus) who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:3

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

God should be "Father" to us ... a personal being in whom we can trust. It's not the Word in isolation ... it's the Word of "Someone".

Matthew 6:25-33

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; **yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?** Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not **much more** clothe you, O you of little faith?

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Don't sweat them!!)

If you are worrying, if you are fearful ... and you don't know The Father!!

Matthew 7:7-11

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks

finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

Therefore you and I need to understand that we are not just looking at words in a book, a mantra ... we are looking at the love of the Beings behind The Word.

Romans 8:14-15

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom **we cry out, "Abba, Father."**

We have received a spirit that lets us cry out, "Abba Father". We have a close, loving, dependable Father. It should be almost quite easy to have faith in His Word ... if we know Him. If we are struggling with Faith ... it indicates that we don't have a relationship with The Father and Our Saviour.

Romans 8:31-32

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

God isn't holding back. He isn't using teaspoon measures with us ... little droppers!! The price you pay generally indicates the value of something to you. What is the price that The Father paid for us? He paid the ultimate price ... His Son.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, **casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**

1 Peter 5:7 AMPLIFIED

Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully. (Then ... we'll be CARE FREE!!)

Psalms 23 (This is how David saw God)

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;

For **You are with me;**

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord

Forever.

David was acquainted with and had ... an intimate relationship with God.

What about the fact that some people think "they are not good enough?"

"God can't really answer my prayers". "I've wasted too many years".

"Let's face it, I'm a poor sorry example of a Christian".

Well. That's not how God sees us. If we've chosen to Walk in the Light ... God sees us as RIGHTEOUS ... our sins are washed away ... and we are clean.

Here is a definition of Righteousness. "The ability and the right to stand in the presence of God without a sense of guilt or condemnation or inferiority. As if sin never existed".

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. **For**

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (A Great Exchange implied here!)

If we are IN HIM ... then that's how God sees us. He sees us "through Jesus". He doesn't see us any longer, "In Adam". We are no longer in the "Adams" family ... we are Now IN CHRIST. God sees us righteous.

Romans 5:17

For if by the one man's offence 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.)

Righteousness is a gift! It's not down to how good we are, our church attendance, how much we pray, how often we fast ... they don't produce righteousness ... IT'S A GIFT.

Romans 3:21-22

But now the righteousness of God apart from (separate 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;

This righteousness is not produced by our right living ... which allows us to be confident!!

Romans 3:28

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified **(declared righteous) by faith** apart from the deeds of the law.

Romans 3:28 WEYMOUTH

For we maintain that it is as the result of faith that a man is held to be righteous, apart from actions done in obedience to Law.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, having been justified **(declared righteous) by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 4:1-3

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 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 (imputed) to him for righteousness."

Romans 4:5-8

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is accounted for righteousness**, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man **to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:**

"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."

Romans 4:20-25

He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for **righteousness.**"

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. **It shall be imputed to us who believe** in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised because of our justification.

It doesn't mean we are free to commit sin. We are righteous IN HIM.

Ephesians 6:10-14

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, **having put on the breastplate of righteousness,** (that is part of our spiritual protection).

Summary: We have a great Father, a great Saviour. They always see us as righteous. They are keen to hear from us ... we can approach them boldly. They are the voice behind The Words of Scripture. The righteous shall live by faith.