

**Articles and Sermons :: God's Righteousness -poonen****God's Righteousness -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/4/14 4:12****God's Righteousness***by Zac Poonen*

Israel had great zeal for God (Rom.10:3) - but it was zeal without a knowledge of God, for they did not understand that God's righteousness could not be produced by their own efforts. This was essentially where they failed. And this is where many Christians pursuing righteousness also fail today. They want to be holy, but they pursue after it with a human zeal that makes them haughty and arrogant towards others.

"Not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, Israel did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom.10:3).

Our own righteousnesses (our very best works) are all like filthy rags in God's sight (Isa.64:6). They are an abomination in God's eyes - and that is why they must be thrown away.

It was self-righteousness that made the elder brother (in the story of the prodigal son) into a Pharisee. In the first part of the parable, it is the younger brother who is outside the father's house. But at the end of the story, it is the elder brother who is outside, while the younger brother is clothed and rejoicing inside. Jesus constantly exposed self-righteousness as the worst of all sins - worse even than adultery and murder. Yet very few Christians understand the seriousness of this sin.

It is self-righteousness that makes a Christian look down on other Christians, and that makes preachers preach to others without judging themselves first. Such attitudes are like filthy rags in God's sight.

Is your righteousness something that God has wrought in you, by making you partake of His nature, or is it something that you attained by gritting your teeth, by getting up early every morning, by fasting and prayer and by yogic self-control? HUMILITY is the test by which you can know the answer.

God is determined that no flesh will be able to glory in His presence in eternity. So the righteousness that you have produced through your own efforts will be worth nothing at all in the final day. You might as well realise that now.

At the very beginning of our Christian lives, God declares us righteous because of our faith in Christ. Otherwise we would not even be able to stand before Him. And then, God sanctifies us by making us partake of His nature increasingly. It is He Who gives us the grace to be faithful and unyielding in the moments of temptation, so that we do not sin. It is He Who gives us the abilities and the gifts of the Spirit whereby we are able to serve Him and be useful in His vineyard. So we see that salvation from start to finish is from God - 100%.

"God is found by those who did not seek for Him and He manifests Himself to those who did not ask for Him" (Rom.10:20). Those are words that most Christians don't even know are found in the New Testament. Paul says there that Isaiah was very bold to make such a statement - and we can be certain that Isaiah was very bold, for that statement goes against the grain of every self-righteous Pharisee of all times.

Humble people however have no problem accepting these facts, for they recognise that their salvation begins and ends in God. Jesus is the Author of their faith (the One Who began it in their lives) and He is the Finisher of their faith too (the One Who will bring it to completion) (Heb.12:2). So they have nothing to boast about at all.