

SKILLED IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Slide Notes by Sonny Bowman

By This Time You Ought to Be

Skilled in Righteousness?

- Hebrews 5:12-13 — For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (NKJV)

The Word of Righteousness

- What is it?
 - God's explanation of how our righteousness is obtained in Jesus and how that works out practically in our lives
- How do you become skilled in it?
 - Read, study, understand, and apply God's truth about righteousness
- Why should you expend the effort?
 - Because God expects it, we need it, and the world needs it

There is a close connection between righteousness, redemption, salvation, and justification.

The Three-Part Problem

Your Three Parts

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23 — ... may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- You are a three-part being
 - Spirit: the real you, eternal
 - Soul: your mind, will, & emotions
 - Body: the physical part you see & feel

These parts are listed in order of importance from God's viewpoint. We generally reverse the order of importance in our own view.

Body - Like an astronaut uses a space suit so he can live on the moon. Body is your earth suit so you can function in this world.

Spirit, Soul, & Body

- Must understand the importance, function, and interaction of each for successful living
- Each part is redeemed on a different time table
- Righteousness functions differently in each part

Need to properly understand how to deal with each part of your being or you will get confused, frustrated, and discouraged.

Redemption of Your Spirit

- Spirit is either alive or dead (Eph 2:1)

- Not saved by good works (Rom 3:20)
- Instead by faith (Rom 3:28)
- Is instantaneous (2 Cor 5:17, 1 Jn 5:13)
- Is joined with Jesus (1 Cor 6:17)
 - Yours & Jesus' histories joined
 - In Christ you are dead, buried, raised, alive
- Is righteous & perfect NOW (Heb 10:14)
- You are a new Creation (2 Cor 5:17)

When we are joined with Jesus in faith, our history becomes His history AND His history becomes our history. That is why the Bible says...

We crucified (Gal 2:20, Rom 6:5-7)

We died (2 Cor 5:14, Col 3:3)

We buried (Rom 6:3-13, Col 2:9-13)

We made alive (Col 2:9-13, Eph 2:5-6)

We resurrected (Col 2:9-13, Eph 2:5-6, Rom 6:3-13)

Redemption of Your Body

- Body is self centered and desires pleasure and ease (Rom 13:14)
- Will receive a new body (1 Cor 15:42-44)
- Redeemed at the resurrection when Jesus returns for us (Phil 3:20-21)
- Until then must crucify it daily, a living sacrifice
 - **Romans 12:1** — 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.

Your current body is still dying and decaying. Your new body will be perfect and everlasting. You must rule over your body, don't let it rule over you. This is a reasonable expectation.

Body is Like Your Car

- Car is to serve us. But people often serve the car
 - Special wheels, accessories, washing, etc.
- Need to keep the car in good shape, so serves well and long
 - Wash, oil, maintenance, etc.

Our body is the vehicle of our spirit and soul that provides interaction with the world we live in. It is designed to serve us as we serve the Lord. If we allow it to get in bad shape, then its service is limited. But we are not to make our body the main focus of life, expending excess effort and resources on it.

Live Spirit, Dead Body

- Romans 8:10 — And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.
- Galatians 5:17 — For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

That explains a lot! Part of us is dead and part of us is alive to God. No wonder I have such a mess in my life! Surely, there is something that can be done to deal with this situation.

The Battle of Your Life

- Your born-again spirit always wants to follow God

- Your dead body always wants to enjoy pleasures and avoid discomfort
- Third part, your soul, casts deciding vote
 - The more carnal (fleshly) minded, more often chooses body against spirit
 - The more renewed, more often choose to follow God and against self-centered desires of the body

Your soul is the key! Therefore, it is important to see the **process** by which the soul/mind is redeemed!

Redemption of Your Soul

- A lifelong process
 - Romans 12:2 — And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ...
 - James 1:21 — Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
- Completed when Jesus returns
 - Will know as God knows us (1 Cor 13:12)

James is not talking about deliverance of your spirit, salvation by faith in Jesus. He is talking about the redemption of your soul, your mind.

Your mind/soul is corrupted by **stinking thinking**—worldly, ungodly ways of thinking and reacting. (Dead things stink.)

We must recondition the mind to think and see like God does, which is a lifelong process. You learn God's ways by reading, studying, meditating on, and choosing to follow His training manual—the Bible.

Mind is Like a Computer

- Similar to damaged program or virus on a computer
- The computer thinks it is doing the right thing, but causes serious problems
- Need an external “standard” to show that the results are wrong
- Need to replace the bad programming with good programming from a reliable source
- A continual process

Winning the War in Your Mind

- Soul/Mind chooses based on what it has been taught is “normal”
- We have a lot of stinking thinking, a distorted view of true reality
- Need to renew (reprogram) our minds to see reality the way God sees it

New Christians may not know that certain things are not normal: Sex outside of marriage, pornography, smoking, drugs, drunkenness, unforgiveness, bitterness, fear, etc.

When born again, your spirit is totally righteous, your soul/mind should be becoming more righteous every day, and your body should be brought into submission to the will of God for righteous service, even though it kicks and screams the whole ways.

If Born Again, You Are

- Completely forgiven (Col 2:13-14)
- Righteous (Rom 4:5)
- Acceptable to God (Eph 1:6)
- Adopted into God's family (Gal 4:5)

- To boldly approach God (Heb 10:19)
- To renew your mind (Rom 12:2)
- To rule over your body (Rom 12:1)

Free Indeed

Jesus purchased an extreme level of freedom for us. Unfortunately, many Christians don't have a clue, and thus don't experience all that God has for them.

Why do you think God gave us His Law?

Purpose of God's Law

- To restrain sin until the Messiah came (Gal 3:23)
- To show that we are sinful (Rom 3:20)
- To be our tutor, bringing us to Christ for salvation by faith (Gal 3:24)
- To teach us God's ways (Micah 4:2)
- It was never meant to make us right with God
 - **Galatians 2:21** — "... if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain."

When We Died in Christ...

- Romans 7:1,4 — Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? ... this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. (NLT)
- Romans 6:14 — Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. (NLT)

Paul in this passage (Rom 7:1-4) uses the example of a woman remarrying after her husband dies.

Okay to Do What We Want?

- Some people thought Paul was saying it was okay to sin since he taught that we are not under the law
- Romans 6:15-16 — Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. (NLT)

A New Law

- No longer under a tutor, the Law
 - Galatians 3:24-25 — Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- Yet not without law (1 Cor 9:20-21)
- The law of love (John 13:34-35, Gal 5:14)
- Don't get back under the old law (Gal 5:1)

Illustration is that of a tutor for a king's young son. The tutor was often an educated and trusted slave. In time, the son matures and takes his rightful place of freedom and rule. But he continues to live by the things he learned under the tutor, even though he is no longer under that tutor. We are not under the Law, but that does not mean we are without law!

Law of Love

- Law of Christ
 - John 15:12 — This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- Love Fulfills the written Law
 - Romans 13:10 — Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.
- Outwardly may look the same as legalism, but a whole different motivation!

Love for Jesus/God and for others. Put others and God before yourself.

Legalism is a pursuit of right standing with God through keeping the law of God.

Love Liberates *AND* Limits

- Jesus set us free indeed (Jn 8:36)
- Don't use liberty for occasion of flesh (Gal 5:13-14)
- Grace doesn't excuse sin (Rom 6:1-2)
- Love of Christ compels/constrains (2 Cor 5:14)
- We love because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19)

Jesus' love for us set us free. Sin opposes God's nature, character, and ways. If we belong to God, why should we ever be involved with sin?

Legal Actions Can Hurt Others

- Romans 14:12-21 — So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself;.... Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ... 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.

It may be technically legal as a Christian, but that doesn't mean it is good. Following the Law of Love gives direction in these situations.

Set Free from...

- The power of the Law
- The power of sin
- Slavery
- Self rule
- Estrangement from God
- Hopelessness
- Darkness

Set Free to...

- Love God and people
- Forgive others
- Die to self
- Live for God
- Follow Jesus
- Know God intimately
- Not for our own self-serving indulgence!

Forgive others — as we are forgiven. Die to self — as Jesus died for us
 We are not set free to do our own thing or to indulge ourselves. We have been set free to fully enjoy our new relationship with God and to be fully engaged in God's work in this world.

Unwitting Slaves

Many Christians have become involved with sin and thus unwittingly enslaved. It is critical that we protect our freedom in Jesus. Never let disobedience enslave you!

Sin Enslaves Christians!

- All legal, not all good
 - 1 Corinthians 6:12 — All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
- Sinning makes you a slave to sin
 - John 8:34 — Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

Sin...

- Enslaves you
- Neutralizes your power in God's Kingdom
- Minimizes your threat to Satan's domain
- Limits your influence on others
- Keeps others from seeing the truth

Even though Jesus set us free and made us children of God, we can still become enslaved to sin and self will through disobedience to God's ways. Do you want to be limited? Do you think God wants you to be limited?

Christians Breaking God's Law

- 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 — For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

If follow sin, you will reap corruption and other bad consequences in this life along with loss of rewards in eternity. But you will not lose your salvation.

Breaking God's Law

- Works judged, rewards lost, but salvation assured
- Disobedience has serious consequences, but not the loss of salvation
- Law still describes God's ways and God's will

Godly works cannot save you from sin. That comes only by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, that does not mean that godly works have no place in your life. They are still in line with God's will and His expectations for your life. You cannot gain salvation with good works and you cannot lose salvation with bad works

Will You Become Skilled in the Word of Righteousness?

More Information

- Session notes on life4square.com
- Read Romans (especially chapters 3-9)
- Read Galatians (especially chapters 2-5)
- Study lessons 5 & 6 in the *Building Blocks of Life* course (free at life4square.com or \$10 in Café)
- Life Foursquare Church Facebook page
- Email me (sonny@life4square.com)