

Message Five

The Righteousness of the Bride

Scripture Reading: Rev. 19:7-9; Matt. 5:20; 6:33; 22:2; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 1:7, 9; Rev. 15:3

I. The righteousness of God is what God is in His action with respect to justice and righteousness—Rev. 15:3; Rom. 1:16b-17a; John 3:16; 1 John 1:9:

- A. Our experience of Christ rests upon the foundation of God's righteousness.
- B. The foundation is God's righteousness, the unshakable foundation of God's throne—Psa. 89:14.

II. There are four aspects of the definition of righteousness:

- A. Righteousness is to be right with persons, things, and matters before God according to His righteous and strict requirements—Matt. 5:20.
- B. Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the Spirit—2 Cor. 3:8-9:
 - 1. This is righteousness as God's image—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.
 - 2. The ministry of righteousness is a ministry of the Lord's image—2 Cor. 3:9.
- C. Righteousness is a matter of God's kingdom—Matt. 6:33; Psa. 89:14:
 - 1. God's kingdom is righteousness.
 - 2. Righteousness is related to God's government, administration, and rule.
- D. Righteousness is a matter of our being right with God in our being—2 Cor. 5:21:
 - 1. To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear, an inner being that is in the mind and will of God.
 - 2. This is a matter of our being the righteousness of God in Christ—v. 21.

III. Righteousness is related to God's outward acts, ways, actions, and activities—Rev. 15:3:

- A. Everything God does is righteous—Rom. 1:16-17.
- B. Whatever God is in His justice and righteousness constitutes His righteousness.

IV. God is righteous in the blood of Jesus His Son—1 John 1:7, 9:

- A. God is faithful in His word (v. 10) and righteous in the blood of Jesus His Son.
- B. His word is the word of the truth of His gospel (Eph. 1:13), which tells us that He will forgive us our sins because of Christ (Acts 10:43); the blood of Christ has fulfilled His righteous requirements that He might forgive us our sins (Matt. 26:28).
- C. To forgive us is to release us from the offense of our sins, whereas to cleanse us is to wash us from the stain of our unrighteousness.

V. Righteousness is related to the kingdom of God—Rom. 14:17:

- A. The church life is the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is righteousness.
- B. God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation—Psa. 89:14.
- C. Where God's righteousness is, there His kingdom is also—Isa. 32:1; Heb. 1:8-9.
- D. In the Old Testament, righteousness is often synonymous with the kingdom.
- E. Where there is righteousness, everything is headed up in a proper way; this is the kingdom.
- F. Righteousness first issues in the image of God, and then righteousness establishes the kingdom of God:
 - 1. In Romans 8 we have righteousness and God's image.
 - 2. In Romans 14 we have righteousness and God's kingdom.
 - 3. Both the image and the kingdom are based on righteousness.

- G. To say that righteousness will dwell in the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet. 3:13) means that everything will be in order, headed up, and regulated:
1. Everything will be governed, controlled, and under the proper rule, for the throne of God, the kingdom, the divine administration, will be there.
 2. The result will be peace and joy.

VI. In Revelation 19:7-8 we see the righteousness of the bride:

- A. There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers:
1. The first aspect is to be the believers' righteousness for them to be justified before God objectively at the time of their repenting unto God and believing into Christ—Rom. 3:24-26; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:24b, 27.
 2. The second aspect is to be the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is the righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified by God subjectively—Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24a; James 2:24; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 19:8.
 3. As our objective righteousness, Christ is the One in whom we are justified by God—Rom. 3:24, 28; 4:25; 5:1, 9, 16, 18.
 4. As our subjective righteousness, Christ is the One dwelling in us to live for us a life that can be justified by God and that is always acceptable to God—Matt. 5:6, 20.
- B. Christ lived out of the saints as their subjective righteousness becomes their wedding garment—Rev. 19:8:
1. The righteousness we received for our salvation is objective and enables us to meet the requirement of the righteous God, whereas the righteousnesses of the overcoming saints are subjective and enable them to meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ—1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9.
 2. The wedding garment in Matthew 22:11-12 signifies the Christ whom we live out and who is expressed through us in our daily living as our surpassing righteousness—5:20; Rev. 3:4-5, 18.
- C. The Lord's bride, His wife, "has made herself ready. And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints"—19:7b-8:
1. Revelation 19:8 clearly associates clothing with righteousness.
 2. The word *righteousnesses* in verse 8 is plural and can be translated as "righteous acts."
 3. The righteousnesses do not refer to Christ as our righteousness, whom we received for our salvation—1 Cor. 1:30.
 4. The fine linen indicates our overcoming life, our overcoming living.
 5. The fine linen is the Christ whom we live out of our being.
- D. "Blessed are they [the overcoming saints] who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb"—Rev. 19:9:
1. The marriage dinner of the Lamb here is the wedding feast in Matthew 22:2.
 2. To be called to the marriage dinner of Christ is to be blessed.
 3. The overcoming believers, who will be called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb, will also be the bride of the Lamb—Rev. 19:7.