



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study : **TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN GOD'S KINGDOM**
Matthew 5:19,20

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, spoke much about the Kingdom of God both during His earthly ministry and after His resurrection (Matthew 5:20; 6:33; 7:21; Mark 1:14,15; 10:23-27; Luke 9:59-62; 13:23-30; John 3:3,5; Acts 1:1-3). In different passages, He used the terms "**kingdom of heaven**" and "**kingdom of God**" as synonymous. As the Son of God and as the King of the Kingdom, He carefully outlined and taught the kind of righteousness required of the citizens of the Kingdom.

Different kinds of righteousness exist and they are not all the same. There is self-righteousness - "**our righteousnesses**", "**their own righteousness**" (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 10:3). There is also "**the righteousness of faith**" (Romans 3:22; 4:11; 9:30-32; 10:8-10; Philippians 3:9). The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is self-righteousness, righteousness by self-effort, external righteousness which is void of right or godly motives. It falls far short of true righteousness, coming forth out of cleansed hearts and pure motives.

Christ, living in us and through us, gives us the grace and the power to live righteously in this present world. This righteousness received by grace through faith is true righteousness.

EXCLUSION OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS FROM GOD'S KINGDOM

Matthew 5:19; 7:21-23; 13:41-43; John 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5,6; 1 Peter 4:17,18; Revelation 21:8,27; 22:15.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so ... " The unrighteous, like the Pharisees, divide the precepts of God's law into lesser and greater parts. They always want to know which of God's laws they can violate or disobey without serious consequences. The Pharisees put a difference or distinction between the commandments of God. They taught their followers: **"Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!"** They made one offence of no consequence and another offence of great consequence. Again, they said, **"Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty."** Their self-serving interpretation made one sin seem as nothing and the other sin very serious. Christ, the righteous Judge, said, **"Ye fools and blind ... ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"** (Matthew 23:16-22,33).

It is the uniform teaching of Christ and the declaration of Scripture that **"the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God"** (1 Corinthians 6:9,10).

EXALTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS IN GOD'S KINGDOM

Matthew 5:19; Ezra 7:10; Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 1:14,15; Luke 13:23-29; Romans 14:17-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5; Hebrews 12:28; 1 John 2:15-17; Revelation 22:14.

The Kingdom of God is for the righteous only; only the righteous are for the Kingdom of God. The righteous are those who have been forgiven and cleansed by God through faith in Christ. They are made righteous and obtained righteousness by faith. Having received the grace of God, they live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Romans 6:18,22; 3:22; Titus 2:11,12). They live by the faith of the Son of God and delight in the law of God. This is the righteous. He has a relationship with God which is anchored on grace and established by faith. His supreme desire is to love God more truly and keep His commandments wholeheartedly. His desire is to see others love God truly and to keep His commandments faithfully. It grieves him when anyone breaks, violates or disobeys the laws of God. He has joy only when the divine nature produces righteousness in men and women around him. He lives for God's glory and teaches others to do the same. As he delights in God, God also delights in him. His is

the Kingdom of God. ***“Whosoever shall do and teach them*** (the commandments with the least), ***the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven.***”

EXTERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS INSUFFICIENT FOR GOD’S KINGDOM

Matthew 5:20; 23:25-28,33; Luke 16:15; 18:9-14; Romans 10:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 8:1-4; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Revelation 19:7-9; Matthew 13:43.

The Pharisees publicised their righteousness everywhere but it was nothing more than **“filthy rags”** (Isaiah 64:6). It was not a righteousness of the heart and from the heart, it was external righteousness (Matthew 23:25-28; 1 Samuel 16:7). ***“All their works they do for to be seen of men.” “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men.” “Ye indeed appear beautiful outward.” “Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men.” “Ye receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only”*** (Matthew 23:5; Luke 16:15; Matthew 23:27,28; John 5:44). Their external righteousness was a superficial covering for hearts full of **“hypocrisy, iniquity and all uncleanness”** (Matthew 23:25-28). External righteousness cannot qualify anyone for God's Kingdom. Only righteousness without hypocrisy, the righteousness obtained by faith in Christ, righteousness from God whose focus and goal is God's glory, only the righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees can open the gates of God's Kingdom for us to enter in.

If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.
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