

# Gift of Righteousness

Sermon #0821

Study by W. D. Frazee

A few days ago a friend of mine gave me a present. It was an apple. It looked good enough to eat, and it is. There are several things we can do with this gift. First I accept it. Another thing to do is to admire it. But the gift my friend gave me wasn't just to be accepted and admired. It is what I am going to do with it. I am going to eat it, and then let it operate. I accept it, I admire it, I eat it, and I appropriate it. Then I let it operate in me.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)" Romans 5:17.

Paul is talking about the righteousness of God, and what a wonderful thing God did in redeeming man. What a wonderful thing Jesus did in redeeming Adam's failure. By one man, Adam, many were made sinners. By one Man, Jesus Christ, many are made righteous.

This verse talks about the gift of righteousness. What a wonderful gift. We are approaching the time when millions of people are thinking about gifts, giving and receiving. Here is the greatest gift in all the universe—the gift of righteousness.

Have you received it? If you have, then you possess that which gives you a title to heaven and eternal life, and a fitness for heaven so you will be at home there and not feel like a stranger.

We don't earn a gift. If we do, it is not a gift. It is a wage.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 6:31.

I don't want to get my wages. Human works, apart from Christ, is death. So I must not think that I can work for this gift. My friend gave me this beautiful apple. He didn't ask me to work for it. It was a present indicating his love and regard. I appreciate it.

What shall we say to our Heavenly Father for this wonderful gift of righteousness? Thank You. We can't earn it, neither can we buy it.

Simon Magus was greatly interested in the Christian religion, and professed to accept it. When Peter and John came and the Spirit was poured out, Simon came forward with some money. He offered the apostles that money to receive the Holy Spirit. Peter said:

"Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" Acts 8:20.

Peter was rather direct. Some people might have thought Peter could have found a better way to tell Simon so he could still get Simon's money, but Peter didn't want that money.

No, my friends, we cannot buy a gift. If we were to buy it, it would be a purchase, not a gift. So this gift of righteousness is not something we earn through our works. It is not something we buy with tithe or offerings, or anything else we can place on God's altar.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to His cross I cling.

If we can't earn it, and we can't buy it, wouldn't it be a strange and unthinkable thing to think we could steal it?

There was a man who tried to get a blessing and used a deceitful way to get it. His name was Jacob. He finally got it, but he had to go through a long, sad series of experiences in getting a deeper repentance. So let's not try to work to earn it. Let's not try to give offerings and expect to buy it. And certainly let's not steal it.

There are multitudes today who are trying to steal this blessing of righteousness. They are trying to get it on other terms than God has offered it.

What is righteousness. I like this brief, comprehensive definition:

"Righteousness is right doing" *Christ's Object Lessons*,  
page 312.

The opposite of righteousness is iniquity, lawlessness, sin. We either have one or the other. We naturally follow our human bent. We do the wrong things. Even if we aim at righteousness we don't hit what we aim at. All our righteousness is as filthy rags. Some poor souls think that is all they can have this side of heaven. But I thank God for the Gospel that offers us the gift of righteousness.

Righteousness is right doing. It means that the thief that has stolen for forty years doesn't steal now. It means the man who has been swearing doesn't curse now. So with all the other commandments, for the law defines righteousness. The law cannot give us righteousness, but it can testify as to what it is. That's its purpose.

You can't reach that yourself. That's why God offers you the gift. If you had it, He wouldn't need to give it to you.

What shall I do with it? I want to accept it. What do you say?

Now let's see how we get this gift:

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" 1 Corinthians 1:30.

I get righteousness in Christ. God has made no arrangements to give anybody any righteousness apart from Christ. That is the only way to get it.

There are nutritionists and physicians who can give us a long list of wonderful things that are in an apple. I know a few of them. I know there are some wonderful vitamins in it. I know the names of some of them. But whether I know the names of those vitamins and minerals, if I eat the apple I get them. People have been eating apples for thousands of years who never knew the name of the vitamin C, or the other vitamins. And I am so glad I couldn't eat an apple until I learned all those.

Studying about what is in the apple won't take the place of eating the apple. Having courses, seminars, lectures, discussions, even debates on what is in the apple won't give me a bit of nutrition. So it is with the gift of righteousness embodied in Christ. If I receive Christ I receive what? Righteousness. Whose righteousness? The righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of God. Can you get anything better? But if I don't receive Him, there is no way I can get the spiritual experience of righteousness. It is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.

When God pronounces something, it is so. When God said, Let there be light, there was light. Does that mean that God said, Let there be light, and then set in operation certain processes that produced light? No. What produced the light? His word. He spoke and it was. So the Bible says that God cannot lie. He called those things which are not as though they were. When He calls them they are. When He says something, it is so. Why? Because His word has creative power that makes it so.

So when I come to God and accept Jesus as my Savior, and He gives me His righteousness, He not only announces a fact concerning my past and present standing, He accomplishes a blessed work in my soul.

When Jesus spoke to the leper the man was cleansed. When He touched the blind eyes and spoke to the deaf ears, they saw and heard. The voice of Jesus was the first voice that many had heard. His face was the first one they had looked upon. Oh, the creative power in Jesus. And if I receive Him, I have righteousness. According to your faith, be it unto you.

The angel told the messenger to the remnant that some tried hard to believe. Faith is so simple. Let's not try to get complicated. Let's just believe Jesus like a little child. Let's believe Jesus like the leper believed him. Let's believe in Jesus like the blind man who got his sight.

"Man can accomplish nothing without God; and God has arranged His plans so as to accomplish nothing in the restoration in the human race without the cooperation of the human with the divine. The part man is required to

sustain is immeasurably small, yet in the plan of God it is just that part that is needed to make the work a success. We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy, is the link that binds men up with one another and with God" *Review and Herald*, November 13, 1980.

I can't make an apple. The part I have in getting the benefit of an apple is immeasurably small compared to the work that produced it. It took the creative power to make the first apple tree. It takes that same creative power to maintain for six thousand years, passing from one apple tree to another, to finally produce this apple. Think of the marvelous elements of nutrition that is in it. Who has done it? God has done it. Does man have a part? Yes, man has a part, but man's part is so small.

Shall we accept the righteousness of Christ? Yes. How do we do that? By receiving Him.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" John 1:12.

This is the way to be delivered from every sinful habit. There is deliverance in Jesus Christ. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.

It is all right to hate if we hate the right things. Religion isn't a wishy, washy, sentimental thing. It is rugged. It can be stern. The more we love righteousness the more we hate iniquity.

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" Revelation 2:6, 15.

This doctrine says that if you believe what Jesus says you don't have to do what He says. That believing, somehow by some mysterious way, releases you from doing what He says. Just believe it, and that takes care of it.

Does Jesus hate some things? Apparently He does. He hates the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and He hates what they practice. What did they teach and practice?

"The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect; that by 'believing we are released from the necessity of being doers of the word.' But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which Christ so unsparingly condemned. Those who are teaching this doctrine today have much to

say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ, but they pervert the truth and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinners credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfills the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. This class claim that Christ came to save sinners, and that He has saved them. I am saved, they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah? No, for the garments of Christ's righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception. They regard faith for the substitute for obedience" *Signs of the Times*, February 25, 1897.

The only way I can get the benefit of this wonderful gift is to eat it. Just to put it on the shelf and look at it and admire it, I get no nutrition out of it. Oh, let us receive Jesus not as a substitute for obedience, but as forgiveness for your past failures and as an empowering strength to obey Him now.

He has that power. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Let's see how faith operates:

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" Mark 11:24.

We are to ask. We are to believe that we receive. Is this what the leper did? Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. What did Jesus say? I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. He got a wonderful gift.

Is there a gift for you? Forgiveness? Yes. Deliverance? Yes. The righteousness of God in Christ is offered to those who will let Jesus give them this wonderful gift.

Involved in accepting the gift of righteousness is to be willing to give up the sin which is the opposite of righteousness. There are some things that even God can't do. God has no way of calling a rebel a loyal citizen. But if I have spent my whole life in rebellion against God, then like the thief hanging on the cross, I can turn to Him and plead for His mercy, and my rebel heart can be melted and broken, and the righteousness of God can be mine as I look to the Savior. It is a gift. I can't earn it. I can't buy it. I can't steal it. But as a free gift, if I will open my heart I can have it.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" Romans 1:16.

Is there anyone who needs help on some point? Would you like to get it right now?

I think of Pharaoh down in Egypt suffering under the plagues one after the other. Finally the Lord sent frogs that invaded all the homes and even got into the baking dishes. It would be hard to mix bread with frogs jumping all around. That is the way sin is. It invades our homes and our hearts, and just mixes up everything.

Pharaoh finally got so sick of the whole mess that he called Moses and said, Moses, cry to your God to take away the frogs.

Moses said, All right, I will.

Pharaoh said, When?

Tomorrow.

Imagine. Tomorrow. Is there anyone here who wants God to do something for you sometime in the future? Is there someone here who needs to make a decision tonight? It may be the first decision you have ever made. Make it tonight.

We need to make more than one decision. As Jesus points out things in our lives that need changes, we may accept the righteousness of God in Christ. We may bring our sins and accept His beautiful life instead, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saves us.

Somebody says, This is for me. This is the help I need and want. I will accept the gift that Jesus offers.

I can't give it to you. Jesus is the only one who can. I am like the nurse helping people get to the doctor. I am not the surgeon. I am not the physician. I am the helper. Oh, I want you to be sure that you come to Jesus.

The more we put into something we are preparing as a present for someone, the greater our joy is in seeing them get a blessing from it. Think how happy we make Jesus just by receiving what He has offered us. What did this gift cost Jesus? Everything. It makes Him happy when we accept it. We will either get the benefit or it will all be in vain. We are either lost or saved.

Our only hope is to look away from ourselves to Jesus. That was one of the great reasons Jesus gave the sanctuary to ancient Israel.

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God" Psalms 77:13.

What did the man do who wanted to be forgiven? He brought his lamb or goat to the altar in the court. He raised his hands upon the substitute, confessed his sin, slew the sacrifice, and watched as the priest ministered that blood at the altar. The man's hope was not in himself. It was in that lamb, the substitute. It

represented Jesus. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We cannot look to ourselves and to Him at the same time.

Let's think of ourselves coming and bringing our lamb. Who is the Lamb? Jesus. But He is not only the Lamb, He is the Priest. He is not only the One who dies for us, He is the One who lives for us. And for the sins to be forgiven and cleaned it took not only an animal that died, it took a priest that lived. The priest must minister the blood. The priest must administer the book within the veil. The priest must lift his hands and pray in their behalf. And every priest represented Jesus.

Jesus is both the Lamb and the Priest. He is the Lamb that died for me. He is the Priest that lives for me. I am so glad He is both, for I need both.

So tonight we are looking away from ourselves to Him. And the blessing comes as we look to Him. Take the thing that is hardest to give up that you are having a battle with. Think of Jesus dying for you on the cross. Think of Jesus praying for you at the mercy seat within the second veil. And the more you look to Him dying for you and living for you, the more the hold of that sin which has ground you down and made a slave of you will loosen. The more your mind will be attracted to Jesus. Put your will on that side. Look to Him.

Just as looking to Jesus awakens love in our hearts to cause us to give up whatever hinders us, so looking to Jesus awakens faith in our hearts that He will accept us. When we see what He paid to redeem us, we know that He will accept us if we come to Him.

Copyright 2019. All rights reserved.

W.D. Frazee Sermons  
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757  
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755  
[www.WDFsermons.org](http://www.WDFsermons.org)  
[support@WDFsermons.org](mailto:support@WDFsermons.org)