



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#104)  
Results of faith (#2b).

## The RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT GOD REQUIRES.

It's not contrived and arbitrary, but  
It's a reflection of God's own nature.  
It's what God originally created us to have.

**Why don't we have it?** Because our sin has gotten in the way.

★ God CANNOT tolerate sin. ★

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil,  
and you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.  
Habakkuk 1:13a (CSB)

When he *does* seem to tolerate it, it's actually an opportunity to repent (Romans 2:4). If we refuse to repent, a terrifying judgment will eventually come (Romans 2:5).

★ TODAY, WE ARE UNDER THE NEW COVENANT ★

But just like under the OLD Covenant ...

1. **THEY needed changed hearts**, before they could live in righteousness and obedience. → *So do we!*
  - This is the only way people can become righteous.
  - Yet people are powerless to make this change.
2. **THEY needed to trust God** to change them and make them righteous. → *So do we!*
  - God offers to change our hearts for us.
  - God has even built this change into the New Covenant! (It was available, but wasn't a part of the Old Covenant.)

**Under the OLD Covenant:** Those who trusted God's promises, also trusted God to take care of the details about how he would fulfil those promises.

**Today:** We know more of the details – and the role that Jesus Christ has in fulfilling those promises.

**HOW GOD FULFILS HIS PROMISES... IT'S NOW REVEALED!**

1. Under the OLD Covenant, some of these things were a mystery.
2. Under the NEW Covenant, this mystery has been revealed!

In the past God hid this mystery, but now he has revealed it to his people. God wanted his people throughout the world to know the glorious riches of this mystery—which is Christ living in you, giving you the hope of glory.  
Col. 1:26-27 (GW)

**TODAY WE KNOW JESUS' ROLE IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS!** →

→ **THE ONLY WAY TO BECOME RIGHTEOUS IS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, WHO ALONE IS RIGHTEOUS!**

**BY NATURE, WE HAVE NO HOPE** → There is no one righteous, not even one.  
For all have sinned ...  
Romans 3:10b, 23a (CSB)

Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!  
Job 14:4 (NIV)

**ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS RESIDES IN JESUS.** → ... Jesus Christ the righteous one.  
1 John 2:1b (CSB)

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.  
1 Peter 3:18a (NIV)

→ **WE NEED TO EXCHANGE OUR SIN FOR CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS!**

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.  
2 Cor. 5:21 (NIV)

When this happens, it changes our desires, interests, conduct; because **GOD EMBEDS WITHIN US JESUS' DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.**

"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."  
Hebrews 10:16 (NIV), quoting Jeremiah 31:33.

With this new foundation, we can do in Christ what we can't do on our own.

**BUT THERE ARE TWO ISSUES WE FACE:**

- 1. Because of the *Spirit*, our heart is experiencing genuine change.**  
The Spirit is the only reason we can grow and have lives characterized by righteousness, works, and obedience. (It's not part of our nature.)
- 2. Our *flesh* continues to fight those changes.**  
God's people have to fight their old habits of sin. They also want to fight them.

- ★ We will succeed only to the extent that we trust God for the power to do so.
- ★ Our ongoing response will show whether the flesh or the Spirit controls our heart.

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This event illustrates\* our need to constantly look to [rely on] Jesus, as we fight our old habits of sin:

Peter, walking on water

**IF THAT IS YOU, JESUS, LET ME COME TO YOU, WALKING ON THE WATER!**

What Peter needed to do in this situation illustrates what we need to do all the time.

\* (It's like a parable or allegory. If we use the water to represent SIN, there is only one way to keep from "drowning" in it!)

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**YOU SHOULD HAVE KEPT YOUR FOCUS ON ME!**

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→ **We need to take seriously our need to trust God and rely on the Holy Spirit for our RIGHTEOUSNESS and our WORKS!**

Even when we want to follow Jesus, our old "self" is at war against us, trying to turn us into a slave!

I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power\* within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.

Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

And because you belong to [Christ Jesus], the power\* of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

Romans 7:22-25; 8:2 (NLT)

\* (A "principle" or "law" that tries to control you.)

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→ **It is ONLY to the extent that the SPIRIT controls our life that we will succeed!**

Only the power of the Spirit gives us victory over our old "selves"!

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)

Romans 8:5-9 (NLT)

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→ **And that's only possible when our old self is put to death with CHRIST!**

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (NLT)

If you are in Christ, your old self has received its mortal wound.

- ★ But its still "kicking about" in its death throes. It still gives you impulses to sin – which (if you are saved) you will hate.\*
- ★ As long as you rely on the Spirit, you will succeed in keeping it under control. Rely on yourself, you will be guaranteed failure.

\* (**What characterizes a saved person?** It's NOT the absence of sinful impulses. It's: 1) hating those impulses when they come, and 2) fighting them with the Spirit's power.)

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**THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE OBLIGATION TO OBEY GOD'S MORAL LAW.**

- 1. Responding as an opponent:**  
*"Do I have to?"* [Implied: "Because I don't want to."]
- 2. Responding as a fake:**  
*"If I have to, I will."* [Implied: "I might not want to, but... I'll do it if I have to, in order to get to heaven."]
- 3. Responding as a genuine follower of Jesus:**  
*"Yes, I want to!"* [Implied: "I'll do it because I love God and I hate the sinful impulses of my old 'self.' "]

For these 3 responses:  
 It's the same Law, but different hearts.

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**Response #2 is hopeless.**

- ❖ If we try to use works (obedience) as a way to GAIN righteousness (and eternal life), we will never succeed.
- ❖ It would require complete obedience; and because of our sinful nature, we do not have the power to do it.
- ❖ It was impossible even under the Old Covenant. Peter described such effort as:

... a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear ...  
 Acts 15:10b (NLT)

**Only Response #3 is an expression of genuine FAITH.**

**WITHOUT FAITH (RESPONSES #1 & #2):** The law restrains sin (especially for Response #2) and condemns us.

**WITH FAITH (RESPONSE #3):** The law is a delight that guides us in the way we desire to go. (We now desire the things of God.)

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**WORKS don't cause us to become RIGHTEOUS!**

**THE ISSUES ARE:** 1) THE REASON FOR THE WORKS!  
 2) THE SOURCE OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS!

**QUESTION:** So WHY do works? WHAT is the relationship between righteousness and works?

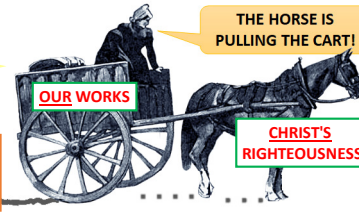
**ANSWER:** We don't WORK for salvation. We WORK because of salvation, empowered by God!

**Work** hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.  
 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.  
 Philippians 2:12b-13 (NLT)

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**GENUINE: Using GOD'S RIGHTEOUS to attain OUR WORKS!**

**DON'T** get it BACKWARDS! GOD CHANGES US FIRST!




Becoming RIGHTEOUS through Christ comes before WORKS.

For we are [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.  
 Ephesians 2:10 (CSB)

[Jesus Christ] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.  
 Titus 2:14 (NIV)

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**FAKE: Using OUR WORKS to attain OUR RIGHTEOUS!**



This represents any time we don't rely on Christ's righteousness.

OUR WORKS don't cause us to become RIGHTEOUS!

... not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.  
 Philip. 3:9b (NIV)

But to the one who does not work, but believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith is credited as righteousness.  
 Romans 4:5 (NET)

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**RIGHTEOUSNESS IS OUR OBLIGATION.**

To whatever extent we live in trust, we will succeed... because it's GOD accomplishing HIS righteousness in us!

But seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, ...  
 Matthew 6:33a (NIV)

... for the kingdom of God is ... righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.  
 Romans 14:17 (CSB)

The one who does what is right is righteous, just as [Jesus] is righteous.  
 1 Jn 3:7b (CSB)

We are to actively pursue righteousness (Proverbs 15:9; 21:21; Isaiah 51:1; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22) ... but NOT as a means to "earn" salvation (Romans 9:30-32)!

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**SINFUL CONDUCT IS NOT AN OPTION.**

Sin is incompatible with righteousness and obedience.

**EXAMPLE: ANGER.** For human anger does not accomplish God's **righteousness** [in us].  
James 1:20 (NET); James 2 also focuses on this issue.

**FAITH PURSUES WHAT IS GOOD... BECAUSE GOD MADE IT POSSIBLE.** So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the **power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do**. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made **possible because of the grace** of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.  
2 Thes. 1:11-12 (NLT)

**NOT AN OPTION:** We CANNOT live in sin or have the values of the unsaved – 1 John 3:9; Mat 7:18.

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**THOUGH THERE IS A FUTURE ASPECT, WHEN OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS COMPLETE...**

But by **faith** we eagerly await through the Spirit **the righteousness for which we hope**.  
Galatians 5:5 (NIV)

**... WE ARE TO PURSUE IT NOW (TRUSTING GOD FOR THE ENABLING POWER). RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO CHARACTERIZE OUR LIVES.**

But you, man of God, ... **pursue righteousness**, godliness, **faith**, love, endurance, and gentleness.  
1 Timothy 6:11 (NIV)

For the **grace of God ... teaches us** to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives **in this present age**, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ...  
Titus 2:11-13 (NIV)

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**IT IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN US THAT ENABLES US TO PURSUE OBEDIENCE!**

To whatever degree our effort is built on **TRUST (FAITH)** in God (who is at work in us), **we will succeed!**

... the **obedience of faith** ...  
Romans 1:5b (NET)

... a large group of priests became **obedient to the faith**.  
Ac 6:7b (NET)

The everlasting God ordered that what the prophets wrote must be shown to the people of every nation to bring them to the **obedience** that is associated with **faith**.  
Romans 16:26b (GW)

We recall ... your **work** produced by **faith**, your labor motivated by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.  
1 Thes. 1:3 (CSB)

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**WE MUST STRESS THESE THINGS!**

**Many churches in our day treat righteousness as optional!**  
**They treat "relying on Jesus" as a part-time activity!**

Works don't save us ... but being saved results in works.

[God] saved us, **not because of righteous things we had done**, but because of his mercy.  
And **I want you to stress these things**, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to **devote themselves to doing what is good**. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.  
Titus 3:5a, 8b (NIV)

As long as we are controlled by our sinful nature, we cannot please God – Romans 8:8. We need a living, fact-based faith – Hebrews 11:6 ... **and this is true every moment of the day!**

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**THIS WEEK'S MISSION: CONSIDER...**

**WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OBEDIENCE?**

Does the idea of "Doing what is right" (or even the idea of **submitting** to what the Bible defines as "right") **irritate or offend** you?

**OR...** Do you have a **changed heart/mind/values** that causes you to **delight** in God's Law?

... the law that gives freedom, ...  
James 2:12b (NIV)

Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long.  
Psalm 119:97 (NLT)

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**Credits**

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