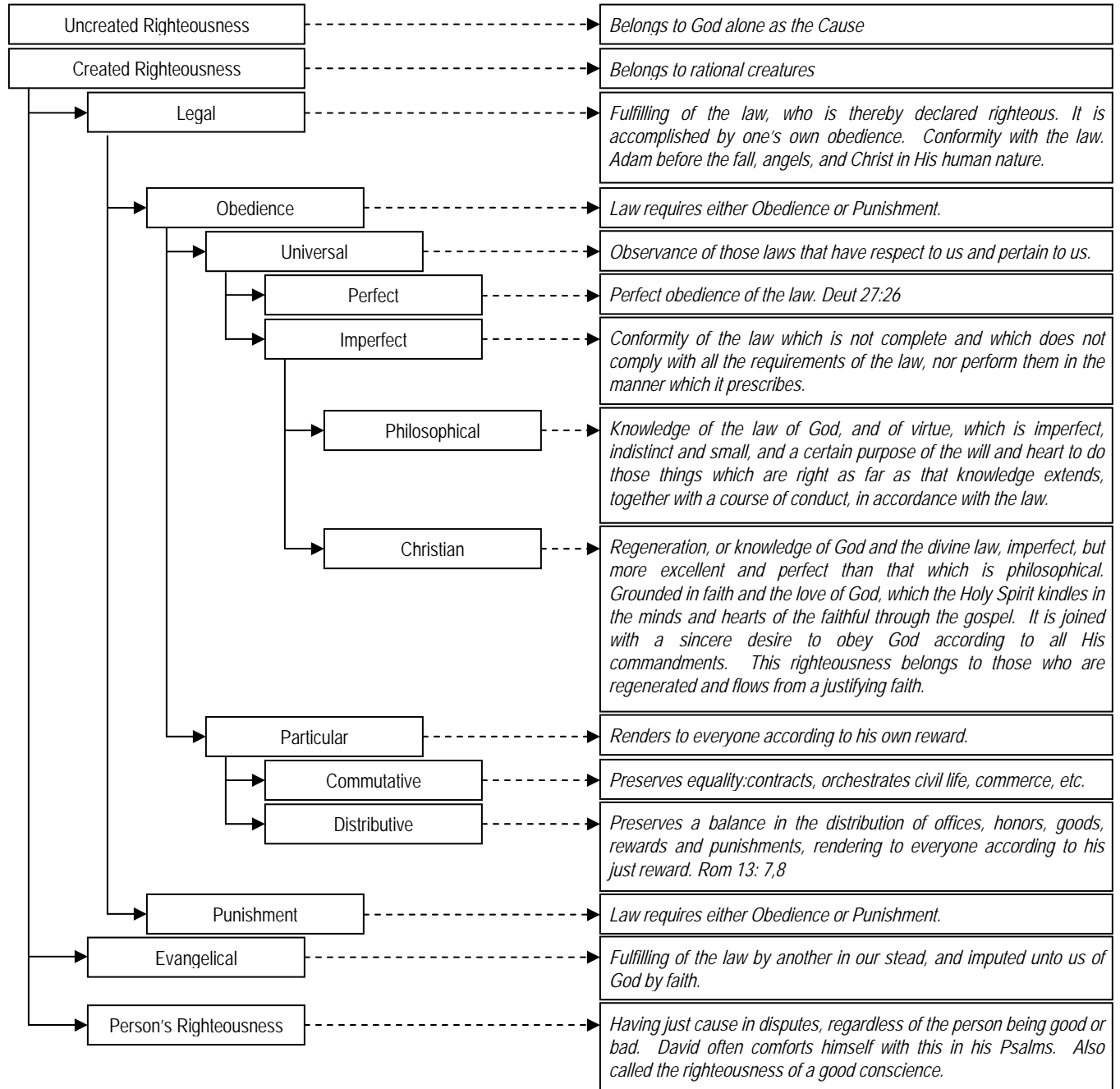


Adult study of Jesus Christ

Last week we dealt with the question 'what is righteousness in general.' This week we are going to study the many facets of righteousness, so that we may increase our understanding of the righteousness we claim because of Christ.

2. HOW MANIFOLD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS OR JUSTICE?

Righteousness is best described in the following graphic.



3. IN WHAT DOES RIGHTEOUSNESS DIFFER FROM JUSTIFICATION?

Righteousness is conformity with, or fulfilling of the law, that which justifies us before God. Justification is the application of this righteousness to the believer. They differ as shape and the application of it to an object, or as whitening, or making white.

Justification consists of Legal and Evangelical justification. Legal justification is when we are made conformable to God and the law. This is commenced in us when we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Evangelical justification is the application of evangelical righteousness. It is the application of the righteousness of another, Christ, by His death upon the cross and by His resurrection from the dead. It is not a transfusion of righteousness, but it is the acquitting, the declaring us free from sin in the judgment of God, on the grounds of the righteousness of another.

Justification and forgiveness of sins are the same, for to justify is that God should not impute sin unto us, but accept us and declare us righteous. He declares us righteous on the ground of the righteousness of Christ made over unto us. That we are sure that this is the correct interpretation of the word is clear from the following passages of Scripture:

Ps 143:2 Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

No one shall be acquitted or declared just by inherent righteousness.

Ps 32:1, 2 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Paul, in accordance with this declaration of the Psalmist, interprets justification to be the remission of sins.

Rom 4:7, 8 Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.

Let's analyze the following statement: 'He that is righteous is conformable to the law. To justify is to make righteous. Therefore, to justify is to make the subject thereof conformable to the law.' To justify is to make the subject of it conformable to the law, either in himself, by a righteousness, which is called his own, and which is inherent, infused and legal. It is to be made righteous in another which is called imputed righteousness, the righteousness of faith, of the gospel, and of another, because it is not inherent in us, but in Christ.

This consists also in conformity with the law, for faith does not make void the law, but establishes it. Our righteousness and justification, is that righteousness with which we as sinners are justified before God in this life and not of that by which we shall be accounted righteous in another life, or by which we would have been righteous had we not sinned.

4. WHAT IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD?

The righteousness, with which we are justified before God, is not our conformity with the law, or our good works, or our faith, but it is the satisfaction, which Christ rendered to the law in our stead. It is the punishment that He endured on our behalf. The entire humiliation of Christ, from the moment of his conception to his glorification, including his assumption of humanity, his subjection to the law, his poverty, reproach, weakness, sufferings, death, etc., all of which He did willingly, is our righteousness before God. All that he suffered to which He was not bound, as being righteous, and the Son of God, is all included in the satisfaction which he made for us, and in the righteousness which God graciously imputes to us, and all believers.

This satisfaction is equivalent to the fulfilling of the law or to the endurance of eternal punishment for sin. The law binds us all to the one or the other.

Let's read a number of Scripture passages that deal with this in particular.

Adult study of Jesus Christ

1Cor 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Col 2:10 ... in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.

Rom 5:9-11 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Rom 5:15-19 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. ¹⁷For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

Isa 53:5, 6 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Luk 22:19, 20 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."²⁰And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

Rom 3:19 – 26 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. ²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Rom 4:7, 8 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. ⁸"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

2Co 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Gal 3:12 - 14 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- ¹⁴in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of

Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Eph 1:7 - 12 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

1John 1:7 ... if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Christ fulfilled the law by the holiness of his human nature, and by his obedience, even unto the death of the cross. The holiness of his human nature was necessary to his obedience for it became our Mediator to be holy and righteous in himself that He might be able to perform obedience and make satisfaction for us.

Heb 7:25 - 27 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; ²⁷who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

This obedience is now our righteousness, and it is because of this that God is pleased with us. The blood of Christ is the satisfaction and God receives us into his favor because of that obedience, which He imputes unto us. Scripture teaches us that

the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin both of commission and omission, as we have read in 1 John 1:7.

The shedding of his blood is the complement of his satisfaction, and is for this reason called our righteousness.

How can a rational creature be righteous before God? A rational creature may be just before God by an inherent conformity with the law, as the angels, and those that are blessed.

Man, however, being a rational creature but also a sinner, have no claim on inherent conformity with the law or having being blessed. How, then, can he be just before God?

A sinner can be regarded as righteous only on the ground of the imputation of Christ's merits. That man cannot be declared righteous upon the ground of his works is evident from this, that his works are unholy before his justification. After his justification they are also imperfect, and even if they were perfect, as they will be in the next life, they could not satisfy for those sins which are past, and which still stand against us, as it would be without Christ.

Can a rational creature merit anything at the hands of God? Man can merit nothing from God. The obedience of Christ also didn't add anything to God so that He might give anything to his creatures, but the obedience of Christ is meritorious on account of the dignity of his person, because He who suffered was the Son of God.

Next week we will continue with our study and deal with

5. WHAT IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD?