

## RIGHTEOUSNESS AND INIQUITY

**Sunday Morning: March 4, 2001**

**Text: Hebrews 1:9** "Thou hast **loved righteousness**, and **hated iniquity**; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

We are still continuing our thoughts in Hebrews 1. I would like for you to turn there. Hebrews 1:8-12 "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

I want to center our thoughts this morning on verse 9 and in particular the first part of this verse, where it says, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity..." The word 'iniquity' as to do with lawlessness. Lawlessness means simply that you can live like you want without fear of prosecution or retribution or consequences.

### LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Hebrews 1:9** "Thou hast **loved righteousness**, and hated iniquity; . . ."

But here we see that the Lord Loves righteousness. I think that we need to focus on that.

### PERSECUTION FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Matthew 5:10** "Blessed *are* they which are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**: for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**."

The Lord loves righteousness because it has to do with the kingdom of the heavens. The rule of the heavens over the earth. Those that love righteousness as He does, can expect opposition. Not only opposition from Satan and his cohorts, but Satan has a way of stirring up others to hinder you in your races. We are not to allow others to effect our walk with the Lord, regardless of what they do. So we can expect persecution for righteousness sake.

### RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

**Matthew 5:20** "For I say unto you, **That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness** of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case **enter** into the **kingdom of heaven**."

Again, reference is made to the kingdom of the heavens, and an reference to entering into the kingdom of the heavens. The scribes and the Pharisees had a righteousness, which is really essential, they were just. They were not living in adultery. They were not stealing, they were not murdering, they were just. The righteousness which the Lord loves is the righteousness which is of faith. The righteousness that comes because we are pleasing Him. The Lord says in the passage, except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of being just you will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.

## SEEK HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Matthew 6:33** "But **seek** [present active] **ye first** the kingdom of God, and **his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you."

"All these things" is a reference to food, clothing and shelter, all the essentials of life will be yours. If you take care of what is important to me, says the Lord, I will take of what is important to you. This word 'seek' is in the present tense. I was talking to a friend this week, and he was telling me that he was telling another friend of his that he was seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. His friend told him, 'you don't have to do that any more, you have been saved.' In the context of this verse, that idea is error. This word 'seek' is in the present tense, it something that we need to be doing all the time. We need to be diligent in seeking the righteousness which is of faith and an entrance into the kingdom of the heavens. Ruling and reigning with Christ.

## PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS

**1 Timothy 6:11** "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and **follow after righteousness**, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:11 follow after righteousness. Here is a man of God, saved in the family, and Paul is telling him to seek and pursue righteousness. This word 'follow' is very interesting word. It could be translated 'persecute.' We have heard of the television series 'The Fugitive.' The passion of this officer seeking the doctor who is supposedly guilty of murdering his wife. The adamant chase is the same thing as 'follow.' This officer has a passion to capture this man. We need to have a passion in pursuing righteousness. That righteousness is the righteousness which is of faith. Another thing that he needs to pursue is 'godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.' These are all attributes that we need to be pursuing and developing in our lives if we want to be pleasing to the Lord.

## CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

**2 Timothy 4:7-8** "I have fought a good **fight**, I have **finished** *my* course, I have **kept** the faith: 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

How are we to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? We do that by fighting a good fight, by finishing the course, and by keeping the faith. That is how you do it. If you will do that you can be assured of a crown of righteousness. Why do we need a crown? If we enter into the kingdom of the heavens we need a crown to show our authority that we are in charge, under the Lord of course. He is the King of kings. As a king or a lord we are in charge judging ten cities, five cities, what ever the case may be.

## THE HUNGRY SATISFIED

**Matthew 5:6** "**Blessed** are they which do **hunger and thirst after righteousness**: for they shall be **filled**."

I do not know if you have been very hungry or very thirsty? Living in America that does not happen too often. Maybe we get pretty thirsty sometimes, but we have not really experienced the hunger that some countries have. I realize that some people say that thousands children that go to bed hungry in this land, but these two basic elements in a human's life will drive you to do most any thing. If you are hungry enough you steel to get something to eat. If you are thirsty enough you will even drink polluted water to satiate you thirst, which may kill you. The point is this, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after the righteousness' which of faith 'they shall be filled' or better 'they shall be satisfied.' If you are pursuing the righteousness which of faith, what is the satisfaction? Ruling and reigning with Christ, that is the satisfaction. What is the satisfaction? The crown of righteousness. You don't get the crown of righteousness if you don't fight, if you don't finish, and you do not live by faith.

The Lord love righteousness. Why does he love righteousness? because he knows that by living a life that pleases God the rewards are beyond comprehension.

## HATE LAWLESSNESS

**Hebrews 1:9** "Thou hast loved righteousness, and **hated iniquity** [ανομία, lawlessness]; . . ."

The Lord also hates lawlessness. It says 'Thou has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. The word 'iniquity' would be better translated lawlessness.

## LAWLESSNESS

**Judges 17:6** "In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*"

'Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.' that is lawlessness. There was no king. What does that mean? God was not in charge of them any more. Between Judges and 1 Samuel where a king was installed we find the book of Ruth. God was not their king and so they began to do that which was right in their own eyes. We find that taking place to day. The Word of God has lost it's authority in the Church so the Church has begun to do that which is write it's own eyes.

## END OF THE AGE

**Matthew 24:3** ". . . the disciples came . . . saying, **Tell us, when shall these things be?** and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and **of the end of the world** [age]?"

His disciples were gathered around Him and Jesus was talking about the temple being torn down. The disciples came and ask, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?' He told them many things but one thing in particular is found in verses 11 and 12 of Matthew 24.

## SIGNS OF HIS COMING

**Matthew 24:11-12** "And many **false prophets** shall rise, and shall **deceive many** (who say Lord, Lord). 12. And because **iniquity** [lawlessness] **shall abound**, the **love** (obedience) of **many** (who say Lord, Lord) shall **wax cold** (to disobedience and lawlessness)."

These false prophets are the ones who are going to deceive many people. They are the ones who are going to say 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?' These that make this defense are lawless. Lawlessness shall abound. It is not only abounding in our government, it is abounding in the Church. The Word of God has no authority in the Church. They are taking away "thus saith the Lord." They are making their own opinions and ignoring what the Word of God says. This happened in the days that Matthew lived and it is happening to day. When it says, 'The love of many shall wax cold' this is talking about obedience. The Lord said, 'If you love me, you will obey me.' If our love for the Lord is waxing cold, it simply means that he is losing authority in our lives. When our love him waxes cold, we are becoming disobedient which leads to lawlessness.

## A FALLING AWAY

**2 Thessalonians 2:3** "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and **that man of sin** [lawlessness] **be revealed**, the son of perdition;"

"Let no man deceive you" even though he may say he is a prophet, don't let him 'deceive you by any means.' The word 'sin' should be translated 'lawless.'

## ALREADY STARTED

**2 Thessalonians 2:7** "For the **mystery of iniquity** [lawlessness] doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way."

'The mystery of lawlessness doth already work' Lawlessness is a mystery. The mystery to me is why anyone who knows the Lord would ever want to become lawless in his life. The mystery of lawlessness was working in the day of Paul and it is working today. I just think of the days of Lot. As it was in the days Lot they were not lawful, but lawless. As judgment came in the days of Lot, so judgment is coming in this day.

## LAWLESSNESS, FIRST OCCURRENCE

**Matthew 7:21-23** "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall **enter** into the **kingdom** of heaven; but he that doeth **the will of my Father** which is in heaven.

There is something interesting about the word 'lawlessness.' The first occurrence of the word 'lawlessness' is in Matthew 7. What is significant here is that Matthew 7 is part of the Sermon On The Mount. The Sermon On The Mount begins in Matthew chapter 5 and ends in Matthew chapter 7. What does the Lord deal with in this message? He deals with that which he loves and he deals with that which he hates. He deals with the righteousness which is of faith and He deals with the lawlessness of many.

## WORKERS OF SIGNS

22. **Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, **have we not prophesied** in thy name? and in thy name **have cast out devils?** and in thy name done **many wonderful works?**

## ARE LAWLESS

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work **iniquity** [lawlessness]."

Here we have a reference to enter into the kingdom of heaven. 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees you will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens. In verse 22 deals with the workers of signs. The signs of prophesying, casting out of demons, and miracles. These are signs that were worked in the day when Jesus was preaching and in the days just after that and in particular during the period of the book of Acts. Signs, wonders, and miracles were being performed during the book of Acts and we dealt with that servile Sundays ago. The reason of signs, wonders, and miracles was to authenticate the man of God. Not everybody had a Bible. The only real Bible was the Old Testament in Hebrew and in Greek. The Bible was not completed until around 90 AD. The word of God was not complete and you could not check out a man based upon what he was saying, because you did not have a Bible to use to check him out. All that a man had to do to prove he was a man of God would be to raise the dead. Signs, wonders, and miracles were for a time. There are going to be those who do these signs, wonders and miracles and they will be judged lawless.

I was just thinking about the fact when the Lord says 'That I never knew you' I assure you that our God is not dumb. Our God knows everything, He is omniscient. What he is saying is that I do not recognize you because of your lawless behavior. He tells these that work signs to depart. He is not sending them to Hell. These people are not lost. Satan knows that a house divided will not stand. I assure you that Satan is not casting out Satan. Satan is not dividing his house. These people are saved people, they are doing something that God does not want them to do and allows it to happen. Why? I don't have the answer for that, but he does allow it to happen. I think that he allows it to happen to allow us to make choices in our own life as to where we are going to be obedient or not. What choice do I want to make? I want to pursue the righteousness which of faith and the sign gifts do not promote faith. The sign gifts promote feelings, experiences and seeing, and these are not of faith they are of the flesh.

## CONFIRMED WITH SIGNS

**Hebrews 2:3-4** "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation [heavenly inheritance in the kingdom]; which **at the first** began to be spoken by the Lord, and was **confirmed** unto us **by them that heard him**; 4. God also bearing *them* witness, both with **signs** and **wonders** [miracles], and with divers **miracles**, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

## SIGNS FOLLOWING

**Mark 16:20** "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

The word was confirmed with signs. That is how the Word of God was confirmed and that is how God worked with them when they were preaching.

## SIGNS STOP

**1 Corinthians 13:8-11** "Charity never faileth: but whether *there be prophecies*, they shall **fail** [inactive]; whether *there be tongues*, they shall **cease** [stop]; whether *there be knowledge* (as the word of knowledge, 1 Cor 12:8), it shall **vanish away** [inactive].

Paul is telling us that what was normal during the book of Acts is going to change gradually. Love is not going to fail or become inactive but prophecies will become inactive. Whether there be tongues they will stop and the word of knowledge is going to become inactive as well. This knowledge that will become inactive is referred to the word of knowledge found in 1 Corinthians 12:8 and not the understanding of the Word of God. The words 'vanish away' and the word 'fail' are the same Greek words. Paul is exercising the gift of prophecy in letting the Church at Corinth know that these sign gifts would become inappropriate in the ministry of the Word of God.

## PARTS

9. For we know in **part**, and we prophesy in **part**.

These sign were important in their day, because the prophets were teaching the word of God without a copy of the Word of God to go by and for other to check them out with.

## ALL THE PARTS TOGETHER

10. But when that which is **perfect** [complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be **done away** [fail, inactive, verse 8].

In verse 10 it says 'that which is perfect' or complete or when all the parts come together, 'then that which is in part shall done away' or fail or vanish away. The same word that is used in verse 8 which is used twice.

## SIGNS, CHILD'S PLAY

11. When I was a child, I spake **as a child** (small phrases), I understood **as a child** (in parts), I thought **as a child** (in parts): but when I became a man, **I put away childish things** (prophecies, tongues, word of knowledge)."

Then Paul says, 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' What childish things did he put away? Prophecy, he put away tongues, and he put away the word of knowledge. How does a child talk? In little phrases, or parts. How does a child think or understand, in parts? A little at a time. When the child matures, then he is able to put all the parts together as a whole.

## ADDICTION OF LAWLESSNESS

**Romans 6:19** "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members **servants to** uncleanness and **to iniquity** [lawlessness] **unto** [leading to] **iniquity** [lawlessness]; even so now yield your members **servants to** **righteousness** unto [leading to] holiness."

In Romans 6:19 we see that lawlessness leads to further lawlessness. I really think that lawlessness is addictive. You can become addicted to lawlessness, just like you can become

addicted to alcohol. You can become addicted to sin. There are people today that are trying to justify their behavior by saying that they were born that way or that what they have is a disease. You addicted to alcohol or any sinful behavior by indulging. It is just like drugs. I would not sniff one grain of cocaine for fear of becoming addicted to it. Obviously there is pleasure received from these drugs or people would not be doing drugs. I was addicted to cigarettes, tobacco at one time. It took me 5 months of smoking Turkish cigarettes and British cigarettes while I was overseas so my tongue burned and my lips burned. That was back in the day when I could buy a whole carton of American cigarettes for 80 cents. Breaking that addiction was one of the hardest things I have done. I think I would just as soon earn another degree in college as to break that addiction. Lawlessness, is addictive and it leads to further addiction of lawlessness. We need to become addicted to righteousness. Pursuing righteousness, which is of faith.

### **REDEEMED FROM ADDICTION**

**Titus 2:14** "Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us** from all **iniquity [lawlessness]**, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

He 'gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity or lawlessness. He has given us the ability and the authority to be released from the addiction of lawlessness. It does not take twelve steps to do it. He has delivered us from that addiction if we want it. Part of being redeemed from lawlessness he has given us things to keep us busy like a purified life. Pursuing righteousness, and faith. Pursuing godliness. Think on things that pure, honest, lovely, etc.

### **ADDICTED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**Romans 6:22-23** "But now being **made free** from **[the] sin** (of lawlessness), and become servants to God, ye **have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life**. 23. For the wages of **[the] sin** is death; but the gift of God is **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord."

'Being made free from the sin' there is the definite article 'the' before sin. Because of the definite article 'the' before the word 'sin,' and sin being singular in number, it is the sin of lawlessness because of the context and also because of 1 John 3:4.

Let's continue the verse: 'and become servants to God, ye have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life' or life for the coming kingdom. 'For the wages of the sin (lawlessness) is death, but the gift of God is life' for the kingdom 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The death in the verse is the loss of life in the kingdom or being told to depart from me ye that work lawlessness. We are to become addicted to righteousness being delivered from the addiction of lawlessness. Being free from lawlessness we can become bond slaves unto God. We can have life for the kingdom age. That is what everlasting life is all about. Ruling and reigning with Christ, not salvation.

### **THE LAWLESS REMOVED**

**Matthew 13:41** "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather **out of his kingdom** all things **that offend**, and **them which do iniquity [lawlessness]**;"

When the Lord said to those who were not doing the will of the Father in Matthew 7:21 depart from me ye that work iniquity, he was removing the lawless from the kingdom. The lawless are the ones who offend those who are trying to do the will of the Father.

### LET GRACE REIGN

**Romans 5:21** "That as [the] sin hath **reigned** unto death, even so **might grace reign** through **righteousness** unto [leading to] **eternal life** by Jesus Christ our Lord."

'That as lawlessness hath reigned unto death,' because there is a definite article before the word 'sin.' As lawlessness reigns being addicted to lawlessness. Addition to lawlessness means that lawlessness is in charge of your life. When lawlessness reigns, you are going to lose a life that will want to enjoy in the coming kingdom of our Lord. You are going to lose a life of ruling and reigning with Christ. Mark it down!

Paul continues when he says just as lawlessness reigns 'even so might grace reign.' 'Even so might grace reign through' what? Righteousness. What righteousness? The righteousness that the Lord loves. The righteousness which of faith. What is my motivating factor? What is it that I am taking in to help me to become addicted righteousness that which the Lord loves? Having a desire to stand in his presence approved. To hear 'well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.' Grace might reign through righteousness leading to life for the kingdom age by Jesus Christ our Lord.

### FLEE YOUTHFUL LUSTS

**2 Timothy 2:22** "Flee also youthful lusts (experiences, signs): but **follow** [pursue] **righteousness, faith, charity, peace,** with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

In closing: Paul tells Timothy 'Flee also youthful lust.' In thinking about that exhortation to pursue righteousness, faith, love, etc, it gave me a little different slant on youthful lusts. When we were a youth, in 1 Corinthians 13, what were we doing? We were pursuing the sign gifts weren't we? And Paul told Timothy to flee these youthful lusts. People that are into the sign gifts are into the experience and have become addicted to those experiences. They may say, 'I have had these experiences and I am not going to change.' Remember the Lord has redeemed you from those experiences that will put you in the company of those who are addicted to lawlessness. When you continue in the experiences provided by the sign gifts, you have abandon faith. You are not pleasing the Lord. You are not doing the will of the Father. In 1 Corinthians 13:11 'When I was a child I spake as a child.' I had youthful lust. 'I understood as a child. I thought as a child, and when I became a man I put away the childish things.' I put away youthful lust. Those childish experiences are so strong, that you have to flee from them as Joseph did when Potiphar's wife grabbed his coat. Joseph fled youthful lusts.

May the Lord help us not to be caught up with those who try to tell you that you do not have all that God wants you to have. Have you ever heard that before? I have heard that. "I want all that God wants me to have!" I want to live by faith. I want to love the righteousness which of faith, and I want to hate lawlessness. If I don't I will be come addicted and you as well. May the Lord help us not to be deceived by false prophets!