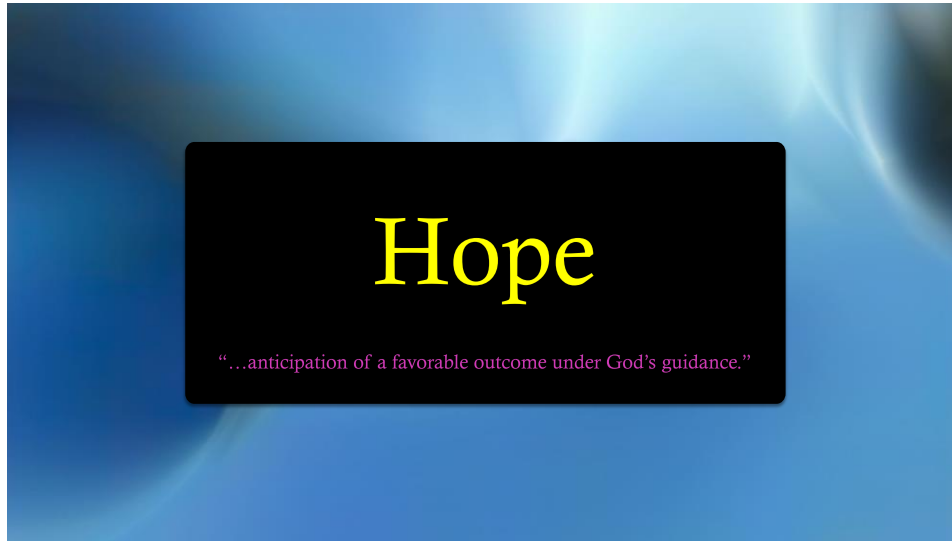


Hope Lesson 3: The Perfecting of Our Self



A recap of what we discussed in the first two lessons:

- Our definition of hope is "...an anticipation of a favorable outcome under God's guidance"

- Part one of the lesson series covers three promises:
 1. The resurrection of the dead
 2. The perfecting of our self
 3. The perfecting of our dwelling

- From last week's lesson on the resurrection of the dead
 1. Our resurrection is anchored in the resurrection of Jesus
 2. Our resurrection is the redemption of the body
 3. Our resurrection results in the destruction of death
 4. Our resurrection gives us hope

This lesson is on the perfecting of our self.

Can we reach perfection while here on earth?

I think all of us would like to be sinless here on earth; but as much as we try, we cannot. It is impossible for us to live a sinless life. Please read the following scriptures:

Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; Galatians 5:5

Even though we sin, we are assured that we will not be tempted more than we can stand. This adds to our hope! God has given us the strength to withstand or escape the temptation.

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Promise # 2

Our resurrected bodies will be made perfect, sinless and able to be in God's presence.

- Perfection = Righteousness
- We long to be perfect
- Can only be satisfied in Jesus Christ
- Christianity's promise: At the last day you will be made perfect

Today we will focus on the 2nd promise we have from the offer of hope:

Our resurrected bodies will be made perfect, sinless and able to be in God's presence.

The biblical word for our perfection is righteousness. Humans have always longed to be righteous (even though they don't call it that). We can see this longing expressed in many ways, but the only real satisfaction for it is through Jesus Christ.

Christianity promises that at the last day – if you are in Christ – you will be made perfectly righteous.

Today's lesson is divided into the following topics:

1. Understanding righteousness
2. Righteousness lost
3. Longing for righteousness
4. Finding righteousness
5. The gift of righteousness
6. The implications of the gift of righteousness

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1. Understanding Righteousness

In the Old Testament righteousness can be defined as ‘what is right’, ‘in the truth’, ‘moral alignment’ or ‘in God’s will’. Just to list a few examples. In the New Testament righteousness can simply be defines as “being in tune with God”.

- Man is not naturally righteous (see **Psalm 14:1**; **Romans 3:10-18**) – but God is.
- God credits righteousness to those who exercise faith in Him (**Romans 4:13**)
- Genesis chapter 2 describes a righteous world (God and man are connected; Man living by faith in the provisions of God; Man obeying God’s command; Nothing to hide; Everything is right
- Righteousness is the ability to stand and be fully seen without any shame, because you know you are accepted.
- God wants us to be righteous and enjoy the blessings that come with that.

To be fully known + To be fully loved

2. Righteousness Lost

I know you are familiar with the story but turn to and read **Genesis 3:6-13**. Adam and Eve lived in a perfect world, walking with God. But that was not enough for them – they longed for more.

The devil used Eve’s weakness to tempt her. She lusted after the fruit, gave in to the temptation and then shared it with Adam. It was all downhill from there!

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3. Longing for Righteousness

Just like Adam and Eve, once we lose our righteousness, we constantly struggle to create a substitute. A desire for acceptance. An obsession with self help (there are over 659K self-help books on Amazon).

Longing for Righteousness

Like Adam and Eve, once we lose our righteousness, we struggle to create a substitute

Not being righteous causes us to act in various ways

- Restlessness
- Defensive (victimhood)
- Self-justifying
- Overachieving
- Unhealthy competition
- Insecurity
- Bragging
- Arrogance
- Judgmental attitude
- Fear
- Worry
- Critical all the time

We all long to be the best version of ourselves

Not being righteous (or perfect) causes us to act in ways to convince others that we are, either by trying to overachieve or by tearing others down in order to elevate our own status.

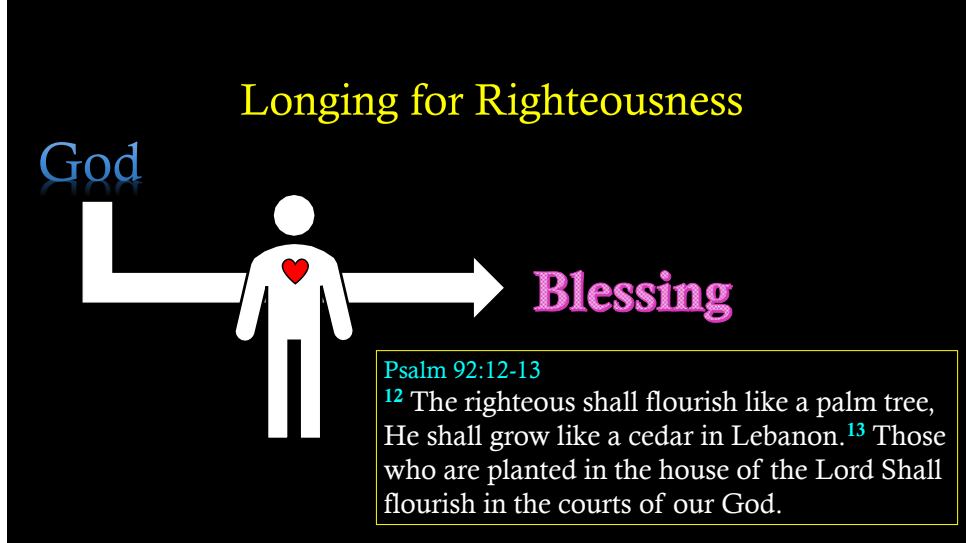
God wants us to be the best version of our self.

There are millions of people in the world and we all have different personalities and skill sets. God doesn't want us all to be cookie cutter copies of each other.

God wants *you* to be the best *you* you can be.

[I highly recommend the book "The Me I Want to Be" by John Ortberg]

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If we allow God to work in us, we will flourish and become the best version of our self.

4. Finding Righteousness

Because of sin, we have a problem ([Romans 3:10](#)), And even when we accomplish every possible thing in the world, we can't shake the sense that we are not acceptable.

Here are a couple quotes that I like. [*Disclaimer: I'm not vouching for their lifestyle or moral standards, I just like these particular quotes.*]

"My drive in life comes from a fear of being mediocre. That is always pushing me. I push past one spell of it and discover myself as a special human being but then I feel I am still mediocre and uninteresting unless I do something else. Because even though I have become somebody, I still have to prove that I am somebody. My struggle has never ended, and I guess it never will." -- Madonna

"I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." -- Michael Jordan

Christianity offers righteousness as a gift ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). God did this for our sake – made Christ to be regarded and treated as sin – even though He Himself never knew sin. We can become righteous (perfect) through Him.

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The Gift of Righteousness

1. **Position:** God sees the imperfect you as perfect in Christ
2. **Progressive:** In Christ we grow and become more like Him
3. **Perfection:** At the 2nd coming you will be transformed

5. The Gift of Righteousness

The gift of righteousness can be manifested into three categories: Position, Progressive and Perfection.

Position. God sees you (in your imperfection) as perfect in Christ (**Hebrews 10:10**). God sees us through the filter of Jesus Christ.

Progressive. In Christ we grow to become more like Him (**Philippians 3:12**). Paul is stressing that he is not already perfect – he is still struggling with life doing the best he can – the glory of his resurrection is still in the future (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**). He continues to press on.

Perfection. At the 2nd coming of Christ you will be transformed into a perfect version of yourself (**Philippians 1:6**). Genuine spiritual progress is rooted in what God has done, is doing, and will do. We can have confidence that God will never let us go, and that we will inherit our eternal reward if we never let go of Him.

(**1 John 3:2**) We will have glorified bodies that will never be sick, grow old or die. We don't understand what these bodies will look like yet, but one of these days all of our questions will be answered.

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Implications of the gift of Righteousness

- ◇ Confidence!
- ◇ Removes the fear of performance-based merit
- ◇ Removes the fear of failure

6. The Implications of the Gift of Righteousness

This gift that is implied in **1 Corinthians 5:21** allows us to have *confidence*. Confidence in our position (God sees us through the filter of Jesus Christ) as well as confidence in the coming perfection (I will someday be the perfect version of myself).

Philippians 1:6 **Romans 8:29-30**

This confidence removes the fear that our current position will cause us to doubt God's love for us and make us depend on performance-based salvation.

This confidence removes the fear of failure. We all fail, but through the grace of God this failure is not fatal – He forgives our failure as long as we ask and are trying to follow His commands.

Lesson Recap

- We all want to be perfect (righteous) but we can't do it on our own.
- Righteousness can only be found through the gift of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for our sins
- Righteousness is progressive – something we strive for and will obtain at the 2nd coming
- Righteousness gives us confidence

We have Hope!