

Series: Psalm

Title: According to My Righteousness

Text: Psalm 18: 20-28

Date: May 8, 2014

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

When a songwriter determines to write a song he picks up a pen to write with. When Christ determines to write a song he picks up one of his choice servants to write with—this is Christ using king David to write Christ's words. We have seen that this Psalm was written as a prophetic Psalm. These are the words that David wrote but this is Christ using king David to write the words of Christ.

Just as we do not praise the pen but the man who wrote the song, likewise, we do not praise David but Christ who used David to write this song. This is Christ speaking of the LORD Jehovah, in the day that Christ finished the work and the LORD Jehovah delivered him from all his enemies.

Psalm 18: 20: The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. 21: For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22: For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. 23: I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. 24: Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

Then we have the application the Lord Jesus gives to you and I who believe.

Psalm 18: 25: With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; 26: With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. 27: For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. 28: For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

Proposition: The believer who trusts Christ and follows his ways shall be justified by Christ, even as Christ trusted the Father, followed his ways and was justified in the Spirit. To see this we will first see how this applied to Christ then see how it applied to David and to you and I who believe.

I. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY ONE—Psalm 18: 20: The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

To help us focus on Christ, read it this way, “The LORD Jehovah rewarded, me, Christ Jesus his King and his Christ, according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands, hath God recompensed me.” In all God's dealing with David God was showing us an imminent type of Christ.

Revolt Against God

The children of Israel revolted against God, desiring a king like the heathen, wicked Gentile nations. Because of this transgression against God, God turned them over to a wicked king, named Saul. It pictures our revolt from God in the garden in Adam. God turned all Adam's race over to prince of the power of the air—we came under the dominion of Satan and under the curse of the law.

Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3:

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

God's Chosen King and Christ

God chose David to be his king over political Israel, to save that temporal nation with a temporal deliverance. It pictured God choosing Christ before the foundation of the world, to be his King over his spiritual kingdom, his Christ, his Savior of his true spiritual Israel, who are now dispersed among the all Gentile nations—a people he shall call out of every tribe, kindred, tongue and people on the earth. God said of Christ,

Isaiah 42: 1: Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles

He said Christ shall settle judgment—establish righteousness. And give spiritual judgment—discernment—to God's spiritual Israel, called the Gentiles because they are scattered among every nation, tribe, tongue and people under heaven

Isaiah 42: 2: He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3: A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

This refers to the meaning of our text. Christ shall do this work in righteousness and holiness, in mercy and uprightness.

Isaiah 42: 4: He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Christ shall establish righteousness, judgment in the earth. His people scattered among all the nations shall hear his gospel. Then speaking to Christ our true David, the Son of David after the flesh, God made this covenant promise to Christ,

Isaiah 42: 6: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8: I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

God called Christ and made this covenant promise to Christ: he promised to keep Christ; God promised to give Christ for a covenant to his people; God promised Christ that he would have the glory of opening the eyes of his blind people and calling his people out of our bondage of sin and depravity because in Christ, by Christ doing establishing judgment for us and in us, God alone will receive all the glory and all the praise—"my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

Magnifying the Law and Making it Honorable

Then God said this of Christ

Isaiah 42: 21: The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

When we speak of "righteousness" we speak of perfection under God's law. We lost all righteousness when we sinned in Adam. We must have perfect righteousness to enter God's presence and be accepted of God.

Christ magnified God's law. By being made of a woman, made under the law, Christ magnified God is righteous and holy—that God must be obeyed in perfect righteousness from a perfectly holy heart for only Christ could do it for his people—that is why he came. Christ magnified the law by his obedience, even unto the death of the cross. Christ magnified God's law—showing that God will by no means clear the guilty—when Christ took the sins of his people and bore the penalty of the law in our place.

Christ made the law honorable by following God fully as he walked this earth. He made the law honorable by declaring God just when he satisfied divine justice, fulfilling his law for his people. Christ made the law honorable by declaring God the Justifier because it was God in Christ reconciling his people unto himself by working out a righteousness for his people and purging us of our sins. Christ magnified and made the law honorable by fulfilling all righteousness in perfect holiness of heart for God and his people. Now back to Psalm 18.

When David confronted Saul, in his cause, David was righteous toward Saul, he kept his hands clean from Saul's blood when he could have taken Saul's life, David delighted in God's law and as far as men go he was an upright man. But to accomplish the work of god, Christ had to combat Satan and all his host of evil, in our nature, even on the cruel cross, in perfect righteousness, with clean hands and a pure heart, in perfect uprightness. Christ declares in our text he did so. This why God justified him in the Spirit when he raised him from the dead, declaring him both Lord and Christ.

Psalm 18: 20: The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. 21: For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22: For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. 23: I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

What does this mean? Though Christ had no iniquity of his own, yet he had the iniquities of his people laid on him, as our surety. He called them "mine." Let me show you this from Ps 40. We know Psalm 40 is Christ speaking. The Hebrew writer tells us it is Christ who spoke Psalm 40: 6:

Psalm 40: 6: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7: Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, 8: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

In the same Psalm Christ owned the iniquities of his people as his own.

Psalm 40: 12: For innumerable evils have compassed me about: **mine iniquities** have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

So what does our Sin-bearer mean when he says in our text, "I kept myself from mine iniquity?" Though he bore our sins, he did not commit any of them; though he was made sin, he knew no sin; though he was tempted by Satan to the most enormous iniquities, he kept himself from the evil one, so that he could not touch him. Simply put, he kept himself from committing any sin, which cannot be said of any mere man.

All these things show, that the righteousness of Christ is perfect—entirely agreeable to the laws, statutes, and judgments of God. He is pure in the sight of God. So Christ was rewarded in strict justice. Hence he repeats himself saying,

Psalm 18: 24: Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

II. SECONDLY, LET'S HERE CHRIST'S APPLICATION AND SEE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BY SEEING HOW IT APPLIES TO CHRIST HIMSELF—Psalm 18: 25: With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; 26: With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure

Christ is he whose ways are mercy and truth. Christ is the upright—perfect Man. Christ is the pure Man, the holy Man.

From eternity, Christ saw the sin and helplessness his people would fall into. He had mercy on us. In mercy he became our surety in eternity; in mercy, betrothed his people to himself in loving kindness and tender mercies. Then when the time was come, in his merciful lovingkindness, because he is the upright man, he assumed human nature—he did so in the womb of virgin—the spotless pure man.

All his days, he went about obeying God doing that which was perfect, from a pure heart and all the while he showered us with mercies, doing good to the souls and bodies of men; he healed the diseased and fed the hungry; he had compassion on the ignorant, and them that were out of the way;

As our merciful high priest, the upright and pure GodMan, presented himself and took the sins and sorrows of his people to be his own.

Though no mercy was shown Christ while he was suffering for us, because God could not spare him when he was made sin for us, instead, God must and did awake the sword of justice against him,

Yet, satisfaction being made, Christ having redeemed his people from all iniquity, showing himself merciful, perfect and pure by his finished work, God did not leave him in the grave, nor suffer his holy, righteous and merciful One to see corruption. God the Father fulfilled every covenant promise to him, raising him; setting upon his head a crown of honor and glory; giving him that glory promised to send forth the gospel and give the blind sight and set us free from our bondage. So Christ teaches us the faithfulness of God and our Savior, he says,

Psalm 18: 25: With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; 26: With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;

III. THIRDLY, LET'S BE SURE TO GET THE MESSAGE

Christ is the Only Righteousness God will Accept

By the obedience of Christ, each of God's elect are redeemed, reconciled to God. Christ is the only Righteousness God will accept. He is well-pleased with his Son. And God is only pleased with those who come to God through faith in Christ the Son of God.

Merciful to the Merciful

Christ comes to each one in mercy: in mercy, sending each one the gospel, in mercy, quickening each one to life, in mercy revealing to us our need of mercy. Then we become the merciful. We begin to desire for God to save us only by his free mercy then with the merciful, God shows thyself—that God himself in Christ is the merciful. In mercy, he reveals that in Christ, we are made the righteousness of God.

With Christ the merciful abiding in us, he makes his child the merciful man those saved by mercy delight in mercy from God to us and from us toward others. This is why David treated king Saul—and all his enemies-

with mercy. It was because God had first showed David mercy! It was because Christ dwelt in David's heart, making him merciful. And to the merciful, God continues to show himself merciful.

Matthew 5:7: Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Upright to the Upright

Christ's work of grace in the heart makes his child upright. We cease bragging of our deeds and become honest with God. With Christ the upright Man abiding in us, he makes his child the upright man. When we are made honest and upright to confess our need of Christ then God reveals Christ in our hearts—revealing Christ is the Upright Man. Upright means a perfect Man. He makes us perfect in Christ through faith. From then on the believer is upright in heart, sincere and without hypocrisy; an Israelite indeed: his faith, hope, and love, are not fake. And he becomes a man of integrity: faithful to God, his cause and interest, his word and ordinances. And faithful toward the saints. We walk uprightly according to the rule of "faith which works by love." God made David an upright man and God showed himself upright, faithful, keeping his covenant with David.

Pure to the Pure

With Christ the Pure Man dwelling in his child he makes his child holy in heart. No child of Adam is pure by nature. We are all defiled with sin. Some are pure in their own eyes, but far from being cleansed from their filthiness

The pure are those sanctified by the Spirit of God. By his grace, he creates clean hearts in his redeemed: whose hearts are purified by faith in the blood of Christ; whose conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God, who are justified by Christ's righteousness and washed from their sins in his blood. He reveals to those he has given a pure heart that Christ is the Pure Man—our sanctification.

To the pure God shows himself pure: providing for the honor of his purity and holiness in our redemption, sanctification, and salvation; by making all things to be pure to them; by granting them his presence, and blessing them with the vision of himself here and hereafter.

Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

It is because with Christ abiding in us we are made holy and have that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. If that were not the case the thief on the cross could not have entered heaven with Christ that very day. Our new nature is made of Christ who is the righteousness of the law; Christ who is our Sanctification. God does not write his law on tables of stone for us to obey but the new heart is made in God's holy law—the new man created in righteousness and true holiness.

That is why we do not have to have the letter of the law, or be constrained by rules and regulation of men, we delight in the law of God in the inward man! We delight to serve God and hear of him and follow his ways.

Those made pure speak a pure language of grace: hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, walk with a pure conversation, delighting in all God's ways and abhorring our sins.

Froward to the Froward

But catch this word of warning: **Psalm 18: 26: and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.**

The first word "forward" means false, crooked, perverse. The froward have a stubborn and obstinate temper against God, his Christ, his gospel and his people.

The second word means "God will wrestle and twist." Those who are obstinate in their rebellion against God, against his people, God will work all things contrary to them—the same word describing God's destruction of Jerusalem. Sinner, don't fight against God, you will lose.

Afflicted or Proud

Are we afflicted or proud?--**Psalm 18: 27: For thou wilt save the afflicted people;**

God people are afflicted: with the corruption of our own hearts, from Satan and his temptations, by the world, with its reproaches, and persecutions. But God in his own time saves his people out of all our afflictions

Psalm 18: 27: but [God] wilt bring down high looks. Every proud sinner shall be humbled by God.

John Trapp--*They were both naked, and not ashamed*" (Genesis 2:25). —Clothes are the ensigns of our sin, and covers of our shame. To be proud of them is as great folly as for a beggar to be proud of his rags, or a thief of his halter. As the prisoner, looking on his irons, thinks on his theft, so we, looking on our garments, should think on our sins.

Isaiah 2: 11: The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. 12 For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

Psalm 18: 28: For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

This was God's promise to Christ

Psalm 132: 17: There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

Acts 2: 27: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28: Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

And this is God's promise to those who rest in him. Christ is our Light. He brought us out of darkness when he raised Christ. Christ gave us light and brought us out of darkness. And Christ will continue to bring us out of darkness till one day we see him as he is and are changed into his image. Believer, we can say with assurance, "He will reward me, according to Christ my Righteousness!"

Amen!