

I. Introduction and review: Have you ever said, “That’s not fair!”?

II. God is righteous.

- A. What is righteousness? Ps. 11:7 33:4f *The LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness.*
1. Righteousness is conformity to a standard.
 2. God Himself defines what is righteous because there is no standard above God by which He can be judged.
 3. God’s righteousness reflects His perfect character. Gen. 18:25
 4. God’s character and His works are righteous. Ps. 119:137 145:17 Re. 15:3-4 Is. 45:21 Deut. 32:4 *Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are your judgments...The LORD is righteous in all His ways...Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!... All the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed... The Rock! His work is perfect. For all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness without injustice.*
- B. God’s righteousness is expressed in His law. Ps. 19:9 119:14,62,160,172 *Let my tongue sing of Your word, For all your commandments are righteous.*
1. The law teaches us about God’s character.
 2. The law shows us how we ought to live. Mt. 5:48
 3. The law shows us our sin and guilt. Ro. 3:20 *Through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*
 4. God’s law provides a standard to be used by human government. I Pe. 2:14
- C. Jesus Christ lived a life of perfect righteousness, fully keeping the law. Ps. 45:7 Isa. 11:5 53:11 9:7 Heb. 1:9 4:15 Mt. 23:41,47 II Co. 5:21 *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, your God has anointed you...Righteousness will be the belt about his loins...By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant will justify the many... We are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong...certainly this man was innocent...*

III. God is a Righteous Judge.

- A. Because God is righteous He hates sin and must punish sinners. Ps. 7:11 9:8 Zep. 3:5 *God is a righteous judge And a God who has indignation every day...He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity... The LORD is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light. He does not fail...*
- B. God’s wrath is holy, perfect and praiseworthy.
1. Some people look upon wrath as one of God’s bad, or unmentionable, attributes.
 2. All of God’s attributes, including His wrath, are glorious. Dt. 32:39-43 Ro. 1:18
 - a. *There is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand... If I sharpen My flashing sword, And My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on My adversaries, And I will repay those who hate Me... Rejoice O nations with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries... For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

3. God's wrath is His righteousness and holiness stirred into activity against sin.
 4. God is a perfect judge with wisdom to discern the truth and power to carry out His just judgments.
 5. Instead of complaining about when God does express His holy wrath, we should marvel at His patience and mercy in delaying the punishment people deserve.
- C. God's just wrath is revealed throughout Scripture.
1. In the Old Testament: The flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction of wicked nations. Gen. 6-8,18-19 15:14 Ex. 7-12 II Ki. 17,22
 2. The cross of Christ who bore God's wrath for us. Mark 14:33 Heb. 5:7 Isa. 53:4ff
 3. Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven. Mt. 5:22 8:12 24:51 25:46 Lu. 16:19ff *fiery hell... There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth...everlasting punishment*
 4. Christ will return to judge all people. John 5:22 Rev. 6:16-17 *They (the kings of the earth) said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*
- D. God's just wrath will be fully and finally expressed in the final judgment. Heb. 9:27 Ps. 96:13 Rev. 19:11 Mt. 13:39 *Behold the LORD... For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.*
1. Those who have defied God deserve the full measure of His wrath.
 2. The wicked will be cast into the lake of fire forever. Mt. 5:22 8:12 24:51 25:46 Mark 9:48 Luke 16:23,25,28 Rev. 20:10,14-15 *Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*
 3. In heaven we will praise God for His just wrath upon His enemies. Re. 6:10 19:1ff *How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood?...I heard...a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; Because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever."*
- E. What practical benefit do we gain from considering God's just wrath?
1. The proclamation of God's wrath should stir sinners to seek God's mercy. Mt. 3:7,10,12 Luke 12:5 *Flee from the wrath to come... Fear the one who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell...*
 2. The proclamation of God's wrath should evoke praise as we remember the price Jesus paid for our sin. Ro. 5:9 *Having been justified by His blood we are saved from the wrath of God through Him.*
- F. Does God bring judgment today?
1. God appoints human government maintain justice and to punish evildoers on His behalf. Rom. 13:4 I Pe. 2:14 Ex. 23:6-7 Pr. 31:9 Dt. 16:18ff *It is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.*
 2. We see evidence of God's judgment upon humanity through human suffering, and death in a fallen and dangerous world. Ro. 8:19ff
 3. God's judgment against sin is expressed by giving mankind over to more sin. Rom. 1:24ff *God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity... God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error... God gave them over to a depraved mind...*

IV. God makes us righteous through the work of Jesus Christ.

- A. The gospel expresses God's righteousness. Ro. 1:16-17 I Jo. 1:9 *I am not ashamed of the gospel.. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- B. We lack the righteousness God requires. Isa. 53:6 64:6 Dan. 9:7 Ro. 3:10,23 Ps. 130:3 I Jo. 1:8,10 *There is none righteous, not even one... If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?... If we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*
- C. God justifies (declares righteous) the guilty through Christ. Rom. 3:21-22 8:3
1. All of our guilt was imputed (charged) to Him. II Cor. 5:21 Ro. 5:6-8 *He (God) made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
 2. On the cross, Jesus paid the full price demanded by God's holy righteousness for the guilt of sinners. Ro. 3:23-25 5:18-19 I Pe. 2:24-25 3:18 I Jo. 2:2 Isa. 53:4-6,10f
 3. Through Christ God righteously justifies the ungodly. Ro. 3:26
 4. We receive this forgiveness as a gift through faith. Rom. 3:20,22,24 1:16-17 Gal. 2:16,21 Eph. 2:8-9 Phil. 3:9 Hab. 2:4 Gen. 15:6 Titus 3:5
 5. Have you been justified (declared righteous by God)? I Jo. 1:8-2:2 Luke 18:10ff
- D. God's work of justification is not merely negative, removing our guilt, but it is also positive, giving us His righteousness.
1. The very righteousness of Christ has been imputed (credited) to us. Phil. 3:8-9 II Co. 5:21 8:9 Ro. 4:5-6 5:18-19 I Co. 1:30 *Not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith... God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him...For your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*
 2. We are made righteous in God's eyes, not by the good works we do, but by receiving the perfect righteousness of Christ through faith. Phil. 3:8-9
 3. God looks upon us and sees the perfect righteousness of Christ. Hos. 2:19 Is. 62:5 *I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion...As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.*
- E. We who have been made righteous by God through faith should seek righteousness in our daily lives. Ps. 23:3 Mt. 5:6 6:33 I Jo. 2:29 *He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake...Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness... If you know He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.*
1. What place does the law have in the life of a Christian?
 2. True believers will grow in righteousness and obedience to God. I Jo. 2:3-4
 3. Believers will stand before God in the Last Day to receive rewards. II Co. 5:10 II Ti. 4:8 Heb. 6:10

V. Concluding applications: Understanding God's righteousness leads you to righteousness.

- A. God's righteousness is an essential part of the gospel. Ro. 1:16-17 I Th. 1:10
- B. Understanding God's righteousness motivates us to pursue righteousness. II Co. 5:11 *Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.*

- C. Understanding God's righteousness will help you overcome anger and depression.**
- 1. You can put out the fires of anger and forgive because you have been forgiven.**
Mt. 18:21ff Eph. 4:32
 - 2. It is not our place to avenge ourselves. Rather we trust God to execute justice upon the wicked.** Gen. 50:19 Jer. 11:20 Rom. 12:19 *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*
 - 3. While evildoers may escape human justice, they will not escape divine justice.**
Deut. 32:40 Lu. 18:7-8 Ps. 73:16f *Rejoice, O nations, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries...*
- D. Praise God for His righteousness.** Judges 5:11 Ps. 48:10 51:14 97:10 *They shall recount the righteous deeds of the LORD... As is Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness... Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.*

Attributes of God: His Righteousness - Quiz (T/F - explain your answers)

- 1. There is a universal standard of goodness which governs all beings to which God Himself must conform.**
- 2. God is free to establish any law He wishes, even if it is arbitrary.**
- 3. Righteousness is a communicable attribute.**
- 4. God's wrath is one of His less attractive, less glorious attributes.**
- 5. God hates the sin, but loves the sinner.**
- 6. God's wrath will be expressed when Christ returns, but is not displayed in the current day.**
- 7. Contemplation of God's wrath is profitable in many ways.**
- 8. God's attribute of righteousness is prominently displayed in the gospel.**
- 9. God had to lower His standard of righteousness in order to save us.**
- 10. Understanding God's righteousness can help you overcome anger and depression.**
- 11. It was important that Jesus live a perfectly obedient life so that His righteousness could be imputed to us.**
- 12. Because we have already received righteousness from God as a gift through faith, it is not important that we pursue practical righteousness in our daily lives.**
- 13. The professing Christian who has no interest in becoming more righteous probably has not yet been truly saved.**