

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday AM 10/18/09
"Attributes of God 8 - Righteousness"

The righteousness of God in us can be defined as: following the perfect will of God in a consistent manner, on a daily basis, while demonstrating a love for the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength; in an unwavering faith, belief in His promises, consistent integrity and the avoidance of evil.

Righteousness is always used in reference to the nature of God, as He is Himself and this attribute leads God to always do what is right, or righteous.

When talking about the righteousness of God we must also include the justice of God, but we will speak of justice in greater detail next week. However, when we speak of the attributes of righteousness and justice, we see that they are a manifestation of His holiness. We see His holiness, righteousness and justice in the way God deals with men and women. Holiness has to do with the character of God, while righteousness and justice express His character in His dealing with us.

Three things may be said of the righteousness and justice of God:

1. There is in the imposing of righteousness, laws and demands, what we might call legislative holiness, but it is still the righteousness of God.
2. There is in the carrying out of the penalties that go along with these laws, that we can call judicial holiness.
3. There is the sense in which the righteousness and justice of God may be seen as the carrying out of the holy nature of God in the world,

So, in the righteousness of God we have His love of holiness; and in the justice of God, His condemnation of sin. In His justice He is not lost in passion or impulsiveness; His justice is vindicative (righteous) without being vindictive (vengeful).

Let's look at some verses through the Scriptures that point to God's righteousness.

Psalm 116:5 *"The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion."* The context here shows that because God is righteous, He listens to men and is obligated to keep His promises.

Ezra 9:15 *"O Lord, God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence."* Even in the punishment for their sins, the Israelites acknowledge that God is righteous and has brought them to the place where they are.

Jeremiah 12:1 *"You are always righteous, O Lord, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?"* The context here is: Even if I were to bring charges against you O Lord, there would be no basis for injustice; I just don't understand your righteous justice! The same verse as recorded in the MSG Bible reads like this: *"You are right, O GOD, and you set things right. I can't argue with that. But I do have some questions: Why do bad people have it so good? Why do con artists make it big?"*

Each of these Scripture verses show us that God is not only righteous and just, but that He defines Himself through His attributes. We are told that God in His way of running the world always does what is good, honest and right.

I want you to look at another verse of Scripture from the New Testament: **1 John 1:9** *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* As we think of this verse we mostly think in terms of mercy, love and kindness, not with God's righteousness and justice, but that's the guarantee of His forgiveness—His promise is that if we ask, He will forgive!

Hebrews 6:10 *"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."*

His justice is His grace and is shown by His eternal promise of continued grace to those who are faithful to Him and His people.

The promises of God, to His faithful servants and followers are for each one of you, and for me. We can stand on all of God's promises and claim them when we live our lives for Him in faith, words and deeds. Look at this verse we find in **2 Timothy 4:8** *"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."*

Paul is writing to Timothy about finishing well—about being faithful, about trusting *God* for everything, even in the tough times—and *God* who promised His eternal reward to His children, will deliver on His promises.