

Taking Hold of the Righteousness of Christ

“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:25–27).

“Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith means the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Saviour as our very best and honored Friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 387.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 77–83.

1. Our Great Need Today

- a. What is desperately needed in our experience today? Matthew 5:3–11; 2 Peter 1:5–11.
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“There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 145.

a. **Matthew 5:3-11** (3) Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. (5) Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. (6) Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (7) Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (8) Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (9) Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (10) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

2 Peter 1:5-11 (5) And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; (6) And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; (7) And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

(8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (10) Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: (11) For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. Our Great Need Today

b. How do we experience revival? Acts 3:19; Matthew 8:5–13.

“We must rely wholly upon Christ. It will do you no good merely to talk of the righteousness of Christ; you must appropriate it by living faith. You should cultivate faith until faith is the language of your soul. May God help us to walk in the light as he is in the light.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 2, 1889.

b. Acts 3:19 (19) Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Matthew 8:5-13 (5) And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, (6) And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. (7) And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. (8) The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. (9) For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. (10) When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (11) And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (12) But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (13) And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

2. Faith is Action

- a. What does it mean to appropriate the righteousness of Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:21.
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“In order to meet the requirements of the law, our faith must grasp the righteousness of Christ, accepting it as our righteousness. Through union with Christ, through acceptance of His righteousness by faith, we may be qualified to work the works of God, to be collaborators with Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 374.

“The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 118.

- a. **2 Corinthians 5:21** (21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

2. Faith is Action

b. How is appropriation different from presumption? James 2:19, 20.

“Many concede that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, but at the same time they hold themselves away from Him, and fail to repent of their sins, fail to accept of Jesus as their personal Saviour. Their faith is simply the assent of the mind and judgment to the truth; but the truth is not brought into the heart, that it might sanctify the soul and transform the character.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 389, 390.

“If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892.

“We must rely wholly upon Christ. It will do you no good merely to talk of the righteousness of Christ; you must appropriate it by living faith. You should cultivate faith until faith is the language of your soul.”—*Ibid.*, July 2, 1889.

“Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 363, 364.

b. **James 2:19-20** (19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

3. Faith Must Grasp The Righteousness of Christ

a. How are changes produced in our life? 2 Corinthians 10:5.

“In order to be candidates for heaven we must meet the requirement of the law: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself’ (Luke 10:27). We can do this only as we grasp by faith the righteousness of Christ. By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 395.

“By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour, by contemplating the perfection of the divine character and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, we are to be transformed into the same image.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 744.

“Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith means the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Saviour as our very best and honored Friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him.”—*Testimonies for Ministers*, p. 387.

a. **2 Corinthians 10:5** (5) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

3. Faith Must Grasp The Righteousness of Christ

b. What is genuine faith? Hebrews 11:1.

“The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. To believe that He will save others but will not save you is not genuine faith; but when the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 391.

b. **Hebrews 11:1** (1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

4. Meditating on the Perfection of Christ

- a. What relationship is the result of faith that works by love? John 15:8. What actions result from faith? Hebrews 11:29–34; Proverbs 4:25–27; 16:3.
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“Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words: ‘I am the Vine, ye are the branches’? (John 15:5). The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer’s relation to Christ. He abides in Christ and draws his nourishment from Him.

“This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 229.

a. John 15:8 (8) Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Hebrews 11:29-34 (29) By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. (30) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. (31) By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. (32) And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: (33) Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, (34) Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Proverbs 4:25-27 (25) Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. (26) Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. (27) Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Proverbs 16:3 (3) Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

4. Meditating on the Perfection of Christ

b. How are faith and love essential to one another? Galatians 5:6.

“The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

“And what is it to believe? It is to fully accept that Jesus Christ died as our sacrifice; that He became the curse for us, took our sins upon Himself, and imputed unto us His own righteousness. Therefore we claim this righteousness of Christ, we believe it, and it is our righteousness. He is our Saviour. He saves us because He said He would. Are we going to go into all the explanations as to how He can save us? Do we have the goodness in ourselves that will make us better and cleanse us from the spots and stains of sin, enabling us then to come to God? We simply cannot do it.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 70.

b. **Galatians 5:6 (6)** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

5. Saving Faith is a Transaction

- a. Explain our part in the plan of salvation. Matthew 7:7; Mark 9:24; Ephesians 2:8.
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“The soul temple is to be sacred, holy, pure, and undefiled. There must be a copartnership in which all the power is of God and all the glory belongs to God. The responsibility rests with us. We must receive in thoughts and in feelings, to give in expression. The law of the human and the divine action makes the receiver a laborer together with God. It brings man where he can, united with divinity, work the works of God. Humanity touches humanity. Divine power and the human agency combined will be a complete success, for Christ’s righteousness accomplishes everything. . . .

“If we do God’s will, we may accept large blessings as God’s free gift, but not because of any merit in us; this is of no value. Do the work of Christ, and you will honor God and come off more than conquerors through Him that has loved us and given His life for us, that we should have life and salvation in Jesus Christ. ”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 27, 28.

- a. **Matthew 7:7** (7) Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
Mark 9:24 (24) And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.
Ephesians 2:8 (8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

5. Saving Faith is a Transaction

- b. Can we expect the approval of God if we do not trust Him? Hebrews 11:6.
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“Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this. Do not give ear to the tempter.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 53.

- b. **Hebrews 11:6** (6) But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where does a clear understanding of the penalty of transgression of God's law bring the wayward soul?
2. How do we appropriate the righteousness of Christ?
3. How is change produced in our life?
4. Review the roles of faith and love in Christian growth and maturity.
5. Describe how the process of faith works.