

YOU NEED RIGHTEOUSNESS

You need righteousness. That's right! You need righteousness. Righteousness is justified behavior and thinking. Approved behavior and approved thinking is sometimes called "goodness". Sin is the opposite! Sin is behavior and thinking that cannot be justified and so it cannot be approved. Sin is wrong behavior that comes from wrong thinking! It is unrighteousness!

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ.

God's reward for righteous behavior is everlasting goodness in the presence of the Creator of the universe. That existence lies beyond your physical death. On the other hand, God's reward for sin is death, eternal death, everlasting existence away from the God who made you and who loves you.

God is the author of righteousness. God knows how you should behave. And why does He care? Because you have life that He has given you. Your spirit is made in His image. You were born of His seed and designed to live forever. The Father of spirits can only make spirits that live forever. You are one of His children! He loves you! God placed within your parents the seed of eternal life. At conception an eternal life, an eternal spirit is created. Don't mistake that life in the womb as something temporary!

The seed of a woman and the seed of a man unite and an eternal spirit is created and entwined with physical flesh! The reason you need to behave righteously is because you were born of God's seed that was planted in your parents. God put this power of reproduction in His first man and woman and then said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply...." (Genesis 1:28 ESV) Solomon put it this way: "I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. [God] has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, [God] has put eternity into man's [the human's] heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I perceived that there is nothing better for [humans, LM] than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil--this is God's gift to man. I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear [show respect, LM] before him." (Ecclesiastes 3:10-14 ESV) Did you hear Solomon? "There is nothing better for human beings than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live...." Doing good is righteousness, and the result is enduring happiness. You need God's list

of justified behaviors!

Well, it is God who has determined WHAT is good. My "good" may not be what you consider to be "good." Who is to say? Jesus had the answer. Jesus was talking about human life on this planet when He said, "Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

According to Jesus God the Father takes care of life when it comes to food, drink, and clothing. Jesus illustrated His teaching this way, "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." (Matthew 6:26-29 ESV) Jesus' conclusion about these physical things is that God will take care of that aspect of your life, however, there is something else you must do. Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:33-34 ESV) Did you hear that last line as to what humans should count as priority? Seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness. You see, there is **your** standard of goodness and **my** standard of goodness, but you and I should be seeking the same standard, the standard revealed by God. And where does God tell us about the behavior He justifies? The Bible! God's Word to mankind is the place where you can begin your search for God's Kingdom and His righteousness. From the Bible you can learn **how** to enter God's Kingdom and **how** to live in that Kingdom according to God's standard of goodness. Are you searching? Are you seeking God and His approved behavior?

God's Kingdom and God's Righteousness are in the world right now! That's right! Furthermore, God's Kingdom and God's Righteousness are eternally connected. People who learn how to enter God's Kingdom are expected to behave in a manner that God approves.

Jesus' apostle Paul heard about some people in the city of Colossi who had become Christians. Paul said, "From the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all

spiritual wisdom and understanding, **so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
(Colossians 1:9-14 ESV)

You see, when those Colossians heard and believed the Gospel of their salvation they learned HOW to obey the Gospel by repentance and baptism and thus they were "transferred" from Satan's kingdom to God's kingdom, which is called "the kingdom of His beloved Son." And how were they to behave now that they were saved and in the Kingdom of Christ? They were to live in a manner "worthy of the Lord." Every Christian must behave righteously!

But this was not only true for Colossians, it was true for all believers everywhere who would obey the gospel and be saved. The Church of Christ was also established in the city called Ephesus and Jesus' apostle Paul also encouraged those believers "...To walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called," [and then Paul listed five major behaviors that Kingdom people should possess; they could live worthy of the calling if they behaved] "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3 ESV) Humility, gentleness, patience, love, and eagerness to keep the peace were all attributes of good behavior for someone living in God's Kingdom. This was God's righteousness being lived out in the Kingdom of Christ.

Friend, you need this Kingdom and this righteousness. First, you need to **enter** the Kingdom of Christ. But only Jesus Christ can make you a citizen of that Kingdom! That's right! When you believe this news about Jesus, repent of your sin and someone buries you with Christ in baptism Jesus then adds you to His Church, which is His Kingdom (Acts 2:47). You can then live the life that will have the eternal approval of your Maker, your Father in heaven.

Every person has done things that did not meet the approval of our parents! We know how that feels. We know the alienation that disobedience causes! You

remember what kind of turmoil that disobedience caused. Some of you, even today, may be living in a way that cannot be accepted by your parents. They love you still. They would love to see you behaving differently. But your will and your desires clash with theirs. But yet, that disagreement with your parents **may not** have eternal consequences. However, when you disagree with God it **will have** eternal consequences! That's right! You need righteousness; you need to practice God's approved behavior.

Your heavenly Father loves you. In fact, God has loved humanity so much that He wanted to show His mercy and forgive our unapproved behavior. God wants us to repent of rebellion and turn away from unapproved behavior. He then can show us a better way, a better road, a better behavior. His Son Jesus was and is the key to God's forgiveness. The penalty for our sin is NOT just physical death, but also eternal death: eternal separation from God. Only Jesus could pay that penalty for every sinner who has ever lived. The Bible says that "[Jesus] committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and **live to righteousness**. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." (1 Peter 2:22-25 ESV)

It was this sinlessness of Jesus Christ that enabled God to bring Him back from the second death and crown Him at God's right hand. And so it said that Jesus is the Lord of all lords and the King of all kings. And so it was prophesied of old "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." (Hebrews 1:8-9 ESV)

Friends, this great King is calling you from His throne! He is calling you to seek and find His Kingdom and His righteousness. As Jesus "loved righteousness and hated wickedness", even so, He calls you to do the same thing. You can do it! You can love approved behavior and hate sin. God has been justified for forgiving your sins by the death experienced by His only begotten Son. God is calling you to a life in pursuit of the qualities of a righteous life. Will you answer the call? Will you repent of your former behavior and seek to change? Are you hungering and

thirsting after righteousness? Some people would be happy with God's forgiveness, but NOT happy with God's approved behavior. And so, you must not only seek forgiveness and admittance into Christ's Kingdom, but you must also practice God's approved behavior as a witness to the world. Do you want a new life that will please your eternal Father? For such a hungry and thirsty person Jesus predicts satisfaction! You will be filled, He promised! (Matthew 5:6 ESV)

Friends, find a church of Christ near you and you will find help for your repentance and baptism into Christ. They will help you to obey this good news. Your obedience will allow the heavenly Father to deliver you from the power of darkness and transfer you into the kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the place where you can practice God's righteousness!