

(Christ--the Way God Makes Man Righteous)

13. Righteousness Imparted

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston explores the transformative process of righteousness imparted through yieldedness to God's Spirit and the importance of living out one's faith practically.

Duration: 1:07:52

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:18, Romans 7:7-8, Romans 8:1, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Righteousness Imparted"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny discusses how God imparts righteousness in our lives through various means. He emphasizes the importance of memorizing and meditating on God's word, as it helps us to internalize and live out His truth. Brother Denny also highlights the significance of consistent and meaningful devotional life, where we seek God and learn from Him. He encourages believers to actively serve and support their ministers, offering their help and prayers. Additionally, Brother Denny explains that God uses suffering and trials to shape and mold us, allowing the life of Jesus to be manifested in our mortal bodies.

Transcript

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When you get older, you'll find that you can't always sleep when you need to sleep. And I had one of those nights last night, so I only got four hours sleep last night. So you pray for me this morning, because I need it.

I know you did. God bless you. I needed more than four hours sleep, or at least I thought that I did.

But I guess that I didn't. Someone gave me this definition of regeneration. Wesley, Wesley Ward said his dad read it to him on the telephone.

I thought this is pretty good. I'll give you another definition of regeneration this morning. You don't have to write it down, but just listen to it.

Regeneration is a radical change in the moral nature of man from the love, practice, and dominion of sin to the love of God and the internal exercise and external practice of holiness. Oh, that's pretty good, isn't it? Well, I thought that'll... We'll have to save that and add it to the definition, so it's a little longer the next time we do this, huh? Are you staying up on those definitions? Some of you are not shaking your heads very strong, you know. Some of them went... And some of them just kind of went like that.

Now, what am I supposed to interpret from that? All right, let's see. Lucas Hilty, you want to stand and give us a definition of the word ethics this morning? The moral principles. Okay, good.

Caleb Cassidy, you want to stand and give that definition? James Pratt, you want to stand and give us a definition of reconciliation? To change from the work to remove. All right, let's do one more here. Daniel Horner, you want to stand and share the definition of faith for us this morning? Well, you'll need a whole lot of it right now.

The leaning in absolute and confidence, His power, His wisdom and His goodness. Romans 10.17 1.17, okay. Amen.

10.17 works too. So then, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Okay, the word for tomorrow, antinomian.

Now, that's an old English word. We don't use it much today. Theologians use it.

But it's one that I want you to grasp because it's sweeping this country. Antinomian, against law. We're free from law.

We don't have to worry about those things. We're free in Christ. Antinomian, against law.

I'm not against law, I love law. And I want you to read chapter 7 and 8 in the book. Nothing in Romans.

Okay, I'll cut you a little slack today. Chapter 7 and 8 in the book, Bone of His Bone. Let's stand for a prayer.

Blessed be your holy name this morning, Father. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Lord, we do praise you and bless you this fine new day.

God, we do thank you that you've been revealing to us all the spiritual blessings that you've blessed us with in Christ Jesus. God, we pray that you will cause responsibility to settle down upon us this morning, Lord, as we look at this matter again today of practical righteousness in our everyday lives, God. Open the eyes of our hearts, Lord, and help us to see, yes, the spiritual yet practical ways in which you want to change our lives.

We ask this, Lord, not in our own name, but in the name of your Son, Jesus. We ask you, Lord, again to fill us with your Spirit, Lord. Wash us in the blood this morning, fresh and clean, God.

Every little thought, Lord, that went through our minds, O Father, just wash us, God. Let our hearts be clean and fill us with your Spirit, O Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You may be seated. We finished our lesson yesterday with a pleading for surrender, a beseeching you to a life of yieldedness. I hope you caught that yesterday, that that's one of the greatest secrets of the ongoing process of sanctification in a believer's life.

There must be that yieldedness. It goes far, far beyond a trip to an altar somewhere where you pray a prayer and make a surrender to God. Although it often may begin in an altar like that, or in a crisis experience where God brings you once again down to the bottom, at the end of yourself, where you give up everything and let Him have control in every way, in every area of your heart and your life.

That process must be continuing all the days of your life. That is, if you want to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Looking again at the diagram here on the board, I think it's very evident that this process of sanctification is something that starts in the heart or in the center of man's being and works its way out into our mind, our will and our emotions, and into our bodies.

To where we bring our bodies under the subjection of the Spirit of God. And may I say, we also bring our bodies into subjection to our soul. I mean, body is down at the bottom, not at the top.

And yea, even the soul can tell the body, this is what you're going to do. My soul told my body this morning to get out of bed at a quarter to four. When the alarm went off, even though I only slept for four hours, my soul told my body to get up.

And the body had to obey. So, I think it's easy to see, just from the diagram, that this whole thing of living a Christian life starts in the heart and works its way out. Paul so beautifully expressed this truth in the book of Philippians chapter 2, if you want to turn there for a beginning Scripture reading in Philippians chapter 2. He says these words, after he states the truth, the facts of Christ's Lordship in verse 10 and 11, that every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Then, he says these words, Wherefore, verse 12, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. Now, what he's saying is, when I was there and I gave you some direction, you did it. Nothing wrong with that, is it? When I was with you and I told you something that you should do, you did it.

But not only when I was with you, but now I'm absent from you. And I know that you will also do what I say. He goes on to say, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is God which worketh in you. Where do you think this God is that's working in them? As we look at the diagram.

God is in the center of your being. Now, that changes things, doesn't it? When God comes to live inside of a man, things begin to change immediately. I mean, obviously, God is now inside of me.

That changes everything. Now, God has always been here. And God has always been with me.

And God was with me when I was a lost man. And He was working here and working there and trying to get my attention over here and over there. And whispering to my conscience.

But now, God is inside of me. Work out your own salvation. Almost sounds fleshly, doesn't it? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Why? Paul says, because God is inside of you. And what is He doing there? He is inspiring you. He is energizing you.

He is creating in your heart a desire to do His will. And He is also there giving you the power to do it. But there is one other thing in there which goes back to the verse before.

And that takes us back to yieldedness. I mean, God can be inside of me creating desire. And God can be inside of me able to give me all the power I need to live out a practical, sanctified life.

But I have to yield. God is there creating desire. This is what is right.

This is the way to go. Writing His laws upon my heart. This is the good way.

This is beautiful. He is also there, able to give me all that I need. My heart must say, yes, Lord.

See, my will, my mind must understand what God is saying to me. Then my will must yield. And salvation gets worked out in a practical way in my life because of that.

His words help us to grasp this whole concept of how righteousness is imparted in our everyday lives. God uses many ways and means to fulfill this process in our lives. And we want to look at these many ways a little later in the lesson this morning.

By the way, the title of the lesson this morning is Righteousness Imparted. We've talked about righteousness imputed. Now we're talking about righteousness imparted.

And that word impart means to give. God gives to us. And it's God that worketh in us both the will and the do of His good pleasure.

And see, you have to understand, dear young brothers, what is happening inside of you. And that we can frustrate the grace of God in our lives. We need to come to grips with the fact that God is trying to work out, He's trying to work in you and work out of you His good pleasures.

But if our heart is unyielding, then we frustrate the grace of God, or we frustrate the working of God's grace within our heart who's trying to work out His good pleasures, the good pleasures of His will. Why frustrate the grace of God? Have you believed in vain? Have you received the grace of God in vain? Don't you realize where God is going? Don't you know why God saved you? Have you received the grace of God in vain? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both the will and to do of His good pleasure. Paul says the same thing in another way in the book of Romans.

He says, first of all, in Romans 3 and verse 31, after speaking about God's free grace, and after speaking about God's free, justifying grace in Christ, he says these words again, kind of answering your objective before it comes. He says, do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law.

And when Paul says that, he's not talking about the ceremonial law. He's not talking about the social laws of Israel. He's not talking about the governmental laws of Israel.

He's talking about the moral law of God, which, by the way, hasn't changed. God's moral law never changes. God's moral law in the Old Testament is a revelation of God.

And God doesn't change. And God's moral law doesn't change. In fact, we've clearly seen it this week in some of the things that Brother Dean has shared with us, that in fact God has more clearly revealed to us what His moral law really is.

And it's way beyond actions and into the heart. So, we do not make void the moral law of God through faith. Nay, we establish that moral law.

This thing is going to become more solid than ever before. In Romans chapter 6 and verse 18, he says again, Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. All of a sudden, I'm a slave again.

Only I'm no longer a slave to sin. I'm now a slave to righteousness. And if you've been a Christian very long at all, you know exactly what I'm talking about as you sit here this morning.

It's just like, that's all I want. I want to do right. Whereas before, all I wanted to do was wrong.

Now, I want to do right. That's the passion of my heart, is to do right. I'm now a slave to righteousness.

Why? Because God is inside of me. I have a new Master. And He lives inside of me.

And life can be pretty frustrating and pretty complicated if I don't recognize that there now dwells a new Master within me. And His name is the Holy Ghost. And now I'm a slave to righteousness.

And I just find myself going that way. I find my heart having desires created in it all the time. And wherever I'm willing to step into the water, I find grace to do it.

Isn't that your experience? Maybe you don't always do it, but when you step into the water, step out and say, okay Lord, have you not always found grace? It's there. Why? Because God is inside of you. And you have a new Master.

Paul goes on to say, expressing this again in Romans 8, verses 2-4, which we will look at in more detail later, but I want to just read you these verses. Because he says, For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death, that which takes me down that road to go and do what I don't want to do. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from what the law could not do, and that it was weak through the flesh.

God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemns sin in the flesh. And then he tells us why in the next verse. That the righteousness of the law, that's God's moral law, might be fulfilled in us.

We will find power to do it. We will find our heart desiring to do it. We will find our heart yielding to that which we desire.

And we will find the grace to do that which we desire. Now listen, that's good news, isn't it? To the sincere heart who wants to do what is right, that's good news. To the heart that's hungry and thirsting after righteousness, that's good news.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. More on that later. But the point I'm wanting to make here is, this whole process by which righteousness is imparted into my life and into your life.

Jesus said it this way in the Sermon on the Mount. Here we are back to the Sermon on the Mount. But He said, Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Now I think by now, in this course, in this study of salvation, we understand exactly what Jesus was saying when He said that. And also, maybe even the more difficult word a little bit later, saying, For I say unto you, Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Well, we understand that now. The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees is a righteousness which is by the law. It's a righteousness which is being done by the soul and the body.

Now all of a sudden, God has come to live inside of this man, and surely He's going to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. Surely He will. Surely His life will be way beyond theirs.

But how sad it is in this day and age of ours to see such a worldly expression of what is supposed to be the righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees. I mean, I thought about it the other day because I was in Dearborn, Michigan, you know, with those Romanians. Well, Dearborn, Michigan has a half a million Muslims in it.

And you drive down the streets in Dearborn, Michigan, and all the businesses are in Arabic. And I mean, they have picture windows, you know, with mannequins in there with Muslim ladies, you know, beautifully dressed, you know, modest and covering and all that. And I just thought about it again this last weekend.

For some evangelical girl to walk up to a Muslim lady with her hair all chopped off, no veiling on, sensuously dressed, legs showing, thighs showing, and to go up to that Muslim lady and say, Come to Jesus and He'll change your life. It is a mock. It is a mockery.

And God's name is being hurt by that. And of course, the Muslims look at that and say, You want to convert me to that? Come on. But oh, blessed be God, we have a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

It goes far beyond it. In 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 4, Peter said the same thing this way as we're speaking about righteousness that is imparted to our lives. He said, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these, that is these exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We've escaped all of that. Now let's be partakers of the divine nature. The very nature of God lived out in our life.

And if you don't think that nature has any meat on it, read the next few verses there in 2 Peter chapter 1. He goes right into it and says, Therefore, giving all diligence, add to your faith. And he goes down a pretty nice list of very practical righteous things that we should add in our life. In other words, God wants to do these kind of things in your life.

Yield. Let God's grace, which is motivating you, and God's grace, which will empower you, meet together by yielding your will to what God wants. Alright, let's look at some of these ways and means that God uses to impart righteousness this morning.

Number one, be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit. This is a command given by Paul to the Ephesians.

And I think this point is obvious, yet so many miss probably the most important method toward a changed life that there is. That is, to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit.

Paul said it this way in Romans chapter 5 and verse 5. He said, The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. That's what Paul said. It seems to me in my studies that the love of God and the Spirit of God are the same thing.

You study that sometime when you're old. That'll make a good Bible study for you. A good topical Bible study.

The love of God and the Spirit of God. How are they synonymous? Good study for you. But what a tremendous motivation unto holiness to be filled with God's love.

Hereby we are motivated not out of a have-to motivation, but out of a love relationship and out of a get-to relationship. We work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. This brings honor and glory to God.

Paul praying a prayer or mentioning to the Ephesians the prayer that he prays for them. That's a better way to say it. He's not praying a prayer here in Ephesians.

He's telling them, this is what I'm praying for you. How many of you think he prayed that prayer one time? I mean, you hear Paul talk about his prayer life. Night and day.

I'm praying for you. I'm praying for you. Again, the next day, I'm praying for you.

Here it is the next day and I'm praying for you. And now it's the night time and I'm praying for you. And now I can't sleep in the middle of the night and I'm praying for you.

What are you praying, Paul? That He, God, would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Where's the inner man? It's kind of a synonymous word. Inner man.

Spirit. But look what he's praying for them. And by the way, this is a pretty spiritual church that he's praying for.

He didn't have any corrections to give to the Ephesians. But his prayer is that God would strengthen them with might by His Spirit in their inner man. And then he gives a reason why he prays that.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. There's faith. I want you to know the reality of Christ dwelling in your heart by faith.

That ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height. And to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we

ask or think.

According to the power that worketh in us. For it is God that worketh in us. Both the will and the do of His good pleasure.

And here's Paul praying this prayer. Same prayer. Same function.

Same process. Just a different church. And the wording is just a little bit different.

Paul knew how vital and life changing this would be. Thus he prayed always for that. For the churches.

You find him praying the same thing for the Colossians basically. When we are thus filled, the Spirit is dominant in our life. Amen? The Spirit is dominant in our life.

And easily has sway over the soul and the body. This is a good definition of a spiritual man, isn't it? And the opposite of the definition of a carnal man. A spiritual man.

The Spirit is dominant. And the soul and the body fall in their place underneath. But in a carnal man.

Even a carnal Christian man. The Spirit is not dominant. It could be the soul or the body that is dominant.

Or it could be sometimes the body is dominant. And sometimes the soul is dominant. But nevertheless, that's a carnal man.

Not a spiritual man. Amen? So, if we are going to work together with God. To see this righteousness imparted in our lives.

And worked out in everyday life. We must be filled with the Spirit, brethren. And that continually.

Jesus said it this way to his disciples when they said to him. Master, teach us to pray. We've been watching you pray.

We've been listening to you pray. We've sensed powerful things when you pray. We have noticed that you always get an answer when you pray.

Would you teach us to pray, they said. I mean, I would ask the same question. But in the midst of his teaching them how to pray.

He taught them how to pray for the Holy Spirit in their life. Saying these words. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children.

Or good things unto your children. How much more shall the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them. That ask him and keep on asking.

And keep on asking. And keep on asking. How much more? So when we look at this whole subject of righteousness imparted.

Surely we want to begin at the beginning. Because we all know it is the Holy Spirit who imparts that work in our heart. Let's move on.

Lest we spend the whole session on this subject. And I contemplated a whole session on just this subject. But I'm running out of days.

Number two. Of the ways and means in which God imparts righteousness into our lives. Number two.

By a renewed mind. I mentioned yesterday how I wished at times that God would have given me a new mind. Would have been really nice.

Would have just totally took all the stuff that was in there and hit the delete button. And put a whole bunch of other stuff in there instead. But he didn't.

But by the way. Blessed is every young man who had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. Who had parents that said no to the TV.

And no to the magazines. And no to the nonsense. And no to the music.

And no to the world. And no to the mall. And all the other places where you can fill your mind with a bunch of junk.

That you have to live with. The rest of your days. Blessed is that young man.

Who had parents. Who watched over his soul. Waiting for the day when God would save him in the inner man.

Blessed is that young man. Who had parents who did that. However.

We still need to renew our mind. And. In a sense.

God says, I will give you a new mind. But not all at once. Not all at once.

See, God wants us in this thing. God wants us active in it. God wants us moving forward.

He says, you renew your mind. I'm giving you the most powerful thing that you could have to renew your mind. It's called the Word of God.

Which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword. It's like a fire that burns. It's like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.

I'm giving you the Word of God. Now renew your mind. Renew it.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans chapter 12 verse 2 says, And that word transform is the word metamorphosis. It's where we get the word that describes a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

So it's very evident to me that if in fact we set ourselves to renew this mind, it's going to change our life. Because what you think you are. It's not what you think you are that you are.

It's what you think is what you are. And there's a difference. Like a caterpillar into a butterfly.

That is what transformed means. As we renew our minds, our life begins to change and righteousness is imparted. Paul said it this way in Colossians chapter 3 verse 10.

Put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Isn't that a beautiful way to say it? It's renewed in knowledge. And I believe there in Colossians it's speaking about a renewing of the mind.

It's speaking about that which we do to renew our mind. But it's also speaking about that spiritual operation whereby God writes his very image on our heart. It's speaking of both of those.

This renewing takes place several ways and all of them are important. Number one, by reading the Bible. And by this I mean the simple process of reading the Bible.

I hope you've gotten that one by now. You need to read the Bible. But don't stop there by just reading the Bible.

You need to study the Bible. Study to show thyself approved unto God to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. You know the verse.

You sang it all week. Study the Bible. Your class on inductive study comes in here.

I pray God you won't throw that book on the shelf and go home and forget that whole class. That was a vital turning, that's a turning point in your life if you got that class and you go home and practice it. I'll tell you, that will renew your mind.

It's got to take time to do that. Time. T-I-M-E.

Amen? It's got to take time. It doesn't come by accident. You don't get that in five minutes as you run out the door.

You know, off the work. That's not how it happens. It takes time.

I was thinking about the other day, you know, Charles Spurgeon. They call him the prince of preachers. And he was quite a prince at preaching.

But I believe what made him a prince at preaching, he preached Christ. I mean, it seems like everything he said, he put Christ right there in the middle. And the testimony of Jesus is the spirit or the breath of prophecy.

But anyway, that's a side issue. They call him the prince of preachers. You know what he was doing when he was 12 years old? Sitting on Sunday afternoon, listening to the theologians talk theology.

And from those exercises, he found himself continually going into his grandpa's study and pulling down the old Puritan theology books and wading his way through them at 12 years old. He said, giving his own testimony, he could hear all his friends outside laughing and playing and kicking the balls and all the stuff that boys do at that age. But he was in there wading through the theology books.

And you might step back and look at that and say, oh, the poor boy, somebody didn't guide him right and they didn't let him have his youth. But when he was 19 years old, he was preaching to 5,000 people on Sunday morning. At 19 years old.

You know why he was? He had something to say. Amen? He had something to say. Study.

This renewing takes place through memorization and meditation upon the Scriptures. God's Word is engrafted deep within your soul. When you memorize and meditate on that which you memorize, it is engrafted into your soul.

And I believe that's what John is talking about when he says, what Jerry quoted yesterday, I write unto you young men because ye are strong and the Word of God abides in you. That's a strong word, that Word abide. The Word of God is in you and it is so in you that it stays in you and stays in you and stays in you.

How do you get the Word of God to abide in you? You memorize it! And you meditate upon it! And you chew on it until it gets deep down into your soul and becomes part of your being. And God imparts it. And lastly, through preaching and study and reading other spiritual books, all of these ways renews our mind.

I am sure that we would all agree that if God is working in me to will and to do of His good pleasure, then we will find this process greatly increased if we will do these things. Amen? We will find it greatly increased. Let's move ahead.

Number three, through a consistent and meaningful devotional life. And I am putting this in a separate category, on purpose. I know that these overlap a bit, yet I want to emphasize this discipline.

The discipline of feeding your inner man on a consistent basis. This discipline of feeding your inner man on a consistent basis will affect every other means that God uses to work practical righteousness into your life. It fuels the fire.

It strengthens the resolves. And it teaches you to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. And encourages a minding of the spiritual things.

Instead of a minding of the carnal things. And that is what we all want, isn't it? It encourages that. Jude said it this way.

Keep yourselves in the love of God. Praying in the Holy Ghost. That happens when you have a consistent devotional life.

Where you get alone with God in your closet. And you get God's Word in you. And you get into God's Word.

And you pray these things through. And you have a time to pour your heart out before the Lord. And these things strengthen your life and your heart.

It greatly increases God's ability to impart righteousness into your life. The next one. And please remember.

I can't cover them all. The point I want to make here is. There are things that we can do.

It's not like you just sit back and say, Okay, God. Now, do all this thing. You're in me.

So, you work it out. And you make it all happen. No, it's not that way.

It is God in you. Creating the desires through many ways and means. And giving you the power whenever you yield.

That's the bottom line. That's the bottom line. Okay, the next point.

A meaningful church life. God imparts righteousness through a meaningful church life. Think about it.

That's a powerful one. This is probably the most practical means that God uses to sanctify our lives. What a tragedy to not have a church.

To be all by yourself. We talked the other day about being baptized into a family. Baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ.

Well, that works itself out in everyday life. That's not just some mystical spiritual thing that we can keep up in our heads and wonder and marvel about. That thing gets worked out in practical everyday life.

And it's called church life. Real brethren. Just like you.

Just like me. Living together. A brotherhood.

Dwelling together. Discipling one another. Admonishing one another.

Preaching to one another. Encouraging one another. Singing together.

Praying together. And all the multitude of things that we could spend five hours talking about the blessings of church life. But this is a powerful way and means by which God imparts righteousness into our life.

Like someone said yesterday as we were visiting at lunchtime. I happen to know a little bit about the church where he goes. I said, so how are things going in the church? And he said, well, yeah, they're going pretty good.

And I dug a little bit deeper because I know some of these things. And he shared this with me. He said, yeah, we've got a few difficulties in the church, but my dad encouraged me.

You know, you can run away from the problem and it will take the tension off of your life. But if you don't run away from the problem and instead you face the problem, God will be able to work things deep inside of your heart that you'll never get any other way. And some of you young men know what that is in relation to church.

Some of you are in little churches and it's little church plants and they're trying to get going. And you gather this bunch together and they're all going to go together. And you find out after a little while it doesn't go together too easily.

There's a lot of different minds about all of that. And so you've been through some of those things. I'm getting ahead of myself.

But a meaningful church life is powerful. There are so many ways in which God does perfect us through the church that we can hardly list them all. I mean, think about all the one another's listed in the New Testament.

There must be 15 of them. All of that takes place in church life. I mean, love God.

Amen. That's great. I love God.

I love God. I love God. But love your neighbor, it also says.

And by this we can tell if we really love God, if we love our neighbor, 1 John says. So, in this way the love of God is perfected in our life. Righteousness is imparted in our life.

When we get in with both feet and become part of church. Amen. Amen.

I just want to encourage you fellas, you know, when you go home. Don't you go home with a bunch of high-minded ideas. You know, well now we know and we know this and we know that.

And the minister, he does this and he doesn't do that. Don't you dare go home that way. You go home and you find your minister and you say, Brother so and so, God has done so many beautiful things in my heart as I spent a whole month seeking Him and learning and studying.

How can I serve you? You know what he'll say? Whoa, I'm going to send a few more fellas over there. You know, it's nice to have young men come up to the pastor and say, You see anything in my life you'd like to change? Is there any way that I can help you, pastor? Is there anything I can pray with you about? How can I lighten your load? Man. Powerful stuff.

Church life. Go home and jump in with both feet. It's interesting, again, you know, Brother Dean mentioned a little of this in his history class, but the early Anabaptists saw brotherhood as the major way to become a solid disciple of Jesus Christ.

And they rushed to become part of one of those little brotherhoods. With hearts that said, Watch me. See my needs.

Watch me. Admonish me. Disciple me.

I want to learn. I want to grow. I want to change.

That's how they saw church life. And by the way, if you didn't want that, then there was a bit of a question mark whether anything really happened that deep down in here in the inner man. They would be wondering, Not sure about that guy's conversion.

Because if God was inside of him, He would be moving him in the direction of changing his life. And he would surely see the beautiful means available in church life. But he doesn't want to have anything to do with that.

I'm not sure anything happened in here. That's how they looked at it. Let's move on to the next one.

How does God impart righteousness in our lives in practical ways? By suffering and trials. Paul gives his own testimony in this in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 when he says, We are always delivered over unto death. Sufferings.

Trials. Difficulties. Necessities.

Infirmities. Distresses. And all the things that he faced.

But he gives it in a very positive light. Because he goes on to say, That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. God incarnate in your flesh and mine.

Right? God incarnating himself in your flesh and mine. To the point that others can look on and see the life also of Jesus being made manifest in our mortal flesh, body, and soul. Why? Because God is in us.

Working both the will and the do of his good pleasure. So, suffering and trials. God uses those to impart righteousness into our lives.

And sometimes it doesn't feel good. Sometimes we want to run away from that. And sometimes, you know, we get the wrong job or we think we got the wrong job.

And, you know, at least up until now, you know, you could pick and choose on your job. But these days, you know, you may have to keep that job that you have that you don't like. That the boss isn't really all that he ought to be.

And he doesn't treat you right. And doesn't pay you as much. And he takes advantage of you.

And all those things that may happen on the job. Hey! God can work through all of that. Beautiful things in your life.

I could tell you some stories that would anger you. Things that were done to me on the job. But God did such beautiful things in my life in the midst of that.

I wouldn't trade it for a million dollars. Suffering and trials. God imparts His very life and His very righteousness into our lives as we yield ourselves to the sufferings and the trials that come our way.

God does. Peter speaks about the trying of our faith. We read it yesterday there in 1 Peter.

Well, what happens when our faith is tried? A tried faith gets stronger. And what does a stronger faith do? Well, we've had enough lessons on faith. We don't need to preach on it again.

But reason together. What does a stronger faith do? It rots beautiful things in the heart and in the life. But a stronger faith is a tried faith.

And a tried faith isn't always easy. And it's not always fun. And it's difficult.

And it can be a bit despairing at times as God is trying our faith. But know this. God is working in you both the will and the do of His good pleasure.

And you only need to read the context there in Philippians chapter 2 to know what waits you just like Christ who went down and down and down and down and suffered even the death of the cross. But that same God is now in you. He wants to change your life.

Really change your life. Will you let Him? Paul describes this process this way in Romans chapter 5 verse 1 through 5. He says, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand today and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation.

Huh? What was that? We glory in tribulation, Paul says, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience worketh experience, and experience worketh more hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Now, what he's simply saying there is, God does mighty things when tribulations come into our heart and our life. I'll never forget the dear brother in our congregation.

An Amish brother. I mean, he went on, you know, he was converted a couple of years, and he went on a couple of years in the Amish church being converted. But all of a sudden he got to that place where he grew to the place where he could no longer be just quietly sitting there in the Amish church.

And he started expressing his Christianity in outward righteous ways, like rejoicing, like preaching, like telling other people about Christ, about rejoicing about the good things that God is doing. And all of a sudden the heat started to turn on in his life. And the day came when all of a sudden he who had a great reputation, and everybody said, Oh brother so-and-so, fine man, fine this, fine that.

All of a sudden he was mud. Mud! Oh, the poor man. No, not the poor man.

That mud laid down in his bed one night in utter despair over the loss of his reputation, and in the despair of his heart he cried out to God in desperation. And the Holy Ghost came upon him laying there in his bed, and he was filled with the Spirit of God, and the love of God flooded his heart, and the joy of God overflowed in him, and he laid there in bed with tears of joy running down his face, thanking God for all the mud. Right? This is how God imparts righteousness in our lives.

I mean, it would be real nice, wouldn't it, if we just could sit down, you know, and God could just open up the head, or open up the heart and just dump it all in there. Now I'm a totally new person in every way. No, that brings no honor to God.

God wants to know if you love Him. God wants to know if you're going to yield to Him, and let Him work from the inside to the outside, and change your life, spirit, soul, and body, and sanctify your life, your soul, your mind, your will, your emotions, and sanctify your body, and make it a clean and a pure body that goes to the right places, and does the right things, and says the right things, and watches the right things, and listens to the right things. That's what God is after.

Oh, that glorifies God! When I shall be sanctified in you, then the heathen will know that I am the Lord. Oh, man, that's exciting, isn't it? I mean, do you want that? Let's go! That's one. And of course, there are more.

God imparts righteousness to us when He gives us a spanking. Have you ever got a spanking from the Lord? Let me see your hand. Have you ever got a spanking from the Lord? Let me ask you a question.

Which one's tougher? The ones that Dad used to give you, or the ones that God gives you? How many think that Dad's was tougher than the ones that God gives? Look at that! Nobody raised their hand! I mean, they're tough, aren't they? I mean, when God puts you over His knee, He can do a good job. But it's because He loves you, that He puts you over His knee. And it's because He loves me, that He puts me over His knee.

Chastisement! Oh, but look at the result here in Hebrews 12. He says, Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, and I've never seen a child over his father's knee with a smile on their face rejoicing. Have you? No, it doesn't seem to be joyous at the time.

But, it's grievous nevertheless. Afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. That's righteousness imparted or given.

The peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those that are exercised by that chastisement. That's how God makes man righteous. It's so much more than just giving him a right standing.

So much more than that. But God truly makes man righteous. That is, fulfilling His will in thought, action and motive.

That's where God is going. Righteousness imparted to our hearts and our lives. Are you willing? Do you recognize that God is inside of you? And that this is where He's going.

Have you been frustrating this work that God is trying to do? Are you frustrating the grace of God? You know, He creates the desire. He's right there with all the power you need to do it. But this desire and this power doesn't go anywhere until you say yes.

Amen, Lord. Amen. When you say yes, desire and power come together in a beautiful expression of the will of God that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

That's what God wants. Do you want it? I believe you do. I believe that's what your heart is.

Well, I have one more, but we'll leave it. Let's stand for prayer. Oh, thank you, Father.

Oh, Lord. It's beautiful, Father. It is lovely to once again just to step back and look at all the ways in which you do change our lives.

Lord, this morning we want to say amen. Lord, we want to be changed. God, we pray that You'll help us and show us where we are, in fact, frustrating Your grace.

And all You want to do is make something beautiful out of us. And we're frustrating Your grace. Oh, God, show us where we're doing it.

And, Lord, don't stop. Don't stop with each and every one of us. God, we trust You for this.

We thank You for hearing us. In Jesus' name, amen.

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