



Most of the time, we are not concerned about being right with God. We might recognize wrong standing with our parents, or realize we are in conflict with those around us. Those we consider friends might not even like us any longer. In our mind's eye, we are failures, not knowing where to turn. Things are just so wrong!

There are so many scenarios. We each have our own stories, but things simply are not right externally, nor with God. If only things could be right with my friends and my parents, then I would have peace. Why do things have to be so wrong?

Right Standing With God

Listen, I have good news. Christianity is all about being right with God, not being right with others. Getting right with them will come later once right with God. Let's concentrate on getting right with God. This is what counts.

Christians are those who have been made right with God. It should also be good news that it does not happen by what we do or don't do. It is not up to us to become right with God. Righteousness is something that God gives to us. It's all about Him and not us.

We do not become righteous by going to church or by giving to the poor. In other words, we do not become righteous by our own works. The only way we can become righteous is by the actions of God - His works. His plan makes us righteous, so it comes down to trusting in God's plan - faith. This should not only be good news, but great news. What is God's plan for us?

Righteousness For Our Wrongness

When we come into the world, we are going in the wrong direction. God understands this, because he saw it all from the beginning of time. He knew when creating mankind that man would go off in the wrong direction trying to live life on his own power, and then man would need someone to

rescue him. God had this plan all figured out, because He knew that man would need help. God not only set forth a plan for man to become right again, but sent forth the power for him to stay right and produce righteousness in this world. God's plan shows us that we just can't live this life depending on our own power and strength, but must depend upon Him.

It does not take much to see that we need His ability to do things right. We have failed, and we need help. God is our righteousness. He is much more; but for now, we just need to see that He is our righteousness, through whom we get things right and do right.

God desired for man to do what is right since creation. He gave us the power to do what was right, but we sinned and turned our back on His help. We escaped our flood of mistakes in an ark with Noah. God scattered us throughout the world, after trying to build a tower to God called Babel. Then God came to Abraham, and He promised to bless his generational Seed forever - Jesus. He gave man the Law so he could see he was doing wrong, not having to depend solely on his conscience. When man did wrong, God gave the way for their sins to be covered by coming to the tabernacle with a sacrifice. Still, mankind turned against God's way. Then, as God foreknew, He sent His Son as the sacrifice for sin to complete the work on the cross that man couldn't do by his own works.

Jesus Made Us Right With God

Doesn't it make sense that being a Christian is all about Christ and not about us? Jesus came into the world, born of a virgin and without sin. He is God's firstborn Son, promised to Abraham long ago, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas day. It is all about the righteous One, Jesus Christ, coming to the earth as a sinless sacrifice to take our place on the cross, to make us right with God, our Father.

God's plan has always centered around a sacrifice. A sacrifice is the offering of something precious to God so we can find favor. In the Old Testament, the blood of animal sacrifices were offered for favor with God. But these offerings did not make mankind completely right with God. Only by Jesus Christ coming to earth to be the perfect sacrifice for the wrongs of all mankind, could man become righteous.

Therefore, it was Jesus Christ, Who came to the earth to take our wrongdoings upon Himself to make us right with God. This was God's plan from the beginning of time. Even if this does not make sense, we must ask God to reveal His plan to us, so we can trust in Him as having made us righteous through the work of His Son on Calvary's cross. In other words, we must trust or have faith in Jesus Christ.

Righteousness And The Cross

How could Jesus dying on the cross make us right with God? This is a question that only God can reveal to us. We must receive the revelation of Christ. God is a just and righteous God. He had to punish our wrongdoings. Someone had to be punished, as a sacrifice, so we could find favor. This person was

Jesus. As prophesied, He took our sinfulness upon Himself so we could become right and not have to be judged. He took God's judgment for our sin upon Himself.

His blood was shed on the cross to wash and cleanse away our sin. This is why we can look back at the cross 2,000 years ago and be cleansed by His act on the cross. He not only was crucified for us, but buried in a tomb in our place. The wages of sin is death. Jesus came to identify with us and to take the penalty for our sin upon Himself.

But God in His plan raised Jesus from the dead, and in so doing, He raised us up from the dead as well. It was the Holy Spirit, God's Helper, who raised Jesus and came into us and raised us from the dead on the third day. Jesus brought us to life so we could be right with God in every way. He brought us to life so we could live with our Heavenly Father forever, free from the penalty of our wrongdoings.

Righteousness Is A Free Gift

Isn't it great to know that Christianity is all about Jesus and what He did for us; and not about what we have done, or can do to find God's acceptance? Jesus Christ made us right and accepted by God, by what He did on the cross. Righteousness is a free gift. It is not earned or deserved by us. Jesus paid the price for our sin. He rose from the dead in our behalf, giving us the free gift of the Spirit. He enables us to live forever in heaven.

We try to do so many things to be right with God, but none of these things mean anything to God. All these things we try to do to be right with God only nullify what God has done on the cross. Anything we try to add to righteousness apart from the cross of Christ only weakens in our heart what God has done. Our sole dependence must be on the work God has done through Jesus Christ and not on our own good works.

Trusting in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross is the key to being a Christian. He is the One who empowers us in every way to be rescued from our evil nature. It is He who frees us from our insecurities, making us secure in what He has done for us. It is He Who gives us boldness to stand tall, trusting Him for every need in this life and the life which is to come. Whatever bondage we may be in now, it is He who has freed us for eternity, promising us a better life to come.

Righteousness Brings Hope

We are given much hope for the future. Hope is a confident expectation of good things to come. The best is yet to come no matter what situation we face. God is on our side, and we are on His. We have a Father like we never had in this life. We have a partnership with our Heavenly Father to accomplish His works on this earth.

There are things for us to do once we have a right relationship with God. When we are right with God, He

frees us to do all things in the power of his Spirit. We now trust Him to work in our lives, since we have ceased trusting in all the things we did on our own. There are dreams and visions of work for us that we never thought about doing before. God is on our side, backing your every move in Christ.

We have God's presence with us at all times. He lives inside of us because we are now born of the Spirit. God has set up His temple in us, to place His being in us. We are the church, a group of individuals, who in faith are living for God, in the Spirit, worshiping and praising Him for Who He is. He has called us out of our wrongdoings and into His right doings.

Righteousness Brings Peace

When the Holy Spirit raised us up from the dead, He came to live in us. As His temple, we not only have hope, but we have peace, joy and love. We have peace with God because of Christ's righteousness. God is not angry with us, He loves us. We are not at war with God's ways any longer by our wrongdoings, but we are at peace with God. He is not only our Father, but our Friend.

Our hearts can be at peace. We have the ability to be at peace not only with God, but with those around us. Relationships of the past that have floundered can be made right. We now have the power to go to our parents to apologize and ask for forgiveness. Friendships that have gone wrong can now be restored.

We have the ability to know what to do in life. If we do or don't have peace about something we are planning, God will reveal it to us. We have the Helper now to direct us in all of our ways as we live in the presence of God. We have become a house of prayer, talking to God continually about our worries and frustrations, so He can give us peace.

Righteousness Brings Joy

Joy is sometimes confused with happiness. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. As we live in the Spirit, joy comes forth. We may not be happy about a situation, but we can still have joy to carry us through the circumstances. The Spirit of joy gives us the ability to have a good attitude about something even though things are not going our way. God is in control!

There is joy in His presence. As we stay in the presence of God, joy flows. The Psalmist David said in God's presence is fullness of joy. When we come up against trials in our life, it is good to turn to God and trust Him to work in the trial and to deliver us. God does His great work in our lives during times of trial according to His timing. So sit back, and let Him do His work in restoring your heart.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. When we are weak, He is strong. If we try to live life in our own strength, we suffer spiritual weakness, but when we trust in His ability working through us, we have great strength. It is God, who causes us to triumph in Christ Jesus. He is the One Who gives us the power to come out of our madness, and He is the One Who empowers us to rise up out of our weakness.

Righteousness Brings Love

The love of God was shown at the cross of Calvary to deliver us, not only from our wrongdoings, but from the power of fear that came into the world from Satan. It is God's love at Calvary that destroyed fear and the power of Satan, so we can walk in love towards God and others. His love is the power to live this life free of torment.

There is a battle going on continually for our thoughts, but the love of God never fails. When thoughts arise that try to torment us during times of trial, our minds must be brought back to God's love at Calvary. His love at Calvary will always strengthen us to overcome every thought of the enemy. God is love and He has displayed this love so vividly by the sacrifice of his Son.

Now, as we die to ourselves and take up the cross, we come into a vision of the heavenly throne room. God is sitting on the throne, but Jesus and us are sitting beside him, we are risen with Christ, righteous in Him. We are given the ability to love God and others from our throne room position. The love of God is now shed abroad through the power of the Holy Spirit. He lives in us and we in Him, for we are now right with the Father and in oneness with Him.

Conclusion

See, the good news of Jesus Christ is not complicated. He came to make us right with God. This is what Christianity is all about. We do not have to be dummies any longer, thinking that the church is all about some organization.

The church is an organism. It is a body of individuals who are raised up in Christ to be right with God so we can have hope, peace, joy and love in this life. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, not ours. It is an act of God through Jesus Christ, now working in our hearts.

If you have not received this free gift of God, it is time to rest in what God has done and accept it. Accept the work He did for us long ago. God is now at work in this earth seeking to bring us into His kingdom. He gives us the desire and the faith to receive Him. He opens up our hearts, so He can come live there and make Himself at home. It is He Who calls us out of darkness into His light, love and life. His Spirit raises us from the dead. Won't you invite Him into your heart today?

Here is a prayer that you may wish to pray:

"Heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus, I present myself to You. I am so sorry for my sins and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe Your Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross to pay for my sins. I want to be born-again and become a new creature in Christ. Right now, I ask You, Jesus, to come into my heart. Please change my life and make it pleasing to You. Amen."



CHRISTIANITY FOR DUMMIES

Message from a former Manson family member

The world is full of dummies when it comes to Christianity. The need for someone to explain what it means to be a Christian is evident. We see the Catholics shamed by the actions of the priests. The Episcopalians have their genders confused. In the Protestant church alone, there are several hundred denominations who can't agree. Do we have to be a part of these organizations to be a Christian?

The church is made up of those individuals who are called out of a confused world, not an organization confused by the world. Today, many are leaving one church organization while shaking their heads in disgust, only to join another. Many are looking for someone to agree with their judgments. Others feel dependent on the church organization they belong to for their salvation. What is the truth?

Being Right With God

Christianity is all about being right with God. When we come into this world, some would say we are innocent. It seems that way, but it does not take long for our conscience and actions to tell us otherwise. Then, we come face-to-face with the law of the land. We learn it is not right to lie, cheat and steal. If our parents don't discipline us, we soon learn to be the kings of our life, doing anything we want. Life becomes more and more painful as we find out our way just does not work. Something must be wrong!

Charles D. Watson
www.aboundinglove.org