

The Armor of God – Righteousness – Teaching

(Recap: If someone wasn't there, encourage them to ask someone for notes.)

Really quickly: Last week we talked about our truth belt and leaning on the Holy Spirit for truth. Does anyone want to very quickly share a truth adjustment the Holy Spirit had them make?

(If no one has anything, encourage people to keep listening, because we all have adjustments to make. Share your story or my story if no one has one as an example)

Example:

Someone shared this with me. They thought that God couldn't heal anyone that wasn't saved. They thought that it was "*the children's bread*," because that's what they grew up with in church. The Holy Spirit brought this revelation to them like someone turned on the lights; no one in the Old Testament, including those in Jesus' Earthly ministry, was actually born again. Jesus even healed non-Jewish people.

Let's start this week's very important lesson on righteousness!

Ephesians 6:14 NKJV

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Righteousness. The Roman soldier's breast plate was to protect all their vital organs from an attack. It was a piece of thick metal that was attached on the sides with leather straps.

Righteousness in the Bible simply means right standing with God. According to Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, right standing with God will protect vital parts, *our heart*. There are many verses in the Bible that speak of righteousness.

We're going to break righteousness up into two parts, **spiritual position** and **righteous living**, because they're *separate and yet they are related*. When we don't live righteously before the Lord, it *affects our consciousness*. Once your consciousness is affected, it changes your perception of your spiritual position, and then you won't boldly approach the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and grace in your time of need (Hebrews 4:16). *Did you get that?* I'll say that one more time in a different way. When you feel bad for sinning, it affects how you view yourself in Christ, and then you approach God sheepishly, fearfully, despondently, sorrowfully, and so on... therefore you won't approach God boldly to obtain mercy and grace in your time of need but approach Him more like a beggar needing a handout. When we feel that way, we start saying things like, "*I'll never ask You for anything else... If You do this for me, I'll do... Please, please, please just this once...*" We shift our prayers outside of scripture, praying from a weak position, because of how we feel and what we think of ourselves. That's how we get away from the Word.

First, let's talk about spiritual position

In the Old Testament, Israel was made righteous through doing certain rituals, which made right standing with God performance based. In the New Testament, we're made righteous in Christ, which makes our right standing with God based on what Christ has already done for us, and it's accepted by faith. When we start to judge ourselves according to how God sees us by saying, "*I should read my Bible more... I should give money to the poor... I should be in church more... I should... I should...*" That's performance based, and you're putting yourself back under the law. **There is absolutely nothing wrong with assessing how you're growing in Christ.** What we're talking about is when you need something from God and your prayer is, "*God, I know I haven't been the best Christian... God, I know I could have...*" before you ask for something. That's not Biblical humility but not understanding who you are in Christ. We don't see examples of these types of prayer in the Word. If you're talking with God about making changes in your life to be closer to Him, of course that's perfectly fine, because you're being honest, "*God I haven't been acting like Jesus lately. Holy Spirit, I need your help to change.*"

For some people, it's a wild, sacred-cow-killing, and a reckless thought to think **you were made completely righteous when you said, "I do," to Jesus**, and you **have remained that way** Bible reading or no Bible reading, church going or nonchurch going, giving to the poor or not giving to the poor. Let's look at some scripture to see that we *were* made completely righteous in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 NKJV

¹⁶Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

It's ok if you thought, "*Huh? My brain just said, 'Nooo' when you read that!*" What Paul is saying is that we don't regard the flesh, meaning give attention to the flesh or consider a person's Earth suit. If anyone has accepted Jesus as Savior, he's made a new creature inside and the past behavior and past sin is gone. God has reconciled Himself to us; reconciling meaning God has restored the relationship He had with man, back to what it was with Adam, through Jesus Christ. God has given us the ministry of restoring that relationship, meaning sharing the gospel (good news) and getting people saved. Not imputing trespasses; meaning that God didn't lay the blame or responsibility of our sin on us, but Jesus. He has committed to us the Word of a restored relationship.

We can read it this way: From now on, we don't consider the actions of a person's outward self that we see with our eyes. Even though we knew Jesus by His Earth suit, we don't know Him by His Earth suit anymore. Therefore, if anyone is born again, he is a new creation; old things are completely gone; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, Who has restored our spiritual position to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the task of spreading the word that we have been restored to God spiritually, that is, that God was in Christ restoring the world to Himself, not laying blame and holding people responsible for their sin, and has given to us the word of the restored relationship to share.

I don't care for the newer translations, which is why I didn't use one, but I don't know anyone who regularly uses the word imputed. Let's keep reading...

²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Paul is saying in other words, "*We might become in right standing with God in Him.*" Might, because you might give your life to Christ, and you might not. But the point we need to see... Your **sins are completely forgiven**, because **the blame and shame was laid on Jesus, and you have been restored to the state of Adam** before the fall. Adam was completely innocent before he sinned. He didn't understand right from wrong. That's how God sees you!!! Completely innocent!! This is exciting!! These are the kind of things we need to *meditate* on and get them in our spirit. **We understand this in our head, but often times we trip up in the believing part of this.** "*I failed... I missed God... I did so many things wrong in life...*" We all have, just some of us were more efficient at it than others. Let's look what John, who had the greatest revelation of Christ's love, and what he had to say.... (he was laying on Jesus, "the disciple whom Jesus loved")

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you sinned and asked for forgiveness, you're completely restored to right standing with God. There is no process you have to go through. You don't have to beg. You don't have to beat yourself up. You don't have to do penance; crawl on your knees and do 10 hail Mary's, walk with your head down to show how sorry you are, or buy God flowers. You're completely restored to right standing. It's our flesh, our human nature, that wants to continue meditating on sin. Quick reminder: we are to forgive like God forgives us. Not require someone else to

beg, do penance, and buy flowers or chocolates. Get your chocolates and flowers yourself! You know he ain't gonna pick the right ones anyway!

Free marriage counseling:

A article written by the BBC News in 1998 was titled **Christmas shopping is bad for men.**

Christmas shopping raises men's stress levels to those experienced by fighter pilots and riot police, according to a psychologist.

Dr David Lewis was commissioned by a London shopping centre to monitor heart rates, blood pressure and stress hormones in male shoppers.

The article went on to say, *"We were looking at blood pressure and heart rates and the secretion of stress hormones really in some cases at a level we might expect to find in a combat pilot or a riot policeman in action."* He found the results showed that men's stress levels went through the roof at the prospect of buying presents, while only one in four women even registered a slight change.

That being said, women don't expect a man to go out and buy something to make you happy. Apparently, it's quite stressful for them to buy Christmas gifts and probably even worse for an *"I'm sorry gift."* We are expected to forgive like God forgives us.

Most of us, as Christians, struggle to believe we are seen as completely innocent and in right standing, as Adam was with God. Even worse, most of us don't even realize we struggle to believe the Bible about righteousness or realize what a huge problem, or distance, this creates in our relationship with God. This is a reason why prayers aren't answered, or people have constant problems in life. Sounds dramatic, I know, but once we go through this you'll understand and your relationship with God will change, and prayers will start to get answered. Why? Because **righteousness gives us the ability to stand holy before God**, and not judge if we will receive what we're asking for based on how well we have performed. We say, *"No, I don't do that,"* but we really do!

When you have a revelation knowledge, not a head knowledge, about your righteousness, everything about you is right and nothing is wrong. Do we *really* believe that about ourselves? Do we *really* believe our righteousness is the same as Christ's righteousness? Yes, **you are equally as righteous as Christ, because He gave you His righteousness.**

Philippians 3:9

and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

You have been given a beautiful breastplate of the righteousness of God as a result of believing in Christ. The *faith* part comes in when you accept by faith that you're made just as righteous as Jesus. He gifted that righteousness to us. It's us who look at ourselves through our mistakes and *can't* fathom how pure we have been made in Christ. **Once we have this revelation, we won't pray in faith for healing and wonder if God will do it for us, but know because you're innocent, pure, and perfect in Christ, it will be done for you.** It won't be, *"Will God do this one thing for me,"* but *"What do I want God to do for me today?"* When you have a revelational understanding of your right standing with God, your faith will work very easily, without even trying. We think we struggle with faith for healing or whatever we're praying about, but we're **actually struggling with faith in our righteousness.**

John 15:7 NKJV

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Many of us here abide in Christ. Many of us here have His Word abiding in us. You showed up to hear this study! So, why is the thing not done? When we truly understand who we were made to be, how could our prayers be anything but answered?

I know we got really deep really fast, and it's a lot to take in, but we're about to dive in even deeper into the issue of righteousness and why we struggle with this. I'm going to show you exactly why the enemy wants you to think you're not as righteous as Christ or think this isn't something that matters much.

Romans 8:1-4

¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Condemnation and law are legal terms. Paul is giving us legal information. Merriam-Webster gives this definition for condemnation:

1. to declare to be reprehensible, wrong, or evil usually after weighing evidence and without reservation.
2. to pronounce guilty: convict, sentence, doom.

There is a courtroom in Heaven. Before we talk about that, let's look at this scripture.

1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Jesus is our Advocate. Advocate defined by Merriam-Webster means one who pleads the cause of another. Again, these are legal terms. We know God is the Judge, and there are many scriptures about that in the OT and the NT. So, if God is the Judge and Jesus is our Advocate, then who is the accuser?

Revelation 12:9-10

⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰.... for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them (the saints) before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Satan is constantly accusing the saints. Some people say after Christ was raised from the dead; he can't do that anymore. Then why did John, after Jesus went to Heaven, tell us that Jesus is our Advocate? Because we're being constantly accused.

So, **let's put the importance of our righteousness into perspective**. There is a courtroom scene in Heaven. God is the just Judge. Satan is the accuser or complainant. You are the defendant. Jesus is our Advocate. Satan reads off your sin. God asks, how do you plead? *"God, my Father, I plead not guilty. I'm innocent. I was washed in the blood of Jesus, my Friend, my Brother, and my King."* Do you see where this is going? Demons want your testimony to line up with their accusation, so they can get a guilty verdict on you. The hearing goes on, God asks Jesus, His Son in Whom He's well pleased and gave a Name above all, *"What evidence do You have of their innocence?"* Jesus answers, *"Exhibit A: My blood on the mercy seat. Exhibit B: There is no darkness of this sin on them"* Then, the angels of God get excited and start to praise, *"Glory to God in the highest!"* God asks the court room stenographer, your ministering angel who is for you, *"What do the scrolls say?"* Your angel checks the scroll and answers, *"Nothing concerning this matter, My Righteous God and King of The Universe."* God asks the complainant, Satan your accuser, *"What evidence do you have?"* He responds, *"I have this video of them sinning."* He goes to play the video, and it's blank. Verdict: Not guilty.

God is for you. Jesus is for you. Jesus' blood is for you. The Holy Spirit is for you. The angels are for you. All of Heaven backs you. **Do not be quick to plead guilty. Be quick to repent and plead innocent. You are innocent. You are not guilty.**

We need to say this out loud

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

Everyone needs to write that down, what we just said. Take your cellphone out and email it to yourself if you have to. This is a very important matter that we must mediate on until it becomes a revelation in our spirit.

If you're replaying sins, that you've asked forgiveness for over and over, you're giving yourself a guilty verdict. Your word agrees with your accuser, not the Word of God. He said He cleansed you. Did He or not? **We need to get ahold of this truth in our spirit.** When we don't understand how important our breastplate of righteousness is to our spiritual walk, you'll keep walking around pronouncing yourself as guilty. **The guilty get judged and sentenced.** What is the sentence for being guilty of sin? Putting yourself back under the law: curses and death (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

We aren't being so *dramatic* saying that not considering yourself being just as righteous as Jesus could stop your prayers from being answered and give you constant problems in life. Angels are reapers, both holy angels and fallen angels. Holy angels bring blessings, and fallen angels bring curses and death. Believing and saying innocent only lines you up for blessing. Notice nowhere in the Word is righteousness a *feeling*, it's faith! We read that in Philippians 3:9. Believing and saying guilty, lines you up for receiving the law, curses and death.

Let's say this out loud again

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

Again, I know you may not *feel* that way, but you're either going with God or you're going with the accusers. Even your worst sins, you're innocent. If that thought of sin comes, it's meant to destroy your righteousness. Cast it down and do not let it prosper, "*I'm innocent. I'm not guilty. That's washed in the blood.*" If you don't cast it down, but you keep making it a current event, even if it's just to yourself that you're guilty, you're open to receive a bad harvest over and over again. Let's go back to Romans 8, "**law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**" If you're guilty of the law of sin, even in one point, then you're guilty of the whole law and deserving of punishment and death.

James 2:10

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Saying and believing you're guilty, and never letting yourself out of that jail, will keep you under the law, and you'll keep stumbling over and over. You'll approach God as a sinner, and what repute does a sinner have with God? By faith you have to believe the Bible, believe you're innocent.

We can't repeat this enough out loud! Matter of fact, say it out loud this week...

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

Let's look at judgement, and then a popular grossly misunderstood courtroom scene in the Bible.

Numbers 11:4-9 has a short story about **Moses and the fiery serpents**. The children of Israel were journeying along the red sea after Mount Sinia (Bible says Horeb, same mountain). Because they became discouraged, they started murmuring against God and Moses.

Verse 5: ... "**Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.**"

Can we agree that they lost their thankfulness to God? When we focus on the situation and make our problems bigger than being thankful for what we have, that's the danger zone when we can easily murmur against God. People read this story and think, "*God is mean and punishes people badly.*" They judged God and Moses as premeditating mass murderers, they judged God as not honoring His promise, they judged God and Moses as starving them to death, they judged God's provisions (which they didn't have to grow, harvest, and grind) as worthless. They included Moses in this judgement as well. *How would you feel if someone did that to you after you blessed them more than they could ever even imagine?* You have to remember they SAW the plagues of Egypt. They SAW the parting of the sea. They SAW the world's greatest army and natation fall to nothing. They

SAW the presence of God on Mount Sinia. They FELT God on Mount Sinai. They witnessed many miracles. So *why not just ask for another one?*

Verse 6: So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Yes, God did *allow* for the sending of the fiery serpents. But after listening to the Holy Spirit concerning this, He brought a scripture to me.

Matthew 7:2

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

They judged God and Moses as premediating mass murderers on two counts, starvation and dehydration with a painfully long journey to do it. The Lord didn't give them what they accused Him of, starvation and dehydration, because they would think, "*See we were right.*" He needed to make them understand they were being judged and wrong, so they can repent.

What really happened is that God judged them with the same measure they used. He lifted the hedge of protection, or should I say force field for Star Trek fans, and the fallen angel harvesters brought them their own harvest, death! We'll see this in the New Testament, but let's finish this story first.

Verse 7: Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." ...

We see that murmuring against the Lord, accusations in particular, brings a judgement on ourselves. The people of Israel understood they caused it. Why weren't the serpents allowed in the camp before? Hedge of protection by the angels (Psalm 91). Israel probably realized this fact, that they hadn't even seen any snakes, and the Heavenly protection was gone. Some people have to have something bad happen before they realize *oh wait, life was great!* What kind of people do that? People that aren't thankful. Let's always remember to be thankful.

Verses 8-9: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

You might be like "*Whuut?*" Some people say, "*This is a type of Christ.*" I don't like the sound of that, so I will say, this was a prophetic representation of Christ, and a prophetic rehearsal of what was to come. The brass represents the hardness. The snake represents the sin Jesus would take on the cross. It was a prophetic proclamation of the exchange that would take place, putting sin and judgement on the cross and taking Jesus' righteousness. **They had to become righteous, right standing with God, once again to be free from the law of sin and death.** It's important to note that it wasn't just about forgiveness of sin, it was about healing and righteousness. **They did the physical act; we do the spiritual act.** Amen!

Let's look at what Paul said speaking about Israel in the time of Moses...

1 Corinthians 10:9-10

⁹nor let us tempt (tempt and test are the same word) Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Tempting/Testing, judging, and complaining wins you the reward of a harvest from fallen angels. Notice Paul said they were **destroyed by the destroyer**. That's not God. Their murmuring lifted the hedge, and the destroyer was free to come. We have all done some of that at some point in our life.

So, let's say it again!

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

If you think you have a judgement against you for murmuring, ask for forgiveness, put it on the cross, by faith receive the righteousness of Christ that has been gifted to you, and take your healing. That's the New Testament version of the same steps Israel took.

Let's take a quick look at a courtroom scene in Heaven written in the book of **Job**.

Job 1:1

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

Ok, Job was righteous, same as blameless. We're going to study this out of order by jumping to the court scene and then back to the cause.

v6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

This is the court room of Jehovah (or Yahweh) they entered. The angels are referred to as the sons of God. Why would the fallen angels be presenting themselves before the Lord? To accuse and see what they can harvest! On this particular day, Satan attended the harvest meeting.

v7 And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

We know from the New Testament, in 1 Peter 5:8, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" Satan came to see if he may devour Job.

v8 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

God knows Satan came for Job. He was not offering Job up on the chopping block! He's all-knowing not ignorant, so He spoke first. Here we see God is calling Job righteous, because **God is for us**. People misread what's happening here. A loving Father would never spout out your sin and see you through your wrongs instead of seeing you through what He's created you to be. That's why God isn't calling out Job's issues. We need to read this and say *amen* to it, because God looks on you with love and out of your good qualities.

v9-10 So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Here's the accuser, accusing in the court room. In the Hebrew language, Satan said, "*Does Job fear God out of favor?*" New King James translated the Hebrew word **chinnam** to "**for nothing**" instead of "**out of favor**." So **his accusation is against his fear motives!!!** Fears of what?? Satan is accusing Job of fearing God because he's so incredibly blessed.

We have to ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding concerning Job. For time's sake, we won't go through it verse by verse, but Job is incredible intelligent and well educated. We know that from how he speaks. His knowledge came from different nations at that time, He's quite possibly highly educated in knowledge through trade. So... Job understood how God works, and that He was blessed by God.

v11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

This is the harvest he's requesting to bring Job. He's asking for that hedge, or forcefield, to be lowered, because of fear. This wasn't a test so God can just see what Job is going to do! The accusation was fear! I can't stress that enough. We're looking at the courtroom judgement, don't forget.

v12 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."

The Lord had to grant the harvest request. Why? Job was in fear, we'll look at some of it in a minute. The Lord only granted the harvest to be done on what Job sowed into. Job didn't sow in to lose his life, **Job sowed into receiving what he believed would happen**. Satan and demons brought in a harvest on Job's faith. Ok? Let's go *back* and look at that...

End of verse 3

this man (Job) was the greatest of all the people of the East.

Satan couldn't touch him until Job *refused* to deal with his fear. We need to make ourselves untouchable by shutting out fear!

Verses 4 and 5 reveal some of the issue

⁴And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all.

So, we can see that Job's kids are partiers. They each have their own house, obviously don't have jobs or responsibilities so that they *can* party. Job knew his kids were partiers or else he wouldn't worry about them, would he? After the feasting, Job offered burnt offerings for each kid. Let's read that again because it's important, "**Job would send and sanctify them.**" Since when, anywhere in the Bible, is daddy allowed to ask forgiveness for adult children? They're adults, they have their own houses. We can't even do that now under grace! Adults have to be responsible for themselves.

Continuing verse 5

For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

Is Job afraid?? Yes!! If someone is regularly asking for forgiveness for *someone else*, it's all out of FEAR.

Let's jump down to **verse 16** and see what happens.

Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house;

They were partying at the oldest brother's house. They went in age order back then, so it's highly likely the cycle came around to the beginning again. The Bible goes on to say that Job's kids died because of some random wind that knocked down the four corners, or 4 support beams, of the house, and one servant escaped to tell him the news. **This tells us that Job's kids weren't righteous!** Their daddy was sacrificing for them, and they obviously weren't in fear of the Lord. When it came time for them to stand on their own righteousness with God, they could not. That's why they didn't survive the attack, but Job's wife did! **This was in NO WAY part of a bet that God had with Satan.** We never hear one peep about the wife worrying. I guess Job did it all for her.

Verse 21, the famous line people quote

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away

Job doesn't know why this happened to him. That's obvious from the rest of the book. We shouldn't get down on him, how many times did we do something wrong and didn't even notice it? He's suffering and doesn't know why, so it's probably **not wise to use his reasoning and his wisdom.**

Job chapter 2, we see Satan shows back up on harvest day

v3 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

God is *still* speaking well of Job, *still* looking at him as He created him. In Hebrew "*although you incited me,*" is just one-word **suth** meaning **allure, instigate, or persuade**. Same as above, "without cause" was translated

from the Hebrew word **chinnam** meaning **out of favor**. It's a judgement and ruling, "**Although you persuaded me against him, to destroy (swallow up) him out of favor**, better understood by us, "*destroy Job out of the fact that I favored him.*" **It was still based on fear!** You have to remember the translators are trying to make sense of this story as they translate and decide which meanings to use. Doesn't matter if we like it or not, opinions can make their way into translations. We read that in the Complete Jewish Translation concerning the disciples.

Satan answers in **verse 4 and 5**

⁴So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

⁵But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

There are so many popular commentaries and explanations saying that this means if God strikes Job's skin, then he will sin. **That's completely made up.** That's not written here at all or hidden in Hebrew. We have to let the Bible interpret the Bible.

Exodus 21:23-24

²³But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, ²⁴eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

We have to realize Satan made another accusation in court against Job. Though the law hadn't been given, the laws of sowing and reaping had always existed. We see that in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sowed in for their own spiritual death. Satan knew this, because he sowed into his own death! Sowing and reaping is law, and Satan wanted to give Job a harvest according to the law of sin and death. We don't know what skin for skin sin had been committed by Job. He obviously *did* do something or *found himself guilty* even after he sacrificed an animal, out of fear!! God was being very gracious not mentioning Job's sin in the Bible, and in turn God has been accused of being evil. God is a good God. Satan just goes on to continue taunting God, but so many people take this as, "*the bet continues...*"

God says in **verse 6**

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."

He must have sowed in for flesh only harvest, flesh for flesh.

Job's wife says in **verse 9**,

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

She actually said, "*Barak,*" Bless God and die. It's noted to be sarcastic, but still, it's not a curse!

Why have all these woes come to Job? People read this on the surface and think God is placing bets with Satan over what will Job do... as if God doesn't know! Let's keep reading, because **Job tells us himself why it happened,** although he doesn't realize it.

Job 3:25

For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me.

Dread defined by Oxford means anticipate with great apprehension or fear. Job received a harvest on his fears. He *actually* expected these things to happen! Job lived in fear, not just the fear of God, but in fear of bad things happening, **constantly.** He was a worrier. His fears were *real* to him, **more real than God's protection.** He feared cursing God so much, and then he promptly turned around and thoroughly cursed the day he was born. That's an interesting turn of events. The next time you read this story, pay attention to the fear and meditate on that instant heart change.

Interestingly enough, I did some reading about the 1-percenters, ***super wealthy people,*** and their fears. The articles seem to report the same top 3 fears:

1. Losing their wealth

2. Health

3. Dysfunctional family (or maybe like partying children and family cursing God?)

Not much has changed in over 3,000 years. Another issue reported with the one-percenters wealth club is how they treat people. It's been reported that the one-percenters treat people however and think nothing of it. **Now, we're not going to accuse Job of anything, but we are going to explore the possibility of this skin for skin issue.** I looked up slave branding in the ancient world. I was able to find that ancient Egypt WAS branding slaves right before Moses was born. It could have been going on well before, but we can only go by archeological finds in ancient Egypt. Historians suggested the older branding irons may have been melted down and repurposed. (We will do a thorough study on Job another time) Job was from Uz, which Bible scholars believe, was located just south of Midian, close to Egypt where Moses escaped. Is it far fetched to think that PERHAPS MAYBE Job was branding his slaves, and Satan reaped a harvest on him? Perhaps Job was afraid concerning the branding iron on humans? This *what if* is not far-fetched at all. According to ancient middle eastern standards, Job owned his slaves, but did God allow branding? I just want to make it clear: Ancient Egypt was branding human slaves, but we're just speculating on Job's "*skin for skin*" sin, not accusing him. We can wonder what in the ancient world would warrant such pain.

BUT... What we were *actually* looking at was the courtroom setting: Judge, accuser, and harvesters. We already went over the fact that **we now have Jesus as our Advocate or Lawyer**. So, how do you plead, for your darkest sins to your mindless actions....?

Say it out loud

Not Guilty!

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

How important is it that you are innocent?? (Let them answer) Your righteousness and harvests depend on it.

Should we live in fear? Is it dangerous to live in fear and dread?

Isaiah 54:14

In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

I want to say it one more time, **God was not and is not playing a sick betting game with Satan over our lives, ever!** God loved Job, that's why double was returned. One of the reasons this story had to be written for our benefit is for us to see how the Heavenly courtroom works. We can see the effects of fear and pleading guilty. God was being as gracious to Job as He could in retelling the story. Out of His loving graciousness, people mistakenly see something else and are led to believe that God does this to everyone! Some people have gone as far as to claim being "*Job-ed*" more 10 times, because they failed the "*Job Test*." Remember, we have Jesus, our Advocate, so this courtroom scene has changed considerably because of the blood of Jesus. If you *feel* like you've been "*Job-ed*," maybe you need to clean some court records with the blood of Jesus and re-enter a plea of not guilty.

Righteous Living

Most of us have a good understanding about righteous living, and we know what's morally right and wrong before the Lord. We'll try not to camp out too long on this topic, but it's very important. It's difficult to really open the Bible and say, "*Oh look, it says right here I don't belong in the bar just having a water while my friends get drunk.*" We have to look through the Bible and take leading and guiding from the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

When we started this study, I said, *“When we don’t live righteously before the Lord, it affects our consciousness. Once your consciousness is affected, it changes your perception of your spiritual position, and then you won’t boldly approach the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and grace in your time of need.”* Paul mentions this point but on a different topic, meat sacrificed to idols:

1 Corinthians 8: Paul tells us a conscience can be defiled and a weak conscience can be wounded. You can even sin against Christ when you wound someone else’s conscience.”

The point we’re looking at here is a **defiled** and **wounded conscience**. When someone is going into that bar having a bubble water to look like a drink to hang out with the drunks, and the Holy Spirit is tapping on their heart to stop, their consciousness will be wounded when they approach God. If someone else sees them, especially if they’re in some type of leadership role, in the bar or walking out of the bar, and not on a mission for Christ, then they’re sinning. When they’re caught, they *feel* embarrassed for their sin. **When you’ve sinned, and you *feel* guilty, you’re not going to approach the throne as you should.**

How you chose to live not only affects your conscience but will determine how close you can walk to God. You might be thinking, *“Ok, so if I don’t have a wounded or defiled conscious, we’re completely innocent and righteous before the Lord, so... does that mean we can do whatever we want?”* Glad you asked! Living a righteous lifestyle will allow you to walk closer to the Lord. If you want to get to know the Father, and develop a close relationship with Him, you’ll have to clean up your life as the Holy Spirit leads you. Always remember this statement...

Cleaner is closer.



I like to explain it like pigpen. How close would you like to get to him? You want him on your couch? That’s exactly what our unrighteous lifestyle, or unrighteous choices do to us in the spiritual realm. We can’t exactly clearly see in the Word if we can go to the casino just for the food. Your conscience might say “No,” but the Holy Spirit sees, *“Yes, it’s a separate business with a connecting door.”* If you go, you have a conscience problem. Then again, the Holy Spirit might say “No,” but your conscience says, “ALL YOU CAN EAT SHRIMP!!” Then you have a sin issue.

We’ll go through some real stories to launch you in the right direction. But before we do, I don’t believe we should live by anyone else’s convictions by the Holy Spirit. It will not work for you. I believe it’s always the job of the Word, pastors, parents, or anyone else you’re supposed to be submitted to. If we stop friends and family, then they’re not doing something because of you instead of Christ. We love them, but we don’t want them to resent us is basically what I’m getting at. We will all become cleaner as the Holy Spirit instructs us, and you lead by living your life as the example. These are some real cleaner-is-closer convictions from Christians...

(Example of a crazy conviction. My true story is below.)

Example:

A woman once called a friend on the phone to share her revelation from Christ. It was that she wasn't supposed to wear contact lenses. Her body was the temple of the Holy Spirit, and she wasn't supposed to insert anything inorganic into her body. Her friend happened to be *really* enjoying her continuous wear contact lenses. She thought the issue wasn't a matter of heaven or hell, so she gently tried to talk her back from what she thought was the edge of reason, but she insisted it was the Holy Spirit. She replied politely, "*Lord bless you, I don't feel convicted for contacts at this time.*"

I like that, "***Lord bless you, I don't feel convicted for contacts at this time.***"

Unless it's dangerous, we shouldn't argue with people's convictions. There have been multiple cases where Amish and Jehovah Witnesses have refused blood transfusions because of their doctrine. In this case, it's good to witness to them from the Word. We shouldn't make battle lines over simple things.

(Example of what God told someone that is only for that individual. My true example below.)

A handful of ministers say the Lord convicted them of drinking coffee. To that I say, "***Lord bless you, I don't feel convicted for it at this time.***" We can't all call coffee a sin, because someone we respect was told not to drink it. Another lady that had sleeping problems was told by the Lord, "*Stop drinking coffee 8 hours before bed.*" She stopped and could sleep better. We don't *all* have to live by that conviction. Some people can drink coffee before bed and sleep perfectly fine; and the Lord has convicted them of nothing.

(Examples all people can relate, make them hit home! My true stories are below if you need them)

This story is from another minister, so don't look around and try to check out my feet! I thought it was a good example.

"When I was a teenager, I learned that Nike was the Greek god of victory. My shoes were Sketchers at that time, and so it didn't really affect my life. Many years later, I found my way into the Nike outlet trying on Nike Torches which I really really liked. Short people need a heel on their sneakers! Sure, the Holy Spirit was tapping me on the inside, '*Nike the Greek god of victory.*' But so what? It's just a name. It doesn't matter. I wore them for many years. One night while I was praying, I kept feeling like my prayers were being blocked. Something in my prayer life was just not right. I started asking God, 'What's wrong?' It was like someone turned on the lights. Here I am in my prayer closet, so to speak, shouting 'Victory in Christ' over situations and I'm standing there in demon Nike god of victory shoes. I completely understood the dishonor I brought to the Lord. I prayed in these shoes, read my Bible in these shoes, praised in these shoes, brought these shoes into the church, and thought absolutely nothing of it. I immediately repented and cleaned my life out of all Nike products. That wall felt like it crumbled"

Lord bless you, I don't feel convicted for Nike products at this time

This is another minister, so don't blame me!

For many years, I used to turn the national news on TV and leave it on for hours. In the evening, I would watch news shows to hear what they didn't play over and over all day long. Of course, that wasn't good enough. When I woke up in the morning, I started watching news from another country about the United States for an unbiased view. Then I would read my Bible and pray. Unfortunately, it took me a while to see that my ears were finely tuned to constant garbage and works of evil, instead of what The Lord was doing. I lost my peace, and I became a walking talking news station. The Lord convicted me of the large volume of garbage I allowed into my life. I decided it was time to make changes, and I no longer listen to or read any news. I'm now last to know everything, if I ever even know at all. It was a change I needed to make, because I let it put distance between the Lord and me.

“Lord bless you, I don’t feel convicted for news at this time.”

(Use the Word concerning the examples)

What does the Word say about those Nike shoes? **“You shall have no other gods before Me.”** (As in before my face) **Exodus 20:3 NKJV**. What does the Word say about their ears being garbage cans? **Proverbs 4:23 NKJV** **“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”**

That is exactly what the breastplate of righteousness Paul is trying to tell us it protects our heart. In both of these situations, it wasn’t that these people weren’t in right standing with God spiritually or that He pushed them away. The shoes and overloading with bad news made them like Pigpen, the filth made a cloud between the Lord and the people with unrighteous behavior. Your right standing with God, your breastplate of righteousness does protect you for a while, because of His mercy and grace. But the time will come when it takes on too much damage and we can reap a bad harvest. But, as soon as they cleaned themselves up, they were immediately closer to the Lord.

I’m not going to make up a hypothetical situation, because someone will inevitably look around and decide they know who it is... So! I’m just going to quote two country songs:

"She's Everything" by Brad Paisley
She's a Saturday out on the town
And a church girl on Sunday
She's a cross around her neck
And a cuss word 'cause its Monday
She's a bubble bath and candles
Baby come and kiss me
She's a one glass of wine
And she's feeling kinda tipsy

"This Is How We Roll" by Florida Georgia Line
We love who we love and we wanna have fun
Yeah, we cuss on them Mondays
And pray on them Sundays

Pretending these are real people, **1 John 1:9 NKJV** says, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** When these people go to church and ask the Lord sincerely to forgive them, they are just as righteous as the saint who doesn’t run around the town, doesn’t cuss, doesn’t get tipsy, and loves everyone as the Bible instructs. *We already talked about how we’re forgiven when we ask.* The problem is that we understand the concept of cleaner is closer, but we confuse it with spiritual righteousness and unrighteousness. For example, Brad Paisley’s *“She’s Everything Girl,”* she’s righteous on Sunday, but she never dumped her junk for good. Maybe there are still half empty wine bottles in her house for another day. Perhaps she still has pictures from those nights on the town that she loves. It wouldn’t be unreasonable to think she has cuss words in her text messages. This is where we can look like Pigpen. We can clean up our armor so it’s shiny, but we can’t walk any closer to the Lord until we remove our own stink. At some point the danger of repeated unrighteous behavior makes sin feel normal and acceptable. *“She had bubble baths with candles with that guy for a long time. Yeah, it’s like they’re married.”* This is the point where armor starts taking on damage until you are no longer wearing it. Why? Because she’ll start to label herself a sinner, or a bad girl when she comes in contact with truth and comfort herself with, *“Who cares?”* At some point, the Lord can’t clean or repair what people choose not to wear.

Let’s look at **Proverbs 21:21**

"He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor."

Righteousness in Hebrew also means justice, law, and righteous acts. “*Follows righteousness*” is the same as saying, “**Cleaner is closer.**” We have so many opportunities in life to veer off the path of righteous living. As Proverbs is telling us, following righteousness will result in us finding life, or The Lord.

Cleaner is truly closer to God. Maybe that’s what cleanliness is next to Godliness should mean. I hope you’re still praying your own version of **2 Timothy 3:16-17** before you read your Bible, we went over this scripture in the truth belt.

¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Don’t overwhelm yourself by picking through your own life this week, unless something has already been stirring in your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to your heart during your quiet times what changes He wants you to make to walk closer to Him.

When a master sculptor is at work on a piece of marble, you may not understand why he chooses to make certain cuts here or there at first, when you can clearly see a large chunk needs to be removed. This is what a marble sculptor named Donatello said,

“You’re almost taking readings (of the marble); how it’s breaking, how much you can take off, how sharp your chisels are, what angle you need to do. Because working marble in particular, you have to be technically correct. Because marble is translucent, and the light travels through the surface before it bounces back. If you use a dull chisel, or you hit it too hard, you can crush the crystals, which leaves what’s call a bruise or a stun mark in the marble. This mark is below the surface, and you have to re-carve it to get rid of the stun mark. You need to keep your chisel sharp and not be over ambitious. Tap away and nibble away at the marble.”

The Lord gave us this example of a master marble sculptor. **This example came during prayer time and was not of my own thoughts.** Listening to the sculptor speak, it gave me the realization this is the perfect example of why we are not supposed to beat ourselves up with lifestyle corrections or go after others with lifestyle corrections and condemnations. We humans are dull chisels. The Master Sculptor is the Lord with the sharp chisel making the perfect cuts. His light travels through us, and depending on the cuts, bruises, and stuns we have received in life is how we reflect His light back out. Dull cuts require the Lord to go back and re-cut the stun marks and bruises out. We shouldn’t be over ambitious with ourselves and others, because readings of the marble determine how the cuts should be made. Sometimes out of our human love for people we go to them and say, “*You have to stop drinking, smoking, sleeping around, cussing, dressing like that, and for God’s sake read your Bible.*” It’s not just others, we do it to ourselves, “*You have to quit cussing when you’re mad, quit getting mad in traffic, stop watching rated-R movies, read your Bible more, pray more, change your diet, and learn to forgive a little bit better.*” It’s still a dull chisel, even when you do this to yourself. Admitting change must be made is good but asking the Holy Spirit to show you where to start and to help you is the way to ensure the perfect chisel cut will be made. I’m going to read what Donatello said one more time. This time listen closely to what the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us about how to approach righteous living. Let these words minister to your heart.

“You’re almost taking readings (of the marble); how it’s breaking, how much you can take off, how sharp your chisels are, what angle you need to do. Because working marble in particular, you have to be technically correct. Because marble is translucent, and the light travels through the surface before it bounces back. If you use a dull chisel, or you hit it too hard, you can crush the crystals, which leaves what’s call a bruise or a stun mark in the marble. This mark is below the surface, and you have to re-carve it to get rid of the stun mark. You need to keep your chisel sharp and not be over ambitious. Tap away and nibble away at the marble.”

*How do we let the Master Sculptor do His work on us? Reading the Word, praise and worship, being fed by pastors and teachers, and asking the Lord to teach you, rebuke you, correct you, and train you in righteousness. When we spend time with the Lord, we learn His love, and our understanding of our righteous position and righteous living will line up easily. **We’re not looking to make rules for ourselves and standards that we must live up to or else, that’s Pharisaical behavior.** We’re going to keep our eyes on*

Him loving us, and us reflecting that love into a dark world. His love never fails! You are loved, and out of His love is where the changes should come from. Never a to-do list.

Homework this week!

Say it out loud and tell other people:

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – turn it into a prayer, and ask the Lord to reveal how you can become cleaner

Ask the Lord to show you the next step in His love walk, righteous living.

You don't want to miss next week's teaching on peace. Bring a notebook with you, because it's going to be a deep study that you'll want to reference again to help others.

(Prayer points:

- Lord give us a revelational understanding of who we are in Christ
- Teach us how to properly approach Your throne so we can obtain mercy and find grace
- Reveal to us if we are struggling with faith in our righteousness in Christ, and teach us how to make those adjustments
- Holy Spirit, please remind us when bad thoughts of unrighteousness (old sins) arise to say, "I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment."
- Thank you for leading us and guiding us to be closer to You.

In Jesus' name, Amen)