

Book of Revelation – God’s Everlasting Gospel Rev 14:6

Series REV-SS-R

A Short Study

Righteousness – God’s Relational Faithfulness

“Righteousness” is a biblical word that basically equates to the idea of *relational faithfulness or an unbroken pattern of other-centeredness* (Hosea 2:19-20; Ps 36:5-8; 37:21; 40:10; 143:1). When the Bible says that God is *righteous* it means that God treats people righteously (esp. during probationary time) and thus He always does what is right and just for others (Deut 32:4; Zeph 3:5).

Righteousness is described as living by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:16). This is first demonstrated in the life of Christ, a life of active *faith* (God’s constant *faith* which works by *agape love*, Gal 5:5-6). The word righteousness is closely associated with the concept of covenant keeping (Isaiah 42:6; Daniel 9:4,7). From His side of relationship, regardless of what we do, God maintains relational integrity (Lamentations 3:22-23; Isa 11:5; 2 Tim 2:13). He remains faithful to us no matter what pain to Himself that faithfulness necessitates. This is why the righteousness of Christ led Him to the *cross* (Isa 53; Romans 5:8).

The question that hung before the universe was, *Does God love others more than Himself?* The *cross* answered the question with a resounding YES! When Jesus breathed His last *agonizing breath at Calvary* without exerting His power to perform a single act of retaliation or self-preservation, it was proven beyond all doubt that God loves all others above and before Himself. This is why Paul pointed to the self-sacrificing death of Christ on the cross as the very gospel itself. At the cross we see the ultimate enactment of the righteousness of God’s character in putting all others first (1 Cor 1:9, 17-18; 2:2; 15:1-4). And that’s the gospel in all its sublime beauty!

So, then, what does God’s righteousness (His faithful *love*) mean for us on a practical level? Read Romans 3:20-28 for Paul’s explanation of God’s righteousness as the basis of our salvation. {For a diagram of this passage, [click here](#)}. Carefully think through what Paul is saying in this passage, because it is the best news you will ever hear. All of us are guilty sinners and if left to ourselves our sin and guilt will destroy us. And yet, because of “God’s righteousness”—the faithfulness of His character that moves Him to keep on loving us in spite of our guilt—He has chosen to give us a justified standing of innocence before Him at the cost of great suffering on His part. We are declared righteous and, for those who come into agreement with God, are made righteous. This happens all out of a means of God’s *faith* and righteousness.

This, Paul says, is the good news! And this, says the first angel’s message is what God’s end-time church is to proclaim to every people, nation, kindred and tongue on earth.*

*Adapted from [truth]LINK #21 *The First Angel’s Message* lesson guide.