

50 POSITIONAL TRUTHS

#24: Made Righteous

There are at least four aspects of righteousness in the Bible. It is important to understand these various uses in order to appreciate the truth that the believer has been “made” righteous.

First, there is the righteousness of God. God is holy and righteous in two ways. He is righteous in His own person (James 1:17; 1 John 1:5), and He is righteous in all His ways (Rom. 3:25-26).

Second, there is man’s relative righteousness. This is having integrity and being true to your word. However, this righteousness is nothing but filthy rags when compared to the righteousness of God and what is needed to be with God in heaven (Isa. 64:6). Though there is a human relative righteousness per se, the reality is that no man is absolutely righteous by what he is or what he can do (Rom 3:10). It is a grave mistake for man to attempt to establish this “righteousness” for acceptance before God (Rom. 10:3). Man quickly moves into self-righteousness and arrogance when he compares any personal “rightness” with others (2 Cor. 10:12). Although there is a limited or relative righteousness of man in regard to laws of divine establishment and basic character that is to be commended on a temporal level (Matt. 1:19), no man is righteous in the absolute sense of the word (Rom. 3:10).

Third, there is an imparted righteousness. When the believer is living under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there is a true righteousness that is produced by the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16-18).

Fourth, there is imputed righteousness. Although “impute” generally has bad connotations in our time (e.g., “impute” evil motives to someone), the basic idea of the term is to consider or reckon—to consider righteous is the idea behind impute righteousness. This is not to be thought of as God actually imparting His own attribute of righteousness to the believer. The correct idea here is of a believer being considered absolutely righteous by virtue of his being in Christ. Jesus Christ represents the righteousness of God, and the believer becomes what Christ is at the moment of believing. Again, God sees every believer as righteous, not by any righteousness in him, but by virtue of the fact that he is in the Righteous One, Jesus Christ. Positionally we are eternally in Christ and so share in His righteousness. Any and all righteousness that is acceptable to God is only made possible by Jesus Christ. Grace provides what God demands—absolute righteousness!

Positional truth #24: Made Righteous.

Romans 3:21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Philippians 3:9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

Existing by Esse,

Pastor Don