

Living Righteousness Well
Genesis 18:16-33

“The essential truth that transcends everything in this section is that God is righteous and just—‘Shall the judge of all the earth do what is just?’ Righteousness is an attribute of God’s moral being, and because of that, all his actions are just. It is impossible for God to do anything that is unjust. His judgments are righteous and just. His mercies are righteous and just. We can rest everything in life on this truth. It will never change. The judge of all the earth will do right!

Because God hears all and knows all, judgment is coming—as sure as God is righteous and just. Still, nothing is more offensive to the unbelieving heart than the coming judgment. No doubt, the inhabitants of Sodom would have shouted God down for being so unfair. Why should you single us out for punishment? they would have thought. But God must act in a way consonant with his perfection, for such action is always right.

In this world it is God’s people who are called to mediate his hope—like Abraham in his day. Jesus has become for them the righteousness of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30). As his people, we are to live lives of righteousness and justice. As God’s people we reach out to the needy, we love the sinner, we give of our resources, we sacrifice ourselves for the lost, we petition Heaven for their souls. And through Christ God calls a people to himself.”

- I. Like in Abraham’s day, there are three groups of people who exist. There are the righteous who live their imputed righteousness well, the righteous who compromise to the world’s evil ways, and the unrighteous who couldn’t care less about living life God’s way. Abraham represents the first group, those chosen by God to walk before Him and be blameless. Their fruit is seen by the positive effect they have by keeping the way of the Lord and by doing what is right and just on family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and others. It is the only group that can fully benefit from the many blessings God gives to those who love him and obey His commands.

Gen. 18:16-19

Gen. 17:1

John 14:21

Matthew 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

2 Cor. 5:9-10 *So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

- II. The standard that God uses to judge a man or woman is His perfect holiness. No one can meet His standard of righteousness because all have sinned and come short of His glory. As a result, man stands condemned before Him. The only way to be declared not guilty for sin is through His Son Jesus Christ. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (Rom. 3:22).* Only then, are we given the holiness we need to positionally stand before him as holy saints redeemed by the blood of Christ. It is His holiness in us that sets us apart from the world and its ways. It His holiness that guarantees our salvation and entrance into His kingdom. It His holiness that is to be cherished, guarded, and expressed as an honor to Him who laid down His life for us.

Matt. 5:48

1 Jn. 3:16 *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.*

Matt. 13:33-34 *Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

- III. There is a great contrast between those who have the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ and those who don't. It is to be a distinct noticeable difference, so much so, that the world will hate us for it. The reason it does, is because our righteousness exposes their sin. If it doesn't, then, like Lot, we fail to realize the precious gift we've been given. Abraham had a passion for the lost, but he didn't compromise his righteousness to appease them. Lot unfortunately did, which did nothing to appease God's wrath against their sin. Who knows how many righteous would have been in Sodom if he would have stood firm in the faith. It certainly is a challenge for us today, isn't it!

Gen. 18:20-33

1 Jn. 3:11-12

Gen. 4:1-10

1 Jn. 3:13

Jn. 15:18-19

2 Peter 2: 6-8

"As Matthew Henry notes, 'The great serpent himself reigns as the God of this world. Wonder not then that the serpentine world hates and hisses at you who belong to the seed of the woman who is to bruise, [i.e., crush], the serpent's head.'" Boice