

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

**PRAYING
THROUGH
THE NAMES
OF GOD**

by Faith Girl

BACKGROUND

Righteousness isn't a popular word in our culture. Yet righteousness is essential to our happiness because it involves being in right relationship or right standing with God and conforming to his character, fulfilling our responsibilities toward him and others. But righteousness is impossible for us to achieve, no matter how much we might long for it. It comes only as God's gift to us through faith in His Son. When we pray to the Lord Our Righteousness, we are praying to the One who has intervened on our behalf to restore us to His likeness and therefore to fellowship with Himself.

The Hebrew word 'tsedeqis' usually translated as "righteousness" but can also be translated as "righteous", "honest", "just", "truth" or "integrity". Righteousness primarily involves being in right standing with God. As such it concerns fulfilling the demands of relationship with both God and with others. Though people were often called righteous in the Hebrew Scriptures if they observed the Law, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament stress that righteousness is not merely a matter of outward behaviour but a matter of the heart – of thoughts, motives and desires. The goal is not merely to DO what God says but to BECOME like Him. In the words of Addison Leitch, righteousness is "primarily and basically a relationship, never an attainment.... Christian righteousness....is a direction, a loyalty, a commitment, a hope – and only someday an arrival."

The prophet Jeremiah predicted the coming of a King who would be called "The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jehovah Tsidkenu). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy by restoring our relationship with God through his life, death and resurrection.

SCRIPTURE

"In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness (Jehovah Tsidkenu)." Jeremiah 23:6

"There is no one righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:10)

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

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Jesus fulfilled this prophecy by restoring our relationship with God through his life, death and resurrection. Paul proclaims in his letters to the Romans, “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Romans 3:21-22)

The word “righteous” isn’t a word you’re likely to hear at work, on public radio, or network TV. Though it may conjure images of the popular singing duo the Righteous Brothers (at least to the over-forty crowd), it is far likelier to make us think of religious prigs, people who alienate us with their smug, self-satisfied views.

But the Bible speaks of righteousness as something altogether different from self-righteousness. To be righteous is to be in right relationship with God and with others. Rather than suffering the misshaping power of sin, the righteous bear a striking resemblance to God, not in terms of His power but in terms of His character. They display His faithful love, his mercy, humility, integrity and justice. Furthermore the bible states that God hears the prayers of the righteous. He blesses their homes, smooths their paths, grants their desires, rescues them from trouble, and makes them prosper. But here’s the rub: Scripture also says that God is the only one who is completely righteous..

The righteousness God bestows through faith in His Son is the path to re-creating paradise, to gaining heaven, to enjoying the unbroken fellowship with God and each other that our Creator intended since the world’s beginning.

Righteousness can be defined as the standard required for people to be acceptable to God. It’s the divinely ordained value of rightness.

Righteousness comes from God, so only He can define true righteousness. Wrongness can be understood as that which contradicts God’s rightness.

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When your hunger for God is decreasing and your appetite for the things of the world is increasing, you can be sure the distance between you and God is growing.

When you fill up on reading novels, watching television, talking to people, and getting the world's perspective before going to God, you lose your appetite and hunger for God. You cease to "hunger and thirst for righteousness," thus eliminating the care, peace, and provision that comes from Jehovah Tsidkenu. To know and fully experience everything God spoke of in Jeremiah 23: 4, you need to know "the LORD our righteousness."

Righteousness exposes areas where sin has infected your life so you can deal with the problem and return to a right relationship with God. And God tells us how He brings righteousness into the lives of His own. "I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land" (Jeremiah 23: 5). This verse is one of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus Christ.

One of the unique things about Christ is that He is both fully God and fully human. This combining of a human nature with the divine nature into one person is called the hypostatic union. Born without sin and having lived 33 years without sinning, Christ hung on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind. After His death, burial, and resurrection, the Righteous Branch had fulfilled His intended purpose as Jehovah Tsidkenu. The apostle Paul wrote, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5: 21).

Said another way, the sin of humanity— yours and mine— was credited to Jesus Christ. Because of this credit on Him, the wrath of God— tied to the sin— was poured out on Him on the cross. The beating, the nails, and the brutality were agonizing, but even worse, He bore the wrath of God on the cross because of our sin.

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But He paid this ultimate cost in order that we might become “the righteousness of God in Him,” as we just read. Just as our sin was credited to Jesus’s account when He hung on the cross to die, His righteousness is credited to each one of us who trust in Him as our Lord and Savior. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are going to heaven on credit. This is because God can’t lower His standard of perfection to allow you entrance into heaven as a sinful being. You can enter in only through the forgiveness of your sin, which comes through the sacrifice of Christ.

Because of Christ’s righteousness, you are credited with righteousness when you believe on His name. If you know Jehovah Tsidkenu, He becomes your tsidkenu. Neither you nor I are righteous in our own standing. But through Jesus Christ, we receive a credit exchange. Our sin on Him and His righteousness on us. Only His perfect righteousness gets you and me into heaven— nothing less than that.

Now, that’s for eternity, but how does this principle of God’s name apply in history? God’s standard is righteousness, and He doesn’t negotiate His standard. We live in the here and now, where none of us are righteous, so how does Jesus’s death on the cross affect us today? I’ll illustrate with a bank account. If a bank teller called you today and said \$ 10,000 was credited to your account, you would celebrate. You would get your praise dance on and shout a hallelujah because you could begin to make withdrawals from the credit in your account.

The same is true for the tsidkenu that God has given each of us through Jesus Christ. This name of God not only gives you a perfect credit score in terms of your standing with Him in heaven, but also allows you to make “righteous” withdrawals here on earth.

How does this happen? Through the indwelling of a brand-new spirit in you when you trust in the righteous Branch, Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5: 17).

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The Bible calls this new life in us an imperishable seed (1 Peter 1: 23). This seed contains all you need to live a life of righteousness. But if it stays merely a seed, you will continue to live according to your old worldly standards.

If you're in Christ, you are brand-new. You're not the same person you were before, even though you may be doing some of the things you did before. Why is that? Because your identity is in Him— He is your righteousness now (1 Corinthians 1: 30). Yet if you're doing the same things you did before, the seed hasn't been allowed to germinate, grow, and fill your soul.

Many Christians have this seed and are still wondering why the Christian life doesn't seem to be working. They try their hand at what I like to call "soul management," but they end up frustrated because the results are only temporary. The reason the seed isn't working to bring about transformation is that the seed hasn't been allowed to grow. The growth of the seed in you affects the control of your soul. If the seed doesn't grow, the self-life will continue to rule you because the Spirit's life in you is still in seed form. A seed won't express its life until it's planted. It has life, but it won't express life. A two-week old fetus in a mother's womb already has all of the DNA it needs to reach its fullest potential of life. But that two-week old fetus doesn't express that life the way a full-grown baby does just after delivery. The newborn baby is the result of the seed that has grown.

There are several ways to feed and nourish the seed of righteousness planted in your spirit. One way is through the Word of God. Another way is to "put on" Christ. The apostle Paul wrote, "Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4: 24). And "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Romans 13: 14).

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In other words, every morning when you wake up and get dressed, you are to put on Jesus Christ. As you go throughout your day, you are to put on Jesus Christ. You are to wear His righteousness by seeking to live within His standards. You are to view life through His perspective.

As you continue to do this day by day, moment by moment, your mind begins to be transformed, and the righteous seed in you begins to grow. As it grows, it dominates your soul so you're no longer forcing yourself to make right choices. You're making them automatically.

If you're serious about experiencing God and the fullness and manifestation of the power of His names in your life, you have to move toward righteousness in your daily life. You have to be, as Isaiah penned, clothed in the righteousness of God. "He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61: 10). You are to grow in Christ through His righteousness made alive in you. "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1: 30).

If you will pursue righteousness, you'll discover your spirit being fed. Your soul will expand, your body will change, and your life will be restored as God originally intended it to be.

Accept by faith the righteousness that comes to you through Jesus Christ, the one we call Jehovah Tsidkenu, The Lord Our Righteousness.

Father, I admit that I have sinned and fallen far short of your glory – of your purity, your justice, your integrity, your mercy, and your love. I have no right to stand in your presence, except by the grace of your Son through his offering of love on the cross. Thank you, God, for drawing me back when I was so far away. Help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness on this earth – that all men and women might return to you and give you glory through the love and power and mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ.

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Jehovah Tsidkenu, I have no righteousness of my own that comes from obeying the law, but the righteousness I have comes through faith in Christ. It is the righteousness that depends entirely on faith. Through this faith, you give me a clean slate of purity, bought and earned through the life of Christ. I praise you for your goodness and grace and for the mercies you give me each and every moment of every day. For my sake you made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him I might become the righteousness of God. Thank You.

Jehovah Tsidkenu, I come to you with a heart of anguish for all of the sins I have ever committed, seeking your forgiveness and mercy. Forgive me for every unkind word I have ever thought or spoken. Forgive me for every selfish act I have ever committed. Forgive the hardness of my heart and my lack of faith. Pardon my fears, remove my doubts, and cover my insecurities with your righteous, covenantal love.

Jehovah Tsidkenu, thank you for imputing your righteousness to me so that I stand in the promises of your covenantal care – not because of anything I have done but because of your great love. Thank you for cleansing me from all unrighteousness and for covering me with the blood of Jesus Christ. This righteousness that I now enjoy came at a great cost to the Son of God, and my heart overflows with gratitude as I think of all you have done for me.

Jehovah Tsidkenu, as you cover me in your righteousness, I pray for the grace to be ever mindful of the cost of this gift. I do not want to treat it lightly or dismiss the price you paid to offer this to me. But also, help me to embrace this gift so I can stand tall and confident before you. Keep my heart open to you so that I may approach you and seek the covenant promises you have made to those who stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Make me useful to you as I serve in humility and worship in righteousness before your throne.