



GOING DEEPER

In Matt 5:6 Jesus plants an important seed for the culture of the Kingdom of God. He says to His disciples that those who hunger for righteousness will be filled, as He himself is. This is the culture within which the Kingdom can bear fruit.

Righteousness

According to the dictionary righteousness means: correctness, according to the law. It means having a clean conscience. One of the characteristics of God is that He is righteous.

Ex 9:27 Pharaoh says here that God is righteous and that means that He is right. According to the law God is in His right.

Which characteristics of God are mentioned here?

Deut 32:4

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What is meant by the righteousness of Abraham?

Rom 4:13-17

Gal 3:6-9,14

Jak 2:18-24

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Abraham heard God speak on different occasions and then acted accordingly to follow the directions given to him.

There are two noticeable stories from the life of Abraham. One is the story in which Abraham let his nephew Lot make the choice. Lot chose the land of Sodom. Abraham trusted God and went to live in the wilderness; he believed that God's blessing would follow him there.

In the second story, once the promised son Isaac had been born, Abraham does not hesitate to sacrifice Isaac when he is roughly 13 years old. He trusted God and acted upon that which he had heard.

The Kingdom of God and Righteousness

If we take a closer look at the Kingdom of God we see that God intended a Kingdom within which righteousness, righteous living and the Kingdom are closely connected.

What should we be seeking?

Matt 6:33

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Notice the word 'its'. In the Kingdom of God it is not about your righteousness and what you think or feel about it, but about God's, the Kingdom's righteousness. He determines the culture of the Kingdom. The rules of living are there so that everyone can live in the Kingdom in peace and joy. So that one can live in love with God and others.

Jesus, the Righteous One

Righteousness is the character of God and of His Kingdom. We see this also in Jesus.





Why is Jesus anointed with the oil of joy?

Hebr. 1:8,9

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Jesus showed in His lifetime what it means to live a righteous life.

How does Jesus judge?

John 5:30

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Here we see that for Jesus, righteousness means God the Father being above all things and that Jesus does what He hears the Father saying.

The practical outworking of this can be read in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus teaches His disciples about varying themes.

Revenge versus Forgiveness

Matt 5:21,22 Be free of personal feelings of revenge or bitterness, because the attitude of heart in the Kingdom is love. This may sometimes mean laying down your right to be right. This is just what Jesus did when He was declared guilty.

Matt 5:23-25, 44,45 Forgiveness is a key thing in the Kingdom of God. It is about your heart, let it be motivated by forgiving love towards those who do evil unto you. A heart free of personal revenge.

Unpure versus Pure

Matt 5:27-29 Purity begins in your heart. The law says that we must not commit adultery but Jesus goes much further; He is talking here about what goes on in your heart. If we allow all sorts of impure thoughts in our heart, a place which no one can see, then we are in the same bad place as those who commit adultery. Righteousness in this instance means choosing to be pure of heart. Who you are in your heart is important.

Dishonesty versus Honesty

Matt 5:37

Let your yes be yes and your no, no. In other words, be honest and trustworthy.

Exterior versus Interior

Matt 6:1-4 Jesus shows us here that it is not about how wonderfully you can pray or how much you put in the offering. What is important is what you tell God with your heart and give with your heart.

In the gospels we see Jesus teaching lessons but also him living them out. He is living from the heart which is devoted to the Father. He is honest, pure, forgiving, full of love. In Him we see the law being fulfilled.

Now You

We often struggle with the reactions of our heart. It is not easy to forgive or to live a pure life. In this world in which we live there are continually challenges and difficult or tempting moments. So how can we become more like Jesus?

Who purifies us and keeps us pure?

John 15:3-7

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How have I been made righteous? How can I stand before God as righteous?

Rom 1:17, 4:5,
8:10, 10:4,10

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The answer is not that difficult. It is only by faith and not by your own works. You no longer look at the things you do wrong (a result of living by the law) but you look at what Jesus has done for you.

Do I not have to do anything to be made righteous before God?

Apart from believing, you can do nothing. By faith you have been made completely righteous to God. You stand righteous before Him. You can never become more righteous than you already are! This comes by Jesus living in you. He is holy, He will lead you and His righteousness shall be expressed through your whole being. It will manifest itself in your deeds.

What does James say about faith?

Jam 2:18-26

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It says that through believing, Jesus comes in us by His Spirit. This is what makes us righteous. You have chosen Jesus to be Lord of your life and the result is that you are willing to live as Jesus did. Just as radically as He did, listening to the Father and doing what He shows you.

EXERCISE



Ask God the Father if He will show you what is in your heart. Ask Him to show you your deepest thoughts about these subjects.



Think carefully about yourself, if you live an honest, pure life full of love and forgiveness. If this is not the case, write down what you are currently struggling with and which areas you are going to let God's Spirit deal with you.



Discuss your struggles with your mento. Ask your mentor how they managed to overcome these areas. Talk together about Romans 7 and 8. Invite the Holy Spirit to work in the areas where you struggle.

Reading task: the letter to the Romans – study the words justified and righteousness.

PRINCIPE 34

Giving people what is due to them. In the Kingdom this means punishment, protection or care. It can mean bringing correction. The needs of widows, orphans, strangers (immigrants) and the poor are important to the King. Doing what is right is linked to faithfulness and humility.

