

A LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

A LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - PART 8

Last week we looked at Ephesians 2:10 and we broke this down into 3 parts.

1. *“For we are His workmanship”.*
2. *“Created in Christ Jesus for good works”*
3. *“Which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them”*

It's very clear from this passage of truth, and many other passages, that there are Spirit centred, inspired, empowered and led works, which are to be expressed through the church, God's people.

We want to take some time and unpack what these works are over the coming weeks, but before we look at the first work, we must realise that if we are not in this Divine Kingdom Pattern above, then the chances are very slim, and will be hit and miss, of us being able to become Christlike and live out these eternal divine works. It all hinges on us actually being and becoming the workmanship of His hands. In other words being built by Christ or the Spirit from the inside out, not the outside in.

Matthew 23:25-26 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

When we are not the workmanship of His hands, allowing Him to clean the inside of us, but think we are, these works will avoid us and we will be found doing our own version of these good works or righteous works, giving ourselves a clap on the back, not aware of the futility of our works, just like these religious leaders.

The First good work or righteous act is to 'Believe'.

John 6:29 This is the work of God, that you believe in Him, whom He has sent.

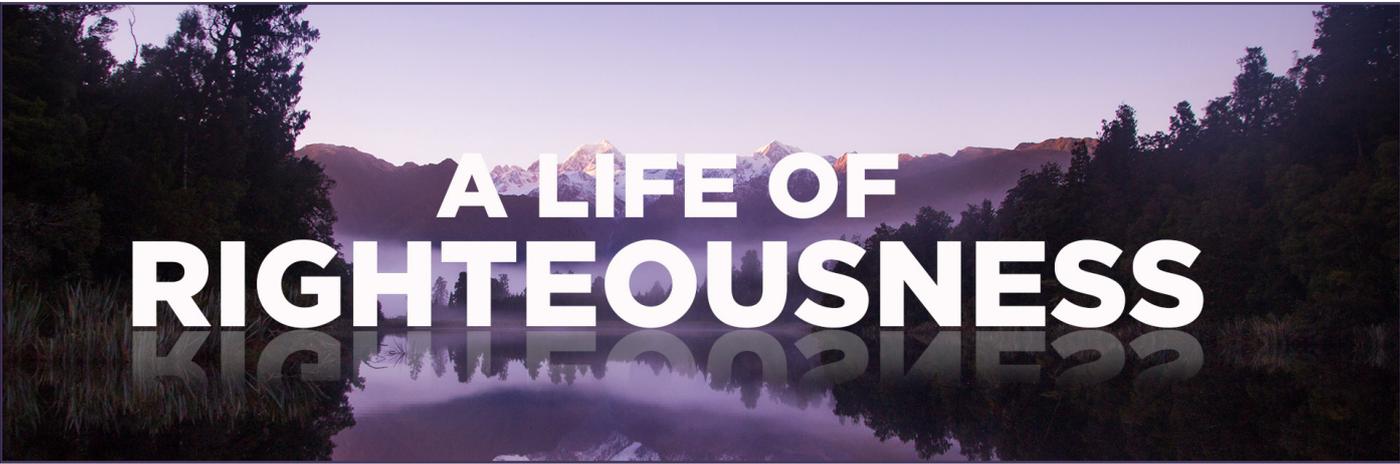
Firstly we are to believe in who He is and secondly in what He says. The question we then must ask ourselves is, “What does it really mean to believe?” because plenty of followers say they believe, but don't necessarily live out the divine demonstration of a life of righteousness.

Luke 6:46 “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

To believe means way more than mental agreement or an acknowledgement of who Christ was and His words. To say you believe Jesus is the Messiah and in the words He speaks, is to have a life that is yielded and surrendered unto Him as Lord, where you value obedience to Him and what He says, as of paramount importance to you. This becomes your number one priority, passion and purpose.

This good work is a work of fellowship. It is a work in the heart and the mind. It is not an external work, but an inner work of transformation, which ultimately will outwork itself in an expression or demonstration of Christ, but it starts on the inside of us.

The Jews wanted Jesus to do an external work so they could believe in Him, while those of the Spirit, those who are in fellowship with God, believe in Him, purely from who He says He is, and what He says is Truth.



A LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

John 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

This out of all the 3 righteous works, is the most essential and important, because it will define and shape the other 2 righteous good works or acts we are to accomplish and demonstrate.

As always the beginning position, or where we start from, is the most critical for getting the middle and the end in absolute alignment and oneness in Him - A life of righteousness lived out.

If we truly want to live lives of righteousness the first work of God, which is to spiritually believe, is the key.

We can see why in 1 John 5:5 John says it's the one who believes who overcomes the world. It's the one who carries, through revelation, a living conviction in the heart, of who Jesus is and the words He speaks, who overcomes and is not overcome. It's the one who has and is receiving the tangible substance of God's eternal food source within themselves, which causes this 'kind' of 'believe'.

John 6:53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."

John 6:55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

The consequence of not being in this 'kind' of 'believe', this first work, is to have no life within us.

This first work of believe, empowers and enables us to live in a way, that a mere acknowledgement or mental agreement of I believe doesn't. While many of Jesus' disciples walked away in John 6 because they said His teaching was too hard and who could understand it, Peter said, "We have believed and come to know You are the Holy One of God".

It is this work, this 'believe', that empowered Peter to stay, even though He too didn't understand many of the words of Christ when He spoke them. What Peter had received though was the revelation from the Father that Jesus was in fact the Messiah, which formed this "Believe", this First Work.

QUESTIONS

1. What arrested you the most and why, out of what we have just heard?
2. Why is it essential that we truly are His workmanship, when it comes to being able to enter into this first work of God?
3. Why is the first work of God an inner work and not an external work?
4. Why do so many demand proof or evidence of God, as opposed to believing in what He says?
5. How different are the 2 'Believes' and why is this the case?

ACTION POINT: What action point do we need to take away from tonight and apply to our lives?