**Righteousness by Faith**

O for a faith. What sort of a faith? That will not shrink though pressed by many a foe, a faith that shines more bright and clear, when tempests rage without, when in danger knows no fear, that bears unmoved the world’s dread frown nor heeds its scornful smile, nor its soft arts beguile.

We will delve into faith by which righteousness is obtained.  Righteousness by faith; our research is itemised into four sections:

1. What is righteousness
2. The Bible requirement of human action in reference to gaining righteousness
3. The human failure to attain this kind of righteousness
4. The function of faith by which we attain to righteousness

As we proceed into righteousness, the definition is our first and foremost quest, we want to understand the way that scripture answers it. What is righteousness? What is the definition?

**Psalm 119:172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.**

All God’s commandments are righteousness.  That simple statement from the Bible, is expanded upon in the words of the Spirit of Prophecy in the story of Jesus.

**“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Righteousness is right-doing. It is obedience to the law of God; for in that law the principles of righteousness are set forth. The Bible says, “All Thy commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:172. SJ 61.1**

It is expanded that righteousness is doing, obeying the commandments of God. That is what righteousness is.

**The law of God is the divine standard of righteousness.  9T 43**

**The foundation firmly laid, we need wisdom that we may know how to build. When Moses was about to erect the sanctuary in the wilderness, he was cautioned, “See … that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” Hebrews 8:5. In His law, God has given us the pattern. Our character building is to be after “the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” The law is the great standard of righteousness. It represents the character of God, and is the test of our loyalty to His government. And it is revealed to us, in all its beauty and excellence, in the life of Christ…. CT 62.1**

If you want to understand the Ten Commandments, it is in the life of Christ. This is the foundation of which our character is to be built.  Our character building is to be after the pattern shown thee in the mount. God has given us the pattern, the law is the great standard of righteousness. This is the pattern that we are to build our character from.

**The Lord has precious promises in this life for those who keep His law. He says, “My son, forget not My law; but let thine heart keep My commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” Proverbs 3:1-4. CT 63.1**

Righteousness is keeping the law, the Ten Commandments of God. Simple.

If according to all we have been reading so far, it is conclusive that the obedience to these commandments is for us to engage in. It is ours to keep the Ten Commandments. That is ours to do — to keep them.

Who has the right to enter into heaven? The New Jerusalem?  Who are they?

**Revelation 22: 14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**

Blessed are they that DO. When Jesus was confronted with the question – what must I do to have eternal life? What was the answer of Jesus?

**Matthew 19: 16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him… if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.**

Very clear. Righteousness is keeping the commandments of God, and if we want to have eternal life, we are to keep those commandments.

**The Jews still accused Jesus of lightly regarding the law given from Sinai, but He turned the question of salvation upon the keeping of God’s commandments. COL 377.1**

Our salvation is the keeping of God’s commandments.

**“This do, and thou shalt live,” Christ said. In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man’s destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. COL 377.4**

We come away from this question of righteousness, what is it and what is it that we need to have for eternal life? Man is confronted by this proposal that we are to keep the commandments of God and being under this teaching with the prospect to reach eternal life, by keeping that law, what do we find?

Lots of doubt comes into the mind of a person. How do you feel? You will only be in heaven if you keep the commandments of God. Have I succeeded in doing that?

**Romans 7:10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. … 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. … 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

What does he describe?

**Romans 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.**

The apostle Paul is speaking about a mind that loves the law, a mind that delights in the law of God. My meditation is day and night as the Psalmist says. This is a person whose heart is in tune with the law of God and he wants to keep it but every human attempting to attain law keeping so he can obtain or reach eternal life as it is said, if you want eternal life, keep the commandments. If you want salvation through the keeping of the commandments, he is destined to failure. Why? Why are we failing to keep the commandments? Because the law of sin is in my members.  There is something making it impossible to gain eternal life by keeping the commandments.  This is what the whole definition of sin actually is.  Because of sin, what is sin?

**1 John 3:4 For sin is the transgression of the law.**

The apostle Paul is taking us in round circles of what we go through in our experience of coming to the commandments, it’s a dog chasing his tail. I have sin in me and I’m trying to keep the law. Sin is the transgression of the law, what chance have I got? Sin is the opposite of righteousness which is the keeping of the law.  It is the opposite of righteousness which is keeping the commandments and sin is the opposite:

**1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.**

Here is a description of our condition as sin is transgression of the law, unrighteousness.

**Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.**

Righteousness is the keeping of the commandments – the requirement of the human to engage in to have eternal life but the human fails to attain to it. That leaves us with the importance of faith.

To understand the function of faith if we are going to have eternal life.  Righteousness is law keeping by faith.  If we saw that the perquisite to eternal life is to follow the pattern of an acceptable character which is the commandments of God; how then do we engage to follow and develop a character after the pattern of the Ten Commandments?  How do we engage to attain it?

**Christ knew that no one could obey the law in his own strength. He desired to lead the lawyer to clearer and more critical research that he might find the truth. COL 378.1**

Jesus knew that it was impossible to keep the law in our own strength. He wanted the to examine the subject more critically. He told the lawyer; keep the commandments to have eternal life. At the same time, he knew that in his own strength, he can’t do it and yet it is a requirement. He desired by showing them that this is what it is about gaining obedience to the commandments of God. He desired to lead him and our desire this hour, is to lead us into a more critical research that we might find the truth of righteousness, commandment keeping by faith.  The truth of righteousness by faith, not by human strengthy.

We need a scriptural and spiritual enlightenment. We need to be enlightened so that we might know the truth of eternal life that pertains to keeping the commandments of God.

Let the scripture show us that this dilemma that we suffer under as sinners. God requires me to keep his commandments to have eternal life. What is there in the scriptures by which I can gain eternal life by being a true law keeper?  We are going into critical research by which Jesus wanted to communicate by speaking to the lawyer.  Also what He wants us to do to attain to this law keeping by faith.

**Psalms 24:3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.**

Who should be able to enter the city? Those who keep the commandments of God. Those who have clean hands and pure hearts. It is those who have not lifted up their soul unto vanity. It is they who will receive the righteousness from the God of our salvation. Where does righteousness come from? Where does the keeping of the commandments come from?  From God. Man can’t achieve it. It must come from God.

**Isaiah 54:17 …This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.**

Righteousness is given of God. We receive righteousness from God. We want to enlarge this because righteousness which is commandment keeping, is something given by God.

**Psalm 37: 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. 7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.**

Righteousness is law keeping and to have eternal life we must be keeping the commandments of God. We put the effort into it and we fail miserably. What are we to do? Righteousness, commandment keeping comes from God. Therefore, what must I do? Delight myself in him. Have a relationship with Him and He will give you the desire of your heart. Blessed are they who hunger after righteousness. He shall bring forth your commandment keeping and your judgement as noonday.

Here I am striving to keep God’s commandments and failing miserably, God says I am going to give it to you. I am going to give you the keeping of the commandments. Just wait, wait patiently.  God will give us righteousness. Wait upon him.

**Romans 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.**

To be saved, I need to keep the commandments of God but I fail. I can’t gain righteousness by merely looking at the Ten Commandments as much as I can see they are given for life, as much as I strive to keep those commandments perfectly, and I need to keep them perfectly so that I have eternal life.  I have to wait upon God. He is the one who is going to give me his righteousness. He is going to give me the keeping of the commandments, and He says wait. I’m hoping to be saved. I’m hoping that I’m going to reach commandment keeping but hope that is seen, is not hope. For what a man sees, why doth he yet hope for it? If I can see that I can keep the commandments, is there any need for hope? Not at all.  But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. God has said I am going to give you my righteousness; wait.

**Hope**

How is hope to operate? How is hope for that which I don’t see?  I can’t see myself being perfect. Can you?  This is the very problem that faces the Christians of modern day seventh day Adventism. You will never be perfect this side of eternity. They have lost hope. They have another doctrine.  Hope, wait on the Lord. How is hope operating?

**Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**

Here comes that word faith because this is what we want to enlarge in our mind. Righteousness by faith is something that we gain by hope. We through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness which is keeping the commandments of God. We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

**Faith**

Righteousness by faith. What is faith? Faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen. I can’t see that I am going to be perfectly obedient to all the commandments, I keep on failing. What is faith? Faith is the evidence of things not seen.  Faith is that which we hope for and hope is something you don’t see yet.  These are very important elements in understanding righteousness by faith. It comes from God and it is something we are to wait for. It is something that we are to gain in hope waiting for it patiently and exercising faith that goes forward in faith hoping to gain that righteousness.

How does God admonish us in reference to keeping the commandments until faith has produced righteousness?  What is God showing us to understand? Waiting for something we don’t see, what are we to do in the meantime?

**Isaiah 56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. 2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.**

What is God saying here?  Just because you can’t keep the law in your own strength, keep on doing it.  Keep on putting it into practice. Keep judgment and do justice and as you continue to keep those commandments, my salvation is to come and my righteousness is to be revealed. He connects the Sabbath with that. Blessed is the man that does this. Does what?  Keeps judgment and righteousness because my righteousness is yet to be revealed. That’s what I’m waiting for. While I’m waiting for it, so I sit back and say – I’m waiting for the keeping of the commandments, I can’t do it?

God says keep on doing it as my righteousness is to come through this avenue.

This reminds me of a statement that says, as we keep the sabbath and as we move onto one step to another, the sabbath will become more and more precious.  As continue to put the effort into keeping the commandments, God said, this is the channel thought which I am going to give you my righteousness. Your effort must be put into it. This is what faith is all about.  Hebrews 11:6 – we must believe that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.  I am seeking Him in His law, I’m discovering Him. That is His character. Seek Him diligently.

**Hebrews 11: 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

He will reward us with his righteousness. He will reward us but I must exercise the faith. How does hope and faith operate?

**The follower of Christ must have faith abiding in the heart; for without this it is impossible to please God. Faith is the hand that takes hold of infinite help; it is the medium by which the renewed heart is made to beat in unison with the heart of Christ. MYP 102.3**

This is an important subject. Being in unison with Jesus. He came down to be a human being with sinful flesh and me in my sinful flesh in my effort to keep the commandment and failing, Jesus came what to do? He came as it says in Matthew 1:21 – He came to save His people from their sins. Not in them. But from their sins which is our unrighteousness to give us His righteousness. That’s what he came for, to save us from unrighteousness. The help is in Jesus Christ as we know, as it is written, He is the author and finisher of our faith.  We must gain commandment keeping through the faith of Jesus Christ. This is a very hands on experience.

**Sin is the transgression of the law, and no man can be saved in sin. The sinner must repent toward God, and become obedient to God’s law through faith in Christ. Faith is the hand that lays hold on Omnipotence. When we do those things that are lawful and right, through the grace of Christ, we are keeping God’s commandments; and to such God has pledged his word that he will do great things. Like Daniel, you may make confession of your sin, and present daily supplication unto God; ST March 24, 1890, par. 2**

I have failed, I have to confess my sins. I have not kept those laws properly. I have to be like Daniel and repent.

**….but however poor and unworthy and erring you may feel yourselves to be, it is your privilege to appropriate the promises of God. You may obtain the grace and help which Christ alone is able to give you. God can no more forget one of his children who is seeking to be obedient to his holy requirements than he can forget himself. ST March 24, 1890, par. 2**

God will not forget you who are striving to keep those commandments. God can no more forget one of his children who are seeking to be obedient to his holy requirements than he can forget himself.

**The Scriptures declare that Christ has graven us on the palms of his hands, that he holds us in everlasting remembrance. ST March 24, 1890, par. 2**

It’s all to do with a relationship. We are to strive to keep the commandments. That’s why he says, keep on doing justice, keep on doing these things, strive to keep them, and my righteousness is going to come. I am looking to you. I am not forgetting you.

**The blood of Christ was shed to atone for sin and to cleanse the sinner; and we must take hold of the merits of Christ’s blood, and believe that we have life through his name. Let not the fallacies of Satan deceive you; you are justified by faith alone, but faith in Christ does not absolve you from obligation to keep God’s unchangeable law, which is as sacred as his throne. Faith is essential, but genuine faith will enable its possessor to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. ST March 24, 1890, par. 1**

Righteousness by faith. Faith is the hand that takes hold of the strength that comes from God. Where is that strength; but in Jesus Christ. As I study Jesus Christ, as I by faith watch him and wait as he waited, at the cross. He waited and He broke through. His righteousness is going to be an ongoing discovery in our life by His promises. Although we cannot see perfect righteousness yet, faith is the evidence of things not seen. Jesus didn’t see his way through the tomb. Jesus didn’t see His way through the condemnation but he had faith in His Father.

We do not see righteousness in our life, but my faith comes from Jesus who is the author and finisher will take hold of the righteousness of God. In Jesus Christ we obtain righteousness. By beholding we become changed. It’s a waiting exercise by faith. I know I can keep the commandments; I will strive to keep them but I’m not being a pharisee.  Many say you are trying to be saved by works.  The hope keeps patiently waiting for the fruition of the unseen righteousness that is still to be developed.  God is working within as we patiently continue to work with Him.

**Romans 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:**

We are seeking this how? By patient continuance in well doing.  That is what God said in Isaiah, keep on doing the right thing. My righteousness is to come, be patient, hope for it. As you engage together with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, you will gain the keeping of the commandments by the faith of Jesus who did it before us. By patient continuance in well doing, we are to do what?

**Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**

The Ten Commandments cause me to tremble. I’m labouring hard to keep those commandments and as you do that, God works in you.  My righteousness will be given as you engage hopefully for something you don’t see as yet.  That is righteousness by faith.

**Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints.**

A people who are patiently striving for the obedience of all God’s laws through faith in Jesus Christ. Learning of him, exercising his faith. Those people have the faith of Jesus and they keep the commandments of God. Blessed are those. That is the way it is summarised in those beautiful words. Wait patiently for Him. Don’t give up trying to keep the commandments. Keep on looking to the promises of God. God is going to bring it about in you. Keep on studying Jesus.

Righteousness is keeping the commandments. We have no righteousness of our own. Our unaided attempts are a failure yet we are to attain to perfect righteousness. We are to attain to the perfect keeping of God’s commandments.

**He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation. FW 94.1**

We are seeking to gain heaven but we can’t without Jesus Christ. The keeping of the commandments. It is obtained through the activity of the faith that alone we rely on.  It is not a faith that we can conjecture in our own self, it is the gift of God. My righteousness which is by faith is a gift that comes to you by you exercising the faith that you find in Jesus Christ practising what Jesus practised and by following His example you will become righteous; you will become a commandment keeper.

If I’m not looking to Jesus, I’m looking to myself and I’m trying to gain works by my own efforts. But if I look to Jesus Christ, then I am not looking to myself to gain the victory.

**Christ knew that no one could obey the law in his own strength. He desired to lead the lawyer to clearer and more critical research that he might find the truth. Only by accepting the virtue and grace of Christ can we keep the law. COL 378.1**

What is behind keeping the law? Accepting the grace of Christ. This is the critical research we must understand.

**Belief in the propitiation for sin enables fallen man to love God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself. COL 378.1**

The research that Christ wanted to stir in the mind of the lawyer is stirred in our mind. I can’t get to heaven without keeping God’s commandments but I need help. It is not in my own strength to be able to achieve it. I look to Jesus. The transference of Jesus righteousness to us, I have shared Sabbath after Sabbath. The transferal of His righteousness. It is only possible as I look to Jesus. Let us put it into action. It is something I must do. As I wait patiently, righteousness by faith, will happen because God will make it happen. May these words that we have been contemplating come to an understanding in our hearts that we may understand, righteousness by faith.

Amen.