

## **Righteousness (Sometimes the Clothes do Make the Man)**

Ephesians 6:10-14

#36 in our series from Paul's letter to the Ephesians and our fifth sermon on spiritual warfare.

November 3, 2013

Peter Hiatt

### **Message**

[Jimi Tong gets dressed in the tuxedo; the tuxedo scans his body and maps his neurological structure. It then prompts him to activate the tuxedo through his watch. Jimi Tong intends to press the “demonstration” button but accidentally presses the “demolition” button. The tuxedo immediately goes into “demolition” mode, and we watch as Jackie Chan does numerous flips and destroys everything in sight. He then is able to get enough control to change it to a different mode, he presses the “shake booty” button and we see him dancing.]

That's to help you remember that we've been talking about the “whole armor of God” or as Marcus Barth translates it: “The splendid armor of God.” Last time, we said that the splendid armor of God is like that splendid tuxedo. When ordinary Jimmy Tong puts on that extraordinary tuxedo, he fights like Jackie Chan and dances like John Travolta.

Last time, we spoke about the first piece of armor, which is Truth.

And we saw that Truth is the Word of God.

And all creation is a manifestation of that Word.

All creation is a dance (even physicists tell us so).

All creation is a dance, yet not all dance.

By and large, we don't dance, and so we must still be being created. We must still exist in the sixth day of creation, before all is finished and everyone is good.



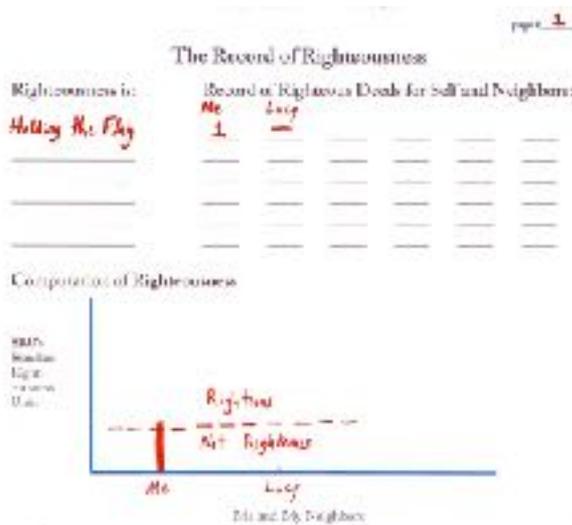
Well, last time I showed you this picture and said, “Truth is all around us, like music in a dance hall, but we're afraid to dance, and we don't dance until the truth becomes flesh and calls to us: “Come and dance.”

Ephesians 6:10-14

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole (splendid) armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil (Literally: "The Accuser"). For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole (splendid) armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day (the 6th day? Judgment day? This day? "Now is the judgment of this world"), and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness..."<sup>1</sup>

I think all of us want to be right, and we all realize that something in us is not right, so early on, we set out to make ourselves right. In fact, your whole life is like a history of your effort to make yourself right.

One of my earliest memories is writing that history.



This is page one of Peter's "Record of Righteousness." If you want to make yourself righteous you first have to ask, "What is righteousness?" In kindergarten, the powers that be told me that it was a privilege to hold the flag during the pledge of allegiance. So righteousness is: holding the flag.

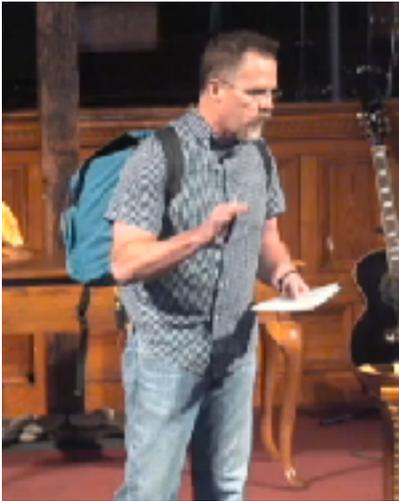
One day, I got to hold the flag, so I calculated one point for me, and zero for my friend Lucy. And then, I plotted my righteousness on a graph. (There's me and there's Lucy.) [Refer to chart above.]

Then I drew a line between me and Lucy. Above it, was "righteousness" and below it was "unrighteousness," and I enjoyed being right, but I soon felt wrong, so I looked for more ways to make myself right.

In ninth grade, I was still writing my history of righteousness but by now it was literally volumes of books.

I carried them everywhere, and they really weigh you down. But I desperately wanted to be right.

<sup>1</sup> Breastplate of *dikaioisune*– "rightness." It comes from the root *dikaios*, which means right and that root is the root of a whole family of words that get translated all sorts of ways.



I brought some to show you.



They are extremely complicated, so I'd like to show you a simplified version of just one page from one day in 1975.



Page #9,463,352,637,342

The principalities and powers of school district #6 had taught us that good grades, competitively achieved, made you righteous. But by ninth grade, more powerful social structures informed us

that other deeds were more important AND we didn't call them "righteous" but "cool." These are a few of the "categories of cool": ski tags, sports, girlfriends, pimples, dumb instruments, body function noises.

This is how it worked: (For simplicity, I'll calculate for only Bobby, me, and Dave.)

Ski tags were really cool (If you had a bunch of ski tags on your jacket). So Bobby always did; give him two points. I did, two points...Dave didn't...no points.

Playing sports was cool. Bobby was great at sports; give him three points. I went to soccer practice; give me one point. Dave, he wasn't in any sports so give him zero.

Girls...all the girls loved Bobby; give him three points. A cheerleader once talked to me so give me three. Dave didn't have a girlfriend, so zero.

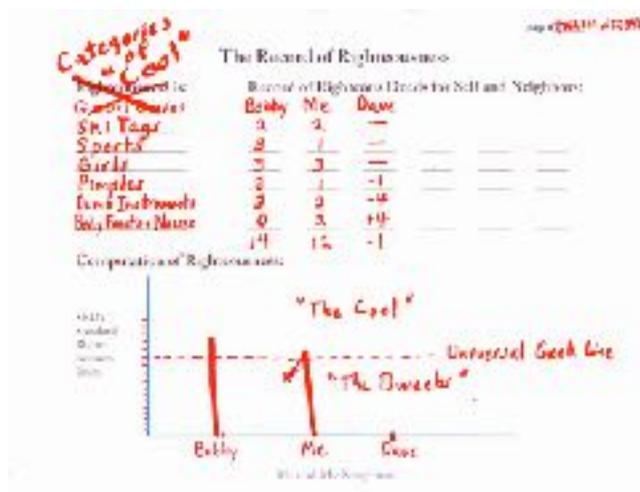
Pimples: Bobby didn't have any pimples so give him three. I had some pimples; give me one. Dave came to school with Clearasil dried on his face...minus one!

Dumb instruments, you shouldn't play dumb instruments. Bobby did not play dumb instruments so that's three. I didn't play dumb instruments so three. Dave...he was State Champion Cello Player, minus four!!

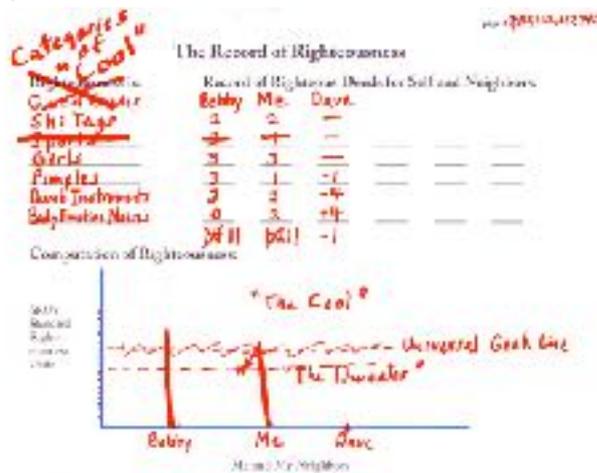
Body function noises, that was really important. Bob struggled here; he couldn't really do any...so zero. I could kind of let them rip, that's two. Dave could burp the whole alphabet so that's plus four!

You add up those totals. The scores are totaled and added to historical scores (but for simplicity, we'll assume a baseline of zero.) The scores are then plotted and just below my score, I draw the "Universal Geek line." Above are the "cool," and below are the "geeks" in the "Dweeb Zone." [Refer to the bottom part of the chart above under "Computation of Righteousness."]

Now, I was ruled by the "Record of Righteousness." It determined who I ate lunch with, who I said, "Hey" to in the halls; it governed every step—each step was complex and calculated. It determined my moods. If Bobby got a zit, I secretly rejoiced. When I was down, I could think about Dave carrying his cello across the football field. By judging him "last and least," I felt better about myself. But that year, I was cut from the soccer team. I remember sitting in a hole by the railroad tracks, crying my eyes out, not because I'd missed soccer, but because I had just been dropped into the "Dweeb Zone."



I actually remember thinking: “How will I explain this to my grandchildren. (Your grandpa is a dweeb). That really hurt, but after a few weeks or moping, I just changed a few categories of “cool”...



and lowered the “Universal Geek Line.”

That’s the beauty of these records I keep, and yet you do kind of live in fear:

- 1) What if my computations are inaccurate somehow?
- 2) What if Dave’s record of righteousness is different than mine?
- 3) What if I’m Bobby’s dweeb? His last and least—his scapegoat, so he can feel better about himself?

Now I know what you are thinking: “Yes, ninth grade boys are so immature.”

Well, here’s a page from the books of a standard adult male.



You’ll notice that it’s exactly the same layout and that it operates exactly the same way; it runs on competition, pride, shame, envy, and fear. It’s just that the categories of “cool” have changed. They were no longer “Holding the Flag” or “Ski Tags”...but: “Professional Success,” “Wife,” “Children,” “Landscaping,” “Snow Blower Horse Power.”

The “Universal Geek line” is the “Respectability line.” Above it are “Good Citizens,” below it are the “Less Fortunate.” You measure yourself against neighbors, coworkers, and maybe the Taliban. (It helps you feel better about yourself, for they don’t even own snow blowers.) And yet, you still feel frightened and alone, and not quite right. And that’s the point at which many folks get religion.



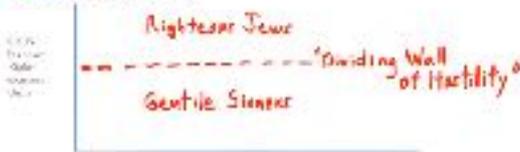
## Standard Jew - 1st Century

The Record of Righteousness

Righteousness is: Record of Righteous Deeds for Self and Neighbors

(10 Commandments)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Love (Mt 22:37-40)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mishnah	_____	_____	_____	_____
Circumcision	_____	_____	_____	_____
Not Dying on a Cross (Cursed & Blame and Last and Least)	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comparison of Righteousness



Self and Neighbors

Righteousness is: Ten Commandments. Love (The Pharisees knew law describes love). It's in Deuteronomy 6:5 They also said, "Love your neighbor." We always think Jesus came up with that, but the Pharisees knew that), Mishnah (Commentary on law), Circumcision (Paul wrote about the "circumcision party" (I don't know what that is but if ever invited...just say, "No."), Not dying on a cross (If you hung on a tree that meant you were "last and least" and cursed by God.)

See? It operates just the same way only the "categories of cool" have changed. So when most people argue about religion, they just argue that their laws are better than another's laws, but they all run on the exact same fuel: Pride, shame, envy, fear, competition. For the Pharisee, those above the "Universal Geek line" were "Righteous Jews." Below the "Universal Geek line" were "Gentile sinners," and Paul called the "Universal Geek line" *"the dividing wall of hostility."*

Now maybe you're thinking, "Hey, I get your point. Our definitions of righteousness are what Paul calls "the law." He wrote that the Jews had God's law, and the Gentiles were a law unto themselves, that is: We all take "knowledge of good and evil," and that's "the law." And so you say, "Well, I'm not a legalist."

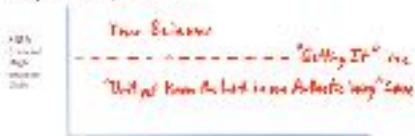
## Standard Non-Legalistic Christian

The Record of Righteousness

Righteousness is: Record of Righteous Deeds for Self and Neighbors

not being legalistic	_____	_____	_____	_____
not being judgmental	_____	_____	_____	_____
embracing freedom in Christ	_____	_____	_____	_____
being gracious to the "last and least"	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comparison of Righteousness

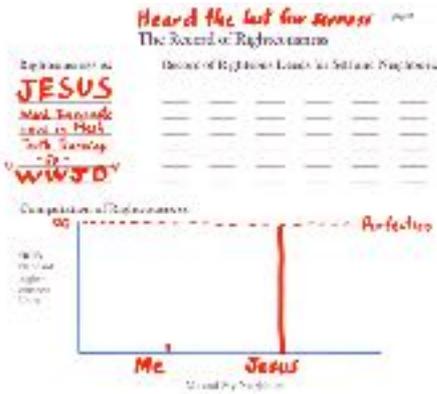


Self and Neighbors

Here's a page from the books of a standard non-legalistic Christian. It's just the same, but now righteousness is defined as: Not being legalistic, not being judgmental, embracing your freedom in Christ, and being gracious to "the last and least of these," but because we're still writing in our books, trying to make ourselves righteous, we're legalistic about not being legalistic; we judge people on their judgmentalism; we're driven to be not driven...but free. We use "the last and least," which means we judge them "last and least" to score points for ourselves.

Now, if you've heard the last few sermons, you might say, "Hey! Wait a minute! Righteousness is not a 'what' but a 'Who.' Righteousness is not a list but a Person.

So you make this a page in your book.

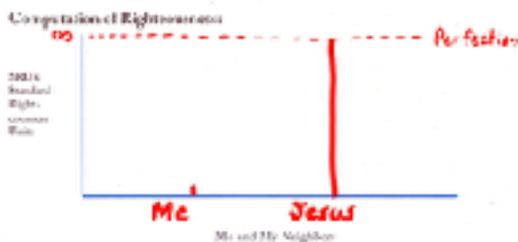


Righteousness is Jesus; Jesus is the Word of God incarnate; Jesus is the Word of Love in flesh; Jesus is the Truth dancing—Righteousness is Jesus. So, “WWJD”-Righteousness is “What Jesus Would Do.”

Now, Jesus is righteousness, but you’re still writing in your book. So when you compute your own righteousness, it doesn’t get better; it gets worse. You know Jesus said, *“Love your enemies (people you compete against) then you will be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* *“Be careful not to do your deeds of righteousness before men to be seen by them...”* (How about if they’re seen by me?) *“Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.”* (How the heck do you do that...perfectly, unconsciously love your enemies?)

Well, if love is a law you must make yourself obey, you are pretty conscious of yourself. You must calculate and force every step, and if righteousness is something you must make yourself do, it reveals that you’re not righteous and don’t love...love. And God is Love, so you don’t love God; you use God to justify yourself. But Jesus loved as if he loved love in freedom, as if love was His nature and He wouldn’t deny Himself even if it killed Him. I mean, Jesus loved like a little child dances. And He kept dancing even though it hurt like hell and cost him his life. He loved Love. He had perfect faith in Love, who is His Father—Perfection. So Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. So when you compute your own righteousness next to Jesus’ righteousness, it doesn’t get better; it gets worse.

Just look at the graph...



There’s you, and there’s Jesus—absolute perfection.

Read the gospels carefully, and I think you’ll see, the Pharisees didn’t crucify Jesus because He broke the law. The Pharisees crucified Jesus because He fulfilled the law and revealed their own unrighteousness.

Mark 15, Matthew 27: *“They delivered Him up out of envy.”* They saw that He was righteous and they were not righteous, so they nailed Him to a *skulon*—a tree, attempting to take His righteousness, wanting to make themselves righteous. They crucified Righteousness, wanting to

be righteous. They didn't have faith in the Righteous One. And now, the American Evangelical Christian says, "That's it: 'Faith is righteousness.'" *"Faith is reckoned as righteousness"* wrote Paul. (Romans 1:7) *"The righteous live by faith."*



So we write, "Righteousness is faith...in Jesus." And we try to have faith (psyche ourselves up by concentrating really hard, taking classes etc.) We think we make faith, which means faith is a "deed I do," which means, I have faith in me, which means, I don't have faith in God. *"...and apart from faith (wrote Paul) it is impossible to please God,"* and when I see that, I understand why Martin Luther yelled out in agony: "Love God? Love God? I hate Him." <sup>2</sup>

Well, here's a page from a more recent book in my vast record of righteousness.



Righteousness is: A Loving Marriage, Preaching the Gospel, Faith in Jesus. And because I'm a pastor, my neighbors are pastors, so I judge my righteousness with Dave, Andrew, and Tim.

Dave the cello player became my best friend. Jesus was in Dave. We did ministry together in LA. He's an amazing guy. One night at camp, he came to me in darkness and cried out: "Leslie's leaving me; she wants a divorce." He fell apart in my arms, and as I stood there, holding him, I heard this thought: "Be happy; you won!"

Andrew Trawick, who is like my only brother, will come back from evangelism trips and tell me of thousands coming to Jesus and because I compete, it makes me sad.

<sup>2</sup> (Like Paul wrote: *"The law worketh anger."*)

Tim had a church bigger than mine and a gift I judged greater than mine. One night, in a crisis of faith, he took his own life leaving behind his wife, his children, and a whole church, and something in me wanted to rejoice because I judged that I had more faith than Tim.

What the hell am I doing rejoicing at the tragedies of my best friends, wishing that thousands would not enter the kingdom, taking pleasure in faithlessness to feel better about myself, and wishing friends to Hell? And when I do that, I wish Jesus to Hell; for he said, *“Whatever you do to the least of these you do to me.”*

When I try to make myself righteous, when I live by these books, I hate my neighbors, hate God’s Kingdom, hate God, and when I see that, I hate myself. I do the work of the Accuser for him. So by trying to be righteous, I make myself unrighteous, and my record of righteousness is the record of my unrighteousness.



And it’s not just that I don’t measure up but that just by trying to “measure up,” I actually “measure down.” I create a lie—a white washed tomb, something that tries to act righteous but is thoroughly unrighteous. I create an imitation Christ (in Greek an *antichristos*—an anti christ).

See? If I think I must make myself righteous, then I think: I must make myself faithful; I think I must make myself Jesus; I think I must create myself in the image of God. What an absolutely absurd notion...that a created being could create himself! What would he create himself with? If there is one Creator then everything is His, and to Him belongs all glory and none can boast. I’m not the uncreated creator. What an absurd idea that I could create myself, even more, that I could create myself in God’s image by taking knowledge of God—knowledge of good and evil. Where would we get such an idea?

Well, remember who Paul says we wrestle against, and remember what the devil suggested to the woman on the sixth day: “Hey look, knowledge of good and evil hanging on a (*skulan*) a tree; take it; eat it, and you’ll know what righteousness is and make yourself righteous—in the image of God.” You see? Knowledge of the good and evil—knowledge of righteousness—knowledge of Jesus isn’t bad. But taking it to make yourself righteous is original sin. God said, *“The day you eat of it you will die.”* But how would they have known God’s word was good, and Satan’s lie was bad?

You see? They lacked faith in God, who is good. They weren’t fully created in God’s image, and now they tried even harder to create themselves in God’s image. They ate and saw they were unrighteous, and now tried to make themselves righteous. They made clothes, and I bet that’s why you wear clothes. I bet that’s why you try to cover your tail with righteous deeds. I bet that’s why you’re proud, ashamed, afraid, and driven. They covered their nakedness and died, and dead

things can't dance. Zombies can't dance; they're stiff. I think Paul would refer to all our "definitions of righteousness" (whether accurate or not) as law.

Law is like dance steps. You can learn about all the steps to the dance, but that's not dancing. Most folks assume that Paul is saying: "Dance or else!" "Make yourself righteous or else!" It's like holding a gun to someone's head and saying, "Have faith in Me, trust Me or I'll pump you full of lead! Dance to the rhythm of My Love; lose yourself and find yourself...dancing to My song of relentless grace. Dance gracefully, faithfully, freely, and without fear, OR...I'll torture you without end."

Is that what Paul is saying?

Is that the good news? Is that the gospel? That's like showing the world this video...



[A brief clip of Fred Astaire dancing beautifully and with great ease yet there is no sound,]

and saying, "Look at that beauty...at that grace! Now do exactly that OR be tormented forever!"

If I think I must make myself righteous, I can't live gracefully. I can't dance well, live well, laugh well, love well. All the books weigh me down: calculating, scheming, posing, acting. I can't lose myself. I'm trapped in myself—a bubble of faithlessness, shame, and fear—a false self, a bubble of hell. And remember, there's no music in Hell, and so there's no dancing in Hell.

To the Pharisees Jesus said, "*We piped and you wouldn't dance.*" Perhaps they couldn't hear the music.

So, if I believe that I must make myself righteous, I make myself unrighteous, and I trap myself in Hell... *IF* I believe I must make myself righteous. But that's *not* what Paul said. He didn't say, "Make yourself righteous" or "Make righteousness" but "*wear* righteousness." "*Having put on the breastplate of righteousness*" (or more literally) "*having ON* (Kind of like we're not even sure how we got it on) *the breastplate of righteousness.*" (Take off your fig leaves and be covered in Righteousness.)

In Ephesians 4:22 He told us, "*Put off your old self...corrupt through deceitful desires.*" That would be like pride. Isn't pride a deceitful desire? Like the desire to make yourself righteous).

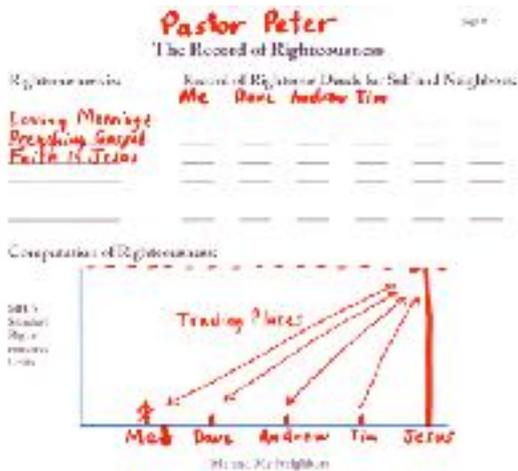
And Ephesians 4:24 "*Put on the new self—new man created after the likeness of God (already created!) in true righteousness and holiness.*"

See? Your righteous self has already been created.

Ephesians 2:8 *“For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this (this faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, that none may boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

Faith and works prepared beforehand that we should DANCE in them...Righteousness that we step into. How can that be?

2 Corinthians 5:21 *“For our sake, God made Him (Christ) to be sin, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God.*



He trades places with us. That's His choice. That's His judgment. Well once that happens (and Paul says, "One has died for all.") Once that happens, once the first becomes last and the last first, it renders all bookkeeping to be utterly absurd. It would be like throwing all bookkeepers into a lake of fire. It would be like throwing the Accuser into a burning hot sea of Grace.

1 Corinthians 1:30 *“God made Christ our righteousness.”* “He makes us righteous, faithful, with Himself. So Paul writes, *“Faith is reckoned as righteousness.”* not because God is a sloppy reckoner, but because Faith is Righteousness. *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for.”* Faith is the presence of Christ, who is our righteousness. As Paul writes, *“We are justified by faith.”* Just and right are one word in Greek. Justify literally means “made righteous.”

We are made righteous by Faith.

We are finished in God's image with Faith and Faith makes the man.

We are dressed in Faith, and it is not our faith.

It's all throughout Paul's letters even though it often gets translated out. We are justified by the Faith of *Christ*, not our faith *in* Christ but the Faith *of* *Christ* in us. His faithfulness creates our Faith and makes us right.

In Colossians 2:13 Paul wrote:

*And you, who were DEAD (Dead things just can't make choices.) in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh (I think that's the old self, the false self, that covers the ears and eyes of your heart so you can't hear the music.)...dead...in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with [Christ], having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt, (record of unrighteousness) that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

God nails my record of unrighteousness to the tree with Jesus. He nails my false self—my old self to the tree with Jesus. And at the cross, God opens my books, takes a big red rubber stamp and He dips it in His own blood [Peter begins opening the books that were placed on the communion table and stamps page after page.] and stamps “CANCELLED” on every debt. Lust- CANCELLED, Murder-CANCELLED, Judging Dave Jones at soccer practice-CANCELLED, Wishing my friends to Hell-CANCELLED, Crucifying Christ—CANCELLED...by blood [Peter pushes all of the books off the communion table so only the bread and wine are left]; drink of it all of you and no more living by these books of damnation—these damn books.

And yet, if we go back and look at these books, what do we see?

The Old Covenant has become the New Covenant.

The Curse of Law has become the Blessing of Grace

My record of unrighteousness has become His story of Righteousness, written upon my life;  
For every sin has become a story of His Grace.

Every point of my faithlessness reveals the wonder of His faithfulness.

The history of my empty old self reveals the glory of God's self—my New man.

And when I go back to the tree in the Garden, it no longer means death but Life. For in the place I stole righteousness, God gives righteousness—*FORE-gives* righteousness. He *FORE-gives* me Christ—(body broken and blood shed)—Faith. There He shows that He is infinitely trustworthy and creates trust within me. You know faith means trust and trust means faith. How do you create trust in a person? Well, you write a story of your trustworthiness. His trustworthiness creates trust. His faithfulness creates faith in me. It's there that He justifies me—that's God's justice, making me just and right. God getting what He deserves and He deserves you.

Paul continues in Colossians 2:15. At the cross “*God disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him*” (in Jesus).

You see this isn't just positive thinking. This is the heart of your ancient struggle against the devil and the rulers and authorities—the principalities and powers of this present darkness. So when the Accuser whispers in your ear saying things like: “You drink too much.” “You neglected your children.” “You aborted your own baby.” “You cheated on your wife.” Don't argue with Him; don't doctor the books. Preach the gospel! Say, “Yes, I did those things, but I'm not those things. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I'm forgiven, I'm sanctified and sealed by the blood of Christ.

When I first encountered demons manifesting in people, I was shocked to discover that they really didn't derive their power from a person's particular sin (it could be a little lie or a horrid murder). It wasn't a particular sin but the shame that the person associated with that sin. It was like all sin had been forgiven, but if a person didn't believe it was forgiven, their faith in the lie made a place for the devil.

Juan Carlos Ortiz used to say, “Your record of debt has been cancelled but Satan took Xerox copies.” So demons will tell you that you are your sin, but you are not your sin. The Lamb of God has born your sin. You must believe that Christ has made you righteous or you will try to make yourself righteous. You must believe that you have been justified in Christ or you will try to justify yourself. You'll start keeping score. You'll start accusing your neighbor, accusing God, and accusing yourself. You'll do the devil's work for him. You'll make yourself Satan's bookkeeper.

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul wrote, “*Love keeps no record of wrongs.*” Isn't that amazing? God is Love. So maybe God keeps no record of wrongs...perhaps...because they were forgiven before they were ever committed, perhaps because they're ultimately lies and illusions. Perhaps God keeps no record of wrongs...but we do...inspired by the devil.

In Revelation 20, the dead are judged by deeds in books, perhaps they are their own records of their own deeds. And their own judgment makes them dead—makes them false. We each have a false self that must be destroyed, but we each are a new self already created in true righteousness and holiness—alive! The dead are judged by deeds in books, but the *living* are names in the Lamb's Book of Life. Names aren't deeds but living persons, made in the image of God.

You must believe: You are not the deeds that you have done.  
You are the person that God says you are.  
You are chosen, justified, sanctified, and redeemed.  
You are dearly beloved and in space and time, as we walk through this world,  
God is revealing your name. (Jesus will hand it to you on a white stone.)  
You are the creation of God's Word.

Righteousness is not what you *should* do.  
Righteousness is not what Jesus would do.  
Righteousness is what Jesus *does do*...in you....WJDD in you.

He makes you righteous. He makes you believe.  
And if you ask, "How does He do it?" Well, I think He's doing it right now!  
Romans 10:17 "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*"  
When we proclaim the Gospel, we sing the song; we play the music; we proclaim that God justifies sinners; we announce that God makes us righteous, so we can't make ourselves righteous.

That Gospel crucifies the old self and sets the new self free.  
That Gospel crucifies our pride and turns us into children.  
That Gospel causes us to dance, and that dance is righteousness.  
It's the Word of the Father incarnate in you.

When my children were little, before they knew how to be proud, I'd come home, they'd hear my voice and just start dancing, and their dance was righteousness. They didn't try to be righteous; they just *were* righteous.

One day, when Becky must've been about three. I said, "Becky, why are you so wonderful?" Without skipping a beat, she looked at me and said, "Because I'm your girl," and started to dance. When you stand before the Father on judgment day and He says, "Why are you so wonderful?" Don't even think about the things you've done. Look Him in the eye and say, "Because I'm your girl...your boy...I'm yours," and you'll find yourself dancing. Not because you're trying to be righteous. You just are.

I'm not saying righteousness doesn't matter. I'm saying it may be *all* that matters. You just can't make yourself righteous, so confess your unrighteousness and listen to the gospel: God makes you righteous. God justifies sinners. God saves...in a word...Jesus.

When I think about getting righteous, I think about Nevin, played by Steve Martin, in *The Jerk*. Nevin can't dance, and the harder he tries...the worse it gets. It's like he can't hear the music; he's so occupied with trying to dance until he confesses his failure, confesses himself and just listens to the radio.

Clip from *The Jerk*

I love that: "This kind of music speaks me; it tells me to go out there and be somebody!"  
And God is speaking to you...

**Communion**

[Steve Martin, the jerk, is settling down in bed for the night. All hope for being able to dance well is lost. He turns on the radio and is about to eat a Twinkie. The announcer says, "That's the gospel from the Full Gospel Tabernacle, now...music for it"...nice music begins to play. Just as he's about to bite into his Twinkie, he notices his toes moving back and forth to the music. A look of unbelievable excitement fills his face; he puts down his Twinkie...suddenly his fingers begin to snap along to the music. He gets up from his bed, taking care not to bring an end to the "miracle" that is taking place.]

Navin: *Grandma! Grandma, Look!!* [His grandma gets up out of bed.]

Grandma: *What? What?* [She begins to turn off the radio.]

Navin: *Don't touch that radio!!*

[Navin runs over to turn it straight back on.]

*It's unbelievable...unbelievable!!*

[Now others join them in his Grandma's bedroom]

*It speaks to me. This is unbelievable!*

[Navin pushes everyone out of the way so he can unveil his new found gift!]

*Now watch, watch!*

[Navin begins moving up and down awkwardly on beat with the music and snapping his fingers.]

*If this is out there...think how much more is out there!! "This kind of music speaks me; it tells me to go out there and be somebody!"*

So on the night Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you; take and eat and do it in remembrance of me. And He took the cup saying, "This is the New Covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it...all of you. This is righteousness, and you can't make it. It makes you. Dance!

[Peter begins singing *Lord of the Dance* by Sydney Carter]

*I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black. It's hard to dance with the devil on your back. They buried my body and they thought I'd gone, but I AM the dance, and I still go on! Dance then, wherever you may be...I am the Lord of the dance, said He! And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be...I'll lead you all in the dance said He.*

So we invite you to come to the table. Be dressed in righteousness. Let's worship

### **Benediction**

The love of Christ constrains us, controls us; I think that means...causes us to dance. "*Love constrains us because we are convinced of this...that one has died for all.*" So there's no point in keeping the books; just put on the breastplate of righteousness. And I saw you come to the table, so you have it on. Do you feel it? It's not dependent on whether or not you feel it. So when you don't feel it, you probably need to preach the Gospel to yourself. In fact, you can do that right now. Just say: "In the name of Jesus, I am righteous." Now, if you look at somebody and you have a thought like: "*I'm kind of proud that I am righteous,*" that's not righteousness; that's the old man...trying to trap you in outer darkness. The moment you recognize him...confess him. Say, "Jesus, I nail him right there with you; I don't want him." And then: "In the name of Jesus, I am righteous." My friends, that's how you go to war with the evil one. So in the name of Jesus, believe the Gospel and you're free to dance. Amen.