

Lesson 11: “Our Anointing of Righteousness”

1 John 2:25-29

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1 John 2:25-29 *This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.*

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

I see 4 key thoughts here: (1) eternal life, (2) anointing, (3) abiding and (4) righteousness.

Personally, I can take this to be referring to my eternal life, my anointing, my abiding in Him and my righteousness. But as I ponder more deeply, I realize it is really about God’s eternal life, His anointing, His abiding in me and His righteousness. Let us meditate on each of these 4 key thoughts in turn.

ETERNAL LIFE

Great stories often revolve around the receiving of great gifts. Pinocchio the puppet receives the gift of becoming a real boy. Ariel the mermaid receives the gift of becoming a real girl on the shore. Clark Kent receives the gift of becoming Superman. In real life, Diana was a normal American girl who by marrying Prince Charles, received the gift of becoming a princess. King Solomon, by not asking God for fame or fortune received the greater gift of superior wisdom, and received fame and fortune as well. (1 Kings 3).

The fairy tales and the real tales of receiving great gifts go on and on. And we rejoice in them, for we all have fanciful dreams of receiving such a great gift. Thus the immensely popular appeal of being the Publisher’s Clearing House winner, or of winning the lottery. Yet receiving such gifts are about as realistic as being given super powers or becoming a princess (especially difficult for a man).

But God has given to us who believe in Him and trust His Son Jesus for our salvation, the greatest gift to exceed all great gifts: the gift of eternal life. Don’t rush by John’s statement in verse 25 too quickly with little thought for its magnitude. *“This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”*

John, of course, was the writer who quoted Jesus as saying to Nicodemus:

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

Though some translations say “everlasting life,” “eternal life” is the correct translation. And there is a world of difference. Everlasting life is the gift of life lasting forever, which is a wonderful gift. But eternal life is the gift of the very life of God – the life that has no beginning and no end and is always in the present tense. Thus, God is the great “I AM” and never the great “I was” or great “I will be.”

God’s gift and promise is to share His life with His children. The very life that imagined the cosmos and created them out of nothing lives in us. The very life that can never be defeated or compromised or snuffed out lives in us. The life that is ever-positive, ever-encouraging and ever-loving lives in us.

And this gift of eternal life is unconditional and irrevocable. The old covenant promise was conditional.

Exodus 19:5 *Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine.*

But God’s gift of eternal life has no conditions and no “if’s.” That is the freedom we have as believers – set free from the yoke of conditional “if’s.” But as Paul taught, we must not turn our freedom into an opportunity to take advantage of His grace. (1 Cor. 5:13) We must walk worthy of our high calling. (Eph. 4:1)

Our great gift of eternal life is also irrevocable. God will never take back the gift he has given.

Romans 11:29 *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

Now that’s eternal security! And that’s a great gift!

At this point we only have a glimpse of the wonder of the gift of eternal life. That glimpse is the “down payment” of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Whenever we find the Spirit within us teaching us a great truth, or

guiding us in the way we should go, or convicting us of a wrong action we are getting a taste of the glory of the gift of eternal life.

Ephesians 1:13-14 ... you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance ...

The truth is, this gift is far greater than we could ever imagine in this life.

1 Corinthians 2:9 Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.

Pinocchio has nothing on us who are followers of Jesus and possessors of the greatest gift ever bestowed. Neither does Ariel, Superman, Princess Diana or even Solomon. Dear Christian brother and sister, be ever in awe of and blown away by your possession of the greatest gift ever bestowed in the universe!

ANOINTING

In the Old Testament it was priests, kings and prophets who were anointed – a sign of their high calling and responsibility. Thus it is with our anointing as believers. We must ever be cognizant of the high expectations God has of us as his ambassadors and lights in this world of darkness.

And what is this “anointing?” You might say you have never had oil poured on you in a ceremony. But when you were saved, the Spirit of God came to live in you. (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). And in the Scripture the pouring of oil is a symbol of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Note that the descriptions John gives of the anointing exactly parallels what we receive from the Spirit: (1) “received from Him” [God], (2) “abides in you” (3) “teaches you about all things.

Believer, you have been anointed by God by the indwelling Holy Spirit because of your high calling as child of God. And this anointing comes with high expectations of your life’s devotion to this calling.

ABIDING

And an important part of this calling is to abide, which John makes clear in today’s passage. To abide is to “cling closely to” and “hang with” and “put down stakes next to.” To abide is to become best friends with God through prayer and listening to Him speak through His Holy Word. To abide is to spend time often with fellow believers who also have the indwelling Holy Spirit in order to draw strength and accountability. To abide is to worship God with heart, soul, mind and strength – giving Him the due owed Him for His divinity and incomparable gift of eternal life.

In short, to abide is to commune with God. And eating of the communion elements is to be a constant reminder of our need and responsibility to commune with God, symbolically eating the flesh and drinking the blood of His Son Jesus.

And note the comment about abiding in verse 28. We want to be walking close to God when Jesus returns to take us up in the clouds with Him. For if we are not, we will be ashamed at His coming – and that would indeed be “a shame.” Imagine Jesus coming back for you, and you being involved in some inappropriate behavior. Say, “may it never be, Lord.” And determine to keep close to the Savior – abiding.

Again, it was John in his gospel, chapter 15 that recorded Jesus as saying:

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

So let us not be “nothing-doers” but bearing much spiritual fruit for Jesus by abiding with him, as close as a branch is to the vine – intimately close.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

The last of the four significant elements of this passage is John’s mention of “righteousness.”

First, we are to know that He, God, is righteous. And to be “righteous” is to be always thinking, motivated by, and doing the absolute right thing. God, in His perfection, never makes mistakes. He is never late, nor early, by our reckoning, but always is on time. He always gives exactly the gift we need at the moment we need it and never gives anything unnecessary or superfluous. He has created each individual with exactly the personality, physical characteristics and propensities that are right for that individual. And each one is placed in exactly the country, state, city and family that God chooses as right.

It is a critically important understanding to know that God never makes mistakes or incorrect decisions. Thus, we can never blame God for a physical disability, a weather calamity, an unwanted birth or an untimely death. God is righteous – always “right” - in all His ways. (And remember, that’s not “righteous” like when someone says “righteous, man!” meaning, “cool” or “awesome.”)

So we start there, says John. And if you know that God is righteous, then you must also know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him (v. 29).

PUTTING THE FOUR THOUGHTS TOGETHER

Now I believe this mention of righteousness is directly related to the “eternal life,” “anointing” and “abiding” mentioned just previously. When we, as recipients of God’s eternal life, receive the anointing of the indwelling Holy Spirit and consequently abide with Him in close fellowship, we will practice righteousness just as God is righteous. In other words, His righteousness will spill out through us. We will, by our proximity to God, practice doing the “right” thing by default. For, as John says, practicing righteousness is an indication of our being born again.

Romans 6:18 *And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

By implication, if we are not doing by default the “right thing,” we must not be abiding and letting the anointing of the Spirit work in us. Again – black and white – one or the other.

Romans 6:13 *And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

Now let me tie this thought even tighter. I believe it would be accurate to say that we, God’s children by faith, have an “anointing of righteousness.” (And that is the title of this message.) That means we have had God’s righteousness passed on to us and through us. We have His very life (eternal life), and so His righteousness personality is lived out through us, His children – that is, if we are indeed abiding in Him. And that is the test.

Eternal life is the anointing of the Spirit. And the believer’s response is to abide with God in close fellowship, producing the very righteousness of God.

ETERNAL LIFE - ANOINTING - ABIDING - RIGHTEOUSNESS

If this is not your progression of spiritual experience, where do you need to correct?

Do you need to be born again, receiving eternal life? Do you need to be filled with the Spirit, not quenching the anointing of the Spirit within you? Do you need to choose to closely abide with God, through Christ?

Do you need to allow God’s righteousness to spill through you, that you might practice righteousness?

The gift of eternal life is meant to continually produce righteous behavior in you. So does it?