



September 26, 2021

“Practice Righteousness”

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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**I JOHN 2:28&29 ~**

We start with “Now, little children.” “Little children” means \_\_\_\_\_

“Now” means \_\_\_\_\_ (Principle followed by praxis).

What are we to do? “\_\_\_\_\_”! That’s Christianity;  
\_\_\_\_\_ in Truth and \_\_\_\_\_ in The Truth.

“So that” - is a purpose-result clause - this is the \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus is returning and His \_\_\_\_\_ is with Him (Revelation 22:12). A \_\_\_\_\_, in this sense, is a payment for what you’ve earned.

You will stand in His presence as He demands an accounting from you for what you \_\_\_\_\_ with the abundance, both spiritually and physically, that He gave to you. You will explain how you \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and in The \_\_\_\_\_ and you will be paid the wages you actually earned.

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

“If you know [οἶδα (oy-dä), \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge], that He is righteous, you know [γινώσκω (gē-nōs-kō), \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge].” Only a Christian can truly understand this concept.

“Righteous” is derived from older English “rightwise,” as in doing things in the right way. Right, itself, means...

God’s perfect justice requires all innocent parties be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, while all guilty parties be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Deuteronomy 16:18-20.

In Deuteronomy 10:17, we find that God is Himself righteous. That is preceded by “Fear the Lord your God to walk in all His ways and love Him and to serve Him with all your heart and soul.” And then, “God executes justice for the orphan and the widow and shows His love for the alien.”

The Bible declares that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31). The Law states in Leviticus 19:15, “You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.”

James chapter 2 tells us that being partial, or showing \_\_\_\_\_ within the church denigrates the Christ of our faith.

God will do right, which means that He will judge with integrity. The Bible declares that every person is guilty. God, being \_\_\_\_\_, can only give us what we deserve. God, being love, chose to \_\_\_\_\_ our debt Himself.

Those who believe that Truth and \_\_\_\_\_ in it are those who are saved through Jesus. Only a Christian who has activated that Truth can know it \_\_\_\_\_. It eliminates the idea of personal goodness/worth as a contributing factor in salvation.

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



**Teen Girls** (6th - 8th Grade)

Led by Susie Holman &  
Darika Dickerson

**Teen Girls** (9th - 12th Grade)

Led by Melinda Miller &  
Nora Keller

**Men's Class**

Led by Pastor Scott Keller

**Women's Class** (Age 18 +)

Led by Yvonne Mackey

**K - 2nd Grade**

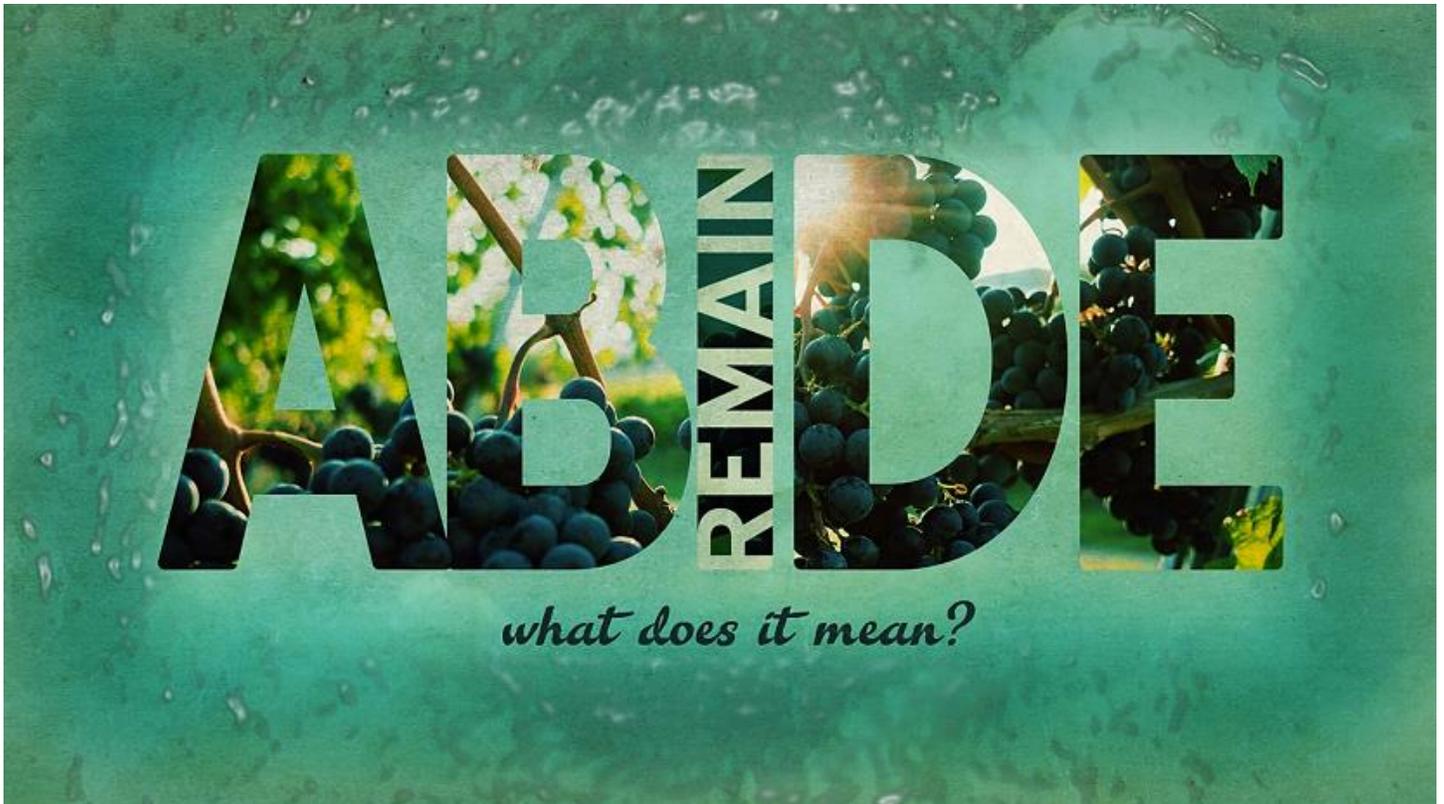
Led By Betsy Wahlert &  
Brooke Wahlert

**3rd - 5th Grade**

Led by Donna Conner &  
Cindi Kling

**Teen Boys** (6th - 12  
Grade)

Led by Rich Lodge



I John 2:28&29, 28Now, 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. 29If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

We start with “Now, little children.” This reemphasizes that the audience is the beloved and blessed of God, Christian people, and that what follows is the consequence of what has already been said. Because of the Truth just shared in preceding verses, now do! Always in the Bible there is principle followed by praxis. This is how it is and because of that react in this way.

What here is the appropriate reaction to the facts?  
What are we to do? “Abide”! The command from God here, is now, my precious children, “Abide”!

In the previous passage the Truth taught was that by actively abiding in Truth, we abide in Jesus - Who is The Truth - He exists as Truth - He said of Himself, Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια. “I AM,” that which I AM, I literally exist as the ἀλήθεια, “The Truth.”

Further, that the one who has the Jesus the Son, likewise has the Heavenly Father as well. This enabled through the power of the Holy Spirit. There’s the Trinity. The Holy Spirit grants us Truth through His agents anointed by His power and He also enables us to guard that Truth through the anointing of Truth.

That’s Christianity - abiding in Truth, and here, because we have been taught that Truth, we are now ordered to do it - to “Abide”! To remain. To stand. To persist. To persevere.



So, again, very important, in Christianity there is only ever one thing and that is Jesus. It is never Jesus plus something else, but as we saw, in order for a person to know that, to believe that, to accept that, to embrace that, with their whole being, as is necessary, they must be given that Truth. They must remain in that Truth.

What is that Truth?

It is Father's Message. The Message is Jesus. What is that Message, that Truth? It is the Gospel - those above the line, salvific ideas necessary to accept God

on His terms... For Who He actually is and through the means that He actually provides.

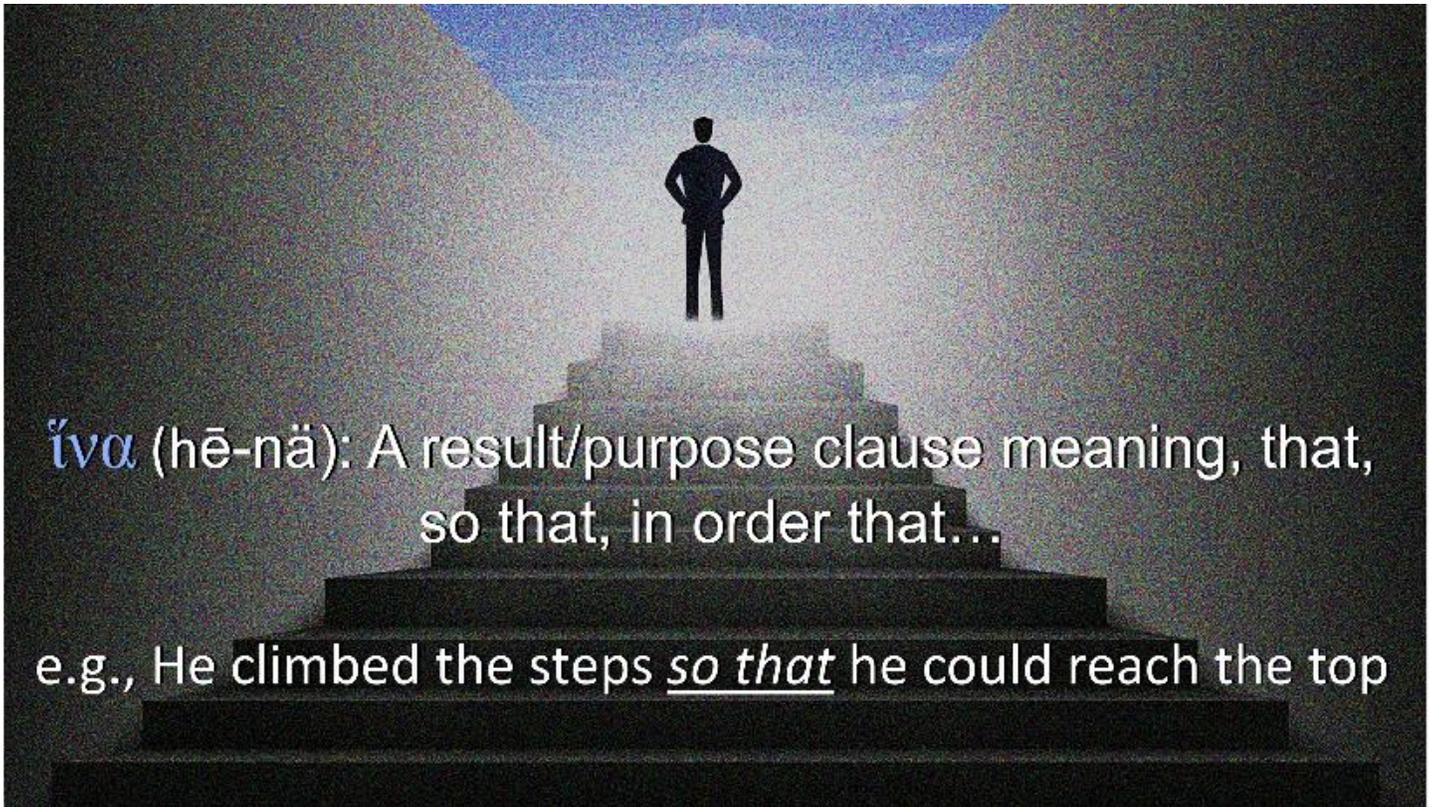
The Holy Spirit reveals that Message to people by breathing life into it and into them. God does this through human preachers and teachers. As a side note, the Biblical phrase "Preachers and teachers," is a hendiadys, meaning the correct way to understand it is as a preaching teacher, or as a teaching preacher. We love to separate the two tasks, but biblically, it is the same task... We are to proclaim the Gospel as we teach it.

It's easy to see why abiding in the Truth of the Gospel is necessary to abiding in God Who grants the Gospel Truth to a person. It isn't the Message per se, nor is it knowledge, it's that to correctly relate with God a person must know the Truth about correctly relating to God. They must know God and what relationship with Him entails - what it means.

It is impossible to correctly relate with anyone if you don't know them and know what correctly relating to them is. Put more accurately, the correctness and legitimacy of your relationship with someone is directly

proportional to how well you know them and what they're willing to accept.

The Truth, the Message, the Gospel, the knowledge, the ideas that are so essential to accept, is simply the information of Who God is, and what God wants, as He, Himself, has personally revealed to us. Where there is no way at all, my friends, God has personally, unilaterally, and sacrificially provided a way and this is that Truth that can open the way to real acceptance of that way, of Jesus, "The Way and the Truth and finally the Life." This is Life. To have that Life one must abide in it - in Truth - in Him.



Principle, or Truth is followed by praxis, or practice. which is then followed by purpose as we continue in the verse... "Abide in Him, so that" - so that, because, in order that, for the purpose of, as a consequence, or as a result... It is purpose. This is the common Greek purpose-result clause.

We have been given the Truth in which we must abide, we were exhorted to abide and now we are told why - we are given the motivation to practice the Truth we know. "So that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." Make no mistake Jesus is returning soon

and very soon and His reward is with Him (Revelation 22:12). Goodie, we say. My Lord is coming to reward me. That thought should terrify you.



That thought should send shivers up your spine. A reward, in this sense, is a payment for what you've earned. 1) Firstly, a person failing to abide in the True Gospel and therefore in the true Christ will be rewarded with eternal separation from God and all that is Truth and beauty and goodness and love and Life. 2) Here, talking to Christians, it isn't that; this is to do with degrees of abiding and so degrees of positive reward.

Jesus will come to you personally and you will stand in His presence as He looks you dead in your face. He Whose hair is as white as snow, and Whose eyes are like blazing fire and Whose feet are like burnished bronze glowing in a furnace, and Whose voice is like the sound of rushing waters. He Who holds in his right hand seven stars, and has a sharp, double-edged sword coming from His mouth. He Whose face is like the sun shining in all its brilliance... He will demand an accounting from you for what you did on this earth, in your life, with the great abundance both spiritually and physically, that He gave to you. You will explain how you abided, and there will be a reckoning, and you will be paid the wages you actually deserve, good or bad, in full (Revelation 1:14-16).

You might object and say, I know Jesus loves me - I have nothing to fear from Him! Jesus loves you more than you can imagine, which is precisely why He won't give you a trophy for merely participating. Disciple is derived from the word discipline. The love poured out at Calvary will save you eternally - praise God for His goodness, mercy, and love! Beyond that there will be Truth - there will be reality - and that means that you will "Receive a reward," or you "Will suffer loss." You

will stand before God with “Confidence,” or you will “Shrink away in shame.”

What’s interesting is that you’ll do that to yourself. Jesus may even console the one suffering loss or shrinking away, but they will regret the work of their life bitterly. That’s the motivation. Realizing that you want to be positively rewarded and not bitterly regretful on the day you fully meet Jesus. The Holy Spirit, through the Apostle John, is telling us how to avoid such a self-inflicted fate.

There is no reason at all for anyone to be sent into the Lake of Fire, let alone any Spirit-filled Christian being ashamed before the Lord. There’s no reason that it must be that way for anyone. It isn’t like God has a quota. It isn’t like there’s only so much real estate and infrastructure in Heaven. It isn’t like God’s mansion could ever run out of rooms. It isn’t like Jesus only has so many positive rewards to give out... No one need suffer! Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Isaiah 33:6, says the firm foundation is “A rich store of salvation and wisdom and

knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.”



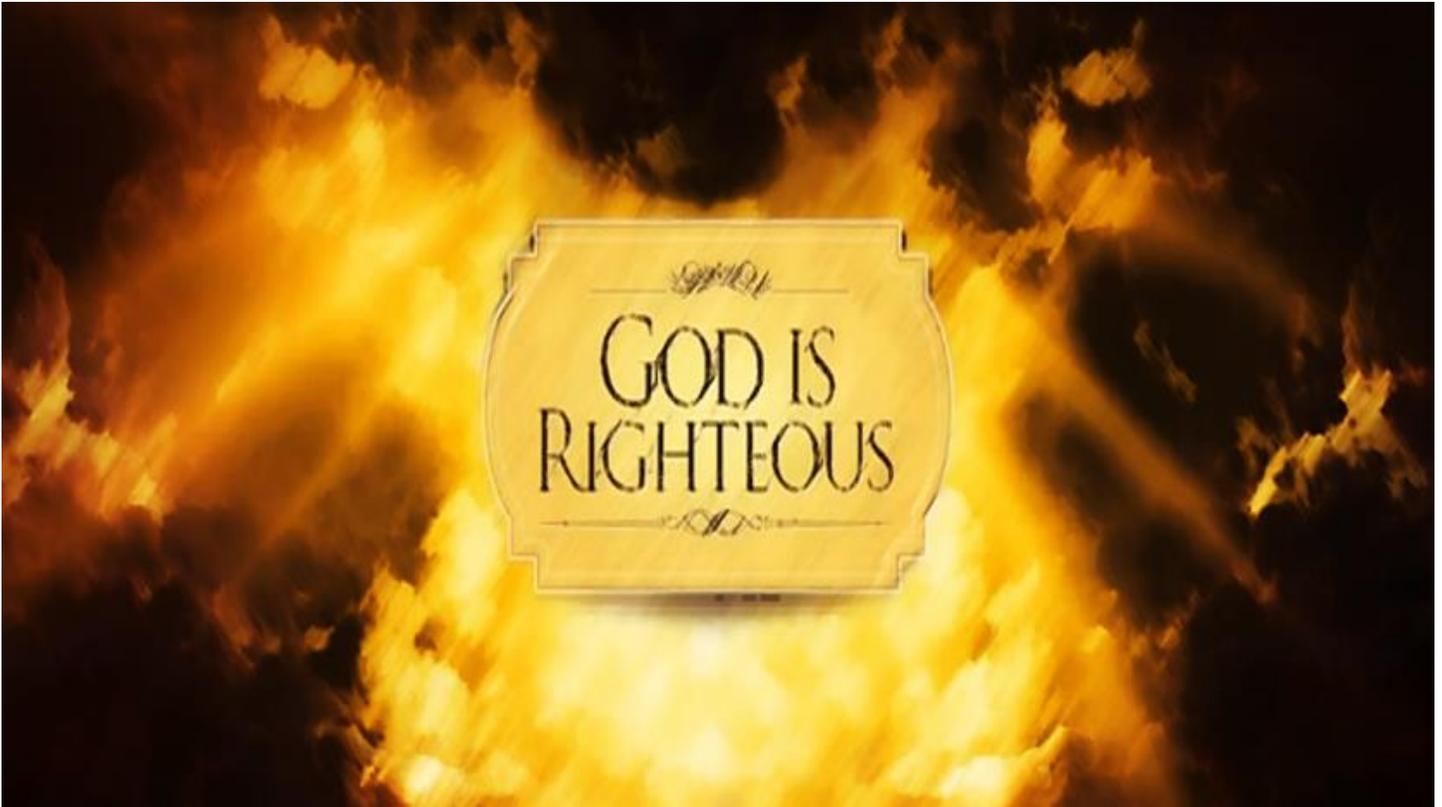
It all starts with Truth - proper Biblical Theology - basic orthodox doctrine - correct Christian ideas. That wisdom treasure then understood, accepted, and embraced, leading to an abiding in the Truth, and so an abiding in the Truth. The result is positive reward and confidence in the presence of the Great I AM. Comfort and ease in the company of the Alpha and the Omega. Warmth and joy in the congregation of the Ancient of Days - Almighty God Himself. My friends, abide!

Now we get down to the nuts and bolts - to the explanation, clarification, and orientation of this concept, or doctrine, with more Truth. Now we're going to put some concepts together, so please pay attention.

Verse 29, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." This is a wonderful expansion that gives us the 1) reason we are saved, gives us the 2) result of our salvation, and therefore 3) gives us a proof of our salvation 4) as well as giving us a litmus test for the degree of our abiding, which itself shows us, here and now, just how much we need to fear His future arrival. 5) Beyond all of that, it reveals a Truth only Christians can comprehend. I'd say it's an important verse.



First though, notice that it has the English word “Know” twice: “If you KNOW that He is righteous, you KNOW that...” They are different Greek words with different meanings. First comes, οἶδα (oy-dä), meaning to have head knowledge. John, especially, uses it when he’s stressing something learned, or understood, through instruction. The second word is γινώσκω (gē-nōs-kō), meaning to perceive, realize, or comprehend. Again, John uses it to stress knowledge that comes from experience. The first comes from study, while the second comes from doing. The first is principles and the second is praxis.



Why do we care? He's saying that if you have been taught and therefore have been exposed to the fact that "He is righteous" and because of that then understand and embrace that Truth, that reality, that God is righteous, then, and only then, with that basis, can you come to experience, and so know in practice, that God is righteous. Principle precedes praxis because you need to know how to read a book before you read a book, but here it's actually more than that.

Only a Christian can truly understand this reality that God is righteous. Only someone who has been given the knowledge and then acted upon that knowledge

can experience the Truth of that knowledge personally, genuinely, internally, spiritually... That reality that God is righteous.

Why? You might think that any non-Christian could recognize God as being righteous and at the same time a Christian might miss that fact. No. That's impossible and the only way it seems possible is because we don't know what the term righteous means.

Just like most people don't really know what "Holy" means. But you do know what holy means if you were paying attention last month. Holey means perforated. Nah, that's not it, wholly, means completely or fully. Not that one either. Holy, h-o-l-y, means other, that which is set apart, as in, not of this corrupt world system. Holy is the otherness of not being common, vulgar, pedestrian, every-day and carnal. You know that and now we need to know what righteous means as well.

We have to do that in order not to overlook this verse as people typically do... You see if we take the easy way out and loosely define it as some kind of nebulous holy, sinless, perhaps glorious perfection, then we

won't know God accurately and we certainly won't be able to emulate Him as we, that's you and me, are commanded to likewise, be righteous ourselves. If we don't really know what righteous means, how are we to do it?

Does God being righteous mean that He doesn't cuss, or that He doesn't drink alcohol, or that He doesn't smoke cigarettes, or that He doesn't miss church very often? I'm pretty sure God doesn't brush His teeth either, so does that mean the English are more righteous?

Our word righteous is derived from older English "Rightwise," as in doing things in the right way. Right, itself, means good, strong, straight, fair, proper, lawful, and the like, all with the basis in the idea of what is "Just," what is noble, honest, good, decent, and correct.



That is, in a word, justice... “Justice is blind,” or at least it is supposed to be blind. For justice to be justice, there can be no corruption, no swaying, no prejudice... No seeing anything not relevant to the facts of the case.

Without prejudice is to have no prejudgment, to be without any bias, to show no favoritism and to give no preferential treatment. To do justice in all areas is to do right, and to do right, is to be righteous. The underlying Greek and Hebrew words are the same. It is a concept of perfect justice.

America was founded on that notion of justice. That no matter who you were, no matter what your family connections, no matter how rich; or poor, how hardworking; or lazy, how strong; or weak, how honored; or disliked, no matter how innocent; or guilty you appeared, you would receive a fair and impartial hearing. “Innocent until proven guilty” through a legitimate, fair, and properly unbiased trial, judged by your peers acting righteously.

Ideally, no innocent person has anything to fear, but the flipside is every bit as true, no guilty person has any reason to hope. The other side of perfect justice is judgment without mercy.



No leniency, forgiveness, or grace because those things derail justice. What good does it do to catch criminals, find them guilty, and then ignore the verdict?

That's the secular meaning of the concept. We got it from the Bible. God's perfect justice requires all innocent parties be quickly cleared and so fully restored, while all guilty parties be quickly convicted and so appropriately punished. Deuteronomy 16:18-20, 18 "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 "You shall not distort

justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. 20“Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”



“Righteous judgment” is justice. Distorting justice is to be partial, to show partiality, to be biased, to be prejudiced, often because of a bribe, even if the bribe is only one of goodwill from the powerful. A bribe doesn’t have to be money.

Notice that the pursuit of “Justice and only justice,” is the thing that will enable a good and decent society. True justice is essential to genuine human cooperation - a social framework in which to live and thrive.

Where do those notions come from? Just a bit earlier in Deuteronomy 10:17, 17“For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.

God is Himself righteous. Leading up to that verse it says that you must “Fear the Lord your God to walk in all His ways and love Him and to serve Him with all your heart and soul.” And afterwards, our verse on the awesomeness of the One True God not showing any partiality, nor taking any bribe... The passage continues to say that “God executes justice for the orphan and the widow and shows His love for the alien.” That means that God Himself detests bullies. He Himself will stand up for the weakest people in a society against those who would oppress them. And He says, you better do likewise.

The Bible declares that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31). The Law states in Leviticus 19:15, “You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.”

Now, let’s bring this around to our point today. I could do this with several New Testament passages and in a few different ways, but let’s use James chapter 2. The chapter opens with James, the brother of Jesus, speaking to Christians telling them in the first verse that being partial, or showing favoritism among your Christian family, within the church, was to play fast a loose with your Christianity. To allow prejudices in the church was to denigrate the Christ of your faith because it’s so completely out of Christ’s character.

Well, James elaborates and explicitly makes the point that God through Jesus Christ saved the poorest of the poor, loving them equally to any other regardless of status. The key to the passage comes in what we now call the Royal Law of verse 8, “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.” It is a condition, “If.” If you practice, act out,

actually do, what Jesus commanded, “Love one another,” if you do that, you are doing well. Now watch what happens in the next verse.

James 2:9, “But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” Man, this is so important! This verse is the other side of verse 8. If you love - good, but, but, but, if you do the opposite of love - bad. What is the opposite of loving one another? Showing partiality. In other words, playing favorites, being prejudiced, being biased, being unfair, is being unrighteous.

To boil it all down, I guess the easiest way to say this, is righteousness is integrity. “Integrity is,” as C.S. Lewis said, “doing the right thing even when no one is watching.” Of course, the Truth is, your Lord is always watching.

Now we take it a step further. God will do right, which means that He will judge with integrity. Heaven, which is eternal life in the presence of a Holy God, requires a person to be innocent of any wrongdoing in their relationship with God. Have you ever, in thought, word, or deed, questioned, or disparaged, or ignored, or

disobeyed, or denied God? Have you ever, in thought, word, or deed, disrespected, despised, denigrated, hurt, or humiliated another Christian child of His? Or even a non-Christian human being made in His image?

You don't need to answer, the Bible has already concluded that every person has already fallen short of the glory of God and is guilty. God being righteous can only give every one of us precisely what we deserve.

If God judges without any bias at all, He has no choice but to condemn the lot of us and no one goes to Heaven. But God chose to pay our debt Himself.



Jesus, as the Word from Heaven was the only one to ever live a perfectly sinless human life, which earned Him His return to Heaven. Instead of taking the reward that He had earned. He allowed the Father to place the entirety of mankind's guilt upon His shoulders and to sacrificially pay the price with His own life.

Those who believe that Truth and abide in it are those who are saved through Jesus. Anyone can grasp the concept of God's righteousness, but only a Christian who has actually activated in their life can know it experientially.

What I mean is that only fully appreciating the righteousness of God can we understand the necessity and the value of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Only a true Christian actually gets that.

It completely eliminates the idea of personal goodness, or worth as a contributing factor in salvation. Righteousness means any violation, no matter how small, no matter what the mitigating or extenuating circumstances, guilty must be the verdict and punishment in the form of eternal separation must be the outcome.

Only with that in mind can Grace be properly appreciated. Only with that in mind can we ourselves attempt to be righteous as we are commanded.

Well, what does it look like? Contrary to popular opinion it has absolutely nothing to do with harshly judging others. The position, role, and job, of Judge has been filled. What it has to do with as a Christian is to treat everyone within the Body of Christ as equal.

It is another way of saying love one another. In practice that is to be kind, good and generous to others starting right here in your local church and then extending out.

That passage I referenced in James chapter 2, tells us “Judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy.” It goes on from there into that well known verse, “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?” It’s a rhetorical question to be sure, but what specifically is he on about? What immediately follows is a section that once again shows the practical work of actually caring for one another in the church. That’s how we show God’s love to each other, and it is the gauge we can use to assess how well we are abiding, and as such, it lets us know just how much confidence we should have regarding the return of the Lord.