

# The Story of Jesus

Published By Evangelist Van Billingsley Winter/Spring 2015

## What Seek Ye?

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." -- Matthew 6:33*

We must first seek and receive His righteousness. As we will see in this edition's sermon article, when His righteousness is imputed upon us, that will produce righteousness within us.

## Righteous, Self-Righteous or His Righteousness?

*by Evangelist Van Billingsley*

Many Christians today are so afraid of being called self-righteous or even believing they may become guilty of self-righteousness, that they abandon all effort to live righteously. This is due to a flood of teaching in this generation, even within my own circles, that any attempt to live holy or righteous as a child of God is just self-righteousness and that it is wrong.

You will find scripture using phrases such as "Not having mine own righteousness" (Phil. 3:9) and "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Tit. 3:5); all of which refer to salvation, but you will never find in your King James Bible the words self-righteous or self-righteousness.

The idea of self-righteousness is dealt with in the Bible concerning the Pharisees and other religious Jews who rejected Christ, but even these cases cannot be separated from attaining salvation. Jesus told the Pharisees, "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of

hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. 23:28) and He told the parable about the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican to deal with "certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (Luke 18:9). Paul explains that those are "going about to establish their own righteousness" (Rom. 10:3).

I cannot take space to elaborate here, but it should be noted that the Pharisees were not guilty of merely holding too strictly to Old Testament law, but to what was called the oral law (supposedly passed down through generations by mouth) which had no foundation in Scripture (cf. Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:8).

Jesus makes it clear that salvation is unattainable by our own righteousness as does the epistles. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10); yet Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

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## *Our Ministry News. . .*



This year is moving quickly and I have some catching up to do with my reporting, especially to those of you I have not been able to see over these past few months. 2014

was a very busy year. In a previous letter, I reported on our tent revivals from the southeast, east coast and into the Great Plains. The Lord greatly blessed through the rest of the year. I spent two months in South Dakota working with church planters and meeting more pastors and churches. I was with 12 churches in South Dakota at least once, returning to several to preach in additional services or help in other areas. Space will not allow details of every stop, but God blessed greatly and I enjoyed serving as I continued to meet more pastors and church planters while travelling through Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri. All of these visits produced new or stronger friendships and several open doors for future opportunities ahead.

Some extra blessings God used other servants to provide included a brand new generator to power my bus or the tent as needed and new tires for my bus for the front and later for the back dual wheels.

It was a busy year, pulling the tent trailer over 6,000 miles while burning over \$3,000 of diesel fuel, but a much busier season lies ahead for 2015. I have spent the winter reporting to churches around the southeast as well as doing ground work for a tent revival between three churches in north Alabama. This is also the time I must do routine

maintenance and repairs on my bus and other equipment. As I write this, I am in the middle of replacing oil seals in the rear end of my bus; doing these jobs myself saves an extreme amount of money.

We are starting earlier this year with a tent revival near Myrtle Beach, SC the last week of March. With other meetings between tent revivals, I will be travelling back to Alabama; eventually to what has previously been our first week under the tent in Smith Station, AL. After that meeting, we will go back to Cullman, AL for the three church meeting then a Missions Revival in North Georgia before heading north to Morris, IL for a tent revival with a church planter about 40 miles west of Chicago. From there, we go further north to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for a tent revival before returning to South Dakota. The meeting in Faulkton, SD will include a Vacation Bible School under the tent during the day with revival services at night. Plans are still being made for the time in the Dakotas and the trip back with possible meetings in Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri. I will work my way back into the Carolinas for meetings and Mission Conferences in the fall before returning to Alabama for the holidays.

I have some meetings to attend over the next several weeks before hooking up the tent trailer and hitting the road in mid March. I have not been able to work the deputation and fund raising into my schedule that I had hoped for through the winter, since I still only have eight supporting churches, but God will supply the need just as He has all along the way.

Many churches in the Bible belt still do not see the need for home missions across our country, even though the condition of America reveals the truth, but God provides for His servants.

I thank each of you who have given and sent support thus far and I covet your prayers as I press forward in His service.

A Servant of Christ,  
Evangelist Van Billingsley

## **Our Support Needs:**

### **Monthly Support**

Our monthly support is divided into three stages:

(Currently within the # 2 stage.)

1. Required amount to survive while doing full-time ministry and deputation.
2. Amount to begin traveling with tent ministry. (Raising funds as I go.)
3. Full support

*(...continued from cover) **Righteous...***

Left alone, this would leave us all hopeless, but thanks be to God, Jesus has not left us without hope! By our own righteousness, we'll never attain salvation. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" according to Isaiah 64:6. That says, not our sins, but our righteous deeds are as filthy rags in the sight of a holy God; that's how far we fall short of the glory of God. We all know that Christ took on our sin and paid that debt on the cross, but we often overlook the fact that He also places His righteousness upon we who accept Him. "For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is called imputed righteousness because His righteousness is applied to us and it is His righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (cf. Rom. 3:26; Rom. 4:6; Phil. 3:9; Tit. 3:5).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9). Neither our righteousness nor our good works are capable of saving us, but does that remove the responsibility from us to perform good works? The next verse clears that right up; "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Likewise, when Paul declares, "But where sin abounded, grace

did much more abound" (Romans 5:20), he knew what the carnal mind would assume; the same conclusion drawn by the carnal Christians and carnal teachers today. Therefore he admonishes, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1,2). These carnal teachers will often repeat that we are not under the law. Paul deals with that phrase in this same passage: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom. 6:14,15).

By this we understand salvation does not come by our righteousness, good works or keeping the law; but how are we to express our love to our Saviour and show the world that we are not of the world? Well, we are to do this by righteousness, good works and obedience to God's law! Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). John said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

It is a gross twisting and mistreatment of scripture to teach that New Testament Christians are not expected to live righteous, separated lives in holiness before the Lord. Paul wrote, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto

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holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). Peter wrote, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15,16). The New Testament is rich in passages instructing the child of God to perform good works (cf. Matt. 5:16; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 2:10; 1 Tim. 2:10; 5:10,25; 6:18; 2 Tim. 3:17; Tit. 2:7,14; 3:1,8,14; Heb. 10:24; 13:21; 1 Pet. 2:12).

Paul wrote to the Roman Christians that we are to yield our members as instruments of righteousness being obedient to righteousness and to be servants to righteousness and holiness (Rom. 6:13-19). He told the Corinthians to "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." To the Ephesians he said, "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). He explained to them, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9). He instructed Timothy to flee sin and lust but follow after righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22) and that scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). He told Titus "We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

The Galatians were rebuked for mixing the law into salvation and others were rebuked for imposing Jewish tradition on Gentile believers, but never does scripture rebuke the New

Testament child of God for righteousness. It is true that some Christians may be guilty of pride in regard to their standards, but their sin is pride, not self-righteousness. This is not corrected by abandoning holiness! Christ said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23; cf. Luke 11:42). Others may promote rules which have no scriptural basis, often even contrary to scripture, but these are ordinance of man, not God's law. If you are accused of self-righteousness or called a legalist or Pharisee because you abide by and teach standards of separation concerning dress, appearance, guidelines for entertainment, or the words you speak or do not speak based on scriptural principles, then you may be comforted by Jesus' words, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt. 5:10) and the words of Peter, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (1 Pet. 3:14). Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

Whether you are among the carnal who have shunned righteousness and holiness, or among the Godly, separated Christian who has become guilty of pride, I leave you with this verse; "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).



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*proclaiming*

**The Story of Jesus**

-- A Missionary to our Homeland --

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