



**METRO NEW YORK WORLD MINISTRY**  
ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL CONTRIBUTING NOTES  
For the week of July 19-25, 2014  
Lesson #4: **Salvation**

## **Lesson Overview**

The study of this week's lesson on salvation is the study of the message of righteousness by faith. The plan of salvation is about how God will forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. As the beloved John wrote, "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

Some teach that we only need to be forgiven. However, it is God's plan to free us from sin. The good news is that we can be both forgiven and cleansed of all sin in this present world.

As we study this week's lesson, we will want to spend some time studying the message of righteousness by faith, which is the great subject of how the sinless life of Jesus can change our life. It is the great subject about how the righteousness of Christ can become our righteousness both imputed and imparted. We will make this study our lesson for Tuesday through Friday. Let us now turn to our memory text for this week.

## **Sabbath Afternoon: Our Memory Text**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God 'manifest in the flesh.' 1 Timothy 3:16.

"It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became 'a Man of Sorrows,' that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.' Isaiah 53:5. Behold Him in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, upon the cross! The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God--it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God.



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“But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.’ John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’ 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.” *Steps to Christ*, pages 12-14

### Sunday's Lesson: Salvation Is a Gift from God

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8.

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” Romans 11:6.

We are either saved by the grace of God or we earn salvation. It cannot be both. It is either a gift from God or we earn it.

Sister White wrote, “It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Savior, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of our character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, ‘The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, ‘It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.’ Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.

“So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.” *Steps to Christ*, E.G. White, pages 62, 63.



### Monday's Lesson: Salvation—God's Initiative

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Luke 15:4-7

The parable of the one lost sheep should motivate us to the service of reaching out to lost humanity. Consider these words from the Lord's servant, “For the conversion of one soul we should tax our resources to the utmost. One soul won to Christ will flash heaven's light all around him, penetrating the moral darkness and saving other souls.

“If Christ left the ninety and nine, that He might seek and save the one lost sheep, can we be justified in doing less? Is not a neglect to work even as Christ worked, to sacrifice as He sacrificed, a betrayal of sacred trusts, an insult to God?

“Sound an alarm throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned. We might have been in the place of the poor souls that are in error. We might have been placed among barbarians. According to the truth we have received above others, we are debtors to impart the same to them.

“We have no time to lose. The end is near. The passage from place to place to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left. Everything will be placed to obstruct the way of the Lord's messengers, so that they will not be able to do that which it is possible for them to do now. We must look our work fairly in the face and advance as fast as possible in aggressive warfare. From the light given me of God I know that the powers of darkness are working with intense energy from beneath, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do; but soon it will be more difficult than we can imagine. God help us to keep in the channel of light, to work with our eyes fastened on Jesus our Leader, and patiently, perseveringly press on to gain the victory.

“In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found.” *Maranatha*, page 29.



### Tuesday Through Friday Lessons: Christ Our Righteousness

We will now take our time studying the great subject of Christ our righteousness.

In understanding how God will save us from our sins and sinful nature, it is important for us to understand the connection between God's perfect law and the sinless life of Jesus. Consider these words from the Lord's servant, "I see the beauty of the truth in the presentation of **the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law** as the Doctor has placed it before us. . . . If our ministering brethren would accept the doctrine which has been presented so clearly—**the righteousness of Christ in connection with the law**— . . . , the people would be fed with their portion of meat in due season." 1888 Materials, page 164.

"Elder E.J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and **the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law**. This was no new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel's message. . . . At this meeting I bore testimony that the most precious light had been shining forth from the Scriptures in the presentation of the great subject of **the righteousness of Christ connected with the law**, which should constantly be kept before the sinner as his only hope of salvation." 1888 Materials, pages 211, 212.

Did you catch that? "The great subject . . . which should constantly be kept before the sinner as his only hope of salvation" is understanding and experiencing "the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law" or "the righteousness of Christ connected with the law."

It is to understand the perfect relationship between the perfect, sinless, and righteous life of Jesus in connection with God's perfect moral law.

So what has happened throughout history? The Jewish nation accepted the perfect moral law but rejected the perfect and sinless Messiah, Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was impossible for them to understand the perfect relationship between the righteousness of Christ and the law.

Much of the Christian world has accepted the perfect and sinless life of Jesus but has rejected God's moral law as still binding upon the believer. Therefore, it was impossible for them to understand the perfect relationship between the righteousness of Christ and His perfect law.

Prior to 1888, believers within the ranks of the Seventh-day Adventist church believed in the perfect and sinless life of Jesus and believe that God's perfect law was still binding upon the Christian, but they did not understand the relationship between the two. You might say, many SDAs were trying to get the righteousness that the law demands from the law itself.

So at the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis, God gave a most precious message to Elders Jones and Waggoner to help God's people to understand the perfect relationship between the righteousness of Christ and the perfect moral law.

So let us begin by defining the term "righteousness."



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### What is “righteousness”?

The Bible says, “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:172.

“Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law;” Isaiah 51:7.

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.” Romans 9:31.

It is clear from these verses that the law of God is the “law of righteousness,” that all of God’s commandments “are righteousness,” that those who know God’s law “know righteousness.”

It says in the book, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “God’s great standard of righteousness, His holy law.” COL, page 314.

The apostle Paul wrote that the law of God is “holy, and just, and good. . . . For we know that the law is spiritual.” Romans 7:12, 14.

The beloved John wrote, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4.

Jesus had summarized the law by one’s love for God and his fellowman. See Matthew 22:36-39.

So we can truly learn about righteousness from two sources. First, there is the altogether beautiful and perfect life of Jesus. Second, there is God’s great moral standard of righteousness, His holy law.

### What does God’s righteous law direct us to do?

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Galatians 3:24.

When we look at the perfect law of righteousness it teaches us that we are sinners. As such, it points us to the need of a Savior. It points us to Jesus.

The law helps us to understand what sin truly is.

The Bible says, “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. . . . For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. . . . Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” Romans 7:7, 9, 13.

The law is not against us, rather, it is for us by showing us our true condition.



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Sister White wrote, “The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ and to flee to Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. An unwillingness to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Waggoner and Jones.” *1 Selected Messages*, page 234.

Paul wrote, “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Romans 5:20.

The deeper I understand God’s law the more sinful my sins appear. The more my sinfulness becomes apparent, the greater grace appears. The more I realize my helplessness the more I will depend upon Christ for mercy and strength. It is good to see my sinfulness that I might know Him who is mighty to save.

### Can the law justify me? Or, can I be justified by the works of the law?

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall not flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16.

The Bible clearly teaches that we cannot erase our sinful past by keeping God’s law in the present.

### Why can’t we be justified by the works of the law?

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10.

It is not possible to be justified by a perfect law that we have already broken. Even if we could keep God’s law perfectly today and forever on our own, we would still fall short of being justified by it. Why? We have already broken God’s perfect law.

Dr. Waggoner wrote, “Justification has reference to the moral law. From the transgression of that, man needs justification; but the law cannot justify any sinner, it can only condemn. And so it drives him to Christ, that he may be justified by faith.” *Signs of the Times*, September 2, 1886.

### So how can I stand justified before God?

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. . . . Justification and pardon are one and the same thing. . . . Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin.” SDABC, Volume 7A, pages 294, 295.



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We can stand innocent before God by accepting the pardoning power of Christ's death for our sins. The Bible says, "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. When I ask God to forgive me of my sins, He keeps His promise, and He forgives me of my sins. I now stand justified in God's sight.

### Can I earn salvation by good deeds or works of the law?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8.

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Romans 11:6.

We are either saved by the grace of God or we earn salvation. It cannot be both. It is either a gift from God or we earn it.

"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Savior, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of our character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, 'It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.' Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us." *Steps to Christ*, E.G. White, pages 62, 63.

### So how can we be accounted righteous when the law already condemns us?

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Jesus is our righteousness, both imputed and imparted.

This is why Jesus is called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jeremiah 23:6.



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We have no righteousness of our own. The law defines what is righteousness, but the law cannot give us righteousness. We receive righteousness from only one source, that is, Jesus Christ.

### Jesus becomes the Son of man

To save man from his sinful condition, to rescue man from the condemnation of the law, the Father sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into our world.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:3, 4.

In the weakness of our fallen flesh, we are not able to keep God’s perfect law. Therefore, God sent His own Son in the likeness of our sinful flesh to live a perfect life according to His perfect law. He did this that we might now walk in obedience to His perfect law through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul testifies that Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15.

Through a constant surrender of His will to His Father, Christ was able to say at the end of His life, “I have kept My Father’s commandments. . . . I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” John 15:10; 17:4.

Jesus came in our fallen flesh to live a life for us. Day by day, choice by choice, Jesus wove in His own life a robe of righteous obedience to the Ten Commandments.

Why did He do all this? He did it for us. He wanted to save us from our transgression of His perfect law. He came to pay the penalty of our sins, which is death. See Romans 6:23. He wanted us to be able to live a new life of obedience in Him, that we may enjoy eternal with the Father forever.

“The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

“This is what the transgressors of God’s law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.



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“But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

“Only one covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. ‘I counsel thee,’ He says, ‘to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.’ Revelation 3:18.

“This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. ‘All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,’ Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God ‘was manifested to take away our sin; and in Him is no sin.’ Sin is defined to be ‘the transgression of the law,’ 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, ‘I have kept My Father’ commandments’ John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, E.G. White, pages 310-312.

When I look into the perfect mirror of God’s law, it condemns me as a sinner.

When Jesus looks into the perfect mirror of God’s law, it declares that He is righteous.

Therefore, for me to stand innocent before God’s perfect law I must have Christ’s righteousness.

I have no righteousness of my own to meet the claims of God’s righteous law. Through Christ’s perfect sacrifice for sin I am able to be forgiven of my past sins and stand innocent before God. By allowing Jesus to live in my heart by faith I am now able to live a new life in obedience to God’s Ten Commandments.

Therefore, the gospel is the good news of how Jesus kept God’s law perfectly for us, that He might be our perfect Savior in the forgiveness of sin, and our perfect Savior in the deliverance from sin. The Bible says, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21.

“It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse.” *Steps to Christ*, page 51.

### What is imputed righteousness?

Paul wrote, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” Romans 4:6.



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The word “imputeth” is the same as the word “credit.”

God will credit the perfect, sinless, and righteous life of Jesus to your account in heaven. Did you catch that! When God forgives you of your sins, you are more than forgiven of your past. He also credits to your account the thirty-three years of Christ’s sinless life.

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be roken.” *Gospel Workers*, E.G. White, page 161.

Do we deserve to have Christ’s perfect life credited to us as if we lived His life? Absolutely not! But due to God’s love and grace, He not only forgives us of our sinful past, but also credits to us the life of His dear Son as if we lived that life.

Now if God is willing to credit to you the sinless life of Jesus, are you willing to serve Him with your whole heart?

Do you want God to do more than credit the life of His Son to you? Do you want Him to impart that life to you?

### What is the imparted righteousness of Christ?

Jesus is now “imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, E.G. White, page 91, 92.

“God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.” *Mount of Blessing*, E.G. White, page 114.

The forgiveness of sin is (1) a judicial act that frees us from the condemnation of the law, and (2) the channel for God’s redeeming love to transform our hearts and save us from sin.

Those who are forgiven are changed. This is the good news of the gospel.

The message of righteousness by faith is a most precious message that invites “the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 91, 92.

Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep the commandments.” John 14:15.

“Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law.” *Steps to Christ*, page 61.



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“While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God’s free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.” *Mount of Blessing*, page 54, 55.

In summary,

Christ lived a sinless life in our fallen flesh. He lived in perfect obedience to His Father’s commands. Christ died for us to pay the penalty for our sins. Christ is risen and offers to us His own righteousness to replace our garments stained with sin. If we accept Him as our Savior, no matter how sinful our past, for His sake we are accounted righteous. Christ will impute or credit to our account in heaven His own righteousness.

More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in our heart by faith. If we maintain our connection with Him, He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

So then we can say, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

### **So what is the perfect relationship between the sinless life of Christ and His perfect and righteous law?**

We can have all the righteousness that the law requires, but we cannot obtain this righteousness from the law itself. We cannot obtain it by simply trying harder. We receive righteousness from only one place. We receive it from Christ. He is the Righteous One. When we receive Him, we receive who He is. And who is Jesus? He is the perfect, sinless, and righteous Son of God. The more we have of Him the more righteousness we have received.

So what is the key to receiving righteousness? It is receiving Jesus every day as your life. As John wrote, “He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:12.

Do you want life? Do you want righteousness? Then have more of Jesus, the Righteous One.

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Notes prepared by Pastor Jeff Wehr.