

THE
RIGHTEOUSNESS OF
GOD

Pastor Bankie

The Righteousness of God

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ISBN (print edition) 978-8062-49-0

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Free download from www.pastorbankie.org

Published in Nigeria by Bezalel Enlite.

P.O. Box 2273 Enugu, Nigeria.

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Introduction

I went to visit some brethren once, while there one of them turned to me and said, “Pastor Bankie, what is the righteousness of God?”

The moment I heard the question I realized I did not know the answer. Yes, I could speak some meaningless preachers’ talk that would have sounded good, like shouting that I am the righteousness of God in Christ, but I hate to say things that don’t have a real meaning in my heart. For this reason I told the brother who asked that I did not know and I promised to study on it. What I want to share with you here is the understanding I believe the Lord ranted me when I turned my heart to understand.

Chapter 1. Some Basics

You see, righteousness is a description for what you do. It is a moral concept that describes the works that are usual in a person's everyday living. When you say someone is righteous, you are describing him based upon the works that proceed out of his person.

Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.
1 John 3:7

Holiness, on the other hand describes the stamp of ownership that is upon you. If we might use the words of Jesus we will say, "whose likeness and whose inscription is upon you." That is what *holiness* refers to. When He said "*you are a holy nation*" He was saying that "you are a people specially set apart for the purpose of doing God's service." Paul described himself in Acts 27:23 as belonging to God. He said "...*God whose I am and who I serve.*" That is holiness.

Righteousness, however, is the approval God gives to what you do. As an example, the act of giving is described as righteousness in 2 Cor. 9:9-10.

*"... He gave to the poor, his righteousness abides forever
"Now he who supplies seed to the sower will ... increase
the harvest of your righteousness."*

(Please bear in mind as we go on that 'just' and 'righteous' mean the same thing. To justify means to set forth as righteous.)

To be righteous therefore means to do right, that is, to do what is morally and legally (spiritually speaking) correct.

We must note at this point that the standard for righteousness or for right and wrong is God. God's character is the standard and measure of righteousness. God is just. He does not ever do wrong. It is lack of understanding that sometimes make men think God has done wrong.

*"The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He. Deut 32:4*

'Far be it from God to do wickedness and from the Almighty to do wrong'. Job 34:10.

You must approach all judgement with this mentality otherwise you will pervert the truth. That was what Elihu came to Job with when he spoke to him in his troubles. He said that in whatever he had to say, he would ascribe righteousness to God (Job 36:3). God approved of the words of Elihu.

The righteousness of God means that 'His work is perfect and all His ways are just.' It means God always rewards good and punishes evil.

I need to clarify one thing before I go on with the main discussion.

The fact that I said that righteousness describes what you do does not disagree with the doctrine of righteousness by faith. The reason is that faith is seen by God as an active thing. This is

why one is said to *walk* by faith. When the Lord Jesus was asked, “*what must we do that we might work the works of God?*” He answered ‘*This is the work of God, that you BELIEVE...*’

Faith therefore is work. I do not mean that you must look for works to show that you have faith. Walking by faith is called the work of God. When you walk by faith, the faith that is in you will automatically produce works that are righteous. These works are manifestations that the faith that you profess is real. (For more, please see my book ‘*He That Believes*’).

Chapter 2. Unrighteous For A While!

In examining further on this issue of the righteousness of God, let us briefly look at 2 Corinthians. 5:21

"He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

The righteousness of God as an expression here is what we are examining in this exposition. It is not the same as that described in Roman 3:21,22 where it refers to the justification of a man by God. The righteousness of God described in 2 Corinthians. 5: 21 refers to the justness of God Himself just as it is also used in Rom. 3:25, 26.

"This was to demonstrate his righteousness... that he might be just (i.e. shown as having done right)..."

When Jesus, who was without sin, was suffering the punishment reserved for the worst of sinners, righteousness demanded that God, who is judge of all the earth, should have delivered Him. His refusal to do anything about this deliverance was apparently therefore an unrighteous act. This is the reason why Islam does not accept that Jesus died on the cross as Christians claim. I heard a Muslim cleric say that the Father could not have forsaken Jesus since He was His servant who served Him well. They therefore hold "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me" as an erroneous quotation by Christians.

Paul was explaining in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that it is the product of this 'unrighteous' act that justifies it. He was saying

that we, new creatures in Christ, are the demonstration of the rightness of God in making one who had no sin to be sin (referring to sin offering). Those who think God was doing wrong by punishing the lamb without blemish will change their minds when they behold the product of the procedure. They will see that by that act, He (Jesus) had justified many (Is. 53:11). If the Muslim will get to understand what a new creature in Christ Jesus is and how he came to be, he will recognize that Jesus indeed had to die the death of the sinner. God would have been so vindicated in his eyes.

This is the point I'm endeavouring to pass across: the righteousness of God mean that God ALWAYS DOES RIGHT. He does not ever do wrong. If He makes a promise, He always fulfils it. When He said "walk before me and be perfect and I will bless you," the righteousness of God is that if you obey Him, you cannot remain in poverty; your star will shine! He cannot but fulfill His promise to you.

Some who did not understand this principle were lamenting at one time saying, *"It is vain to serve God and what profit is it that we have kept His charge and that we have walked in mourning before the Lord of host."* (Mal. 3:14) They did not understand the principle of the due season. They did not understand the testing of God. They did not understand that for a while, before the final manifestation, God may appear unrighteous. They simply did not understand.

Some of you reading this today are in this same position. Many are going through similar experiences. You have done all you know how to do according to the doctrines of God that have been taught you.

You have refused to pervert your ways; you have refused to take bribes; you have refused to leave what you believe to be the call of God upon your life.

As far as you know, you have not allowed the love of money and the cares of this world to becloud your judgement.

You have refused to marry an unbeliever.

In summary, you have served the Lord and walked mournfully before Him. And what do you get? NOTHING!!!

There has been no fruit. None of the benefits of serving God that you were taught has manifested. You seem to be the one who does not know how to do it. Your mates are getting married; they are acquiring material possessions; even those that lack the principles of God that you profess.

You have become a personification of 'the foolishness of the Gospel'. You indeed appear foolish.

A brother told me something sometime ago; he said, "if I were to do what my colleagues in the office are doing, I would make much more money than I do presently." I encouraged him, telling him that he was commending his conscience toward God, not to man. God who was seeing the uprightness of his heart rewarded him in due season; I witnessed his promotion above all those his mates.

Chapter 3. Temporary Afflictions

Are you wondering about your present situation in life? I think you should read this!

"You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you ... That He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

"And he humbled you (by letting) you be hungry, and (then) fed you with manna... that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone but man lives by everything that proceed out of the mouth of God.

"For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land...

"Where you shall eat food without scarcity, in which you shall lack nothing.

"He led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground...

"In the wilderness he fed you manna... (All these were) that he might humble you and test you, TO DO YOU GOOD IN THE END. Deut. 8:2-16 (Words in brackets are added for emphasis).

There is a season in life that God takes you through – the season of testing. It is not because you lack faith. It is not because there is anything wrong with you, *per se*. It is indeed a period you enter into because you have chosen to obey God. It is reserved only for the people that have chosen to leave Egypt (spiritually and by not being conformed to the world's standards).

In this season, there is little physically to boast of, you seem to go hungry once in a while. No! Child of God, it is not lack of faith. It is called the *disciplining of the Lord* (Deut. 8:5). Sometimes there seems to be danger all around. You took steps of faith that only led you to Joseph's prison. You are virtually passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

It is not lack of faith.

When you are in such distress it is not because you are inferior to anybody. It is because you have chosen to obey God and He has purposed to do you good at the end of that period. That is the reason – TO DO YOU GOOD!

What am I trying to pass across? I want you to know that if you have chosen the fear of God, there is no present situation that should make you derail.

God is righteous. You may be in your season of testing; in the days of small beginnings. Never mind, He will do you good in the end. It is just that your time is not yet. It does not mean that the things that are your expectations from God are false; they are indeed real.

If you believe God for abundance of wealth, your present meagre salary is not at all an indication of where you are heading. I hope you do realize that for the period that the Jews were in the wilderness, Egypt was apparently a more prosperous nation. That was however not reason good enough for them to turn back. Those who desired to turn back murmured and were destroyed.

The Righteousness of God

"...If he shall draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

What are you to do? You are to go ahead, knowing that God is only testing to see what is in your heart so as to make you humble. He is righteous and so will do you good.

Chapter 4. Patience, My Friend

"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward his name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints". Heb. 6:10

I want to draw a few points out of here.

One, this verse of scripture says God is righteous (i.e. *not unjust*), and that His justness or righteousness is demonstrated in the fact that He observes your work and will definitely reward it. If He does not, it would be unrighteousness.

Two, His righteousness is that you will be rewarded not just for 'having ministered' but also 'in still ministering'. This emphasizes persistence and a refusal to stop whatever your dedication to God is.

The point in this, God will definitely remember you like the king remembered Mordecai (Esther 6), but you must continue in the things that you know to be right, to do them. If you by reason of the cares of the world, the pressure of society, parental pressure, and such things fall away from what you know to be the will of God, you have lost out entirely. God will still be just though He does not remember you. It is FAITH AND PATIENCE that inherit promises.

so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Heb 6:12

Patience can be defined as '*still ministering*', that is a continual adherence to the doctrines of rightness. The time that

God will remember you as He did Joseph is called the *due season*.

Now, note that not every season is your season.

Before examining further the issue of due season, I'll love us to look a bit at what I call 'the principle of Daniel'.

THE DANIEL PRINCIPLE

Daniel, a Hebrew name, means 'God, my Judge.'

What does it mean when God is called Judge?

"But God is the Judge, he puts down one and exalts another." Ps. 75:7

He is called Judge because He is the one that raises one up while bringing down another. He said in Ps. 103:19 that *'His kingdom rules over all.'* and in Daniel 4:25, He says

"...The most high is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever he wishes."

This is the point I'm making: your lifting does not depend on your degree, your connections, your parents, your nationality or anything else of such. Therefore, there is no such explanation valid for any situation you are in today.

You are not poor because you did not get that oil company job, or because you did not study a particular course in school. If you are walking with God, you are on your way up and none of these things can keep you down.

Your destiny is not tied to any degree, any company, or any economy. When God swore to Abraham, the scripture tells us in Heb. 6:13 that He swore by Himself. The reason, we are told, is that He couldn't find anything greater than himself.

He didn't swear by your degree saying, "Seeing that you are an accountant, I will bless you."

He didn't swear by your connections: "Seeing that you are a millionaire's son, I will bless you."

He did not say any of these because He is greater than them all. He swore by Himself.

See, if you are down now, it is not because of something physical that you lack; God never swore by circumstances!

God is not using your smartness or your business acumen or any of the skills that you are counting on. When He finally shows up in your life you will understand what is meant by *"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream."*

Stop looking at physical things to discover what your life will be like. The spiritual realm absolutely controls the physical. The control of the spiritual over the physical is demonstrated well in the history of nation of Israel in the scriptures. Their prosperity was directly proportional to their obedience to God; it had nothing to do with the circumstances around them. Think about it.

Now, if God is the one that will set you on high, it makes good sense therefore to endeavour to be pleasing unto Him.

Whatever you are doing, do it with the realization of God's presence and this principle of Daniel.

Let me briefly share this testimony to drive that point in. During my final exams in Obstetrics and Gynaecology as a medical student, I was examined by a visiting Professor in what we call the 'long case' examination (In this you are tested on your ability to obtain relevant information from patients, to physically examine them and to make good conclusions). At a point, the Professor asked me a simple question, "Have you performed this kind of procedure before?" The exam had gone on alright up until that time and all I needed to say was 'yes' and all would have been just fine. But there was a problem – I had never done it! So I told him 'No'. Was he angry? You bet! He made so much of it that a doctor who witnessed my apparent folly quizzed, "why didn't you tell him 'yes'?" Immediately I spoke to myself (and to the Lord) in a whisper saying, "Lord, you have helped me till this moment. I can't dare get in your wrong books at this time." The result? By the time we were through with that phase of the exam, the angry Professor turned to me and said, "you have done very well, I will forgive you for not having done that procedure."

The scripture says, "*when a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*"(Prov 16:7)

Chapter 5. A Test Period

Are you maintaining your integrity before God in your place of work while others make money and your boss is not even aware? Child of God, God is your rewarder; He is righteous and He notices!

Are you holding to the doctrines of the righteousness and apparently loosing money and even your friends are appalled at your stupidity? God will soon vindicate you!

You are in a period of testing. God is testing you. He has a placement ahead for you. He is preparing you for that place; He is testing your faithfulness. When Joseph passed his test, he became a Prime Minister. When Daniel passed, he became a top government official in a strange land. When David passed, he became King. When you pass, you'll probably be the next President of your country. When you have endured and passed, you will be the happiest wife on the earth.

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Ps 126:1-2 KJV

The time of your trials is when you confirm the decision that you have made for righteousness. It is the time to hold on to your faith. It is the time to frustrate Satan with your determination. It is not the time to look for a quick way out of the pain. It is the time to wait.

All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Job 14:14 *KJV*

Allow me to quickly tell you that God always looks for an excuse to bless people. Blessings do not just rain from heaven for no cause. That is what is called the righteousness of God. It means that God always has reasons for blessing someone. When the time came to greatly bless Abraham, God asked him to sacrifice Isaac. When he did as God commanded, the Lord used that as the excuse to forever bless him; he got an irrevocable blessing.

*By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, **because you have done this thing** and have not withheld your son, your only son... Gen 22:16*

Can you see that? All the pains that you are going through because of obedience to the word of God is the excuse He is looking for to bless you. All the things that you lost because of your stand for righteousness are standing before God as a memorial; He will look at them and show them forth as the demonstration of your faith in Him, and that will provoke the kind of blessing that you have never seen.

When Joseph lost his position in the house of Portiphar, it stood as the excuse to bring him to the throne of Egypt. Yes, he had a promise but a promise from God must be activated by the works that the faith in them provokes. His conduct in Portiphar's house, especially with Mrs. Protiphar, was his work of faith.

Because of the righteousness of God, the Lord gives everyone a season of life in which to do things that He can reward later. It is the early period after attaining the age of accountability. It is called the youth season. This is the time to choose your ways, not the time to look for money and to enjoy yourself.

Your youth, which is a fleeting or very brief period, must not be wasted chasing material possessions. It is not given to young men (and women) to exercise energy to acquire material things. It is given unto you as a young man to use that period to order your ways before God. Material possessions are automatic additions. They are provisions that God will satisfy you with and you will super-abound. You are to labour to be well pleasing to God who will in turn bless you for the labour of righteousness. Have you not heard?

'Seek first the kingdom of God ... and all these things shall be added'

It is said that the only decision-making factor some people have in life is money. It is called idolatry. It disqualifies one from the blessing of God.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Now this is the righteousness of God:

'You shall serve the Lord thy God and He shall bless your bread and your water.'

You shall serve, He shall bless. He will definitely bless!

The Righteousness of God

This is the righteousness of God:

“I walk in the way of righteousness of God, in the midst of the paths of justice, to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.” Prov. 8:20-21.

God will not forget you. All the choices you made with Him in mind will definitely be rewarded; your change will come in due season. This due season comes at the *fullness* of time.

Chapter 6. Due Season

Let's conclude this discussion by looking briefly at the issue of due season.

"And let us not loose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. Gal 6:9

"And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season." Ps 1:3

God has made everything beautiful for its own time. Eccl 3:11 NLT

There is a time God has set to visit you; that is the time He would have proved you (Ps. 105:19).

We have seen the issue of patience. ("*...if we do not grow weary.*"). Apart from this we have to understand that due season comes only at the *fullness* of time.

There are events that must necessarily take place and lessons that must be learnt before your time changes. The fullness of time is marked by the last event that must be fulfilled. As an example, before the flood came down from heaven to cover the earth Noah had to go into the ark.

"And just as it happened in the days of Noah..."They were eating... drinking... marrying... and being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and (then) the flood came..."
Lk 17:26,27

Everything spiritual is in measures and until the necessary measure is filled the next event will not happen. The point is this:

there is a purpose for your particular situation, until you *full-fill* it, you are not moving. This is why you do not graduate from the University until you had passed all the courses necessary. This was why Hannah went year by year to Shiloh until she understood the purpose for her firstborn, then she conceived. It was when she promised to give him in service to God that her due season came.

God is not in a hurry; a thousand years is just like a day. You need to discover the reason for your circumstance, fill it up and get out of your testing. The day this understanding came to me, I wrote it on my wall that, "The more the time you waste, the longer you'll have to wait." Struggling won't get you out; you must learn what makes for your change, do it, then God will move you.

Are you involved in something that isn't working? Go home and pray, not for it to work but for God to show you what adjustments you need to make. Ask the Lord, *what lack I yet?* Pray to him saying, *"That which I do not see, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more"* Job 34:31-32.

Until you make a discovery of what more is needed and you fill it up to the full, your change may not come. Be careful, lest you be tempted to return to Egypt. Turning back from righteousness is not the way out; there is just something you need to adjust.

Remember this: God is righteousness; He is watching to do you good.

Pastor Bankie

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro the surface of the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart are perfect towards Him". 2 Chr. 16:9 (KJV).

Chapter 7. In Summary

God is set to lift people up. He is just using this season to know those who are serving Him and those who are only fair weather friends. He is not looking for smart fellows or ambitious ones. He is looking for those whose hearts are perfect towards Him, who will stick with Him, come what may, who will dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Everyone can profess faith when there are no troubles, the time of testing separates the true faith from what is not. So rejoice, your adversity is your qualifying examination. This is the purpose of God,

"And they will be mine", says the Lord of Hosts, 'on the day that I prepare my own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.

"So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him" Mal. 3:17-18.

Your change will come because God is righteous.

This is the righteousness of God: Though it appears like you have not profited, but your choice of the ways of truth which cost you so much will be rewarded openly. You will head the company from which you refused to steal. You will head the places you stood by in the time of adversity. Your 'foolishness' will be envied. You will become in the mouth of those who formally mocked you an illustration of the righteous ways of God. The public demonstration of this, the rewarding of your closet life

Pastor Bankie

in the open is what is called the righteousness of God. This is what is meant by

"...That we might be the righteousness of God..."

It is,

"...For the demonstration, I say, of his righteousness."



Dr. Bankole Olusina, fondly called Pastor Bankie, is a teacher of the Word of God. The emphasis of his teachings is the separation of the Church from the world by obedience to the truths of God. He is a member of the Light of Christ Alumni Fellowship (LOCCAF) Ministers Forum, and the Pastor-Teacher of Kingdom-Word Ministries which he founded with his wife and partner in ministry, Ufuoma.

Kingdom-Word Ministries is a non-denominational teaching ministry based in Enugu, Nigeria. Activities of the ministry include weekly Bible classes at the ministry office, publication of free teaching tracts and books, radio/TV broadcasts and organizing teaching seminars in various towns and cities.

Pastor Bankie's audio message digital catalogue includes hundreds of messages which are available on CDs and MP3 CDs.

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