



GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ - Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the Church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:6 says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

As a Christian you have probably heard a lot of teaching about righteousness. Unfortunately some of this teaching brings people into bondage and struggle. People try to achieve righteousness as well as they can, but never really succeed. Understanding the righteousness in the new covenant will set you free!

The first article in this newsletter is from Mary Felde's new book "Living the Better Covenant". In this article she explains the different types of righteousness and lays a solid foundation for understanding the righteousness we have through Jesus. I recommend you to get hold of the whole book to be further established in the awesome life we have in the new covenant!

The second article is about our loving relationship with Jesus and how He lives forever to intercede with God on our behalf. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven - and He is continually praying for you! He wants you to receive everything He has paid for! The article is an extract from the book "Come, Sit & Eat", a devotional written by Jocel and Mylene Evangelista, Pastors of "New Life Christian Center - The Fort" at the Philippines.

Friend, remember that the new life you have in Christ is not based on your own effort, but on Jesus - and Jesus only!



Berner Vegge, Editor



Living the BETTER Covenant

By Mary Felde

Jesus has become the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Understanding righteousness will greatly help us to know and experience the realities of this better covenant.

GETTING THE FOUNDATION RIGHT FIRST

"Self-Righteousness or God's Righteousness, the choice is yours!" These words came from a bishop during a pastors' and leaders' seminar in a city in Africa. This seminar coordinator was overwhelmed after having

heard the teaching about God's righteousness given to us as a gift—the very truth of the gospel of Christ. It was not difficult to understand what choice he himself had just made, and now he was challenging the other leaders in the seminar. Still full of wonder he added, "These scriptures are not new to us! They have been in our own Bible all the time. We have even read them many times—but I have never understood what it meant before today."

The words he said were so true. In this book I am not coming with a new and “special” teaching that no one has ever seen before. No, it is quite the opposite. We are going back to the teachings that have been in the Bible all the time—both in the Old and in the New Testament. However, we will be careful to rightly divide the Word of God, so we do not end up with a mixture of gospel and religion—a mixture of Jesus’ work and our own self-effort.

OUR FOUNDATION WILL ONLY SHAKE IF IT HAS BEEN BUILT ON SOMETHING OTHER THAN CHRIST HIMSELF!

I have found the words of Jesus to be so true; the foundation of the house is the most important. Two houses can look the same, have the same kind of windows, doors, and roof, but one might have been built on sand and the other one on the rock. When challenges come, only the house built on the rock will stand. Jesus is the rock! All other foundations are shifting sand.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

In this book we will take some time to study the foundations of our faith. Have we built on sand or on the Rock? I remember well how I overheard one of the participants in the same seminar say to his fellow minister during one of the breaks, “Now our

whole foundation is shaking.” Our foundation will only shake if it has been built on something other than Christ Himself!

The old covenant had another foundation. In that covenant the blessings of God were told to come upon people if they were able to be perfectly obedient to the whole Law of Moses. It is interesting to see that at the same moment the Ten Commandments were given, instructions regarding sacrifices were also given. This is because God knew from the beginning that no one would be able to keep the law perfectly on their own, and without the sacrifices they would all be under the curse.

THE THREE PLATFORMS

A way to explain the old covenant is to say it would be like building a foundation, a platform, of our own works and self-effort. When the platform has reached a certain level, we would then step on top of it and say, “Lord, bless me because of myself. I have been good and done all perfectly according to what you instructed.” You might have heard people pray like this also in our time. However, we can hear something isn’t right with this saying. This is because in the *new* covenant we have *another One*, Jesus Christ, who built *another* foundation, another platform, of His perfect works and perfect life. This second platform is the only one that is entirely perfect and without any cracks! And then He allows us to step on this platform where we can pray, “Lord, thank You that You have blessed me because of *Jesus*.” This is what the gospel is all about.

However, in many churches worldwide today a *third* platform has become evident, where

people step on it and say, “Lord, thank You for blessing me because of Jesus and also a little bit because of myself. You see I have really tried, I have done my best, so I deserve Your help now.” In reality we have mixed the two platforms into a third platform. We have mixed the gospel of Christ with religion, which is always focusing on our self-effort. It is high time we demolish this third platform and step entirely over onto the platform called Jesus Christ. He is the only foundation of our faith!

I believe this transformation is happening all over the world at this time—through many different ministries and ministers. God is revealing the finished work of Jesus Christ and how *the whole Bible* needs to be read through the light of the finished work of Jesus Christ. As we stop mixing religion and the gospel of Christ we will experience that it is much easier for people to receive and experience the miracles that have already been provided for them by Jesus. For it is the gospel of Christ that is the power of God, not a mixture of self-effort and Christ.

WE HAVE MIXED THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WITH RELIGION, WHICH IS ALWAYS FOCUSING ON OUR SELF-EFFORT.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek (Romans 1:16).

When we read this scripture we might think this is only about receiving the new life and

becoming born again. So we might think that the gospel is what we preach to unbelievers and then the believers need to be taught something else. However, it is the gospel of Christ that is the power of God. If people need the power of God to transform their lives, then the gospel of Christ is the key. You see, the word salvation implies much more than a spiritual rebirth. Salvation (Greek: *soteria*) includes physical, mental, and spiritual restoration.

We need to preach the gospel to both unbelievers and believers, and even to us ministers too. For the gospel of Christ is also the power to break habits of sin, change people's characters, and even transform marriage life. Confidence and boldness in the ministry comes from understanding the gospel itself, and will bring us into a restful ministry where we do not constantly try to work the gospel, but where we let the gospel do the work.

Upon the revelation of who Christ is, He will build His Church, and the gates of Hades *shall not* be able to stand against it (Matthew 16:18).

CONFIDENCE AND BOLDNESS IN THE MINISTRY COMES FROM UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL ITSELF, AND WILL BRING US INTO A RESTFUL MINISTRY

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING RIGHTEOUSNESS

After years of conducting leadership seminars and teaching in Bible schools, I have come to the conclusion that unless people clearly understand the grounds for righteousness and salvation, they will often be afraid of the teachings of the gospel of God's grace. I discovered that if I started teaching about God's grace, then a lot of critical questions regarding salvation were asked. However, if I started teaching about righteousness and salvation, the majority of the *same* questions were also asked there. And when we had laid a solid biblical foundation on the amazing truths about righteousness, people were more likely not to misunderstand the teachings that would follow later. This is what I mentioned earlier—the foundation of Christ alone must be laid *first!*

GETTING THE "FEEL" OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RIGHTEOUS

There are several definitions of righteousness. One definition is "Right standing with God." Another definition says, "The ability to stand in the presence of our Father as if sin never has existed." And a third definition is similar, "The ability to stand in the presence of our Father without any sense of fear, guilt, shame, or inferiority."

Each of these definitions is strong and carries a lot of meaning. Let us just imagine the first definition, "Right standing with God." If you carry a big load of sin, the sin will

then come between you and God. For some people the load feels so heavy that they are walking with their head facing down, hesitating even to look people in the eye. We know the scripture that says, "Look, the Lamb of God who covers the sin of the world." Jesus came to cover the sin of the world, so God does not see it, but we still feel the heavy burden and shame of it. Is this what happened? No, I actually quoted the scripture incorrectly. Let's look at it again.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

WE CAN STAND IN FRONT OF THE FATHER AS IF THOSE SINS NEVER HAD BEEN COMMITTED!

The blood of lambs in the old covenant could only *cover* sins, but the blood of Jesus *removed* the sin. When did this happen? Around two thousand years ago. So there is now nothing that separates God and us. If people feel there are many things still separating them from God, then their feelings are lying to them. From God's point of view, the sin has been paid for and has been taken away.

Let's take the next definition, "The ability to stand in the presence of our Father as if sin never has existed." Many people live their lives full of regrets: "If only I had..." "If only I had not..." They wish they had some kind of time machine bringing them back in time, so they could have avoided some of the mistakes that still are

haunting them today. Imagine, the blood of Jesus is somewhat having that function. We can stand in front of the Father as if those sins never had been committed! Of course, some of the natural consequences may still be there, but the shame, fear, guilt, and nagging condemnation are gone. And do you know what? God is even able to take our bad past and turn it into something good! That is called abundance of grace— grace upon grace! So take courage and keep on reading.

THREE PEOPLE FULLY RIGHTEOUS

At this point I would like us to look at three people who I would consider fully righteous, not 80 percent or 95 percent, but 100

WE ARE TOO USED TO MEDITATING ON OUR SINS AND WEAKNESSES, INSTEAD OF BEING CONSCIOUS OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

percent. The first one is Adam. Adam, you might ask? After all, Adam made a huge mistake. Well, I think I agree with you—we need to change the example. Let us instead say, “Adam *before* the fall.” Do we agree now? Before the fall Adam had never done anything wrong—he had a perfect standing with God. And this leads us right into the purpose of this example. How do you think Adam felt walking around in the Garden of Eden? Do you think he felt shameful or fearful when talking with God every afternoon? No, of course not. He had never done anything wrong. And when God asked him to name all the animals, he boldly said yes for he had no trace of failure.

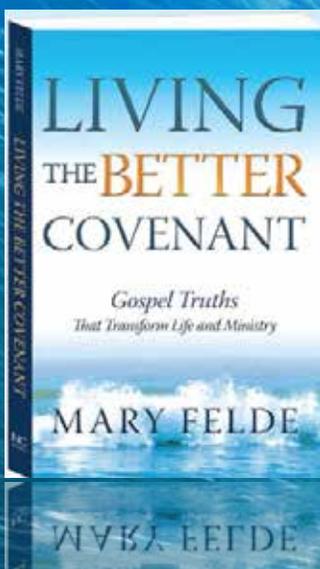
Imagine if we could feel just the same way Adam felt at that time. My friend, I encourage you to take some time today and meditate on how you would feel if you were just like Adam—before the fall. The reason why this exercise is important is because we are too used to meditating on our sins and weaknesses, instead of being conscious of our righteousness.

The second person we will mention as fully righteous is Jesus Christ. This time I can hear you

fully agree. Jesus never had a wrong motive, said a wrong word, nor did a wrong action. He was totally perfect! And what effect did this have on Him? We can see that He was always confident when talking to His father, “Father, I thank You that You always hear Me when I pray,” and He boldly said to the devil, “Get away from Me,” and “you have nothing in Me.”

Another interesting truth we can see is that the Bible says Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness more than His companions (Psalm 45:7). If you could see Jesus and the twelve disciples walking down the road and they all started to laugh, Jesus would probably be the one who laughed loudest.

I think some paintings of Jesus have not given Him favor. He looks physically weak, pale, and kind of serious. However, when we think about it, Jesus must have been physically strong probably being a carpenter in those days. And this was important, as His body needed to be strong enough to endure the torture and hardship before He came to the cross. Also, it is likely that His skin was tan, as He often was out on the road walking under the heat of the sun.



Transformation happens when you discover Christ’s finished work. Trusting Him who lives in you removes condemnation and brings you peace, security, confidence, and great joy. Ministry becomes restful and more fruitful.

Living the Better Covenant is an intensive treatise that covers truths that Mary Felde has taught for many years to diverse people worldwide – with ongoing testimonies about how lives have changed for the better and ministries have been significantly transformed.

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But more importantly, I believe He had, most of the time, a big smile on His face. He must have looked very friendly, because children don't come running to a person who looks strict and serious.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE NOW ARE PUT ON THE SAME LEVEL AS JESUS—WE HAVE RECEIVED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST HIMSELF.

Personally I have been very blessed by what I like to call “The Laughing Jesus” movie: “The gospel according to Matthew,” with Bruce Marchiano as the main actor. This movie portrays Jesus as a man of great joy on a journey of redemptive love. Maybe it's time for some new paintings of Jesus—and for even more preachers filled with the same joy. The Bible says that as we preach, we paint a picture of Jesus. Let's continually discover more of who He is so we can paint a correct picture of Him.

Let's remember that we have good news to share—not bad news! My pastor over many years told us repeatedly a testimony of when he was a young evangelist. He used to preach strongly and somewhat angrily. One day his mother attended the meetings for the first time. After the sermon she came to him and said, “My son, you are such a good and friendly son. Why is it that when you stand behind the pulpit you become so angry at people? This is not how you are. I know you!” God used the evangelist's mother to teach

him an important truth: you cannot preach the good news mad, you can only preach the good news glad. Later he heard T.L. Osborn speak the same sentence. So if we are angry, let's check to see if it is really the good news we are preaching.

Let's return to the topic of righteousness. Imagine if we could feel just like Jesus. I encourage you to take some time and meditate on how you would feel if you were just like Jesus—fully righteous. How would you walk around on the streets then? Would you carry a smile on your face? Would you have confidence to expect full support from God? What a wonderful thing it would be to be as righteous as Jesus! And that is the core of the good news—we are!

This brings us right to the third person we will mention as fully righteous—100 percent. That is... you! I can hear some readers rejoicing and others disagreeing. I will never forget an elderly pastor from Asia whom I met in a Bible school. When I pointed out that the third person fully righteous was him, he could not believe it. “You cannot put me on the same level as Jesus. Jesus was perfect, but I sometimes have errors,” he spoke out during the teaching session. This was an honest man! But he had never before seen the clear message of the Bible. The good news is that we now are put on the same level as Jesus—we have received the righteousness of Christ Himself.

After the session was over, the same man came to me during the break. “I want to thank you so much for this teaching, it has changed my life completely,” he said. Then he suddenly turned and walked out of the classroom,

being unable to say anything more as tears were already falling down his cheeks. Maybe for the first time in his long life the burden of sin and condemnation had lifted from his shoulders. Oh, how people all around the world need this teaching.

Here are a few of the many scriptures telling us that we are fully righteous.

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4).

...to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight (Colossians 1:22).

...those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.... (Romans 5:17).

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE SOME TIME AND MEDITATE ON HOW YOU WOULD FEEL IF YOU WERE JUST LIKE JESUS—FULLY RIGHTEOUS.

As we can see, righteousness is a *gift*, and it was God's *choice* that we should stand holy and blameless before Him. It doesn't say “before people,” but before God. As a married person, your spouse may accuse you of not being perfect; yet before *God* you can stand boldly as holy and blameless. Understanding this will greatly affect our lives and enable us to live different lives! We will return to this later in the book.

ON WHICH KIND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE WE BASING OUR LIVES, MINISTRY, AND CONFIDENCE?

One of the most effective ways I have found to clearly explain the powerful truth about righteousness is to explain the difference between the two kinds of righteousness found in the Bible. The first one is called *self-righteousness*. As we can hear by the name it is based on *ourselves*; on our good works and right lifestyle. Now the truth is that this kind of righteousness can improve and grow over time. However, it is not solid ground and can also decrease.

IF WE AS BELIEVERS HANG ON TO SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, WE HAVE JUST TURNED OUR FAITH INTO A WORK-RELIGION LIKE OTHER RELIGIONS.

Here is an example of how it could be if I based my confidence on self-righteousness. Let's say I wake up one morning and spend time reading scripture, praying, and worshiping. I feel good! Maybe I think my self-righteousness rises to 90 percent. If someone at this moment knocks on my door and asks for prayer for an urgent and serious matter, I will feel ready to pray.

Later the same day I might take the car and drive in the very hectic traffic in a rough area of

a large city. Imagine someone driving very recklessly and almost hitting my car—a very dangerous situation. I might get angry with the person, and tell him a few things. But oh, here drops my righteousness to 50 percent. What if a person just then calls me and asks me to come over and pray for a very serious situation? “Oh, I'm sorry, but I'm a bit busy right now. Try to call someone else,” might be my reply. Why? Because I don't feel worthy, and I am not sure if God will answer my prayer.

All religions are based on the idea of self-righteousness. If the people just try hard enough, they might gain some acceptance and favor from their god(s). If we as believers hang on to self-righteousness, we have just turned our faith into a work-religion like other religions. The truth is that the Bible says we can *never* achieve righteousness by our own effort. That is why we all need a Savior, no matter which religion!

As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).

Some people use this scripture to say that there can never be anyone righteous, and that we should all try to improve our level of righteousness to be accepted by God. No, we need to read this scripture more carefully. If we read the context we see clearly that this is about righteousness by the law—by our own effort.

*Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin** (Romans 3:19-20).*

No flesh will ever be justified by self-righteousness. This is bad news. But then I'm *so glad* for the words that follow: “But *now*.”

*But now the righteousness of God **apart from the law** is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on **all who believe**. For there is no difference (Romans 3:21-22).*

WE ARE NEVER TO APPROACH GOD BASED ON OUR LEVEL OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS BUT INSTEAD ALWAYS BASED ON GOD'S PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS GIVEN TO US AS A GIFT.

This brings us right to the gospel of Christ! As we can see the second kind of righteousness is called *God's righteousness*. By the name we know that this one is based on *God Himself*; on His good works and His right living. And of course, His righteousness is always 100 percent—it will neither increase nor decrease. He is yesterday, today, and forever the same. I am so glad the traffic in the city or the temperature in our house does not affect His righteousness. This is where we base our hope and confidence! And look carefully at what it says. This righteousness is given to us by faith in Jesus— and it is given to *all* who have faith in Him. We are *all* declared righteous the moment we are born again. That's what I call good news!

We are *never* to approach God based on our level of self-righteousness but instead always based on God's perfect righteousness given to us as a gift. This seems to be just a simple sentence, but it carries a strong meaning! I encourage you to meditate on it when you are in various situations in your life and ministry. Never let condemnation steal your confidence before God.

THE TWO KINDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE CLEARLY SEEN

The truth about the two kinds of righteousness can be clearly seen in the Bible.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Romans 10:1-4).

and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith (Philippians 3:9).

This very moment in the seminar was when the bishop challenged the other leaders, "Self-righteousness or God's righteousness, pick your choice." It is so clear in the Bible that it doesn't need further explanation. It is just to read what is written.

In Luke 15 we see the story of

a father having two sons. The younger son had wasted all the inheritance he had received from his father. Possessions that the father had worked hard over many years to earn were wasted in just a short time. The young man was now suffering greatly. He decided to return to his father and work for him like a servant. In this way he would get a house and food, and hopefully he could "pay back" some of the wrong he had done. But all hopes to be accepted as a son was completely gone. You can imagine his surprise when the father ran toward him, kissed him repeatedly, interrupted his defense speech, fully restored him as a son in the house, and immediately threw a celebration party for him! There was great joy! However, not everyone was happy. The eldest son did not partake in the celebration—but was instead angry at the grace that had been displayed.

So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him" (Luke 15:29-30).

Why this anger? We can clearly see that the elder son had the mindset of self-righteousness, focusing on what he had done and not on who he was. However, the father did not leave him in that state. As he came out to meet him he spoke friendly with him, trying to make him see that he also was a son and not a servant.

What do you think; did the elder son change his mindset and join the celebration? Which was his

pick? The loving invitation was for sure extended to him by the father himself!

A pastor gave a testimony, after having heard this teaching in a seminar. Referring to the scripture we had discussed in Romans 10 he said, "I now understand that we have had a lot of zeal. We have had so many prayer conferences, and tried so much in every way. But I now see that we have been lacking in knowledge. Righteousness is a gift we simply receive by faith."

What a humble heart and teachable spirit this leader had. He could learn some things from me regarding righteousness, but I could surely learn something from him regarding his heart and attitude. Everywhere I go I tell the story about this man as an example for all of us.

This article is an extract of Mary Felde's book "Living the Better Covenant." www.NCResources.org



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Relationship Is Better Than Rules

By Jocel and Mylene Evangelista

The new Covenant has totally changed our relation with God. Let us look further into this loving relationship we now have with Jesus Christ.

A Better Covenant

Hebrews 8:6 (NLT) But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

Do you like better deals? What about better seats? If you were on an airplane sitting in economy class and the flight stewardess came and offered you a free upgrade to business class, would you take it? Of course you would! Why? Because it's better! As believers, we must understand that God has given us something better. The Old Covenant was good, but what we have today under the New Covenant is far better.

Under the Old Covenant,

the covenant of the Law, the emphasis was man's effort. It was a covenant of "YOU shall" and "YOU shall not"—an external set of rules and regulations, which YOU had to perform. The Law was good, but the fault of man was that he could not do it (Hebrews 8:7–8). In fact, that was the very purpose of the Law, to show man that he could not do it on his own and point him to a better way.

Instead of "you shall" God says, "I WILL."

That better way, the New Covenant of grace came through the person, Jesus Christ (John

1:17). Under the New Covenant, the emphasis is no longer man's performance but God's performance. Instead of "you shall" God says, "I WILL."

Under the New Covenant, God's law is now written in our hearts and when something is written in your heart, you cannot help but do it (Hebrews 8:10). He now lives in us, empowering us from the inside out to do what is pleasing to Him (Philippians 2:13).

Friend, God wants you to know that you don't need to struggle and strive, trying to live life on your own strength. There is a better way! In Christ, you have a better covenant. You are no longer self-sufficient, but God-sufficient. You now trust in Him to perform in and through you, and when God is the one performing, you can expect His performance to be glorious.

Jesus Our High Priest

Hebrews 7:17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

Do you know that Jesus is our high priest? You may be wondering, "what's a high priest?" Under the Old Covenant, the high priest was appointed to represent the people before God. According to the Law, this high priest had to be a son of Aaron from the tribe of Levi. The problem was that Aaron's priesthood had limitations, as these men could never serve perfectly, and eventually they would die and need to be replaced (Hebrews 7:23,28). However, God never intended for Aaron's priesthood to be permanent. He had something better in mind—a better priesthood, with a better high priest.

Under the New Covenant, Jesus Himself has become our High Priest, and He is not limited. He serves perfectly before God, and He never dies (Hebrews 7:24,28). He has become our high priest forever, not according to the priesthood of Aaron but according to the priesthood of Melchizedek (an unchanging and eternal priesthood).

The high priest of the Old Covenant entered God's presence just once a year, but our high priest, Jesus, never leaves the presence of God. He lives forever

to intercede with God on your behalf (Hebrews 7:25). How amazing! Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven continually praying for you (Romans 8:34).

Whatever your concern is today - know that Jesus, your high priest, is taking it to the Father in prayer, and God never says "no" to His Son.

What is He praying for? Hebrews 9:11 says, He is praying for the good things to come. He is praying that you have a healthy marriage. He is praying that you walk in wisdom. He is praying that your sons and daughters grow up in the knowledge of Him. He is praying that you receive everything that He has paid for.

Whatever your concern is today—know that Jesus, your high priest, is taking it to the Father in prayer, and God never says "no" to His Son. You may not know what you need in the days ahead, but Jesus does; and He is already praying for your tomorrow, so that when

you need it, it will be there!

Relationship Is Better Than Rules

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

When I was a kid, my dad used to send us gift boxes from the U.S. I would love getting gift boxes from my dad; but do you know what was even better than receiving a gift from my dad? It was when my dad would come home. The gift was good, but my dad coming in person was far better.

John 1:17 says, "the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Notice here that the Law was "given" but Christ "came." God gave the old covenant of the Law; but when He established the new covenant of grace, He did not just send something down from heaven, He came personally. He did not just send the answer—He came! God came down in the person of Jesus Christ and died for you and me, so that we could enter into a relationship with Him.

Now let me ask you, what's better: rules or relationship? Relationship! More than rules and regulations, God wants relationship with His people. Hebrews 7:18 says that the old way, the system of commandments did not work. It was not able to change us, nor help us grow to maturity, so God



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set it aside and established a new way—Jesus! Jesus is the way that works. He is the way to maturity and a transformed heart. Now, we obey God not because we have to, but because **we want to**. Our obedience springs forth, not from a heart afraid of punishment, but from a heart of love. When we see how much He loves us, we cannot help but respond in obedience.

Friend, be reminded today that the new life you have in Christ is not based on a system of rules, but on a loving relationship with your Savior, Jesus. As you get to know your Savior more, you will find yourself changing effortlessly. You will find yourself growing and maturing like never before.

All Of God's Promises Fulfilled In Christ!

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NLT) For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory.

Are you standing on a promise from God today? Well I have good news. The Bible says that ALL of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ. That means when you approach God with a promise from His Word, He says YES!

You may have heard that when you approach God with a promise, He either says "yes", "no", or "wait". But the Bible is very clear: When you approach God asking for something He has promised you in His Word, He always says YES! When you approach Him for healing, He says YES! When you approach Him for provision, He says YES! When you approach Him for wisdom, He says YES!

As you get to know your Savior more, you will find yourself changing effortlessly.

The second part of this verse says when God says "yes", our response is "amen". *Amen* means "so be it", or "I believe". So when you say "amen", what you're really saying is "I believe". That's why when you hear God's promises declared from the pulpit, we encourage you to say "amen". It's not to make us preachers feel better. It's for you to release your faith and grab hold of that promise. It's you saying, "That's mine! I believe!" And when you believe, then you receive!

The awesome thing about God is that He knows us all too well. He knows that we need more than just a promise. His word is more than enough, but for our sake, He has backed up His promise with a covenant. So, not only do we have His promise, but we also have His covenant, and these two things are unchangeable because God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:17-18).

Friend, I don't know which of God's promises you're standing on today but you can rest assured that if God said it, He will fulfill it. He **always** keeps His Word. Your part is to simply say "amen!"



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