

Hebrews 5.13

The Word of Righteousness

There is a specific accusation on the table; it is the accusation of immaturity is specific to spiritual things, and more particularly applied their grasp and mastery of the "word of righteousness." It is important to remember that they were not ignorant of the word of righteousness, but unskillful; that they were babes. Before we go on I want to remind us of the fact that "babe" here is not an infant in terms of age, not the word for child that carries with it the connection of an infant in relationship to its parents - rather it is the idea of maturity vs. immaturity. And as such, the writer of Hebrews is not even connecting the assumption of salvation to these Jewish believers. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't. They should be, but they are not displaying the signs of someone who is mature, or even alive. The mark of maturity is skill. Someone may be mature in differing areas of life. We are warned to remain inexperienced in evil, in wickedness or malice but to still be mature in regards to spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 14:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

But this immaturity is something important, it is something affecting what is fundamental in the Christian life, it is a missing foundation that leaves them unstable and in danger of not only living a life without impact, but far worse, a life that is not alive at all but rather a dead thing masquerading as living. This immaturity is about how they have or have not walked in the experience of spiritual truth. They are unskilled in the "word of Righteousness." So what is this "word of righteousness"? We could describe it in a variety of ways...

I. OBJECTIVELY –

It is the only means by which righteousness is declared TO US

a. In it the righteousness of God is revealed

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV) 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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

- b. It is the message or word of the cross, and is the very power of God...

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- c. In it His hatred toward sin is revealed

Romans 3.25

Romans 8.2-3

- d. In the Gospel the full faithfulness (and so the righteousness) of God is displayed

Genesis 3.15

Romans 3.23-26

Romans 15.8

Luke 1.70

Acts 3.18, 24-26

e. The only righteousness which God requires is displayed in the gospel

f. The only righteousness which God will approve

g. The only righteousness that God will accept is displayed in the gospel

2Corinthians 5.21

Romans 10.3

Philippians 3.9

Romans 8.3-4

Romans 10.3-4

II. SUBJECTIVELY –

It is the only righteousness which God will accept
FROM US

a. This is the one question that all must answer - how is a sinner made right with a holy God –

Micah 6:6–7 (NKJV)

6 With what shall I come before the LORD, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old? 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

- b. Some will try to skirt the issue, to make us not sinful
- c. To make a god less holy
- d. To make God false, pretend he does not exist... this is the great aim of all atheism. To remove that law which is written on the walls of the heart and pretend that man will NOT give an account of himself to His creator.
- e. This subjective righteousness is perfectly suited to the absolute righteousness of the thrice holy God

- i. It answers His justice
 - ii. It demonstrates His goodness
 - iii. It showcases His grace
 - iv. It reveals His love
 - v. All of His holy attributes are manifested
 - vi. Our souls are made clean and pure before Him
- f. Nothing but the gospel can ever achieve all of these aims
- g. Works based righteousness must diminish God and elevate man, narrowing the gap rather than displaying it.

III. DIDACTICALLY –

it is the only means of righteousness which teaches us WHO God is, what He requires of us, and how to live so as to fulfill His law.

- a. Teaches us our duty towards God
- b. Teaches us our duty toward man

i. We are commanded thus to be righteous –

1 John 3:7 (NKJV) 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

- ii. Though the law gave these same instructions, it carried no power to enable us to fulfill its demands.
- iii. The gospel strikes at the heart of sin and the heart of the man laying both open while teaching us to walk contrary to the flesh and in accordance to God's will.
- iv. It neither condones nor allows for sin. Rather it condemns it in the fullest possible manner by rejecting sin where it hides in the heart of a man.

IV. EFFICIENTLY –

it is the only instrument by which righteousness is communicated to us, or rather, by which we are **ACTUALLY** made righteous

a. It is only by the gospel that we are promised to be MADE righteous

Acts 2:38–39 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

b. It is by faith we receive the promise and the preaching of the gospel produces faith in its hearers - it actually produces the alien Righteousness of God in us

Romans 10:4 (NKJV) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

c. Our ongoing sanctification is produced in us by the gospel

John 17:17 (NKJV) 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

As we are made righteous by being conformed to the very image of Christ, whose gospel we serve!

Ephesians 4:24 (NKJV) 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:10 (NKJV) 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

V. SINGULARLY -

for it is the only righteousness that God will accept.

a. The Gospel is the ONLY word of Righteousness that has ever been or ever will be given.

- i. It is itself the definition of righteousness
- ii. It is the only true expression of righteousness

VI. WARNINGLY –

the simplicity and clarity of the gospel makes the act of ignoring and despising it all the more hateful to God

- a. The more pressing and urgent the message, the greater affront there is in ignoring it
- b. The plainer the message is the greater the sin is in adding to it, thereby making it complicated
- c. The more authority in the sender, the greater the obligation to be plain and accurate
- d. Thus the refusal of the gospel is the greatest of sin.