

Being Ignorant of Christ's Righteousness and Going About to Establish Your Own

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We will begin this morning by reading our text. Our text this morning is found in Romans 10:3.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, Lord may you exalt thy righteousness this day. May you bring us, Lord, to an end of self. May you bring us, Lord, to see that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. May you reveal this day what is true righteousness found in thee and thee alone and, Lord, may you put down any thought, any desire, any machinations of our minds and our hearts and our wills, to exalt a righteousness, Lord, that is not accepted before thee and in thee. Bless this time, Lord, with the pouring out of thy Spirit that you may speak to thy people, that you may glorify thy name and, Lord, keep me from any error, and bless this message to thy glory for thy name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

It's been a while since I've been up here and one of the things my family and I did is we took a little trip and we went up to Williamsburg in Virginia and it was right after Christmas time and we like to park there at Busch Gardens that we went to and frequented quite a few times and it was all done up for Christmas. A couple of the things that we partook in was their shows that they had in there and a couple of them were reenacting either the Christmas message or the things about Christmas, and the thing that really resonated with me is that no matter where you go, that there is a righteousness that man has, a righteousness that man will always put forth as a righteousness that is acceptable to God. We sat in a "religious" exercise where it was a reenactment of that night and the birth of Christ, but it wasn't really along the Scriptures, and they told you that at the beginning. They told you it was their way and their interpretation of what took place. Any time you hear that, you know you're in trouble. But that's the thing that rang through to me the most is that man has a righteousness that he looks up to God and he

says, "Accept this." It's always been that way. It's been that way since Cain and Abel were here. It's been that way since the fall of man, that man puts forth a righteousness.

The first thing I want to do this morning is as I was reading, it's customary for me to look at Robert Hawker. I look at his "Poor Man's Commentaries" at times and I read some of the things he had to say about my text this morning or the text that the Lord has given me, and I wrote down a couple of them and he wrote this on this passage. He says, "A righteousness of their own or a fancied righteousness they were endeavoring to set up, all the meantime unconscious of the person and work of the Lord, our righteousness." Now, we know as we'll see here in just a moment, that Paul was addressing this to Israel, and that's the thing, the righteousness that the religious Israel had was such a high righteousness. We're going to talk about that more in a minute, but I want to read this other comment. He said, "So all the meantime they were unconscious of the person and work of the Lord, our righteousness. An ignorance of Christ's righteousness and a supposed preparation for acceptance with God in a righteousness our own is the general creed of the present hour." That's what Hawker wrote at the time that he wrote this. He said all around us, that's the prevailing thought of man is there is a righteousness that we can do, that we can spin our own robe, we can make our own robe of righteousness. We can mix it with the righteousness of Christ or we can stand in the righteousness of our own before the Lord.

I thought that was interesting as Hawker wrote that in his time as the present hour of the day. That was the creed of the day. It's no different now in the year 2016. As I sat there in Virginia, as I sat there and talked to people, and I sat there and listened to people, there seems to be this idea that there's a righteousness in man, and because of that righteousness, he is accepted with God, and that's what I want to talk about today, but I want to begin today by reading the first three verses because he says, "For they being," we need to find out what he's talking about.

So chapter 10 begins this way, he says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." I'll tell you something: salvation is a very sobering thing. It's a very real thing. To be saved from wrath, to be saved from hell, to be saved from death, is a very sobering, a very real thing to the child of God. And Paul said it's equally sobering to be lost, to be in eternal damnation, and Paul says that, he says, "You know, my heart's desire and prayer." Do you have anybody that you would put in that today? I know I do. There are people that in God's providence he has brought people into my life that my heart's desire would be that the Lord would reveal his righteousness to them, but they don't need his righteousness in their own eyes. That's the whole point Paul is saying. They're going around, they've established their own righteousness. There is no need of salvation in Christ. There is no need of a robe that's not mixed with their own.

That's the whole point and I sat and I thought about that and I know, I know in my heart there are people that I've come in contact with, that I sit and I say, and even in those very moving things that we sat in. We heard some people with some very beautiful voices lift up their voices and sing about the Lord and sing about what the Lord is, and who the Lord is, and you sit there and you see this righteousness and as you get caught up in the

music and you get caught up in everything and all the emotion that's going on, you sit there and go, "Yes, it would be great if all the people in this room could understand the righteousness of Christ."

But that's not the case and that's what Paul is saying here. He says, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." Israel, the one who were called to be righteous, the ones who said, "We have all this religious duty that we do and all this obedience that we do." Then in verse 2 he says, "For I bear them record." I bear them record. I put it on account right here, "that they have a zeal of God," and that's what I'm talking about. You can run into people who say Christ all the time, "God does this. God saved me. Christ has done this." They have a zeal of God, "but not according to knowledge." What knowledge is that? My knowledge? No. Your knowledge? No. A knowledge that the Bible talks about growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. It's the mind of Christ. It's that knowledge. Paul said, "It's missing. It's missing in them that I bear record they have a zeal of God, they have a desire, they seem to have such a power toward God." You know, if you're like me, I've got family members like that. When you speak to them there are times you just feel like, "Wow, they really know about God. They speak about God as being a Savior. They speak about Christ as being their everything."

But yet life doesn't bear that out. It doesn't, and that's the same thing Paul is sitting there and he says, "You know, I'm surrounded by all this religious world." The Jews were this religious people and they all had this zeal but it wasn't according to knowledge, and that's true knowledge he's talking about. They had their own knowledge. They had their own righteousness and that's what he tells us in 3 of our text today, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness." It tells you something about the knowledge of the day, the knowledge of the religious world. It's ignorant of God's righteousness, and they're going about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. That's the whole thing. Paul said, "Here it is in a nutshell, here's what's going on now." Hawker said, "This is what's going on in the day." I'm up here telling you it's the same thing going on today and I think you'll find that. I think you have found that in this life if you've had any dealings with the "righteous people" in this life, the ones that have made themselves righteous.

But let's look now at this verse, "they being ignorant of God's righteousness." Nothing will do to appear in before God. Nothing, except the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's doctrine. We all know that. We know that in that parable with the wedding feast, we know that there was one who came in that Christ saw who it was. The one who administered the feast, he saw through his righteousness. The rest of them couldn't see it. He sat down with them and it was undetected by them. But the Lord said, "Bind him hand and foot." He had a righteousness on. He had a robe on, but it was his own robe. He was ignorant of the righteousness of Christ. He was ignorant of the finished work of Christ. He was ignorant of what righteousness is in Christ Jesus and that's a very sobering place to be this morning.

It's a very scary place to be, and if you don't think that's scary, Jesus said in Matthew 5:20, he said, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the

righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And you sit there and you go, "Well, that was a self-righteousness. I understand that. I know that the righteousness of Christ must be seen because self-righteousness will never, never be able to stand before God." But let me tell you something about these Pharisees. Have you ever read the Gospels? Have you ever searched the Gospels? Who is always present around Christ? It's the Pharisees. They came to Christ. Did you hear that? They came to Christ. We think about it and we say, "Oh, people just need to come to Christ." That's what we're told every day in this world, "Come to Christ." They came by the thousands to Christ. These people came to Christ on a daily basis. When he was performing his miracles, they were there. When he was there instructing his children, they were there. They were there to catch him in a trap. They were there to lay a snare. They were there to put their righteousness up against Christ's righteousness and compare the two because in their eyes they had a righteousness all their own, and they weren't stripped of it, and they couldn't be stripped of it because they were the sons of perdition, and the Lord Jesus Christ did not come to die for them.

And as they came to Christ, they had a righteousness of their own, and the Lord says that in Matthew. He says, "I say unto you, your righteousness has to exceed theirs." And you think about yourself in that seat and you compare yourself to these people who came to Christ on a daily basis. They came and they sat in the temple and they sat there and they examined the Gospels, not the Gospels, they examined the law. They examined the Scriptures that they had in front of them and they looked into them for salvation, and they kept looking and searching and searching and they became more righteous and more righteous and more righteous in their own eyes, and they came to Christ daily. Daily, and Jesus says to them, "Unless your righteousness exceeds theirs." Now, I don't know about you, may God be your Judge today. May God be true and every man a liar, but I know that in me, I don't come to Christ every day. I don't seek Christ every day. I don't seek him when things go bad in my life. I'm in need of him to seek me, to call me to him, to show me the depravity in my heart, to show me the wickedness of seeking my own, trying to work things out in myself.

Being ignorant of God's righteousness, that is a very sobering thing to be. To have that thought. If we die today, if we die in the next hour, and we have not the righteousness of Christ, we are absolutely going to spend eternity in hell. That's the dire need of this righteousness. I don't care how much you think you can mix your righteousness with his, he rejects that. He has always rejected that, and it doesn't matter what man says, it matters what, "Thus saith the Lord" saith. And these Scriptures are filled with a righteousness that's not found in man, it must be imputed. It must be a righteousness that's given to him by faith, the faith of the Son of God.

Now, for our first turning today, we're going to turn over to Philippians 3 and see what Paul writes there. A very familiar passage. Philippians 3, and we'll just start in verse 7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Listen, Paul's not talking about physical things. I mean, yeah, he talked about having sat at the feet of Gamaliel and he was circumcised the eighth day, he's of the stock of Benjamin, he's done all this stuff, but do you know what? What is gain to you today? Is it your righteousness?

That's the question of the day. Is there something in you that is telling you that you are achieving something or your obedience is achieving something for Christ today? Is that the case?

Paul said, "There was a time in my life that was the case, but what things were gain to me. I thought that was such a gain to me. I thought that by going around and having this zeal for God, it was something God would accept from me. But those things today," Paul says, "they were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ." Do you know what that means? Everything that's in Christ, everything that Christ has is greater than anything that I have.

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." There's that knowledge that Paul said they don't have, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Not a head knowledge, which we'll hear about later.

"For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." As you sit in that chair today, that's the examining question: have you suffered the loss of all things, which includes your creature righteousness, your creature will, your creature desires, your self-will, your self-righteousness, yourself, all these things? Have you suffered the loss of them? And what does that mean "suffered"? It was a hard thing to be stripped of those things. It wasn't something you put off of yourself. The Lord has stripped you in the stripping room. That's what Paul is saying.

"I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." In comparison to all of those things, Christ is so much greater. Christ is the excellency, but he had to be shown that.

Verse 9, "And be found in him." That's the eternal, vital union. Paul said to be revealed that is where the secret lies. To know that my life was hid in Christ before the foundation of the world and that his seed himself is in me. Christ is that seed and he is in me, and his salvation lives in me. To be found in him, me being in him, him being in me, that's what union is.

"Not having mine own righteousness." That's the difference. Being found in Christ, you don't have a righteousness. It's been stripped from you. It's been put to death. It's not something you cleave to. It's not something you desire every day to get up and say, "What is it I've got to do for God? What is it I can learn more about God? What is it I can have this added to my merit?" That's not what grace is. That's not the grace that's in Christ Jesus. That's not the righteousness that's in Christ.

"Be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law." That's the whole thing. If you ever sit back and have a deep thought, everything we do is because of this bondage we have to the law. The law that keeps telling us we have to. The law that says obey or else. The law says this. The law says that. The law says this. That's what the world's righteousness is. Do you understand that? They are out there trying to, and I'm talking about the religious world now, I'm talking about the ones that are in our passage today.

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness." Paul said, "You know, my own righteousness was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." That's how we understand this righteousness, is by the faith of Christ because you're not going to reason getting there. You're not going to sit down and put everything in order. You're not going to sit there and try to doctrinally understand everything. It's not going to happen. You might attain to an intellect, but Paul has been stripped of all that. The child of God must be stripped of all that because faith credits the word of God. Faith lays hold of Christ's finished work. Faith testifies of what Christ has done. Faith testifies of his righteousness. It has nothing to do with the preacher. Nothing.

So we go back to our text today, "they being ignorant of God's righteousness," and here's the soberness of the hour: if we are wrong here, if we miss this point, if our life is built upon a mixture of righteousnesses, your whole life will be filled with that. It will come out in everything that you do: your personal life, your work life, your religious life. Whatever it is, if you are spinning a robe to meet a robe of Christ, to patchwork his or to put something into his righteousness, it will permeate your entire life. For the child of God, he must be stripped of every bit of that.

Paul said it this way in Romans 7:18, "For I know," I am convinced, I have been shown, I have been revealed by the Holy Spirit, "that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." There is no way I can bring anything to Christ. There is no way I can assent to Christ. There is no way that I can do these things. "For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." I don't find it in myself. Can you say that today? We're going to end today, Lord willing, with some words from Philpot which I thought, I mean, I can't say I'm any better. The heaven-born soul is taught that this righteousness that he has spent his life in, that he has spent his life trying to achieve, and spent his life trying to spin this robe, it's all filthy rags and it's all dung compared to Christ's righteousness, and that's the robe we must be wearing. It's not of ours, it's his to impute. It's his to put on.

It's his to give and by faith we understand that, which is also a gift of his. The child of God, as we sit here today, is in dire need of him. You hear me say that every time I'm up here because do you know what? It never changes. Every time I'm up here, we're in dire need of Christ. We're in dire need of him to meet us in this hour. We're in dire need of him to reveal his righteousness because we're too busy looking at a righteousness of our own.

But that's the thing, we have to be convinced. That's what John 16 tells us is the Holy Spirit convinces the child of God of sin and he convinces him of righteousness. He has to convince us that we're sinners. He has to convince us that we fall far short to the glory of God. He has to convince us that our righteousness is filthy rags. Not up here, in the soul. We can all mouth it. We can all say it, but in the soul. In the soul is you and the Lord. It doesn't matter what you say outwardly around other people, it's you and the Lord. It's that time. It's when the Lord communes with your soul and when you commune with your

soul. But Paul was convinced that in him dwelled no good thing, in his flesh, but I'll tell you what, in my new man, I know something good dwells there, it's the Lord Jesus. It's him.

But the second part of this is, "and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." How can we, as I sit here and view these Scriptures today, how can we rely on ourselves? How can we just sit there and carnally just say, "No, I'm going to rely on myself. Myself is what's needed here. I can do this." But that's how strong self is. That's how strong Satan is. That's how strong the world is because all three of those things have the same message. All three of those enemies have the same message: you don't need Christ. You can mix, if you're a religious man, that's fine. You can be a religious man, just mix me with them. Mix the world with them and we're fine. Satan says, "Hey, that's fine. Mix me with them." Your flesh says the same thing, "That's fine." Because the Lord is a pure Lord, that's what he is. He has no mixture in him and the child of God must be stripped of all of that. That's the mortification of the Spirit. That's what he does in the child of God's life, he continues to strip him and strip him and strip him.

But let's see what the Lord says over in Psalm 50. Well, I'm not going there, I'm going to read it, actually. No, I'm not. We're going to go there. Okay, Psalm 50. They're going about to establish their own righteousness. Psalm 50, the Lord says this and he says this in 21 and 22. Listen to this, "These things hast thou done," this is the Psalmist speaking for the Lord, "These things hast thou done and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Did you hear that? That's mixing your righteousness with Christ's righteousness. You thought that you and the Lord were on the same equal plane. That's what the Lord's indictment is, not only against the "them" who are outside of Christ, but in our sinful nature. And there are thoughts that we have everyday, they are anti-Christ.

You thought that you were altogether such a one as thyself, "but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces." How does he feel about forgetting God? How does he feel about establishing your own righteousness? "Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." The Lord doesn't wink at sin. He hates it. His wrath will be poured out upon sin and for you and I, it will be poured out upon us if we're outside of Christ, or it's been poured out in our substitute. And I'll tell you what, if you don't understand that, you don't understand salvation, the depth of what Christ put himself under and what he absorbed for the children of God. The wrath of God poured out for our sins, these sins we have in our mind to make ourselves equal with God by mixing something in us with what God has. It's abominable. That's what he says here. It's absolutely abominable.

There is so much religion in this world that teaches Christ is there when you need him and all you've got to do is pick him up and apply him to yourself, and if you apply him to yourself and you apply his righteousness and you do that when you're in need of him. And you do that. That's a mixture. You know, if it's reliant on any of us in here, we're lost. We're not going to apply Christ's righteousness. We don't have anything to do with it

because we're too busy in our flesh trying to establish our own righteousness. We need to die to that. We need that stripped from us every day. It's not a one time thing. Have you found that, that you were stripped from it and never had those problems again? You never had those prideful thoughts about what you see in the Scriptures or how you think you know this and other people don't? Have you ever had that? I know I have. It's a righteousness of your own.

Dire need. It's a solemn, solemn thing to be ignorant of Christ's righteousness. It really is. I can't underscore that now in the hour that we're speaking. It's a solemn thing to be ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish your own righteousness, thus not submitting unto the righteousness of God, and that's what all of that is. When we're establishing our own righteousness, we're not submitting to Christ's righteousness and that's what Paul says in this entire passage if you read it yourself. You need a power greater than yours, you know, and that's what Paul's life attests to and we're going to read that now.

He said it's by imputed righteousness alone that we're saved and here are some passages to back that up. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." this is in his letter to Titus. He says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." In case you're sitting there saying, "Well, Paul, what is this imputed righteousness? Is it us? Is it Christ? What is it?" "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." That last part is very important. We stand every hour in dire need to be renewed by the Holy Ghost. I don't know about you but I find myself to be very dead at times, just feel blah, you know. The happiness in the things of this world, they just don't last long enough. You know, the weekend is over. It's back time to go to work, blah. About time to do this, blah. Those are creature things. I stand in need of a renewing of the Holy Spirit to lead me to Christ's finished work; to see what Christ has done for me.

2 Corinthians, his letter to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:21, he says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us," that's what we talked about earlier, him standing in our place, him taking on the sins of the child of God. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He is made unto us righteousness, that's what he tells us at the end of 1 Corinthians 1. He is made unto us righteousness. That's what we have in this eternal vital union. He is made unto us righteousness, and Paul keeps pointing to the fact of what he's done to be righteous, what he's done in his righteousness, and I don't know about you, I can't answer for you, but if you sit there today and you're comparing what you've done against what Christ has done, I'd like to know who comes out on the better side there. What you've done for the Lord and what he's done. Which one has a better righteousness? Which robe would you want to have put on you? Yours or Christ's?

Then in Isaiah 54:17, Isaiah says, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." All throughout the word that's what you see, a righteousness of his, "and their

righteousness is of me." It must be imputed. It must be put on. It must be gifted. It's not one that we can attain to, or mix with our works, or our religion, or our obedience, or whatever it is you want to put in that blank. It must be all of him.

But what is righteousness to you? Is it when God in our nature shed his precious blood to open a fountain for sin? Is that what his righteousness is to you? Is it when he lay down his life in perfect obedience for his children? Is that righteousness to you? What is righteousness to you? Is it when he appeased the wrath of God? Was that a righteous act for you? So I said, we sit in these chairs, you don't come with your righteousness and compare it against what his righteousness is. How does that compare? Is it his reconciling God and the sinner? Is that righteousness to you, that he has reconciled God the Father and the sinner together because of him?

Finally, what about verse 4 in our text, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And that's the thing, that's the thing, that's the question because all of these things that we mix and we try to put a righteousness to Christ, is because of the law. It's because of trying to do something and anytime you hear that word "do," to do something, that's of the law, and the child of God is constantly bothered by that, and in this life, that's what I'm saying, the Pharisees, they just kept trying to do and do and do and Paul said, "You know, they have a zeal of God, but it's not according to knowledge." Is that what you want today? Is that your desire to have a zeal of God? Oh, he's got such a zeal, but it's not according to knowledge. It's not according to the finished work of Christ.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Psalm 89:16 says, "In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Do you hear that? In thy righteousness they shall be exalted. All throughout the world, all throughout. All those ones we've ever heard in the Old Testament. You know, we like to point to all those things they do and Hebrews blew all that out of the water, didn't it? By faith. By faith in the Son of God. Took all them out of it. Took all their righteousness out of it. Took anything that they had, anything that they did. It's all put down. It was all by grace. It was all by gift. It was all by him. You see, that's the thing. For the child of God, everything in these pages point to him. They must. It's where his life is. It's hid in Christ.

Turn with me, our last place together, Isaiah 64. Isaiah 64:6-8, and may the Lord bless the reading of this to ourselves. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses," and we have them, oh, my gosh, we have them, "are as filthy rags." I hope that we're in that number in this hour that the Lord has spoken that to you. All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Every one of them. Everything you try to attain to, everything you try to add to Christ's finished work, it's filthy, "and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." That's what sin does. It takes us away. It breaks that communion with the Lord. That's what spinning our own righteousness does. It puts a very big roadblock in there. It's building our house on sand. It's not being built upon the Rock which is the finished work of Christ.

"And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee." Did you hear that? There is none of us that can stir up ourselves to take hold of him. Not righteously. Oh, we can do it self-righteously.

"For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." Do you know what that is? That's emptying. That's safe and secure in the potter's hand. That's being preserved by grace. That's being emptied by the Lord who strips us. That's what that is. Maybe that riles you up today. Maybe you don't want to be emptied. I know your flesh doesn't want to be emptied, mine doesn't either. Mine's going to fight against it every day. But my new nature, he knows that I need to be emptied. I must decrease and he must increase every moment of my life or I'm in trouble. I'm in this group here that's trying to establish my own righteousness and being ignorant of the Lord's righteousness. Paul said in Romans 5:21, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." May his righteousness today reign in our souls, the righteousness of Christ, and may deaden and kill off all of our righteousnesses that are as filthy rags.

Two things I want to leave you with: the first one is heart's hymn. This one comes, it's number 82 and he always writes, well, not always, but this one is after Isaiah 61:10 which says, "he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

"Of all the creatures God has made,
There is but man alone
That stands in need to be arrayed
In coverings not his own.

"By nature bears and bulls and swans
With fowls of every wing
Are much more warm, more safe, more fine
Than man their fallen king.

"Naked and weak we want a screen
But when with clothes we're decked
Not only lies our shame unseen
But we command respect.

"Can sinful souls that stand unclad
Before God's burning throne
All bare for what is quite as bad
In coverings of their own.

"Rich garments must be worn to grace
The marriage of the Lamb
Not nasty rags to stink the place
Nor nakedness to shame.

"Robes of imputed righteousness
Will gain us God's esteem
No naked pride, no fig leaf dress
How fair so it seem.

"'Tis called a robe perhaps to mean
Man has by nature known
It grows not native like our skin
But is by faith alone.

"A sinner clothed in this rich vest
And garments washed in blood
Is rendered fit with Christ to feast
And be the guest of God."

That one touched me and I wanted to share that with you. And the last thing I want to share, I've been reading a collection of sermons, "Manna," by J. C. Philpot. The more I read him, the more my soul is knit to him as one who has certainly been exercised in all the things that I've spoken of this morning. He says and this is on a sermon that is not even on the text we're talking about, it's called, "A Seed of Israel, Justified in Christ." He says,

"A man may say 'in the Lord, I have righteousness'; but he must give me better evidence than merely saying it, else we are not bound to take that man at his word. We may rest assured he cannot say feelingly, and experimentally, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength,' until he is put out of conceit of his own. When, by the eye of faith, he sees a glory and beauty in Jesus as made over to him, by the hand of a good and living faith, the blessed Spirit is pleased to engage our soul, to bring into our heart some sweet discoveries of his perfect obedience, and in the language of living faith, then we say 'In the Lord have I righteousness.'

"Thus we learn our weakness, not doctrinally, or in our judgment; but surely and experimentally feeling ourselves the very weakest of the weak - so we are taught to feel ourselves the very vilest of the vile. There is a growing acquaintance with these things - as the Lord leads a man deeper down into the knowledge of his corruptions it makes him more and more out of conceit with his righteous, pious, holy self, the more the Lord leads a man into the knowledge of temptation, his besetting sin, the power of his corruptions, the workings of his vile nature; in all this work, he knows and learns more deeply, and painfully, what a poor, helpless, weak, powerless wretch he is; and, as the Lord is pleased to unfold before his eyes, the strength, power, and fullness lodged in Jesus Christ; draws him, leads him, brings him, encourages him, and enables him to come to this fullness, pleading with the Lord to make his strength perfect in his weakness; by

the hand of faith he draws supplies out of that fullness which is in Jesus Christ; he learns in the Lord that he not only has righteousness but strength."

We must be brought to the end of ourselves to see the righteousness of Christ exalted, and that's all of him. That's his work. May the Lord be pleased today to strip us of the righteousness that we claim to be righteousness but it's not the righteousness of God.

Our text one more time, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, add thy power and thy clarity. May you bring us, Lord, before thee, before thy throne. Strip us, Lord, of our righteousness and may you exalt the righteousness of thy Son that we no more see self. May it be swallowed up this day and put to death that we may live unto thee, be set free from the bondage of the law, and to live in the freedom of your Son. For thy name's sake and for thy glory alone, in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.