

## MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

### God is righteous, Part 1

*Greg Wheatley:* Welcome to Radio School of the Bible, a ministry of the Center for External Studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. I'm Greg Wheatley, and we're glad you're with us today as we continue in our study this quarter on God's Will for Your Life. Our instructor is Dr. Bill Thrasher, professor of Bible and Theology at the Graduate School of Moody Bible Institute.

Well, we've been exploring some of God's attributes and how getting to know Him and getting to know Him in context of those attributes really is getting to know God's will. And Dr. Thrasher, I think today we're gonna deal with a very important attribute, and that is God's righteousness.

*Dr. Bill Thrasher:* That's correct. We've looked at number of truths about God and – we've said that God is a person and it is His will for us to develop a personal relationship with Him. In the words of Jesus, become His friend, and as a friend of God, He will give us all the insights we need into living out His will in this Earth. And that God is a spirit, and that as a spirit, He's able to touch our spirits and live inside of us and fulfill our longings, and He wants to train us and teach us to worship Him in Spirit, with our spirit, and in Truth.

God is immutable, and God's will for us to build – to build our life around He who cannot change. God is eternal, and it is God's will for us to pursue the things that are eternal. God is omniscient, that He is eager to share His knowledge with us in regard to our need, and we've quoted that definition of God's will a number of times, that God's will is exactly what you would desire if you knew all the facts.

That God is omnipresent and it is God's will for us to cultivate a conscious enjoyment of His presence. That God is wise and He wants to give us the gift of His wisdom. And that God is omnipotent and it's God's will that we experience His power, as we trust Him for His adequacy and we trust Him to open doors. That God is holy, and we begin to see what are some evidences that we're beginning to understand this truth that God is holy as we pursue His holy will. And that God is loving and that God wants to overwhelm us with His love, and we looked last time at some of the things that that produces.

And now today, God is righteous. God is – God is righteous. I love this verse in Psalm 9, where it says, "When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before thee, for thou has maintained my just cause. Thou does sit on the throne judging righteously."

You know, as you pursue God's will, God may give you just cause to come into God. There's no better just cause than saying, "Lord, I want to be a vessel of you to love this world," and God will take you and all the abilities that you have so that – some that you maybe don't even realize that you have. He can use anything that's dedicated to Him.

You see, God wants you to understand His righteousness and to communicate that righteousness to the world. There's four primary ways that this term righteousness is used in Scripture. One, of course, refers to the character of God. Jesus, in his prayer there in John 17 refers to the Father saying, "O, righteous Father." Also, it refers to the standard of acceptance that God demands for one to be accepted by Him. In that sense, no one has ever lived up to that on their own. In fact, Paul says, "There's none righteous. No, not one."

It also refers to the standards that Christians are to live by. Paul would turn to Timothy and say, "Pursue righteousness." It also refers to that gift of righteousness that is a part of justification.

So how does all that help us in regard to God's will? Well, certainly it tells us this: that the fundamental aspect of God's will first of all is to know and to receive the gift of righteousness and for God to become experientially your heavenly father, and for you to know His acceptance. And you are to pursue righteousness so that you can become an instrument by which God demonstrates His righteousness to the world.

You see, how does God demonstrate His righteousness to the world? Well, I want to mention just a few ways here. One is God demonstrates His righteousness to the world in the giving of a moral law. You see, every person God ever created, He printed upon their conscience the reality of an eternal moral law.

Maybe you remember reading on one of C.S. Lewis's books, *Mere Christianity*. The title of that chapter, I think, is "The Clue to the Meaning of the Universe", and there he talks about the idea that in every culture there is a sense that – what – certain things are right and certain things are wrong. And the reason we know that everyone has that sense is because there's none of us that haven't struggled with a critical attitude and none of us would be critical unless you thought some things were right and some things were wrong.

Well, that's because God is the governor of this entire world has – what – in this entire universe, has printed upon every person He ever created the reality of what? There are certain things right, there are certain things wrong. That's God's eternal moral law.

Now, as God wants to communicate His will to you and through you is to what? He in His kindness has given us a moral law to protect us and to guide us. In fact, He tells us there in Deuteronomy 10:13, "These things I'm commanding you today are for your own good." I like also what He says there in Deuteronomy 4, where He tells His people, "See, I've taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord, my God, commanded me that you should do this in the land where you're entering to possess it.

So keep them and do them, that is live according to God's moral standards, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all of these statutes and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and a discerning or understanding people, for what great nation is that that there has a God so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him". Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as His whole law which I'm setting before you today.

You see, it's not God's will for us to become so like the world. That's not how you learn to communicate to the world. It's God's will, what? First, to be totally distinct from the world, separated from the world by living, what? In obedience to His holy laws.

You see, as we follow His ways, that shows what? That Christianity, it's not just a different way of life. It's a superior way of life. God wants to put His blessings upon those who follow His ways. So one way to demonstrate God's righteousness, that God demonstrates His righteousness is in the giving of the moral law. And one way you could, in pursuing God's will, can glorify God is by living in accord to His word and by teaching His ways.

Of course, another way that God has demonstrated His righteousness is in requiring the death of Christ as a basis for salvation and fellowship. You know, as you seek to pursue His will, certainly one thing in regard to God's will is how are they going to be rightly related to God? You know, it could be almost confusing as a person looks out and they see so many religions and so many churches and this person says they're right and this person says they're right.

Well, one thing that helps is that there's one distinct religious message in the world, and it is the "By Grace Through Faith" gospel. That separates from every other cult, separates it from every other religion, and it's God's will that, what? You be an instrument to communicate that.

You see, when Christ died on the cross, it proved that, what? It showed or demonstrated, in the words of Romans 3:25, that God is righteous, God is righteous. That he takes sin so seriously that He couldn't just forgive you without, what? There being a just payment for it.

See, God wants you to, what? Communicate to the world, first of all by appreciating His great gift of righteousness to you, and also to communicate to the world that that is the only way that they can be in a right relationship with an eternal God and a righteous God. You see, if a person wants to know God's will, they must first know God, and there's only one way to know God, and that's through the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, there's only one way to walk with God, and that's to avail of one's self of the privilege of Jesus' shed blood.

In fact, Scripture says, "As we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, to cleanse us with all the righteousness." You see, the death of Christ was absolutely necessary in order to both have a salvation experience as well as also to walk daily in fellowship with God. And as you walk daily in fellowship with God, that's – what – God will enfold His will to you.

You know, there's one other way that God demonstrates His righteousness to us that we're gonna look at today, and that is this. God demonstrates his righteousness in pouring out His wrath on the unrepentant. Now, Jesus is called the Savior of the world in chapter four, he is called the Judge of the world in John 5. John 4:42, called the Savior of the world. John 5:30, called the Judge of the world. You see, the Savior of the world longs for you to escape God's judgment, but to the unrepentant, there will be what? The pouring out of His wrath.

Now, you see that is a perspective that the believer needs in order to put God's will into perspective, because there may be times that you can be disillusioned with God's will, as you look out at the person who cares less about pursuing God's will, just wants to do their own thing, and seems to have it made. They have plenty of money, they seem to have an easy life, they enjoy life, seemingly at least on the surface, and you are struggling in a sense to know God's will and you're suffering, and that's what the psalmist was experiencing there in Psalm 73, that says when he came into God's presence and God gave him perspective, he says, "Oh, God, I'm sorry. I've reasoned like an animal." When I see that they're headed to judgment, that puts things in perspective.

This idea of the reality of hell is something that I've always feared. As a little boy, I would go to bed and say, "Lord, if I'm to die tonight, help me not to go to hell, but help me to go to heaven." You see, I didn't have a sense of assurance of how a person could know that and rest in that. This idea of hell quite frankly is so unpleasant to me and I'm not sure I can fully digest it, but I've sought to as I've studied Scripture.

Scripture describes it as a place of torment, a place of great pain. It calls it black darkness. I think that's part to describe the utter absolute loneliness that will be a part of the experience of hell. It's a place of where Scripture says there's no relief and there's only one thing you desire, is that – what – your loved ones would escape it. In fact, also there's something that we learn from Luke 16 that somehow a person in hell will have some sense of knowing what they're missing, and that part in itself will add to the torment that they're experiencing in regard to hell. You see, God's will, He does have a will for us on this earth, but as you pursue His will on this earth, we do need an eternal perspective to put in perspective the trials that are a part of His will.

*Greg Wheatley:*

Well, thank you, Dr. Thrasher. Today we've considered God's righteousness and how that plays into knowing His will, and I hope you're benefitting from these studies as I am, as we sit here together under the teaching of Dr. Bill Thrasher, who is professor of Bible and Theology in Moody Bible Institute's Graduate School. We'll get together again next time and study more on God's will for your life here on Radio School of the Bible.

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