

Our Righteousness in Jesus Christ **- Ron Stullenbarger -**

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:14-21, NASB)

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 describes one of the most powerful outcomes of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross. Jesus' death on the cross defeated the power of sin and darkness and set us free to walk in the glorious light of righteousness. You and I have been transformed by the power of Jesus' death. He took our sins and bore the entirety of their penalty. Through the death of Jesus, you and I are now free to live as new creations formed in the righteous and holy image of our heavenly Father.

When God tore the veil, He demonstrated that our sin and depravity couldn't hold back His presence any longer. Thousands of years of pent-up longing for restored relationship burst forth proclaiming the newfound nature of God's people who would choose to accept and follow Jesus.

There is no more important way to pursue a greater connection to our heavenly Father than by accepting our standing in Christ before God. Even though Jesus defeated the power of sin in our lives, our great enemy continues to tempt us, lie to us, and steal from us the abundant life God intends. He continues to try to rob God of what He so fully deserves: unencumbered relationship with His children. Satan lies to us and tells us that sin still causes God to withhold Himself from us. We allow condemnation that is not of God to creep in and cause us to believe that our heavenly Father doesn't want to be with us. But the truth is, God always wants to be with His children. God runs out to us, calls us His beloved, wraps us with honor and His righteousness, and leads us into His glorious embrace.

Take time and renew your mind to your righteousness in Jesus. Ask the Spirit for strength to fight sin and allow your longings to be satisfied in God rather than the world.