

# Righteous Brother 1 John 3:1-7

Pastor Bill Mosley 4-18-2021

I got to see the Righteous Brothers in a live concert at the Houston Music Hall in 1965. They sang "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'" and "Unchained Melody," and a bunch of others. They also told some stories, including the fact that they weren't brothers. Bobby Hatfield and Bill Medley were singing with another group. Once after their duet, a black Marine shouted out, "That's righteous, brothers." They remembered that and came to name their own group The Righteous Brothers.

They weren't brothers. So what was "righteous" about them?

What do we mean by "righteous" or "righteousness?"

The English word righteous was coined by William Tyndale, who remodeled the word after an earlier word which would have yielded Modern English rightwise or rightways. He used it to translate the Hebrew root tzedek, which appears more than five hundred times in the OT, and the Greek word δικαιοσ which appears more than 200 times in the New Testament. --Wikipedia

A theologian told the story about being in Tel Aviv when his taxi stalled out. The taxi driver raises the hood, makes some adjustments in the engine, starts the car, and when the engine purred nicely said with satisfaction, "Tzedek."

"Everything is right." All things are working together rightly. It's about relationships. Things with things. People with people. People & God.

In the Book of Job the title character is

introduced to us as a person

who is "perfect" in righteousness. This does not mean that he is sinless. "Perfect" in this sense means that his righteousness permeates every relationship of his life as his working principle.

God is right because He is righteous, therefore God can only act righteously. In one instance the word means being right; in another it is used to mean doing right; in still another case it means putting right. Job qualifies as a righteous person on each of these counts, so much so that he is commended by God as "wholly righteous" or, translated into our terms, "perfect." --Wikipedia

By ourselves, we are not righteous. Jesus came not for the righteous, but for sinners. To make us righteous.

We know we are God's children because he loves us. We share in his righteousness and so can purify ourselves.

Love is the keynote of John's first epistle. He mentions love almost 40 times in 5 short chapters. The themes of light, life and love recur again and again, for new consideration and development.

John sees things in black and white polarities: light & darkness, hate, love, life, death, children of God, children of the devil.

Children of God are righteous, pure and do not sin.

This passage is part of a section on how the children of God, those who believe, live a life free from sin. For John, love is the opposite of sin, and love is almost

identical with life.

John aims to give us confidence that there is a right and a wrong, and we can know the right through God's righteousness. Look at verse 7: "Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous."

That's righteousness, that's dikaios, that's tsedek. But it's not our righteousness. It's God's righteousness.

Jesus is sinless, and he takes away our sin and gives us life and love.

Reading 1 John you know you are hearing from someone who was in the room with Thomas when he saw the risen Jesus. John wants to assure those who have not seen that he has seen Jesus as he was raised and expects to see Jesus and be like him in glory, so he tries to live like him now.

That's what we're meant to do.

We know we are children of God now, shaping up for the life to come: In Christ now, in Christ then, because he is righteous.

Back in Chapter 2:28-29 John says ~ 28And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before him at his coming. 29If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right has been born of him.

Last week I suggested that for this Easter Season you could commit to reading 1 John straight through each week. Even memorize 2 John as summary of John's thought. I hope you are doing that.

And do something loving each day. Participate in God's righteousness.

PRESIDENTS have always given gifts to friends and distinguished guests as a matter of course. But Lyndon Johnson raised gift giving to an art. Doris Kearns, in her book, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream, writes: Along with the cuff links, bowls and tie clasps that are the traditional Presidential gift fare, LBJ was fond of giving out electric toothbrushes engraved with the Presidential seal. Johnson said, "I give these toothbrushes to friends, [so] I know that from now until the end of their days, they will think of me the first thing in the morning, & the last at night." -

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God has given us more than a toothbrush. He has given us new life through the life, death and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Think of him the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. When you're getting a stalled car to run. When you hear beautiful music.

And try to live like him.

That's righteous, brother. It's not our righteousness by ourselves. It's ours as long as our brother is Jesus, the son of God.

Lord, you are righteous so we can say no to whatever makes it more difficult to say yes to you. 969 words