

Date: **November 12, 2011**
Title: **Thinking through Righteousness**
Series: **Community Compassion**
Speaker: **Phil Schaefer**

christianfellowship



Summary

Scripture: Job 29:12-17

Job was a righteous man who described his righteousness in these verses. He wore his righteousness like clothing. It was something he put on so that others could see that he put his trust in God. He did it by taking care of those in need. The Old Testament speaks to Israel to care for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. But Job lived before the Law of Moses was even given. This is how Job understood the righteous life. In the New Testament, Paul says that the just shall live by faith, that is, by trusting in Jesus Christ and his salvation. In Colossians 3:12-13 Paul tells us to “clothe yourself” or “dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you.

We are put on :

- Compassionate hearts
- Kindness
- Humility
- Meekness
- Patience
- Bearing with one another

Job says he show his righteousness by caring for the disadvantaged:

- The poor
- The fatherless
- The sick
- The widow
- The disabled
- The needy

This is where true righteousness is to be demonstrated in justice for others. OT definition of righteousness is tzaddiq- a willingness to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community. Paul writes, “for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness (that is: compassion, kindness, humility, peace and joy.”

Righteousness is right relationship to God, to others, to the church, to our community, to the disadvantaged- economically, socially, physically. It is good for us to ask , “How does righteousness affect our personal lives? Who do we let in our personal lives? How does it affect our community, our finances, our careers?” In Acts 4:29, 32-37 we see the interconnectedness of prayer, power, and possessions. They prayed with boldness, the power of God came, which resulted in powerful acts of meeting the needs of others. This is being done in small and large, visible and not visible ways throughout our church life. It is about making connections with people in need.

Job 31:16 “If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widows grow weary”. Desires means ‘basic needs’ but also ‘brings joy or creates delight’. Job’s goal

for the vulnerable, the oppressed, the widow, the poor, the immigrant is that by being deeply involved in their lives, he could bring delight into their life, and lift their spirits. That is taking righteousness to the right place. In America we think we are favored by God because we are the 'haves'. But Christianity offers hope and equality of worth to the 'have nots' of the world. The word 'repent' means to think again. It means I'm opening my eyes to things of God that I had not seen before. God wants us to consider what true Biblical righteousness looks like in our own lives.

As a church we are praying and considering a number of things:

- Our van ministry needs more drivers, and more friends giving families rides.
- We are thinking of offering tutoring classes for GED.
- As an act of faith we are budgeting \$60,000 to our Benevolence fund this next year. We are praying that god will help us meet this commitment.
- We are raising up a new level of ministry by asking some to serve as deacons over the elderly, the widows, to the refugees, and to our missionaries abroad. Our intent is that no one in need is overlooked.

Love Inc. is a direct result of people like Jane Williams. Their whole philosophy is to show compassion through connection, not just hand-outs. You don't have to be a social worker to help. Pray and ask God how you may help others. Meditate on what it means to disadvantage oneself in order to advantage another.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways would you describe righteousness in your own life in relation to Job's description and Paul's description.(see Job 29:12-17, 31:16 and Colossians 3:12-13, and Acts 4:32-37)
2. Are there any areas where you need to change your way of thinking about what true Biblical righteousness should look like?
3. Are you seeing any areas where God might be calling you to able help others who are disadvantaged in some way?