

Series: John

Title: O Righteous Father

Text: John 17: 25-26

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**John 17: 25: O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26: And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.**

In his high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus has addressed the Father many times. When asking the Father to sanctify and keep his people from the evil, the Lord called him “Holy Father.” Here, when speaking of exalting his people to heaven to behold his glory, he addresses him as “*O righteous Father.*”

The Lord declares that the world does not know God the Father. Unregenerate sinners do not know God at all and certainly not as “*the righteous Father.*”

But neither did any believer as we came into this world—Peter, James, John, Paul—nor any of us here. None of those Christ gives a true understanding knew God—especially not his name as “*the righteous Father.*”

## **HOW ARE GOD’S PEOPLE MADE TO KNOW GOD OUR FATHER**

**John 17: 25: O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee; and these have known that thou hast sent me.**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. One with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He has known the righteous Father because he is One with the Father. And it is only by Christ making us know the Father that we know him. That is why God our Father sent his Son and speaks to his people by his Son.

Hebrews 1: 1: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Christ made his apostles know the Father. And it is Christ who makes all his people know the Father. He said, “*I have known thee; and these have known that thou hast sent me.*” How did they know? Christ said, “*I have declared unto them thy name.*”

Spurgeon pointed out that it is obvious that the knowledge that Christ gives is to a particular people because “*The world hath not known thee*”—yet Christ made those given him of the Father to know him. The unregenerate world—every sinner as we come into this world—has no knowledge of God the Father and certainly not as the Righteous Father of his people.

We may think of the world as heathen idolaters in some jungle somewhere. But they are also living next door to us in our neighborhoods. They are sit in pews in churches. The

unregenerate world—religious or otherwise—knows nothing of God as the “*righteous Father*.”

“The righteous Father” is not heard declared in the world’s sermons. Until Christ gives us a true knowledge of God, sinners have no idea what it even means that God is the “*righteous Father*.” Man imagines god is unjust because man who imagined him is unjust. Man imagines god is unrighteous because man knows nothing of the righteousness of God by nature. Man’s imagined god is a father only in the sense that he helps men out when they need him.

But remember, we were the idolator—you and me. Not any of us who now believe knew God as the “*righteous Father*.” We had no conception of the righteousness God is and that he requires. We had no idea where the righteousness of God is to be had. We had no idea why God is called “*the righteous Father*.” How did the apostles know God’s name and how do we now know?

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

## CHRIST’S GLORY

**John 17: 25: O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26: And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it**

It pleased God to make his name known through his Son. God the Father gave his Son the glory of declaring his name and making it known in the hearts of his people. Christ said the apostles knew because “*I have declared unto them thy name*.” We know God’s name because Christ said, “*and will declare it*.”

Our Lord Jesus expressed the unfitness and inability of the world of unregenerate persons to know his name—“*O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee*.” Then he speaks of himself and his apostles, saying, “*but I have known thee and these have known that thou hast sent me*.” Then he declares the origin of this knowledge in his eleven apostles, “*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it*.”

Our Lord repeats what he spoke to his Father at the beginning of his prayer.

John 17: 6...I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world...

In verse 6, our Lord makes election the ground for which he declared God’s name unto them. It was the eternal motive of the Father to choose his elect and give them unto Christ,

John 17: 6...Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.

The Father ordained that Christ should manifest his name unto them who the Father had loved and chosen to save. So Christ says with delight, “*I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it*.”

Is God unrighteous to elect a people to save in and by Christ Jesus? No! Election declares God’s name as *the righteous Father*. God is not unjust to leave the non-elect to themselves

because we all have sinned against God by one man's disobedience. God would have been just—righteous—to condemn us all because we all come forth with a sin-nature, hating God and loving sin which God hates.

So if God does not give a saving knowledge to the non-elect world, our Father is righteous to do so. It is what the carnal mind wants because the carnal mind hates God. Unregenerate sinners do not want to know the God who is the Righteous Father. So God is merely giving the unregenerate world what they want.

But the elect did not want to know him either. Yet, Christ makes his elect behold that God is the righteous Father. He by free grace chose to be a Father to some of Adam's fallen race. He purposed and decreed Christ to be our Savior—our Righteousness—before the world was made, even before we fell in sin. This is God's name. This is *our Righteous Father*. By his free grace he elected to save a people in Christ so that he could be both a *righteous* God and a *loving Father* to his people, our *righteous Father*.

The true knowledge that Christ gives makes his people know the name of God as "*the righteous Father*." We were like every other sinner at first crying that it was unfair, unrighteous, unjust for God to elect some to save and pass by others. But Christ gave us a knowledge of God as the Righteous God—the Just God who will by no means clear the guilty. He made us see the righteousness of God by making us know, personally, that we are the sinner and God is just to do with his own what he will.

By making us behold we are sinners—not worthy of the least of God's mercies—and yet the Father choosing us and setting his love on us to be our righteous Father in the person and work of his Son, he made us say amen and bow and rejoice that our righteous Father did elect some.

God raised up the devil just as he raised up Pharaoh. The fall of God's people into sin with no ability to free ourselves was God's ordained purpose the same as the children of Israel being in bondage under Pharaoh with no way of freeing themselves. The purpose in both was the same—for God to manifest his power and declare *his name*. By that same power, God shuts our mouth of opposition by making us behold his mercy in choosing us before and preparing us unto glory by giving us to his Son to save.

Romans 9: 17: For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18: Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19: Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20: Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? 21: Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22: *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24: Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

In Christ, by our Lord's substitutionary death in place of his people, we behold God is righteous and at the same time our Father. We behold his love is righteous love; he is our righteous Father. His grace and mercy are in harmony with his justice. He is our Father—but better—he is our righteous Father—he is our Just God *and* our Savior.

We see God's name as the Righteous Father illustrated in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord often went there so Judas knew it well. He came with the soldiers. But we see the accomplishment of our Substitute, the way God our Father is our righteous Father, Christ said, "Take me and let these go."

John 18: 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Christ makes us know the name of God in the first hour by declaring the gospel in our hearts. But like the apostles we are slow learners. So Christ continues all our lives declaring the name of God to us. This knowledge comes gradually. We know the Father by our Savior declaring him to us. But he continues to declare unto us our Father's name.

Our Redeemer liveth. He is our Prophet, Priest and King at God's right hand. He is the Head of his church who filleth all in all. Our risen Redeemer continues to declare the name of the Father to his people through the preaching of the gospel.

When Christ makes the Father's name and his love toward us known in our hearts then we love to declare the gospel to needy sinners. But our Savior delights to do so even more than we do. His purpose is not only to call out each one he redeemed but to comfort each of his people who belong to the household of faith. His purpose is to increase the Lord's glory and praise in our hearts. If we need wisdom come to Christ.

James 1: 5: If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

He shall continue to grow us in the grace and knowledge of our righteous Father unto the day that we behold our triune God face-to-face in the face of Christ his Son.

## **THE END PURPOSE**

**John 17: 26...that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.**

Next, time we will look more at the love wherewith the Father loved the Son. But as Christ takes up abode in us, the Lord makes us know ourselves more. He makes us know the sinners we are. But he also makes us know God's love toward us more. He makes us behold the love of the Father toward his Son in trusting his people to his Son. And that is also God's love to his people. Thus he constrains us in our heart by his love for us.

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

We had offended God. We needed forgiveness from God. We needed our sins put away and we needed forgiveness from God. But God did not say, "If you will take the first step, I will do the rest." We did not love God, we would have perished. But God loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God did not send his Son to make God love his people but because he did.

Then because ye are sons made righteous in Christ, Christ made us know the righteous love of our Father in our hearts. He drew us in cords of love and caused us to approach unto him in love. And he continues to do so. And that is how Christ teaches us to love one another.

1 John 4: 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12: No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13: Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14: And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. 15: Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16: And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Brethren, you whose only righteousness and only hope is Christ, *are loved of the Father as He loves His only Beloved Son.* Christ said,

John 17: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Does that mean you and me whose faith is small and unbelief great? Who yet see the sin of our sin-nature and even we abhor it. How then can God love me as Christ? Yes, the righteous father—our Father—loves us in Christ as he loves his Son because Christ made us righteous. It was God's love toward his Son to give him that honor and the Father's love to us to trust us to Christ to do it for us. If God our righteous Father had not loved you as he loved the Son then he would have spared his Son. But he did not.

And, child of God, never forget, our righteous Father's love is unchanging. Christ said,

John 17: 24...for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Many would discourage the hopes of God's children. They point out our sins and tells us we cannot possibly be a child of God. Satan desires to rob us of our consolation. False religion would do so.

But the same as you can place no limit on God's love to his Son, so you can place no limit on His love to his people in Christ. God's love is without beginning, without end; without change, without limit, without degree. The Father loved us in Christ our Righteousness. Christ made us righteous in himself. Therefore it is righteous for our Father to love us and have mercy on us.

Our Father may rebuke, chasten, cause his child sorrow. But it is only because he loves his children as he loves his Son and will keep us partaking of his holiness. His love does not alter in the least.

By the love of God in Christ—by Christ dwelling in his people—we shall continue committed to Christ and to his people in love, despite whatever we have to endure. It is what Christ has done toward us. And it is what Christ shall work in his people.

Colossians 3: 12: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*. 14: And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15: And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17: And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

**Amen!**