

Searching the Scriptures / 84 / Trees Of Righteousness - The Planting Of Jehovah / Part 4

In our Bible study today we are again looking at the subject of righteousness. Our three points are:

- 1. Righteousness is a Gift from God**
- 2. Believers are Likened to “Trees of Righteousness” Planted by God**
- 3. As “Trees”, Christians also “Grow” (in Grace)**

1. Righteousness is a Gift from God

Those that God has graciously redeemed have received the gift of righteousness, as Psa 24:5 indicates, *“He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”* Rom 4:6 repeats this same idea: *“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”* The fact that righteousness, or salvation, is a gift cannot be stressed enough. John 3:27 states, *“John [the Baptist] answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”* Tit 3:5 further adds: *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”*

Throughout the Bible, and particularly in the book of Romans, we see this theme and its counterpart so vividly expressed in Rom 5:18, *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* Rom 14:17 is a beautiful verse which describes the nature of the kingdom of God: *“For the kingdom of God is not meat [food] and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*

2. Believers are Likened to “Trees of Righteousness” Planted by God

We have just considered Rom 4:6, which declares that righteousness is imputed, or bestowed, upon a person without man’s works . In Psa 1:1–3 David, under divine inspiration, also compares the Christian to a tree: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”*

The same imagery of trees is also found in the account of the blind man in Mark 8:22–25: *“And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.”*

Isa 61:1–3 crystallizes not only the mission for which Jesus came to earth, but the very heart of the Gospel of God’s sovereign grace: *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the*

prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

3. As “Trees”, Christians also “Grow” (in Grace)

God uses many agricultural examples in the Bible to illustrate the truth that believers are God’s spiritual handiwork. Psa 92:12 asserts, *“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.”* A similar metaphor is employed in Mark 4:28, which says, *“For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”* Mat 13:23 notes the progress of new life in those who are the elect of God: *“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”* 2 Pet 3:18 also speaks to this subject: *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”*

Furthermore in John 15 we find a lengthy teaching on spiritual growth and fruitfulness, both of which are governed by the divine “husbandman”, or farmer, God Himself. Verses 1–2 state, *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit...”* Verses 4–5 add, *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.... I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing...”* Verse 8 is an excellent summary of the Christian life: *“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”*