



Week 6 Session Guide

Jehovah-Tsidkenu “The Lord our Righteousness”

“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks God. All have turned aside.” Romans 3:10

Introduction:

Righteousness is defined as the quality of being morally right or just. So who gets to decide what morality and justice is? The one who created everything. God is the one who separates right from wrong. He sets the standard. There is only one problem according to Paul in the book of Romans ... not one of us is righteous! Not only do we find ourselves not measuring up, but we don't even have the ability to make up the difference. What hope do we have? Let's jump in to see the heart of God toward us.

Old Testament:

Jehovah-Tsidkenu is introduced to us during the book of Jeremiah, where the only two instances of this name occur. The Book of Jeremiah is so depressing as it chronicles a time when Judah (the southern kingdom) was wandering from God and experiencing a decline. Israel (the northern kingdom) had long since departed from God and been deported by the king of Assyria. Now the remainder of God's people were about to go under the judgment of the king of Babylon because they, too, had chosen to turn from God.

We learn a fundamental principle from this period in Israel's history—the further you depart from God, the more you invite decline and destruction into your life. This is because the very essence of God is life, so when you put God on the periphery of life—when you remove Him from the core of who you are—you will deteriorate as a result. In this particular situation, Israel had gone after other gods to meet their needs, thus leading to the decline of their civilization and culture. The book of Jeremiah details the warning of impending judgment the Israelites were to face due to their rebellion against God.

We learn a foundational principle from this period of Israel's history - the further you depart from God, the more you invite decline and destruction into your life. If God is the author of life, as you remove him from the center you will experience deterioration as a result. As the civilization and culture declined, God raised up Jeremiah the prophet to warn the people of impending judgment if they did not turn back to God.

The troubling part of the situation was that the leaders and “shepherds” of Israel were actually leading the people astray instead of leading them back to God.

*“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the Lord”
Jeremiah 23:1*

They weren't teaching God's point of view, and as a result, the people were scattering and the culture was declining. The shepherds were being molded by the culture. This is similar to what we do when we remove the

Lord Jesus and His standard from our government, schools, businesses, homes, media, and elsewhere. God's kingdom worldview has been replaced with a man-made worldview, and we're suffering the social upheaval that results when Jehovah Tsidkenu is no longer our central focus.

Since the shepherds were leading the people astray, the Lord spoke his plan through the mouth of the prophet ...

"I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD. "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness {Jehovah Tsidkenu}' Jer. 23:4-6

God's answer is to raise up a King, a Righteous King.

New Testament: King Jesus Our Righteousness

Jesus took on humanity and did what we could not ... He lived a perfect, sinless, and righteous life before God. He fulfilled God's righteous requirement, and here is the amazing part. He being perfect took upon himself our penalty for sins so that we could be clothed in his righteousness as Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:21

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

He paid the ultimate cost in order that we might become "the righteousness of God in Him." Just as our sin was credited to Jesus's account when He hung on the cross to die, His righteousness is credited to each one of us who trust in Him as our Lord and Savior.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are going to heaven on credit. This is because God can't lower His standard of perfection to allow you entrance into heaven as a sinful being. You can enter in only through the forgiveness of your sin, which comes through the sacrifice of Christ. Because of Christ's righteousness, you are credited with righteousness when you believe on His name.

Though we receive His righteousness at salvation, we are exhorted by Paul to "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness ..." (Eph 4:24) and to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ ..." (Rom 13:14). Just like we get dressed in the morning we are to clothe ourselves with His righteousness by seeking to live within His standards. To view life through His perspective. We must move towards righteousness in our daily life as we seek to please Him.

When we do, we are promised that all under His rule will "be saved" and will "dwell securely."

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways does our culture mirror Jeremiah's? What should our response be? How do we guard ourselves from conforming to the culture? How do we bring transformation to our culture?
2. Read Matthew 6:33. Many people gloss over the phrase "and His righteousness." Why is there a correlation between righteousness and blessing?
3. How do we clothe ourselves in righteousness? What is the problem with self-righteousness?