

## **1 John 2:29 Trust in the Righteousness of Jesus**

**29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness also has been born of Him.**

John's saying that they should know by now that God is righteous, but the word he uses indicates that it's possible that some of them have not trusted in the righteousness of Jesus. Jesus knew God is Righteous (see John 17:25-26). To know God, is to know He is righteous! It was by making God known to the Disciples, what His Righteous and Holy character is like that Jesus says will induce love in us as His disciples for God, and will deepen our relationship with Him.

### **God is Righteous and Just when He forgives:**

Forgiveness is the pardoning of an offense. But forgiveness doesn't negate the offense or its effects. There are consequences. Sin damages relationships. Jesus bore our sins in His body, and He still bears the scars of that payment. When we forgive, we make a choice to act like Jesus, and just pass over those wounds and hurts, disregarding the damage, because we know that we have offended a Holy and Righteous God much more than anyone could ever offend us. Forgiveness must always be coupled with justice. Justice is about restoration, not retribution or vengeance. If all we do as Christians is forgive, without seeking restoration of the image of God in the offender and the offended, then we have not practiced Christian justice. It's not just about our heart, but the heart of those who have offended us as well. Forgiveness without Justice belittles Righteousness. We want restoration, and a change of heart, and for people to understand that there's a reason why we're forgiving—it's not that we don't care what they did, or that we're passive or weak—it's that we understand that we have also sinned against those around us, and more importantly, against a Holy God! God is just and righteous when He forgives, because He has already meted out the punishment, and laid it all on Jesus, who agreed to take the punishment for us. But God also seeks justice in our lives. By his gospel, he not only forgives us, he restores us to righteousness. He changes us. He sanctifies us. He makes us a new creation, in Christ. God demonstrates His justice by forgiving us, because the debt has already been paid! It's the blood of Jesus that has cleanses us from all sins.

**Abraham's** entire reason for thinking that he had any bargaining position with God was based on the fact that he knew God to be righteous! The source of **David's** strength was that he trusted God. Do you know what David said to the 9 and ½ feet tall, about 600 pounds of muscle Goliath, who had been a warrior from his youth, whose armor weighted 125 pounds, and his iron spearhead alone weighed 15 pounds when he met him? We read in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 17:45 **45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands...** That's quite a lot of confidence, considering the challenge that he was facing from a giant who had just threatened to kill him! Where did this confidence come from? Experience in trusting the Lord! (see 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 17:32-36). Faith grows by: Trusting God to get you through circumstances that seem difficult or impossible and Knowing that He is able to get you through those circumstances.

Knowing God in His righteousness comes by knowing Him. (see Psalm 11:7 Psalm 4:1, Psalm 50:6 for example). We trust God because we know Him. We learn, both by the instruction of the Word of God, and we know by experience. John continues in 1<sup>st</sup> John 2 vs. 29

**You know (by experience) that everyone who practices righteousness has also been born of Him.**

No one can ever take away our experience of knowing personally our righteous God, and it's living for Him in righteousness that causes us to experience Him more. And we grow in righteousness, by growing in Faith! After all our source of confidence isn't our own righteousness, but faith in Jesus' righteousness. Romans 4:120-21 **20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.** His faith was in God's ability, not his own, and he grew strong in faith. The Gospel is the inherent, omnipotent power of God accomplishing the salvation for those who accept it. And,

active faith in God is necessary for that power to be present in our daily lives. It's the righteousness of Jesus that gives you access to God's power in your life. And it's faith that allows you to appropriate that power to do God's will in your life. Isaiah 50:10 **Isaiah 50:10 Who is among you that fears the Lord, That obeys the voice of His servant, That walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.** Be righteous, but put your faith in God! He's the one who directs us: Proverbs 3:5-6, **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.** God took a weak Abraham and put strength into him. Abraham was made strong because of his faith indeed, but it was God, not faith, that provided the strength. Faith allowed Abraham to appropriate God's strength to do God's will! In Romans 1:21 we see that the fundamental sin of the human race was, **"even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks."** But Abraham expresses the opposite sentiment: Abraham grew strong in faith and gave glory to God. This teaches us that our faith should grow. Weak faith (or little faith) is still faith, but we should grow strong in faith. **We grow in faith by growing in our knowledge of the object of our faith, namely, God. Faith is only as good as its object.** We all must come to God with "the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" ( Rom 4:16). This faith is rooted in God's gracious promise to declare righteous all who believe in Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for our sin. Saving faith is rooted in God's grace. It rests on God's promise. It revels in God's glory. And saving faith relies on God's power to keep His promise, in spite of human inability. We have hope, even in circumstances which seem hopeless. This means that we will have struggles of faith, just as Abraham experienced. Circumstances often dash our hope, but against that, we fight back with hope. Our faith and hope are not in ourselves or our ability or in a positive attitude that everything turns out okay for good people in the end. No, our faith and hope are in the God who gives life to the dead and who calls into being that which does not exist. And, since God's salvation is by grace through faith apart from works, we can join Abraham (in 4:21), **"being fully assured that what God [has] promised, He [is] able also to perform."** Knowing who God is, and trusting Him to keep His word. Saving faith puts all its weight on Jesus Christ and His shed blood at Calvary. It's rooted in God's grace, it rests on God's promise, it revels in God's glory, and it relies on His power. Jesus is the Bridge from us to God. He's the Only Way! Make sure that your trust is in Christ alone.