

# The Better Way

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## SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.  
Worship.....10:00 a.m.  
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.  
(via Zoom Meetings)

#### ELDERS

David P. Brown  
Ken Cohn  
John West

#### DEACONS

Bret Bailey  
J. D. Gunter  
Eric Paluka

#### EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

#### SECRETARY

Sonya West

## ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

*O. H. Tabor*

**I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels (Isa. 61:10)**

Whoever is acquainted with the nature of mankind in general, or the propensity of his own heart in particular, must acknowledge that self-righteousness is the last idol that is rooted out of the heart. Being once familiar with a covenant of works, it is easy for man to glory in being the cause of his salvation. Like the Jews of Paul's day, over whom he prayed, we may find ourselves disregarding the righteousness that comes from God and seeking to set up our own righteousness and refusing to submit to God's righteousness. We are taught that Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (Rom. 10:3-4). Ever since the fall of Adam there seems to be a powerful instinct in man to adorn himself. Love of self and personal adoration have taken the place of love to and heart admiration of Almighty God. The savage expects to be admired because of his tattooing and the fashionable lady because of her finery. We must remember that Adam and Eve were not sufficiently clothed until God clothed them. Man may pride himself on his beauty and his accomplishments while God sees his nakedness. The righteousness of God alone is man's robe that can cover the shameful nakedness of man as a sinner. This is hard doctrine but true.

Jesus addressed Himself to this great need of mankind in many places during His earthly life. He said to His disciples, "**Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven**" (Mat. 5:20). He is saying here, except you are better men and women than those whom you consider to be the very cream of your society, you will not enter the kingdom. Then what kind of men were these referred to by our Lord? The general idea is that they were hypocrites; but this is a mistake. Of course, there were some who merited that designation; yet not all. "Pharisee" meant those who had separated themselves from all wrong and sinful things. They were great religious teachers and leaders and must have been people who conformed with the Law which the Old Testament affords. From the Scriptures we learn that they were punctual in attendance of Divine worship, believed in and practiced public and private prayer, were temperate in eating and drinking, were generous and benevolent, supported the house of prayer, and read and studied the Scriptures. What more could be desired of them? How can we surpass such righteousness? Yet the Lord said there is no hope for us unless we are better than they (Luke 18:11-12)!

One may say, "I am not righteous but I am doing my best." Are you? Do you pray three times a day, read and study the word of God, go as often as possible to the meeting place and support all good causes? "No," then cease talking about "doing your best." But granted you are. Here was a class of people who really were doing their best, and yet the Lord said that it was not sufficient. If one thinks of this for a little while one will be compelled to say, "this is staggering." Surely this word from Jesus ought to bring despair to the hearts of all who are honestly doing their best. God states in Isaiah 64:6, that in His pure eyes, even our best is a filthy rag. Our Lord's words would be terrible if they stood alone, but thank God, they do not. Just before He made this statement He said He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. We are taught that Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (Rom. 10:3-4). This is to say that Christ has perfectly fulfilled all God's righteous claims. If my best is not sufficient, God's best is more than enough; if my righteousness will not pass the test, there is another righteousness that will see me through—the righteousness of the Lord's own providing when we are in Christ.

We must give the greatest consideration to the all-important question how the Lord is to be man's righteousness, and that is in one word, by imputation. At the beginning God made a covenant of agreement with Adam and Eve upon condition of an unsinning obedience to give them immortality and eternal life when he said, "**The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.**" We may fairly infer, so long as they continued obedient they should surely live. We remember the full and mournful account of how they broke this covenant and thereby stood in general need of a better righteousness than their own, in order to procure their future state of acceptance with God. In later years, God made a covenant with Israel which they were commanded to keep perfectly—in every detail. They fell short of such a measure of righteousness, as Paul stated in many places in his letters. There we see mankind without strength, yet they were obliged to do all things which the Lord had required in a perfect manner (Rom. 7:7-13, 21-25).

Here then opens the amazing sense of God's divine love to all mankind. For behold, what man could not do, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did for him. In His human nature, while on earth, Christ obeyed perfectly and thus fulfilled

the law in man's stead. As the sin-offering He satisfied the demands of divine justice for the breach of which man was guilty and provided a full, perfect, and sufficient righteousness for all to whom it was to be imputed. Here we see the meaning of the word *righteousness*. It implies the active as well as the passive obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only died, but lived; not only suffered, but obeyed, for or instead of poor sinners. This is what Paul meant when he said, "**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**" (2 Cor. 5:21). All who are in Christ, as new creatures, have the righteousness of God imputed unto them, by the act on Calvary. Paul said, "**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ**" (2 Cor. 5:17-18). The righteous man under the law became righteous by doing righteously; under grace he does righteously because he has been made righteous in Christ. Man's righteousness is confined entirely to the life that is seen by men, but the righteousness of God is both concerned with the external and the internal, because it is both imputed and imparted.

Participation in the benefits of the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus demands surrender and self-denial and entry into the sin-offering. This is the meaning of baptism; for in baptism into the name of Jesus Christ the process of dying and rising with Christ is initiated, embodied, and portrayed with no meritorious act attached. Thenceforth, the business of Christian living is the working out of our death to sin in the ever increasing realization of our union with Christ's self-surrender as the Holy Spirit, who dwells within, bears His fruit in our life (Gal. 5:22-25).

The Scribes and Pharisees had made the observance of ceremonies the be-all and end-all of religion. Now, ceremonies are right in carrying out God's arrangement, yet godliness is not a series of ceremonies, but a deep inward spiritual reality.

As the child of God struggles to rise higher and maintain moral values he has the help of the Spirit of God, who dwells within, and He comes to own that it is "**God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure**" (Phi. 2:13).

Paul gave up all things that he might gain Christ and as he said, **“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”** (Phi. 3:7-9).~

*Deceased*

## WHAT JEHOVAH REQUIRES

*Frank L. Cox*

**Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what Jehovah requires of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?** (Mic. 6:6-8; ASV).

That the Lord requires something of His people is plainly taught in the Bible. When we come before Him, what shall we bring? On what condition will He accept us? “How can man be just with God?” is an ever-recurring question pressing upon people of every age of the world’s history. In the passage before us, written by a prophet of the Lord, we have man’s earnest question and the Lord’s simple reply.

### MAN’S EARNEST QUESTION

**“Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God?”** Convinced by the prophet’s previous warnings and appeals, the people inquired how the Lord may be appeased. (1) With rites or external forms? **“With burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?” etc.** Men naturally cling first to outward forms, trusting in the customary rites to heal the wounds of the soul. They are liberal in their offerings, and ready to sacrifice anything for ease of conscience. But we are reminded that the blood of animals cannot take away sin. (2) With

human sacrifice? **“Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”** Heathen nations have **“burnt their children in the fire”** (2 Kin. 17:31). Feeling their unworthiness and the weight of guilt, they have been driven to desperation, and sought to appease divine anger by their own inventions. Neither a spotless beast nor human blood can make men acceptable to God.

### GOD’S SIMPLE REPLY

**“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.”** In His revealed will, He has given the requirement. In the Bible and the Bible alone we have God’s reply to man’s earnest question. Without the Sacred Volume, man would indeed be in the dark. The world by its wisdom knew not God. The light of nature is dim. In the words of the passage before us, three things are specified, namely: (1) *To do justly.* Injustice and oppression are destroyed by the teaching of God’s word. In all our dealings with men, the law of justice should prevail (Mat. 7:12). (2) *To love kindness.* Kindness is the element that gives more than justice requires. Kindness is the warmth added to justice. Kindness is manifested in three ways: in forgiveness (Eph. 4:32); in deeds of helpfulness (Luke 10:36, 37); in mildness of judgment (Mat. 7:1). In the element of kindness, we should rejoice (Luke 6:36). (3) *And to walk humbly with God.* The first two requirements have to do with the human relationship, the third with the divine. **“We walk by faith, not by sight”** (2 Cor. 5:7). When we walk by faith, doing what the Lord tells us—no more and no less—we walk with God (Gen. 5:24).

In the life we now live, various requirements are made of us. Some are made by our fellowmen. Some are made by ourselves, i.e., we demand certain things of ourselves. But the important requirement is the threefold one that God makes—to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. This, my brother, is the essence of man’s duty. Unto this noble purpose, let us dedicate our lives.~

*Deceased*

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[www.churchesofchrist.com](http://www.churchesofchrist.com)

A Study In  
**THE MAJOR PROPHETS**

Jeremiah Ezekiel  
Lamentations Daniel  
Isaiah

Sunday Morning Bible Class  
*David P. Brown*

A Study Of  
**1ST JOHN**

Teacher:  
*David P. Brown*

WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
BIBLE CLASS VIA ZOOM

## THOSE TO SERVE

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2024

Announcements	Ken Cohn
Scripture Reading	John West Rev. 19:17-21
Song Leader	Bret Bailey
Prayer	Steven Johnson/Andrew Paluka (AM) Andrew Paluka/Steven Johnson (PM)
Speaker	David Brown
<b>Lord's Table (AM)</b> (Isaiah 53:1-5)	
J.D. Gunter	Andrew Paluka
Steven Johnson	Gary Blasingame
<b>Lord's Table (PM)</b>	
Joshua West	Stephen Cohn
Audio/Video Monitor	Eric Paluka
Camera/Door Monitor	Gary Blasingame
<b>WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2024</b> (via Zoom Meetings)	
Announcements	Ken Cohn
Speaker	Bret Bailey
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown
<b>FOR AUGUST</b>	
Prepare Communion	L. Paluka
Lock Buildings	Bailey
Prepare Bulletin Board	N. Cohn

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, August 25th:** Monthly meal & afternoon singing service.
- **Tuesday, August 27th:** Ladies' Bible Class.
- **Saturday, September 14th:** Baby Girl Shower honoring Devon & Andrew Paluka.
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship at Walker County Fairgrounds, Huntsville, TX.
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship. "James: Practical Christianity Part 3."
- **Saturday, November 23rd:** Chili Cook-off at Burroughs Park.

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Josie Contreras, Edith Young, Janie Tatum, Joe Blau, Gayle Barnett, Zack Nero, April McCain, Tim Orbison, Debbie Brannon, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

## TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who said he would not make an offering to the Lord that cost him nothing?

**Answer to last week's question:**  
Laban to Jacob;