

Doctrine of Pleasing God

Exceeding the Righteousness of the Pharisees

1. A spiritually concerned heart longs to know what the chief end of a Christian is to be.
2. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, with Proof Texts, provides one answer.

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

To Glorify God

- *Psalm 86. Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone. Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid. Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.*
- *Isaiah 60:21. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. Romans 11:36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*
- *1 Corinthians 6:20, 10:31. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.... Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Revelation 4:11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

To Enjoy Him Forever

- *Psalm 16:5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*
 - *Psalm 144:15. Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*
 - *Isaiah 12:2. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Luke 2:10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Philippians 4:4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*
 - *Revelation 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*
3. The Biblical answer to the inquiry as to the chief goal of man, is righteousness. The main objective of a person is not to seek piety, spirituality, or even morality, as important as these facets of the Christian life may be. The main goal is to be a righteous person.
 4. A person can be pious, and not be righteous. A person can be spiritual, and not be righteous. A person can be a moral person, and not be righteous in the sight of God.
 5. One reason for a general failure to pursue righteousness, is because no one wants to be accused of being self-righteous.
 6. The seeking of righteousness, is the pursuit that Jesus Himself said we should be engaged in.
 - *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
 7. The word for “first”, is the word “*protos*”, and means something more than being number one in chronological order. The word carries the implication of that which is first, not only in sequence, but also first in importance.

8. There is no greater purpose in life than to seek the kingdom of God, and God's righteousness. There is no higher priority.
9. Christian's are to manifest righteousness, and for this reason.
 - *Matthew 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
10. This warning of Christ is a sobering warning.
11. It is possible that the righteousness Christ referred to, is the righteousness of justification which He has acquired for all who believe in Him. With this understanding, the text is saying that a person must embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and that is certainly true.
 - *Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
12. But is also possible that the righteousness Christ referred to, is not an imputed righteousness, but a personal righteousness.
13. While a person is justified at the moment of salvation, he is still a sinner. The person, who is declared to be just, by faith, will long for sanctification. Christ will be formed in their life, and spiritual fruit will be manifested.
14. Unless the faith that is professed is manifested by conformity into the image of Christ, then the faith professed is not authentic.
15. Justification is by faith, but sanctification is where we grow in authentic righteousness.
16. Consider then, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees that we must go beyond if we are to be saved.
17. As a party, the Pharisees emerged after the Babylonian Exile, which began in 586 BC.
18. After returning from their exile, the Jews retained some of the pagan practices they had embraced while in captivity. Many forgot their traditions, the Law of Moses, and the covenant with Abraham.
19. A group of people arose who wanted to reform the faith of Israel, and restore godliness. Called "The Separatists", or Pharisees, they longed to keep the Law of God.
20. The sole purpose in life of the Pharisees, initially, was to pursue righteousness. They were not casual in this effort, but zealous.

21. While Jesus denounced the Pharisees, they did achieve a measure of righteousness.
 - *Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*
22. The Pharisees were zealous for missionary outreach, and they were evangelistic. They would go over land and sea to make just one convert to their religion.
23. The Pharisees were also careful to give God what was due to Him. They were scrupulous tithers. Today, only about four percent of evangelical Christians tithe their income.
 - *Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*
 - *Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*
 - *Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*
24. The tithe, for the most part, was paid in food, or livestock. What the scribes and Pharisees did was to take even a wild mint plant, growing near their doorstep, and give a tenth of that to the Lord.
25. Jesus acknowledged how scrupulous the Pharisees were, but they should have been more concerned about justice, mercy, and faith.
26. The question comes, “Are we more righteous than the Pharisees?” “Are we as evangelistic as they were?” “Are we as missionary minded as they were?” “Are we as scrupulous in honoring God with our resources as they were?”
27. Unless we are faithful in little things, how can we be faithful in larger things?
28. The Pharisees searched the Scriptures. They were serious students of the Bible. They believed in the inspiration of the Bible, the infallibility of the Bible, and the inerrancy of the Bible.
29. Like the Pharisees, the Christian should search the Scriptures.
 - *John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

- *2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
30. There are people in the church who do not care about missionaries, they do not care about evangelizing, they do not care about supporting the work of the ministry, and they do not open the Bible.
31. The Pharisees were a praying people.
- *Matthew 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
32. The Pharisees were the teachers, the preachers, the prayers, the tithers, the evangelists, and the defenders of the faith. But all of this religious activity did not penetrate into their soul.
33. An external religion is not enough, which is why the term “hypocrite” is appropriate. A hypocrite refers to a play actor. A hypocrite is a person behind a mask. A hypocrite is not authentically religious. A hypocrite will, on the service, manifest a kind of piety, but whose life, in the deeper dimension, is void of true righteousness.
34. While eternal forms of religion, and spiritual disciplines “ought to be done”, attention must also be paid to the “weightier matters of the law.” The internal and the external, need serious attention. Both are essential for authentic righteousness, in obedience to God.