

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

WHERE RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS

By Pastor Brian De Jong

2 Peter 3:13 *But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. As Peter contemplated the coming day of the Lord, he focused on the future. According to God’s own promise, there will be ‘new heavens and a new earth.’ This better country, this heavenly land, will be one in which ‘righteousness dwells.’*

When most people think of heaven, they tend to focus on streets of gold and gates of pearl. They think of angels and archangels, and of the myriad multitudes worshipping together around the throne. But how many think of the fact that righteousness will reign supreme in this heavenly land?

First off, we must define what we mean by “righteousness.” One of my seminary professors used to stress that righteousness is doing the right thing – especially as God defines ‘the right thing.’ Righteousness is both active and relational – it is actively doing right things in relation to others – to God and to our fellow man.

The opposite of righteousness is, of course, unrighteousness. That means sin practiced toward God and man, doing the wrong thing to the hurt and harm of others. Unrighteousness is iniquity, transgression and evil-doing. There will be no unrighteousness in the new heavens and the new earth.

So in what sense will “righteousness dwell” in this heavenly country – in God’s new order? I believe there are

three respects. First of all, Christ is ‘our righteousness’ and He will dwell with us in the new heavens and new earth. So Christ’s presence is implied by this verse.

Second, we have been made righteous through the completed work of Christ. Having both his active and passive obedience imputed to us, the righteousness of Christ is now ours. We will be perfected in holiness, and our righteousness will be completed and fulfilled. So not only will Christ our righteousness dwell with us, but we will be the fully and wholly righteous people of

God, dwelling with Christ in the glory land.

Third and finally, righteousness will be the atmosphere and the environment of eternity, like the air we breathe. No hint of evil will remain. Satan and his followers will be consigned to eternal damnation in hell. Human hearts will be purged of the last vestiges of sin, and we will not be able to sin again. There will be no possibility of wicked actions to hurt others. Instead, the new heavens and the new earth will be ruled by peace, goodness, justice and obedience to God’s will.

Living here on earth, we can grow understandably weary of all of the shenanigans of our fellow men. Their iniquitous antics can drive us to despair. When the men of earth are driving you crazy, think on the promise of that better country, where uprightness will be the order of the day. Let your heart be encouraged, and your eyes lifted to the purple hills of eternity.



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Mnemonics...

- *Joint Service, 12th*
- *Meadowview Manor, 12th*

My Redeemer Liveth

by Charles H. Spurgeon

Continually have I spoken to the reader concerning Christ crucified, who is the great hope of the guilty; but it is our wisdom to remember that our Lord has risen from the dead and lives eternally.

You are not asked to trust in a dead Jesus, but in One who, though He died for our sins, has risen again for our justification. You may go to Jesus at once as to a living and present friend. He is not a mere memory, but a continually existent Person who will hear your prayers and answer them. He lives on purpose to carry on the work for which He once laid down His life. He is interceding for sinners at the right hand of the Father, and for this reason He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him. Come and try this living Saviour, if you have never done so before.

This living Jesus is also raised to an eminence of glory and power. He does not now sorrow as "a humble man before his foes," nor labor as "the carpenter's son"; but He is exalted far above principalities and power and every name that is named. The Father has given Him all power in Heaven and in earth, and he exercises this high endowment in carrying out His work of grace. Hear what Peter and the other apostles testified concerning Him before the high priest and the council:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:30, 31).

The glory which surrounds the ascended Lord should breathe hope into every believer's breast. Jesus is no mean person—He is "a Saviour and a great one." He is the crowned and enthroned Redeemer of men. The sovereign prerogative of life and death is vested in

Him; the Father has put all men under the mediatorial government of the Son, so that He can quicken whom He will. He openeth, and no man shutteth. At His word the soul which is bound by the cords of sin and condemnation can be unloosed in a moment. He stretches out the silver scepter, and whosoever touches it lives.

It is well for us that as sin lives, and the flesh lives, and the devil lives, so Jesus lives; and it is also well that whatever might these may have to ruin us, Jesus has still greater power to save us.

"This living Jesus is also raised to an eminence of glory and power."

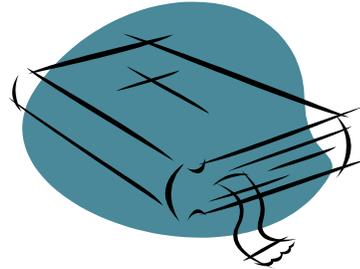
All His exaltation and ability are on our account. "He is exalted to be," and exalted "to give." He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, that He may give all that is needed to accomplish the salvation of all who come under His rule. Jesus has nothing which He will not use for a sinner's salvation, and He is nothing which He will not display in the abounding of His grace. He links His princedom with His Saviour-ship, as if He would not have the one without the other; and He sets forth His exaltation as designed to bring blessings to men, as if this were the flower and crown of His glory. Could anything be more calculated to raise the hopes of seeking sinners who are looking Christward?

Jesus endured great humiliation, and therefore there was room for Him to be exalted. By that humiliation He accomplished and endured all the Father's will, and therefore He was rewarded by being raised to glory. He uses that exaltation on behalf of His people. Let my reader raise his eyes to these hills of glory, whence his help must come. Let him contemplate the high glories of the Prince and Saviour. Is it not most hopeful for men that a Man is now on the throne of the universe? Is it not glorious that the Lord of all is the Saviour of sinners? We have a Friend at court; yea, a Friend on the throne. He will use all His influence for those who entrust their affairs in His hands. Well does one of our poets sing:

Spurgeon Concluded...

He ever lives to intercede
Before His Father's face;
Give Him, my soul, Thy cause to plead,
No doubt the Father's grace.

Come, friend, and commit your cause and your case to those once pierced hands, which are now glorified with the signet rings of royal power and honor. No suit ever failed which was left with this great Advocate.



From All of Grace written by C. H. Spurgeon, No. 14.

Thank Offering Report

January 31, 2012

From: Danny E. Olinger, general secretary of the Committee on Christian Education, writing on behalf of the general secretaries of the program committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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It is with great joy and praise to the triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—that I am pleased to announce that \$841,983 has been received from reporting congregations for the Thank Offering.

The combination of a wonderful Thank Offering along with the generous support of churches throughout the year to Worldwide Outreach has resulted in each program committee receiving over 100% of its requested budget for 2011. Thank you so much not only for your gifts in support of the work of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but also for your prayers on our behalf and your joint service to the Lord and his church. Truly how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity!

Giving Summary

Thank Offering – \$841,983
WWO 2011 Giving – \$3,415,655

CFM \$1,377,970 – 100.2%
CHMCE \$1,074,885 – 100.5%
CCE \$ 377,800 – 102.1%

February Birthdays



Book Review

by Carla De Master

A book review of Pages from Church History by Stephen J. Nichols...

At the book discussion at Mission OPC in October, the book of choice to discuss was Pages from Church History. Twelve women discussed a section of this book (3 chapters) and the discussion was animated. There were women there of all stripes of church history knowledge. I considered it a privilege to be part of that discussion.

Home schoolers, people who want an easy read of church history, or those who want an appendix to Kuyper's Church History, which is in the church library, this is a book for you.

The major topics covered are: The Ancient Church, The Medieval Church, The Reformation, and The Modern Age. People involved are: Polycarp, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas a Kem-

pis, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, John and Charles Wesley, William Carey, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Many, many other leaders in the church are included in the period of time where they fit.

Another book on church history is A is for Apple and Augustine, an ABC book listing 26 people who made the church what it is. We gave this to Aleks for his first Christmas. It is a little premature, granted, but children should have a sense of history earlier than age 40. This book is an easier read than the former but both help understand many people who labored faithfully in the past to keep the church on the right path.

I hope you enjoy reading and that this book will be toward the top of the list. It will soon be in the church library.



Grace OPC

February 2012

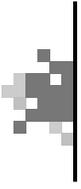
*Showing forth the
excellencies of
Jesus Christ*



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	2	3	4
5	6 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i>	7	8 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	9	10	11
12 Missions Sunday <i>Meadowview</i> <i>Manor, 3 p.m.</i> Joint Service at Calvary (p.m.)	13 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology Class,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i>	14 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	15 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	21	22 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	23	24	25
26 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	27 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i> Theology Class, 1:30 p.m.	28	29 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.			



Comments on Finances

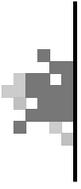
General Fund receipts for January totaled \$15,549.90 as compared to the budget of \$15,672.95, while General Fund disbursements for January totaled \$8,597.59. January year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$15,549.90 as compared to the budget of \$15,672.95 (a shortfall of \$123.05), while January year to date disbursements of \$8,597.59 were \$7,075.36 below budget. Through the end of January, the General Fund has increased by \$6,971.17. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. General Fund receipts for January were 15.4% above last year's total while disbursements were 4.3% below the prior year. January disbursements have been typically lower than budget and this is a normal historical pattern.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for January totaled \$1,179.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$314.75). Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts. Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project for January was \$295.00. The outstanding Promissory Notes balance was \$59,000.00 as of the end of January 2012. During the current year, \$53,000.00 is scheduled to mature on these notes.

January Benevolence Receipts





Dill Bread

- ★ 1 pkg. dry yeast
- ★ 1/4 c. warm water
- ★ 1 c. cottage cheese
- ★ 1 Tbsp. butter
- ★ 2 Tbsp. sugar
- ★ 1 Tbsp. minced onion (generous)
- ★ 1 tsp. salt
- ★ 1 Tbsp. dill seed (generous)
- ★ 1– 1 1/2 tsp. dill weed (generous)
- ★ 1 unbeaten egg
- ★ 2 1/2 c. flour
- ★ 1/4 tsp. baking soda

Soften yeast in warm water, add sugar and let stand 5-10 minutes. Beat in cottage cheese and butter, then add onion, salt, dill seed, dill weed, and egg. Beat well. Mix flour and soda together, and add to the dough to make a stiff dough. Let dough rise in a warm place until double in size. Punch down, make into 2 small loaves or 1 large loaf. Put into well greased pans. Let rise in warm place about 30 minutes, or until almost double in size. Bake 350° until done. Small loaves approximately 25-30 minutes, large loaf—40-50 minutes.

Carla De Master

(Note: I found this recipe in the Oostburg Christian School Cookbook (submitted by Cathy Ver Velde). It is delicious!!)



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You
give them
their food in
due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon

Corner

“They shall sing of the ways of the Lord.”

(Psalm 138:5)

The time when Christians begin to sing in the ways of the Lord is when they first lose their burden at the foot of the Cross. Not even the songs of the angels seem so sweet as the first song of rapture which gushes from the inmost soul of the forgiven child of God. You know how John Bunyan describes it. He says when poor Pilgrim lost his burden at the Cross, he gave three great leaps, and went on his way singing—

“Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!”

Believer, do you recollect the day when *your* fetters fell off? Do you remember the place when Jesus met you, and said, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud thy sins; they shall not be mentioned against thee any more forever.” Oh! what a sweet season is that when Jesus takes away the pain of sin. When the Lord first pardoned my sin, I was so joyous that I could scarce refrain from dancing. I thought on my road home from the house where I had been set at liberty, that I must tell the stones in the street the story of my deliverance. So full was my soul of joy, that I wanted to tell every snow-flake that was falling from heaven of the wondrous love of Jesus, who had blotted out the sins of one of the chief of rebels. But it is not only at the commencement of the Christian life that believers have reason for song; as long as they live they discover cause to sing in the ways of the Lord, and their experience of his constant lovingkindness leads them to say, “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” See to it, brother, that thou magnifiest the Lord *this day*.

“Long as we tread this desert land,
New mercies shall new songs demand.”
Morning, February 1, Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON



Coffee Fellowship

A Men’s Coffee Fellowship will be

held at Grace Church every Thursday

morning from 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Come to

enjoy a cup of coffee & some fellowship!

