

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Someone asked me recently if I could define “righteousness” – a frequent term in our study of Romans. More particularly, when I speak of the “righteousness of Christ,” what is that all about?

Righteousness comes from the legal world, and carries the concept of ‘conforming to a standard.’ To say that someone is ‘righteous’ is to say that they are ‘just’ in the eyes of the law. But it is not just any standard in view – a righteous man is just in the eyes of God’s law, the true standard of righteousness.

Righteousness is never a theoretical quality, though. Righteousness is active – it is something that a person does. You cannot sit idly and “be righteous.” In order to “be righteous” you must practice righteousness – you must do something.

Righteousness is also relational – it is something someone does toward another person. That can be behavior toward another human being, or toward God himself.

So when we talk about a person “being righteous” we mean that his behavior toward others conforms to God’s particular standard of right and wrong. In short, it means that a person behaves in obedience to God’s commands in his dealings with others.

Now applying these ideas to Christ, you can easily acknowledge that Jesus practiced upright conduct toward everyone he encountered. In his dealings with

all men, he always did the right thing. He never behaved wickedly toward anybody.

Even more importantly, Jesus was fully and completely obedient to his heavenly Father. He did everything the Father demanded of him – always with a quick, cheerful and exact obedience. Jesus practiced righteousness toward God, as well as toward man. Thus, at the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus had a perfect track record of complete and perfect obedience. He had consistently done the right thing in all his dealings and there was not a

single flaw or fault in his life. He stood before God as The Righteous One, and God accepted Jesus’ full obedience as entirely righteous.

Looking at ourselves by comparison, we must admit that we don’t always treat others as we ought. We sin against them in many ways and our record is spotty. If God looks at how we act toward Himself and toward our fellow human beings, the verdict is unsurprising – we have failed and are far from perfect. More than that, we are positively unrighteous in God’s sight – guilty as charged!

The good news of the gospel is that in his love and mercy, God transfers our record of failures and sins to Christ’s account. He also credits the perfect righteousness of Christ to us through faith. So when God looks at the justified sinner, he sees us as if we had never sinned, but had instead lived a perfectly and thoroughly...

Continued on the Back Page



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Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor’s Article</i>	1
<i>The Garden by Rev. Churchill</i>	2
<i>Missions/Benevolence Update</i>	3
<i>Christian Schools Golf Outing</i>	3
<i>August Birthdays</i>	4
<i>Thank You</i>	4
<i>August Calendar</i>	5
<i>Egg Rolls– Yum!</i>	6
<i>Church Picnic</i>	7
<i>Comments on Finance by Joel Moody</i>	7
<i>Library News</i>	8
<i>VBS 2011</i>	9
<i>De Masters in Mount Vernon</i>	10
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	11
<i>Front Article Concluded</i>	12
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	12

Mnemonics...

- *Missions Sunday, 14th*
- *Church Picnic, 18th*

The Garden

by Rev. Robert King Churchill

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom he had formed.” ~ Genesis 2:8

Each year we make garden plans; we love to work in a garden. We get a lot from seeing things grow. We like to get our hands dirty and then look on the fruits of toil. Someone has said, “You haven’t lived til you have dug your own potatoes.”

All this is something deep down in us— in fact, it is part of the image of God in us. God was the first gardener and we were created in His likeness. “God planted a garden eastward in Eden.” Think of how wonderful this garden must have been before sin entered the world. God, of course, not only planted see as we do; He created each growing plant. He gave the shyness to the violet, to the lettuce He gave crispness. He caused the rose to blush; He made the hollyhocks tall, with new blossoms appearing as others faded. He gave velvet to the pansy, fragrance to the lilacs and friendliness to the gladiolas. He made the morning-glories and four-o’clocks to open and close. He gave purity of heart to the lily, grace to the columbine and sweetness to the honeysuckle. He gave to berries and corn the flavor; He placed a carpet underfoot and gave the trees for pleasant shade. Over it all he brought the dew and the rain, and caused the rivers to meander through. He set up the cycles of springtime and harvest, and caused His voice to be heard in the evening breeze.

We should love gardens. In a great garden man first opened his eyes. Man and woman first met and were married in the leafy bowers of Eden. A garden was man’s first workshop, school, and home. The garden of Eden, and all gardens since, should teach us many things. They tell us that man is more than an animal, his home and employment bespeak a high order of creation. The garden should also tell us that man is more than intellect— something more than mere intellectual appeal and challenge would come to this creature. The brain alone would be insufficient.

Gardens call for the aesthetic, the creative, a responsiveness to God revealed in the beautiful.

Man is also to find a sense of fulfillment here. He will here find that worthwhile achievement comes only by being a co-worker with God and the law of creation. Gardens should teach us how great God is, and in what a variety of ways He loves to reveal Himself. There is not a living thing, there is not a single motion or color where God is not revealed. The very earth does shout Glory. It should be a religious experience for a Christian to go into a garden, especially early in the morning when all nature is heavy with sparkling dew.

There is something beautifully instructive and thought provoking in the words of Isaiah.

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (Isaiah 58:11)

Taken from Selah: Collected Writings of Robert King Churchill, “The Garden”, pg. 40-42. (Rev. Churchill was Nancy Harmelink’s dad.)



Missions & Benevolence Update

by Pastor Brian De Jong

Part of the work of your Session is to review the missions and benevolence budget of our church, and keep track of monthly receipts for this work. It is not uncommon that giving to missions and benevolence fluctuates – some months are robust, others somewhat anemic. Through the first half of this year, however, most months have been on the anemic side, with none of those robust months to balance it out.

Therefore the elders thought it good to remind the congregation of our commitments in missions and benevolence, and to encourage your thoughtful consideration.

It may be worthwhile to remind everyone of all the causes we support through our missions and benevolence giving. Let me list them, with a brief explanation for each.

First, we give to OPC worldwide outreach. This money is split by the denomination between our three standing committees – foreign missions, home missions and Christian education. The budgeted amount for 2011 from Grace OPC is \$6400.

Next, we give to the “Hub-Spokes Program.” This is a Presbytery wide mechanism to funnel financial support to several of our missionaries.



That amount is \$2500 per year.

Also in the category of Presbytery causes, we support our Presbytery’s Church Extension Committee. This committee oversees the planting and development of new churches in our geographical region. That comes in at \$2400.

The next items are smaller commitments, but no less important. We give to several seminaries, to our Presbytery’s Kings Men offering, and to Karl Thompson’s work at Menomonie OPC.

Locally we help the Sheboygan County Christian High School and the Pine Haven Christian home. We also provide Scholarship funds for all school age children in either private Christian schools

or home schools.

Mid East Reformed Fellowship is another important work that we regularly help, and then we have a category for “Miscellaneous” that is used, as needed, for other missions projects.

The total amount for our annual missions and benevolence budget is \$17800, which breaks down to \$1483 per month.

Would you consider giving to support these ministries?

Christian Schools Golf Outing

A benefit golf outing designated to support Oostburg Christian School and Sheboygan County Christian High School has been set for Saturday, August 20, 2011 at Town and Country Golf Club. All proceeds from this event will be used to offset the cost of tuition. Tee times are available starting at 7:00 a.m. The format for this event is an “18 Hole Scramble.” Team fees of \$100 are due at registration, and individual Greens & Cart Fees are due the day of the event. All skill levels are invited

to participate, and there will be prizes will be given for 1st thru 4th place teams. There are also hole prizes on every hole and a hole-in-one competition. The deadline for registration is August 5. Registration forms can be picked up at either school or are available by contacting Justin Zylstra @



August Birthdays



Thank You!!

We want to thank all of you for your special love and care during my operations and Chemo treatments. All of the cards, gifts, visits, prayers, and words of encouragement really helped a lot. I can only explain getting thru everything so well, because you all asked and God answered.

Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.

Ps. 106:1



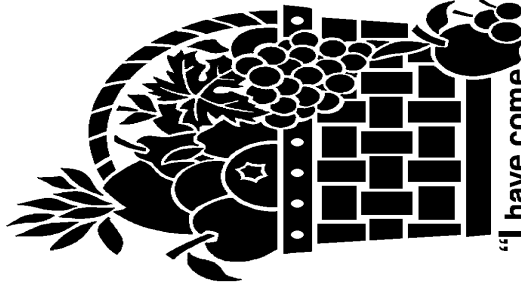
Carl & Phyllis Nyhof



Grace OPC

August 2011

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



“I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”
John 10:10

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email: graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Camp Westminster	2 Camp Westminster	3 Camp Westminster	4 Camp Westminster	5 Camp Westminster	6
7	8 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	9	10	11	12	13
14 Missions Sunday	15 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	16	17	18 Church Picnic, 6:00 p.m.	19	20
21	22 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	23	24	25	26	27
28 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	29 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	30	31			

Egg Rolls- YUM!

On July 16th, Mou and Mai, our new friends from our neighboring church came for a demonstration on making egg rolls. The event was well attended by about 18 women, young ladies and one young man. Mou and Mai got right to the task of cutting, chopping, (with a little audience participation) cooking meat and noodles, and answering our hundreds of questions.

They do not use recipes, so writing amounts of ingredients was a little tricky. When the mixtures were ready, we all took turns rolling the mixture into the paper thin egg roll. The instruction was “roll them tight”. Needless to say we had a few “do-overs”, and “woops”- who put their thumb through the pastry? Mou and Mai were very patient with us and easily laughed with us. While Mai did the frying, Mau instructed us on making the fried rice, and we were soon eating these scrumptious creations. They were oh soooo good! Everyone seemed to have a good time.

I wish to thank ALL who participated in this time we had together. And, thanks to those who helped with the clean up. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know and learn from new friends and to have some fun and fellowship. This gathering of friends in Christ left me with more than just “how to make egg rolls”! I hope it was the same for all who attended.

Thanks to God for the opportunities he gives us: Marge Halbach

Marge



Mou



Mai



Fellowship- Food- Fun

Sign up to attend our annual Church Picnic on Thursday, August 18th here at the church and do bring your friends! We will eat at 6:00 p.m. but you may come anytime after 4:30. Please bring a dish to share (info is on sign-up sheet). Don't forget outdoor equipment! Tableware & drinks are provided. Questions? Call Gail Moody.



Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for June totaled \$10,886.21 as compared to the budget of \$11,709.61, while General Fund disbursements for June totaled \$12,403.28. June year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$73,568.51 as compared to the budget of \$76,112.50 (a shortfall of \$2,543.99), while June year to date disbursements of \$74,359.87 were \$1,752.63 below budget. Through the end of June, the General Fund has decreased by \$640.65. The decrease in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in receipts as compared to the budget. General Fund receipts through June were 0.0% above last year's total, while disbursements were 0.1% below the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for June totaled \$1,461.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,483.33. Year to date benevolence receipts through June totaled \$7,511.75, while the budget amount was \$8,900.00 (a shortfall of \$1,388.25). Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the Gen-

eral Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. During June, \$150.00 was sent to each of the following seminaries (Westminster East, Westminster West, Mid America Reformed, and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminaries). In addition, \$900.00 was sent to Mission OPC in St. Paul, MN (\$600.00 from Benevolences and \$300.00 of designated gifts). During August, we plan to send \$600.00 to Middle East Reformed Fellowship.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project through June has reached \$54,071.41. The outstanding Mortgage and Promissory Notes balance was \$92,884.24 as of the end of June 2011. Assuming that mortgage payments continue to be made as scheduled, the mortgage will be paid off near the end of 2012. The promissory notes have specific terms of repayment for each particular note and we plan to pay those back accordingly.



A friendly smile to greet the students at the VBS registration table! Here's where you get your VBS badge!



Shary De Troye was all ready to greet her students!



Sara Ten Pas, with her great helper, Becca Taggart, teaching a very large (23) primary class! Aren't they good listeners?



The kids favorite part of the VBS program wouldn't have happened without Jenna De Troye and Ellen's hard work in the kitchen! Those jam filled biscuits with whipped cream were sure yummy!



Where would VBS be without Mrs. Doro's craft table! They are more than crafts - they are works of art!!!



Recreation Team! What a great team of young men working with all the kids!

VBS 2011



Craft class in session! How 'bout all those helpers! What a blessing they were!



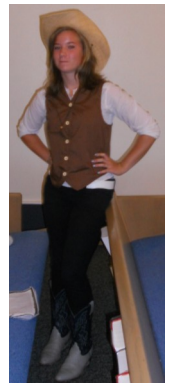
Caleb the Prospector is about to be mistaken for his twin brother, Dr. Marvel by Petunia Periwinkle



Cringing in terror from Kate the Snake!



(L-R) Petunia Periwinkle, Bubba Grizzly, Otis Henry, Theodore Tweedle, Sadie Brown, Kate the Snake



De Masters in Mount Vernon IN

From the De Masters

Ten weeks of ministry are now completed. Originally it was going to be 4 months but surgeries call for less. In some ways we feel like the unharvested soy beans growing around the house. It is not time yet. God has his purposes in this too and we wait for his blessing and guidance.

We have enjoyed the 8 families that make up this congregation. They are now entwined in our hearts and have been on our prayer lists, joining those in Sheboygan, Portland, and Hammond. There are about 30 children involved, one born a couple weeks ago. That baby spent days in the neonatal care of St. Mary's Hospital, where experts studied growth and digestion. Charissa is now home but needs constant care and returns to doctors for follow up.

A reconciliation meeting between two has resulted in some measure of the hoped for. This was bathed in prayer and attended by the pastors (Sam Allison and Ivan) from both meeting places. Another letter of repentance and healing has been approved by the session and sent on the way. These involved matters of the past. Now for the future: The three men nominated for elders here on the west side have gone through intensive training with Ivan. If there were more time it would have been spread out over weeks. The two deacon nominees withdrew their nominations for personal reasons. If approved at the congregational meeting in August, there will be 4 elders on the west side (Mt. Vernon) and none on the east (Evansville).

Yesterday was blessed greatly by the Lord. The session meeting was held at a home between Evansville and Indianapolis. Mark Melton from Indianapolis and Ivan are augmented members and Keith and Sam the other members. More was accomplished at this than Ivan had expected. God led through decisions and the discussion was amiable. Ivan had a proposal for action by the presbytery and it was approved by the session. It involved the organization of the two groups and the

persons who will take responsibility. Ivan left here before 2 for the 2 hour drive so I had a lot of time. My neighbor, Ruth, (whom I will miss much) came over to talk and later Sonja (Sam's wife) came to join us. The time flew with lots of things in common. That was also a blessing from God.

I have finished 4 quilts while we were here—three for families here. Two more babies will be born this fall. Of the 12 baskets I made I gave 8 away. We have had most of the congregation here for a meal and enjoyed getting to know them and a single man who has been attending. Sunday school is starting for children and I got involved in a very small way.

A three hour trip to New Madrid MO to meet friends (Tom and Jean Champness) from Memphis (2 hours for them) was a blessing in the middle of this month. They decided not to come here as interim. We have known this family for almost 50 years. The need for pulpit supply is still looming and there have been requests for interim supply which were turned down. God has someone in mind but that will be for others to determine. Thanks for your prayers for this group of believers and for us. God has answered in many ways.



Carmel Brownies

Megan Boss



“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

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

Knowledge of God

“People that do know their God shall be strong.” (Dan. 11:32)

Every believer understands that to **know** God is the highest and best form of **knowledge**; and this spiritual **knowledge** is a source of strength to the Christian. It strengthens his *faith*. Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as being persons who are enlightened and taught of the Lord; they are said to “have an unction from the Holy One,” and it is the Spirit’s peculiar office to lead them into all truth, and all this for the increase and the fostering of their faith. **Knowledge** strengthens *love*, as well as faith. **Knowledge** opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour. Or, to use another similitude, **knowledge** paints the portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love him, we cannot love a Christ whom we do not **know**, at least, in some degree. If we **know** but little of the excellencies of Jesus, what he has done for us, and what he is doing now, we cannot love him much; but the more we **know** him, the more we shall love him. **Knowledge** also strengthens *hope*. How can we hope for a thing if we do not know of its existence? Hope may be the telescope, but till we receive instruction, our ignorance stands in the front of the glass, and we can see nothing whatever; **knowledge** removes the interposing object, and when we look through the bright optic glass we discern the glory to be revealed, and anticipate it with joyous confidence. **Knowledge** supplies us reasons for *patience*. How shall we have patience unless we **know** something of the sympathy of Christ, and understand the good which is to come out of the correction which our heavenly Father sends us? Nor is there one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy **knowledge**. How important, then, is it that we should grow not only in grace, but in the “**knowledge**” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Evening, August 4 Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON

Front Article Concluded

...obedient life. In short, God sees us as if we had lived the life Jesus lived. So while Christ absorbs the pain and punishment for our sinful failure to live righteously, we receive the benefits and blessings that came to him for his perfect obedience. What a wonderful truth!

