

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS SERIES**

### **THE ORGAN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

We have already made known that the fight of righteousness is more than just obeying the commandments of God - it has to do with a rightness in our being, a sense of rightness and in the right things to do, even in areas stipulated beyond the Ten Commandments. In our daily life, there is always some righteousness to observe, some right way of doing certain things and some right thinking, right attitudes, right behaviors, right perceptions to follow.

*Rom. 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. In order to have victory in this life we must understand two things, the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. And we all are supposed to rule and reign in this life.*

*Also look at I Cor. 8:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge, for some, with consciousness of the idol until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.*

I wish to make known to you at this point that the word *consciousness* and the word *conscience* are from the same Greek word *suneidesis*. So let just for a moment be consistent in the translation - we either use the word *conscience* or the word *consciousness*. In this series, we will use the word *consciousness* by replacing the word *conscience* with the word *consciousness*, and see what meaning we can bring out from this passage.

Verse 7 again *However, there is not in everyone that knowledge, for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to idol; and their consciousness being weak is defiled. Also verse 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the consciousness of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?*

Now the word *conscience* means consciousness. And if we were to look at the word *consciousness* replacing the word *conscience*, we note a few facts here like in verse 7 that our consciousness can be affected. Sometimes when you have spent a lot of time with God, or in the presence of God in a prayer meeting or in a worship service, you carry that consciousness of God with you throughout whatever you do. And when you leave the church or prayer closet, there is still that consciousness hanging over you. But it says here that the consciousness can be affected. That consciousness can be defiled. That consciousness can be weakened. When you go out and encounter some people you don't like or come across some incidences that bring some painful memory to you, your consciousness gets affected. So there is such a thing as consciousness that we can carry around with us.

The secret to ruling and reigning in Jesus is to maintain that consciousness 24 hours a day. That consciousness is the result of the gift of righteousness that we can partake of in God. The gift of righteousness imparts a sense of consciousness of God.

Now cross reference to the book of Jn. 16:8 *And when He has come He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* Then He points in the next verse that conviction of sin has to do with those who don't believe in Him. Verse 10 conviction of righteousness has to do with those who understand that Jesus has gone to the Father and we see Him no more. Conviction of judgment has to do with the ruler of the world that is Satan being judged. Here in verse 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the gospel of John 16, there are three types of conviction. There is a conviction of sin, which many of us know experientially.

We were convicted of sin. The conviction of sin brings certain feeling of remorse and brokenness and certain consciousness of guilt, condemnation and failures. Conviction always brings a part of the consciousness of God. Most of us know what a conviction of sin is like.

But there is another conviction called the conviction of righteousness and it brings a different dimension. There is a conviction of judgment, which is a sense of victory over the devil. Notice that these three types of convictions are progressive. We first learn to be sensitive to the conviction of sin. Then we learn to be sensitive to the conviction of righteousness. And as that becomes more and more a part of our second nature, we become conscious of our victory over Satan that Satan is completely defeated. So, these convictions are progressive.

Now lets look at the second one the conviction of righteousness. *Jn.16:10 and of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more.* Now what has Jesus going to the Father and us seeing Him no more to do with the conviction of righteousness? It has to do with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life. He says that unless He goes, the Holy Spirit cannot come. So He was talking about a new presence, a new measure of the Spirit that comes upon our lives where we will be free from guilt and condemnation and we will only be conscious of whom we are in God.

Conviction of sin makes us conscious of what we have done wrong. Conviction of righteousness makes us conscious of who we are in God. Conviction of judgment makes us conscious of the defeat of the devil. Each conviction brings a different dimension of consciousness of God.

In our anniversary, we talked about the history of this church. This church has various phases. It was started in 1986 and 1996 was the celebration of tenth anniversary and Isaiah 59 has been the chapter for us in the first ten years.

Presently Isaiah 60 is the chapter as we enter the second phase from 1996.

However, we will not presume to state how many years this second phase will be in. Our church has a platform to the international scene and has its place in leadership in the body of Christ throughout the world. So our destiny is tied up to the destiny of the body of Christ.

When our church enters its third phase, Isaiah 61 will be very prominent where there will be the first new anointing to prepare for His second coming that will come upon the church in here and in the whole world.

In the fourth phase of this church, Isaiah 62 will be very prominent. Now Isaiah 61 talks about the second coming and a new anointing and Isaiah 62 talks about moving into the Jewish dispensation. I believe that Jesus will come somewhere in the fourth phase of the church.

In 1996, the church entered its second phase. It took ten years for us to complete our first phase. And in this second phase if you read Isaiah 60 it's a realm of prosperity both spirit, soul and body. And when you read verses like that, you might as well read it as promises given to you since it is very good. I like each one of you businessman and ministry to claim Isaiah 60 for yourself from 1996 onwards because it will be true of your life, true of the church life here and true of the church in the world. May be one or two of those verses will apply more to your life than to another person. But the whole chapter is relevant and will hold true for this second phase.

Isaiah 60

*Arise, shine; For your light has come!*

*And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.*

*For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth.*

*And deep darkness the people,*

*But the Lord will rise over you,*

*And His glory will be seen upon you.*

*The Gentiles shall come to your light,*

*And kings to the brightness of your rising.*

*Lift up your eyes all round and see;*

*They all gather together, they come to you;*

*Your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side,*

*Then you shall see and become radiant;*

*And you heart shall swell with joy.*

*Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you.*

*The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.*

*The multitude of camels shall cover your land.*

*The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;*

*All those from Sheba shall come;*

*They shall bring gold and incense.*

*And they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord.*

*All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you,*

*The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;*

*They shall ascend with acceptance of My altar.*

*And I will glorify the house of My glory.*

*Who are these who fly like a cloud,*

*And like doves to their roosts?*

*Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me;*

*And the ships of Tarshish will come first,*

*To bring your sons from afar,*

*Their silver and their gold with them.*

*To the name of the Lord your God.*

*And to the Holy One of Israel,*

*Because He has glorified you.*

*The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls,*

*And their kings shall minister to you.*

*Therefore your gates shall be open continually.*

*They shall not be shut day or night.*

*That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles.*

*And their kings in procession,*

*For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish.*

*And those nations shall utterly ruined.*

*The glory of Lebanon shall come to you.*

*The cypress, the pine, and the box tree together.*

*To beautify the place of My sanctuary;*

*And I will make the place of My feet glorious.*

*Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you.*

*And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet;*

*And they shall call you The City of the Lord. Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*

*Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you.*

*I will make you an eternal excellence. A joy of many generations.*

*You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles. And milk the breast of kings.*

*You shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior.*

*And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.*

*Instead of bronze I will bring gold.*

*Instead of iron I will bring silver.*

*Instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron.*

*I will also make your officers peace. And your magistrates righteousness.*

*Violence shall no longer be heard in your land.*

*Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders.*

*But you shall call your walls Salvation. And your gates Praise.*

*The sun shall no longer be your light by day.*

*Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you;*

*But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light.*

*And your God your glory.*

*Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;*

*For the Lord will be your everlasting light;*

*And the days of your mourning shall be ended.*

*Also your people shall all be righteous. They shall inherit the land forever.*

*The branch of My planting, the works of My hands, that I may be glorified.*

*A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.*

*I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time.*

That's a powerful scripture. That's for your life. That's for your business throughout the next ten years. That's for your ministry throughout the next ten years. That's for this church here throughout the next ten years. That's for the church in the world throughout the next ten years. The church is moving into a different dimension from the world.

Now when we look at the above scriptures, we can sense an excitement and expectation but strangely sometimes we also can have a sense of unworthiness, a sense that we don't deserve it, a sense that we haven't fully been faithful to receive the promises. And this consciousness, which comes from the conviction of sin, must be dealt with. Let me remind you that what's going to happen will be because of the gift of righteousness. The gift of righteousness is not experienced just because we have done good works. It is a consciousness that occupies our life when we continuously yield to the Holy Spirit and that can set us free from the conviction of sin. I am not saying that the conviction of sin is wrong. From time to time, as our lives grow in God and God reveals different rooms in our life to be dealt with, that conviction of sin will be there. Before repentance, there is conviction of sin. Before someone can acknowledge that they are wrong, they must sense this sensation, this consciousness that they are wrong. And that leads them into repentance.

But we need to disassociate that conviction from the conviction of righteousness where God will bring His blessings into our lives. You will never ever be good enough to receive this blessing. You will never ever be able to bring yourself to the position where you deserve this blessing. The gift of righteousness is a gift of God. That's why we are teaching this series on righteousness. It is a sense, a consciousness of who we are in God. How wonderful it is that every time you worship God and come to God we are just conscious of who He has made us to be and what we are in Him. Even though you may not be where you should be doing what you should be but it makes no difference. Let that consciousness of righteousness comes first.

Now lets look at conviction of righteousness, which is a consciousness of who you are in God. Unless you are conscious and convicted in your consciousness of who you are in God you can never move into the blessings that are there from that conviction. The result of the conviction of sin is repentance and restoration. But the conviction must come first before you receive whatever the conviction is to produce. In the same way, there must be a consciousness that we deserve all that God has for us because Jesus paid the price for it and not because of what we have done. There must be a consciousness that the blessings of God are ours because of what Jesus has done. Yes, they belong to you. Yes, it's God's will for you. Yes, God has these blessings for you and no matter what happens, you are conscious that they are divinely yours. And when that comes into your life, you will receive what that conviction came to give. For too long the church has been conscious only of sin, that is, her sin consciousness is very strong. We need to be conscious of righteousness. And righteousness doesn't depend on what you and I do. Strangely, in the Christian life, you feel more righteous if you lived a number of days, of hours, of weeks, free from what you feel to be sin. And the longer you have done that the more you sense you really feel "good" or "holy" or "righteous". For example, you could be a Christian on the way to perfection and you lived your life for months right with God. You attended all the prayer meetings you have, fellowship all you can, and then at the end of three months you just yielded to your weakness, boom, suddenly that very day or the very next day that consciousness of righteousness is gone. Three months of building up spiritually is gone like a bird flying. How can it be? Why should it be? Then when we look at Isaiah 60 many Christians look at it and say, "I haven't done anything to deserve the promises of Isaiah 60." As long as you are not conscious of the gift of righteousness and you keep on having that kind of state of mind you will never receive the blessings of Isaiah 60.

My question is, when will you ever come to this state of mind to receive these blessings? When we have lived right for ten years? When you have lived right to the age of seventy? You will never get it that way. That consciousness is a gift of God to be received through the Holy Spirit by faith. Let me look at it this way. There are a lot of people out there in the world, let say ungodly men or women in the business world, who accumulate millions and billions of dollars when their lives with ten thousand weaknesses are not even half as right as the

weakest Christian. And it hasn't kept them from accumulating wealth. I am saying that they spend their time in accumulating wealth and their life is not right with God at all. Some of these artistes, celebrities and movie stars are not living right with God. They are openly living in sin. But yet, they have plenty of Isaiah 60 happening in their life, with the wealth of the world flowing into their hands. Why should it be that although you are generally a good Christian with some weaknesses here and there, you feel condemned when in Isaiah 60 God promises that He is going to bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles? You could be a businessman and God says, "This year and the next ten years I am going to bless you abundantly." And then you just had one tiny little problem - you are bad tempered. You lost your temper, you banged the table and you said, "O there goes my million dollars." How is the million dollars associated to your losing your temper? Why have you always been thinking that you can only receive based on your merit? If God has ever given anything to us on merit, none of us would have received anything. Up to now it is because of the grace of God. And that's the point that we are driving home - that there is a consciousness that we need to enter into to receive what God wants us to receive. I call that a state of being and a state of mind. It's a conscious state of mind where you are no more conscious of your weaknesses, of your sin, of your past, of your failure. But the conviction of righteousness makes you only conscious of your destiny. Conscious of what you are there for; what you are there to be; conscious of what God wants to bring to your life. You are only conscious of that.

Let's look at Rom. 4 at Abraham's life. It says in verse 2-3 *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what do the Scriptures say? "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. We are going to look at the story of Abraham and see how he grows in this consciousness. It is just like the conviction of sin comes and brings repentance and then we repent and there is restoration and it's supposed to disappear because you are right with God. And you are supposed to move into the dimension of the consciousness of your rightness with God. Now that consciousness and sense of righteousness can grow. I mean many of us have experienced soaking in God's presence and coming out of the presence of God with a tremendous sense of who we are in God in our life. There is not one tiny bit of the consciousness of sin. And you came out of that it's a powerful realm to be in. You have to spend time with God. All my mornings I usually set aside for

God. I will spend time in the Word, meditation and prayers. It gives that consciousness of God into my life. Now that consciousness if you notice it in your life is strong at times and then its weaker at other times based on the things that are happening around you. We need to learn how to yield to it and to keep it going strong in our life. When we learn to yield to the presence of God and it becomes strong in our lives, it will cause us to grow in our spiritual and Christian life. The sense of rightness develops in us.

Turn to Heb. 5:13 *For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness,* Now he is talking about those who only drink milk. Those who drink milk are baby Christians. They haven't been able to handle this righteousness yet. They have only been able to handle the conviction of sin and repentance and restoration. And many Christians lived their entire life in this world in this first realm of just conviction of sin, repentance and restoration. That is the only realm they ever lived in. They never move out of that. According to the book of Hebrews, you haven't grown unless you break free from this realm into another realm. You are unskilled in the word of righteousness, the word that brings the conviction of righteousness into your life. Apparently, it is a skill that we need to develop.

Verse 14 *Solid food belongs to those who are of full age that is those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* I call it the organ of righteousness that senses right and wrong. Beyond the law is that sense of righteousness that needs to come into our life. Now the good news in the New Testament is that this sense of righteousness, this consciousness and this gift of righteousness is a free gift. You don't have to do anything to get it. You only have to believe and receive. You don't have to pray twenty hours in order to get a sense of it. You don't have to do good works for twenty years to get a sense of it. Although praying twenty hours does help that sense and although doing good works does increase that sense, but the fact remains that it's a gift of God for us.

Now observe carefully the progression of the gospel of Matthew. Lets look at the book of Matt. 3:15 Now Jesus always is developing that consciousness or the organ of righteousness in Him. He uses it in every situation and it will produce a greater consciousness of that righteousness. In the natural world, if you

become conscious of any of your five senses, you tend to develop a greater sensitivity to that particular sense. Lets say you are a musician. You would have ears trained to hear the different notes, chords and scales. And right now, some of you are not hearing certain sounds because your mind would have filtered away these sounds to pay attention to the Word. But if you want to you could concentrate your hearing and begin to hear the humming sounds of the air-conditioner. You begin to hear the pitter-patter of the rain outside. You would hear people flipping the pages of their bibles. I mean when you pay attention to these sounds, you become more conscious to them. In the same way if you concentrate to see certain things and you are paying particular attention to certain things, then you can see more details. In the same way, as we yield to the organ or righteousness it will develop a greater consciousness of righteousness in our lives.

Now Jesus is yielding to that organ of righteousness in Matt. 3:15 He knew it was right for Him to be baptized by John the Baptist although it was legally not required of Him since He was sinless. Verse 15 *Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.* We have mentioned this before, legally Jesus don't have to be baptized because John the Baptist's baptism was a baptism of repentance and remission from sin. Jesus had no sin. Legally He doesn't have to undergo the baptism but consciously it was the right thing to do. And He yielded to that rightness to build that consciousness of righteousness.

In Matt. 5 Jesus says that people who wants to live beyond the legal requirements, beyond the moral demands and beyond the theological boundaries to do what they know its right, they would have to pay a price for doing so. What is the price? Matt. 5:10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.* If you want to live your life right that way, you will definitely be different from the world. The world always misunderstands and persecutes those who are different. But it is your choice whether you still want to yield to righteousness or not. And God says yield because it has a reward. It's O.K. to be different because Jesus was different. Or rather, you are different in a right way. Not different in a wrong way. But He says here if you want to live a life that is righteous because of that righteousness, you will receive persecution. But you will receive your reward and your inheritance in God.

**Matt. 5:20** *For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.* What is He talking about? Those who build righteousness and yield to the organ of righteousness will have a consciousness of righteousness in their lives, a consciousness of who they are in God and they will have a sense of authority, and it will be like a heaven on earth. And wherever you are, you will have that consciousness that you are in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God rules and reigns through you. That is why those who have the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will rule and reign in Christ. Apparently, Jesus is interested in developing this organ of righteousness.

**Matt. 6:33** *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.* In other words, yield to the organ of righteousness that you and I have received. The day we were born again the gift of righteousness was imparted in our life and we could sense it and yield to it. And when you yield to it, it will produce a consciousness of God. That is important to receive whatever the conviction is to produce. And the conviction of sin is to produce repentance. The conviction of righteousness is to produce the blessings of God and what God wants to bring about in your life. You don't wait till the blessings come and then you receive the consciousness of righteousness. The consciousness must come first and then the blessings will come. The blessings will come for those who seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Lets look at Abraham according to **Rom. 4:3** *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* Not of works but its of grace. You keep yielding to what is right, you don't see the reward yet, you are not trying to earn any reward either, you just know that it's the right thing to do and you keep yielding to it. It will yield certain results. It says Abraham believed God and it was counted for righteousness. Now what is important for us to do is to see where this righteousness that was imputed on Abraham took place in scriptures. All you have to do is to look at your cross references and you will find that it ties you back to Genesis 15:6 and see how Abraham received the gift of righteousness in his life.

**Gen. 15:6 *And he believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*** Was God talking about anything to do with his past failures and his problems? No, all God was talking to him was about who He wants him to be. God gave him a promise. Abraham asked God a question, "Lord you have given me no offspring, indeed one born in my house is my heir." And the word of the Lord came, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then verse 5 The Lord brought him outside his tent. Then the Lord told him this. How personally involved can the Lord be? He brings Abraham outside his tent. Remember Abraham could be conscious of his failures. Has Abraham failed up to this point? Yes, when God first told him to leave his homeland, he didn't obey and leave the land of Ur. He followed his father, Terah to the land of Haran. It was only after Terah died that Abraham finally obeyed the second time God called him again in Gen. 12:1. Acts 7 tells us before Abraham dwelt in Haran God told him to get out of the land of Ur and he didn't fully obey. He was still under the dominion of his father until Terah his father died. According to Joshua 24 Terah was an idol worshipper. So, Abraham was not fully obedient. Then when he came out he still was not fully obedient because Lot was with him. God told Abraham to leave his kinsfolk but he brought Lot along with him. He hasn't fully obeyed the commandment of God. And God kept dealing with him in his life. Then there was the time when he was in Egypt. He told lies to Pharaoh and he almost lost his wife to him. I mean Abraham had his share of failures and mistakes.

Don't you think Abraham should feel unworthy? Humanly he could have. But yet, God never brought up his past. God didn't come to Abraham and said, "I remember what you did in Egypt. I know that you are not obedient to me when you followed Terah your father to the land of Haran." Did God know all these things? Yes. God knows every inch of us. He knows all your little naughty deeds and all your good points - He knows everything. But God was not concerned about these things. God wanted Abraham to develop the organ of righteousness on his inside. When Abraham said, "Lord, I have no heir," God brought him outside and said, "Abraham, look now towards heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them." He didn't just bring Abraham out and said, "Abraham your descendants will be like the stars." God was very good in His presentation. He just brought Abraham out and said, "Abraham, can you number the stars?" and there was a pause. Abraham must have replied but the reply was not recorded in the bible.

Remember you and I have the advantage of looking backwards. But Abraham didn't know what God was going to say next. You may say that Abraham should know that God had promised that he would have many thousands of descendants when God called him in Gen. 12. Yes, it is true but apparently, that consciousness was not there in him yet. Because up to Gen. 15 verse 1 and 2 Abraham was still not assured. And he had no idea what God was going to say next. What would you do if God came to you and brought you to the R.S.P.C.A. and said, "Can you number the dogs and cats?" Would you be arguing with God? No. If you are a normal obedient person you would probably start counting. Most of us won't be asking question; we would start counting immediately. Now God brought Abraham out and didn't tell him what is the next sentence and God said, "Can you number the stars?" Then Abraham said, "Lord there are so many."

When Abraham experienced the overwhelming fact and truth of the great number of the stars and as he had experienced the emotional feeling of the greatness of the galaxy and the stars in heavens, it would have sunk into his consciousness as God told him that his descendants would be as great and numerous as the stars. If God brought you to the Niagara Falls and said, "Look at this great river. Can you contain it? Well the financial blessings coming by your way will be as great and flowing as this big river," you will be bowled over! You would be flabbergasted. It would take a long time before your consciousness can take it in. It would be overwhelming.

We realize that Abraham had that sense of the greatness of God. "Lord, You mean all my descendants will be as numerous as these stars?" Remember there was a pause in between and that pause was for Abraham to experience emotionally the overwhelming number of the stars and then God said, "Your descendants will be like the number of the stars." And Abraham chose to believe God. "Lord, You said it, I believe it and I receive it," and from that day onwards it was counted as righteousness. As long as Abraham had consciousness of the facts that God brought to him, the promise will be fulfilled. And that consciousness must grow and develop in his life. What I want to show here also

is that by the time Abraham reached Gen. 15 there was a level of consciousness that he had grown into. He was yielding to the organ of righteousness and it was growing stronger and stronger in him. The more you yield to the organ of righteousness the greater the righteousness is developed in your life.

Abraham had a moment of failure in Genesis 12 when he allowed Pharaoh to take his wife Sarai into his harem. God intervened by sending plagues to Pharaoh and his house so that he had to return Sarai back to Abraham. God had to protect Abraham's seed in Sarai for His purposes. But in Genesis 13 Abraham did what was right when there was strife between him and Lot in verse 7 and 8. *And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.* What do you think is the right thing to do when two brethren are in strife? What is the right thing to do and what is the legal thing? Abraham legally had the authority over Lot. Abraham could have said, "Lot, you go off and take all your livestock away with you. We bless you - go." That would have been the legal thing to do. He could have exercised his authority by saying, "Lot, since I am older than you in age, I have this right to order you off." He could be right and yet wrong. Legally he was right but morally he was wrong. He could have used hardness to solve this problem but Abraham didn't. Although Abraham legally had the authority over Lot, he didn't exercise that authority but instead gave Lot the first choice. He would not allow that strife to remain. He says, "Lot if you go to the left I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I go to the left. Lot I allow you to make the first choice." Don't you think that was very good of him? Don't you admire people like that? We could say this man has integrity. This man has uprightness. I mean in the natural he may lose out by settling for second-best whilst Lot takes the best. But spiritually Abraham was a giant. He got something inside him that money cannot buy. He doesn't have to do it. But he chose to do it. He was yielding to what was right. He knew that he couldn't be short-changed because God was in control.

This Lot didn't even think about Abraham. He is selfish. He looked around and chose the best land. Lot didn't have the sense of telling Abraham, "I think you better take some of the good land as well." Sometimes you go to a church camp and a buffet-style lunch is served. There is a particular dish that everybody loves. But the amount of food on that dish is such that if you take two or three portions, the dish won't be enough for all, especially for those at the end

of the queue. You know that for everybody to have a chance you should only take one portion. But your stomach says, "Take three portions, please." So what do you do? You could yield to your greediness and say, "First come first serve," and quickly with two or three scoops take five portions. But definitely, you have not yielded to the organ of righteousness. But you could also think of others, "Since this dish is not enough for all, I will just take one tiny little bit so that others will have a chance after me." And that is your righteousness.

That was Abraham's character. But Lot was not like that. Lot would be that kind of person if there were only one drumstick and he loves drumsticks he doesn't care about others. He says, "Thank you; first come first serve," and grabs that drumstick. So, Lot looks around and the bible says Genesis 13:10 *Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan was well watered.* He saw the best place. Have you ever had the experience when some profits, inheritance or prize money had to be divided with a few others, the greedy person who grabbed a bigger share may seem to gain immediately but he loses ultimately. The person who is generous seems to lose on the short end but he gains in the long run. And Lot just doesn't care about Abraham for he just grabbed the best part. Of course, he ended up the loser. He says, "Abraham you see that river there and all that lovely things. I want that part."

Did Abraham feel hurt? I know some of us will say, "Alright take your share." We are trained with a social ethic to share and share alike. We know that we share the one dish that everybody like. We know that it is the right thing for everybody to share. We know that it is the right thing for others to take first and for us to take last. We say to others, "Please take your share first." Then that person actually took your word and took all his share including yours. You said, "I should have taken my share first." You should not, Abraham never felt that way. If you are exercising the organ of righteousness in your life, you will not feel the loss. You will say, "Never mind it was a risk I took." When you give people the freedom, it is a risk you take that they will take advantage of you. Lot just grabbed the best part of the land. That was one of the incidences the bible recorded. I am sure there were many more incidences that are similar.

Abraham yielded to righteousness in giving the first choice to Lot. By the

time Abraham reaches chapter 14 of Genesis, he was more conscious of what is right. He is now trying his best to yield to righteousness. In chapter 14, a war took place and Lot was among those captured. Abraham such a good man in spite of all that Lot had done to him. Verse 14 *Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.* Abraham could have sort of say, "It is none of my business. He took that part. He took the risk. It is now his problem not my problem. Remember I divided it and he took that part. He faced the risk. It's none of my business now. What will be will be. Too bad for you, O Lot, what will be will be." No, Abraham saw this thing happened to his brother. What was the right thing to do? To do nothing is wrong. He took upon himself. It costs him money. It costs him time and he risked his life to go and rescued this Lot who didn't think about him. It was the right thing to do. In the bible if you study the word righteousness, God Himself always rewards the righteous. Just to show you how highly developed his organ of righteousness was, he fought and he won and rescued Lot and the people who were with Lot.

Then the king of Sodom came to Abraham in verse 21 *Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons and take the goods for yourself."* Now Abraham had a legal right to take the loot. The loot was now actually his. He had won it by warfare. In those days, warfare was the way they establish territory and goods. He had fought and he won it. Abraham knew that although he fought and won it, it was actually not his. He just rescued them. And the king of Sodom recognized the law of the land at that time. He says, "Abraham, give me the people but all the goods and the spoils are yours." Legally the spoils belonged to Abraham but morally he doesn't want to keep it. His organ of righteousness says, "No. I don't want to prosper by going out in a war and fighting and killing and destroying and taking some people's goods and making these goods my own. I would be sitting down at home looking at this loot everyday and knowing that it belongs to somebody." Abraham says, "If I want prosperity, I want it to come from the hand of God."

Look at his organ of righteousness. Don't you think it was highly developed? And he told the king of Sodom in verse 22 *I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing from a thread to a scandal strap.* I wouldn't want to take one tiny

shoelace. Abraham said, "I do not want it. Take it and go." Why do Abraham do things like that? He was yielding to his organ of righteousness. There may be many occasions but I have shown you how three times Abraham yielded to the higher consciousness of righteousness.

Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. It means, when you have this kind of righteousness, you wouldn't care about your legal rights that the laws of the land would entitle you to. You wouldn't care what the king of Sodom is offering you. You want to be conscious of the righteousness in your life. If you are not sure whether it's right or wrong ask God. I know something can be legally mine but it may not be spiritually mine. And Abraham yielded to that consciousness three times. And when God see these things God is pleased. If you want to please God and gladden God's heart, yield to the organ of righteousness. There are countless situations around each one of us when we have to face the same challenges to righteousness that Abraham faced - in the ministry, in the business and professional world, in the marketplace, at home, in court, with the government, in international relations – the list is endless.

But if you will yield to the organ of righteousness one day God will say this to you like He said to Abraham in chapter 15:1 *After these things, what things? After all these opportunities for Abraham to test out his organ of righteousness. After all these tests and trials where God was watching him how he will re-act in every situation. When Abraham kept choosing the higher law God says, After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."* If you yield to this organ of righteousness, God is your reward. And when God is your reward, there are no boundaries. Your reward is as big as God. It may take time to come but when it comes, it's going to be powerful. God is watching. And that was when Abraham got these golden opportunities that we talked about.

When God now wants to reward him, then Abraham looked around and said, "Lord that's not much that I have. I may have all these wealth in goods, livestock and servants but I have no heir." And to Abraham that was the most

important thing in his life. What is the most important thing to your life that you consider as a reward? I mean all the herdsmen, the cattle, the gold and the fame meant nothing to Abraham because he had no son. That was Abraham's reward that he wanted so much. What is the reward that you are looking for that is most important to you? God brought Abraham outside the tent and said, "Abraham, look up. Can you number the stars?" And Abraham may have just paused for a moment and said, "God they are too numerous." God said, "Abraham your descendants will be like the stars." Remember Abraham is childless up to that point. Everything in the natural was not in line with what God showed him. Sarah was barren and he was an old man. In the natural, there was no way that could have taken place. But Abraham believed God and it was counted for righteousness.

Now you see what righteousness is. It is believing what God says about you. Even though in the natural it's looks like it is not true, it looked like a lie but righteousness is believing what God says about you. Righteousness is access through faith. Rom. 4:21-22 *And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And there it was accounted to him for righteousness.* That's the key that God brought forward the gift of righteousness. Now we go to Romans 3:21-22 *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed being witnessed by the Law of the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference.* That is the gift of righteousness that He seeks to impart. Then Romans 5:17 *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.* And it's very clear from all the statements in the book of Romans that the righteousness of God is received through faith.

This means that if you have faith in what God promised you of the stars in heaven, you will have the gift of righteousness that will cause you to reign in life. Each one of those stars represents a part of God's will in your life. All you have to do is believe it. Even though in the natural everything around you doesn't look like it but if you believe it, it will bring you into the position of righteousness and will bring a consciousness of that righteousness into you and God could work in your life to bring His grace. The first step is believing by faith followed by the consciousness of righteousness and then receiving the abundance

of grace from God. So through faith you have access into the consciousness of righteousness. And in the consciousness of righteousness, it produces the abundance of grace. And grace is based not on your works but based on the works of Jesus. It is called the gift of righteousness.

Each one of you is standing like Abraham outside his tent. And God has asked you to look up and see whether you can number the greatness of God and all the stars in the heaven. God is not asking you to look into your life but to look up to see all those things that God can do in your life. And God says these are all the things He has for you. Can you believe it? If you can believe it, it is yours. And He will work it out for you.