

Function by Faith

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is the founder and now the senior pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens' ministry has spanned four decades and has included the establishment of Maryland Bible College and Seminary in Baltimore and the development of "The Grace Hour", an Angel Award-winning radio talk show that is still heard on Christian stations throughout North America and via the internet.

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes spirits influence people, and they do not even recognize it. They have no idea what spirit they are of. They are very sincere, but they enter into opinions that run contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit. These are people who have not allowed God to develop in them a capacity to function by faith in the righteousness of God.

God's justice is still very real. He has never altered Himself. He remains holy and can only fellowship with those who have received His righteousness by faith in the Son of God. His righteousness is a free gift that comes to us by faith. Once we have entered into the family of God by grace through faith, we still have a life to function in. The Lord desires that we function in this life by faith.

In this booklet, we examine this principle of living in the operational righteousness of God—that is, the function of faith. It is the Holy Spirit

putting in our hearts a will to do His good pleasure wherever we are and in whatever we do.

Chapter One

GOD IS RIGHT

“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

“And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

“That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:25-29).

“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him” (1 John 2:29).

“Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful” (Psalm 116:5).

Righteousness means that God is right. When you see this as it is unfolded in these pages, you will be astounded. A person who practices righteousness is a person who is born of God.

The God who is right became a man in the Person of Jesus Christ. Yet, because of the hypostatic union, this Man was also God. For thirty years very little was known of this God-Man. Apparently, His human life was very ordinary, just as yours and mine.

Think of the biography that could be written about you. “He woke up every morning, drank his juice, ate his oatmeal, went to work, and raised his family.” On the surface, that record of life would draw very little notice. In the same way, Jesus’ early life was the quiet life of living in Nazareth as the oldest son of Joseph the carpenter. He was ordinary, just like us.

The Beloved Son

This all changed the moment Jesus began His ministry. Much was revealed about this Man because He was the Son of God.

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up

straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17).

God is right, and in His righteousness He provided a way for His people to function in faith. The love of God came down and paid for our sins. The Man Christ Jesus lived an impeccable life and offered Himself for us. In doing this, His righteousness, His rightness, was never compromised. Yet by His righteousness, the door to salvation was opened to whosoever will come unto Him.

Jesus Christ shed His blood on Calvary and paid for everything that we have ever done and paid for everything that we will ever do. This is God Almighty, the only God, making things right in His view by sending Christ. What Christ did satisfied His immutable holiness because Christ had no sin and became sin for us: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When Christ shed His blood for us, this was

simply God being right. This was just God doing what God would always do, for God is gracious and righteous and merciful.

Jesus' life was not a life of sacrifice. Revelation 13:8 tells us that He was the "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It seems to us who live in time that Jesus made a great sacrifice. That represents our viewpoint. But Christ actually had laid down His life before the earth was even formed by God.

God forgave the prostitute and told her, "Go and sin no more." That was God being right. When Jesus said to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee" (John 8:11), that was God being the way that He has always been and the way He always will be.

Jesus Christ took my place at Calvary. On His way to the Cross, He never listened to one evil report. He did not judge by what He heard and never reproved anyone by what He saw (see Isaiah 11:3).

Chapter Two

PROGRAMMED WITH TRUTH

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:29-31).

Do you realize that your arms have been programmed to operate as your arms? If something happened and your arm was broken, your arm would not operate according to the way it was programmed.

My liver and my kidneys were programmed to process the food and the fluids I take into my body and process a healthy blood flow. In eter-

nity past my legs were programmed so that I could walk. My ears were programmed to receive and process the sounds that I hear. My eyes were programmed to see.

We send our children to school and their capacities are programmed through teaching. They learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. We are so thankful for dedicated teachers who give their lives so that our children might learn and understand these important subjects. And now, through the grace of God, the Holy Spirit, and the love of God, the Bible—the living Word of God—programs us for obedience so we can be like God. Sure, we continue to think for ourselves, but by choosing to receive Truth we allow God's program to determine the output of our lives. By refusing to choose Truth we hinder our capacity and we live under the influence of another spirit, no matter what IQ we possess according to the academic world.

Jesus Christ became a man and came to earth where He was hated, persecuted, rejected, and despised. Because He had never gone that way before, every step Christ took in His humanity required faith from God the Father.

Our Future As Ministers

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:16-20).

We live by the faith of the Son of God in something that has never happened before. This represents our future. As a man, Jesus chose not to be “Number One.” He was, is, and always will be number one as Creator (Colossians 1:16). He holds everything together by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). But as a man, Jesus chose

to be the Servant of all. He chose to be the least and the last. The only plan that would work to salvage us was for Christ to have come to be the last.

In Mark 9:34 and in Luke 9:46, the apostles argued and reasoned about who was the greatest among them. Who is the number one follower of Jesus? The number one follower is the one who considers himself to be the last. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life as a ransom for the many (Matthew 20:28).

Why do you go to church? Of course, we all come to the services to be ministered to. But outside of the church doors, how highly do you think of yourself? Do you want everyone to cater to you? Or, do you understand the principle of Matthew 19:30: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first"?

The Christian who sees himself as the least shall be the greatest in God's Kingdom. That person is righteous, and his righteousness is from God. This is amazing.

Jesus Christ came to give Himself away. He did not come for Himself. He came to give Himself away to the Father, to the Spirit, and to the Word.

Chapter Three

LIVING THE HIGH WAY

“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:11-14).

“And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is

of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:14-15).

“Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up” (Jeremiah 18:15).

Here the Bible speaks of people who operate in the righteousness of God, and these are considered to be people who are right. These people are on the high and holy way of God. When believers forget about God, they come down from that way. They go down to the lower road and leave God’s highway. People who carry critical spirits don’t function in faith and they live beneath the high calling God gave them. Spiritually, they are not operating in the righteousness of God.

To Will and to Do

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

“Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Philippians 2:12-16).

An amazing principle is brought out in these verses: the difference between willing and doing. Many people go to the mission field and work hard for a season, but then they stop cultivating and stop working. They don't choose to finish the course and therefore there is no harvest for them. They live in their potential but never live in the harvest. Potential is not enough. We have to stay with the work until it is finished.

The Holy Spirit works in our desires and in our wishes. The Spirit and the Word of God work into our souls a will. Our response to God's initiation is the content of our faith. He puts in us the will and therefore we do.

In Romans 7, Paul speaks of the wrestling that goes on within us. The things Paul wanted

to do, he did not. The things he did not want to do, he did. He finally just threw up his hands and said, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). Who delivered Paul? Jesus Christ delivered him.

The apostle Paul was saying that God worked something very wonderful into him. In Romans 7, Paul couldn't do it. God had to do something in him and God did, for in Romans 8:1 the apostle wrote, "No condemnation." Paul had come to the place where the Holy Spirit had taken over and therefore he could do what God called him to do.

Faithful is the Lord who calls you who also will do it. Whatever God asks you to do, He performs in you. Never become discouraged between the willing and the doing. This is not to teach anyone that he may continue in sin. God forbid. No, this teaches you how to continue in God. This teaches you how to function in faith and to live in operational righteousness.

God is right, and His righteousness is foremost. He commended His love toward us in sending Jesus to die for us while we were yet sinners. When we fail, He keeps on forgiving us. He forgives us not so that we can continue in

sin, but so that He can reveal to us what righteousness is.

God loves justice and righteousness (Psalm 33:5). Justice precedes love. People do go to hell because God is righteous and His righteousness cannot be compromised when people refuse to function in faith. Those who go to hell are sent there because they did not receive His love and enter into the function of faith that comes by His great grace.

But to those who do choose to function in a faith that works by His love, God put them on His high way and leads them into a tremendous process of willing and doing His good pleasure.

CONCLUSION

God works in every believer a great will to respond to Him. When we respond, we begin to experience His righteousness. Through our faculties, the Lord moves with His living Word.

By functioning properly in our free volition, we choose to make decisions to live by every Word of God. By the grace of God, we become oriented toward divine viewpoint for every situation. This makes us some of the happiest and most joyful people on earth. Through the Holy Spirit and precise Light from the Bible, God can bring out all the possibilities that we possess in our individuality as we learn to function by faith.