CFC
CHRIST FELLOWSHIP CENTRE

CFC SERMON RESOURCE

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Reigning in life through grace and the gift of righteousness

Theme Scripture: Romans 5:17

Arranged for ministry use by
Christ Fellowship Centre South Africa

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Sermon at a glance

Title	The Righteousness of God
Theme	Reigning in life through grace and the gift of righteousness
Primary text	Romans 5:17
Supporting texts	Romans 3:21–26; Romans 4:25; Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Philippians 3:9; James 5:16–18; 1 Peter 2:24
Purpose	To help believers receive God’s gift of righteousness, reject condemnation and self-righteousness, pray from their standing in Christ, and live a holy life shaped by grace.

Big idea

Believers reign in life as they receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ.

Recommended movement

- Begin with Romans 5:17 and introduce grace and righteousness as gifts received through Christ.
- Explain righteousness as God’s declaration and the believer’s new identity.
- Show how faith receives Christ’s righteousness apart from self-righteousness.
- Apply the message to prayer, holy living, healing ministry and salvation.

1. Grace and righteousness belong together

Romans 5:17

Paul teaches that those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through Jesus Christ. The Christian life does not begin with human effort. It begins with receiving what God has accomplished in His Son.

Grace describes God’s generous action toward us. Righteousness describes the right standing He gives us in Christ. These truths belong together and create confidence before God.

- Grace rescues us from relying on our own performance.
- Righteousness gives us right standing before God.
- Jesus Christ remains the source and centre of both gifts.
- We reign through dependence on Christ rather than confidence in ourselves.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Invite the congregation to say: “Through Jesus Christ, I receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.”

Opening transition

“Today we are not trying to manufacture righteousness. We are learning to receive the righteousness God gives through Christ and to live from that new standing.”

2. Two dimensions of righteousness

Romans 3:21–26; Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21

The sermon presents two connected dimensions. First, righteousness is God’s legal declaration over the believer. Second, it becomes a covenant identity that shapes how the believer thinks, prays and lives.

- God declares the believer righteous because of Christ’s saving work.
- Condemnation no longer defines those who are in Christ Jesus.
- The believer must allow this truth to take root in daily identity.
- A secure identity produces confidence without pride because every benefit comes from Christ.

LEGAL DECLARATION	God counts the believer righteous in Christ. Our standing rests on Jesus rather than on our fluctuating performance.

COVENANT IDENTITY	We learn to see ourselves as people who belong to Christ and approach the Father through Him.

Preaching question

“Which voice has shaped your identity more strongly: condemnation, your past, public opinion or God’s declaration in Christ?”

3. Righteousness comes from outside ourselves

Philippians 3:9; Romans 4:5

The Reformation phrase iustitia aliena means “alien righteousness” or righteousness that comes from outside ourselves. Martin Luther used this language to emphasise that our right standing originates in Christ rather than in personal merit.

Faith does not pretend that human beings have no sin. Faith looks away from self-righteousness and rests in the obedience, death and resurrection of Jesus.

- We cannot produce God’s righteousness through moral achievement.
- We receive righteousness through faith in Christ.
- Self-righteousness must give way to humble dependence on Jesus.
- Our assurance rests in Christ’s finished work rather than in changing emotions.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Ask the congregation to surrender pride, religious comparison and every attempt to earn God’s acceptance.

Historical clarification

The supplied transcript referred to “Martha Luther” and “Eustitia Alena.” The correct historical name and Latin phrase are Martin Luther and iustitia aliena.

4. The new creation carries a new identity

2 Corinthians 5:17, 21

Paul calls the believer a new creation. The old order no longer has the final word. Through union with Christ, God gives a new relationship, a new standing and a new direction of life.

The Latin expression nova creatura means “new creation.” The new birth does not merely improve the old life. God begins a new work through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

- We belong to Christ.
- We receive right standing through Him.
- The Holy Spirit lives within the believer.
- The mind must be renewed so that conduct increasingly reflects the new identity.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Lead the church in rejecting old labels and receiving the identity God gives in Christ.

KEY SENTENCE	Identity in Christ must shape conduct, prayer and purpose.

5. The righteous pray from right standing

James 5:16–18; 1 Kings 17:1; Hebrews 4:14–16

James says that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective, and he points to Elijah as an example. Elijah's declaration in 1 Kings 17:1 arose from covenant confidence: he stood before the living God.

Believers do not pray in order to earn righteousness. They approach the Father through Jesus, agree with Scripture and pray with confidence because Christ has opened the way.

- Stand before God through Christ rather than through personal merit.
- Pray according to Scripture and the character of God.
- Speak with faith while remaining humble and submitted to God's will.
- Persevere in prayer and refuse condemnation.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Pray over families, bodies, finances and ministry needs with biblical faith, compassion and submission to God.

PASTORAL BALANCE	Confidence in prayer does not mean controlling God. Biblical boldness remains dependent on Christ and submitted to the Father's wisdom.

6. The resurrection confirms our justification

Romans 4:25

Romans 4:25 connects the death and resurrection of Jesus with our sins and justification. The cross shows that Christ carried our sin. The resurrection announces His victory and confirms the saving work through which God justifies believers.

Righteousness is therefore a gift, not a moral wage. We cannot purchase it, improve it through boasting or measure it by our emotions. We grow in maturity and obedience, but our acceptance before God rests in Christ.

- The cross deals with our guilt.
- The resurrection declares Christ's victory.
- Faith receives the gift of right standing.
- Assurance looks to Jesus rather than to self.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Invite believers who struggle with condemnation to place their confidence again in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Memorable illustration

A person does not become more or less South African each day according to feelings. In the same way, the believer's standing rests in Christ, while daily growth shapes how that identity is expressed.

7. Right standing leads to right living

Titus 2:11–12; Romans 6:1–4; Ephesians 2:8–10

The gift of righteousness never turns sin into something harmless. Grace trains believers to reject ungodliness and live in a way that honours Jesus. Good works do not buy acceptance, but the grace that saves us also forms a new way of life.

Righteousness therefore changes both our confidence and our conduct. We obey from acceptance rather than trying to obey for acceptance.

- Repentance remains part of Christian discipleship.
- The renewed mind learns to agree with Scripture.
- Holiness becomes a response of gratitude.
- Love, integrity and service reveal the transforming work of grace.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Ask each person to identify one area where the new identity in Christ must now shape a new decision.

PREACHING BALANCE	We do not live rightly in order to become righteous. We live rightly because God’s grace has joined us to Christ and is changing us.

8. Righteousness, healing and human brokenness

1 Peter 2:24; John 9:1–3

First Peter 2:24 joins Christ's sin-bearing work, our call to live to righteousness and the healing mercy revealed through His wounds. The church should pray for healing with faith, compassion and hope.

The supplied transcript describes sickness as a by-product of sin. Scripture teaches that sin brought suffering and death into the world, but it does not teach that every illness results from an individual person's personal sin. Jesus rejected that assumption in John 9:1–3.

- Pray for the sick with compassion and without shame.
- Trust God for healing while continuing appropriate care and support.
- Avoid accusing sufferers or treating illness as proof of weak faith.
- Keep Jesus, His mercy and His completed work at the centre.

MINISTRY RESPONSE	Invite those who need healing to receive prayer. Use gentle language, obtain consent and provide responsible pastoral follow-up.

PASTORAL BALANCE	Prayer ministry should never pressure a person to stop medical treatment or to perform an action that could cause injury.

9. Ministry response and salvation invitation

2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9–10

Righteousness is received through faith in Jesus Christ. End the message with a clear invitation for people to turn from self-reliance, trust in the crucified and risen Lord, and begin a new life in Him.

Congregational declaration

“I belong to Jesus Christ. God has forgiven me and given me right standing through faith. I reject condemnation and self-righteousness. The Holy Spirit renews my mind and shapes my life. I will pray, serve and walk in the confidence of Christ.”

Prayer of salvation

PRAY TOGETHER	Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Jesus Christ. I confess that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and rose again. I receive Him as my Lord and Saviour. Forgive me, make me new and teach me to live in the righteousness You give through Christ. Amen.

Follow-up for new believers

- Welcome each person without pressure or embarrassment.
- Record contact details only with permission.
- Connect new believers to discipleship, baptism preparation and a local CFC branch.
- Arrange pastoral prayer and practical follow-up during the week.

Source note

This guide was arranged and edited from the sermon transcript supplied by the user. Transcription errors were corrected, repeated conversational sections were condensed, and pastoral balance was added for responsible public teaching.