

Fountain of Living Waters

Jeremiah 2:13; Romans 14:17

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org



FOCAL Read Responsively Jeremiah 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

FOCAL Romans 14:17 **For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**

ILLUSTRATE Abraham Lincoln had a good sense of humor and a lot of “country wisdom”. He was attempting to ride a skittish horse, and had made several attempts to mount him. Finally Mr Lincoln got in the saddle, and the horse started bucking and kicking – and hung one of its rear hooves in the stirrup. Lincoln quickly jumped off, looked at the horse, and said “If you're going to get on, my friend, I'm going to get off!”

The Bible is not only an account of creation, but it gives the history of mankind. From the beginning God has loved the humans He created **“in His own image” (Genesis 1:26)**. God made us like Him. **In the image of God created He man; male and female created He them (Genesis 1:27)**. God made humans in three parts – body, soul, and spirit – and then made a counterpart to man called *woman*. And though we could not understand the unique Being we call “God” the Lord gave us a wonderful illustration of His Person in the marriage of Adam and Eve. **The two shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:24)**. We were, indeed, **fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14)**.

And yet, from the beginning we have traded a

relationship with God – **The Fountain of Living Waters** – for a lesser thing – **a man made cistern that cannot hold water**. Young people may not understand what a **cistern** is, but I am told that these things were quite common in the Rock Hill Community at one time. A “cistern” is not a “well” or even a “spring”. The two latter things receive water from an underground source. In other words, when you dig a well or go to a spring these things never run dry of water. They have their own supply. The “cistern”, on the other hand, is no more than a hole in the ground. Cisterns were usually “**hewed**” or chiseled out of rock. They were large, open faced depressions in the ground that were *unattached to a source of water*. Cisterns rely on other sources – like the rains – to be filled. When the rains cease the cistern is dry. Cisterns often held *stagnant* water, and critters – like tadpoles – often had to be strained out of the water before it could be consumed. The **cracked cistern** was no good at all, for water collected quickly drained back into the soil.

From the very beginning mankind has traded **The Fountain of Living Water** for the **man made, cracked cistern**. Adam in a perfect environment called “Eden” (the Garden of God) lived at perfect peace with God and his world. When Adam was willing to – by faith – trust in God's loving provision, he remained in a state of perfect peace. But when he listened to Satan's lies and *followed what the Devil said* then he brought disaster on his family. What Satan offered Adam and Eve was this lie:

Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that **in the day ye eat**

thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Satan said “**You shall be as gods. God wants to deprive you of godhood – He wants to keep you from your full potential. You can “Live Your Best Life Now” by following me. Heed my Word instead of His Word, and you will be blessed.**”

As we used to say in school, “Liar, liar, pants on fire!” We were not blessed when Adam did as he did. What happened? **We brought a curse upon ourselves**. The Lord said to Adam:

Genesis 3:17-18 ... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; {18} Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Beloved, God loudly said to us – through Adam - “**if you're gonna get on, my friend, I'm gonna get off**”. As humans – created beings – we need to understand that *God alone is God*. There is no other. When we ignore His Word:

Exodus 20:3 **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**

Then we trade **The Fountain of Living Water** for a **broken cistern that cannot hold water**. We bring a curse upon ourselves.

God does not curse us, but *we curse ourselves* by trying to be God. We can create a god out of stone or wood – a **god of our convenience and a god of our imagination** – and worship that god. That false god will do nothing for you, for it is but a dead thing created by a dead thing.

The Lord says:

Psalms 96:5 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

These idols, these imagined things, cisterns without water, are of no benefit to us. They are

Psalms 135:15-18 ... the work of men's hands. {16} They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; {17} They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. {18} They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

Oh Beloved, there is but One God, and He is clearly represented in this Holy Bible. This God loves us, and has made provision for us all by shedding His own Blood for us. He offers to all salvation, pure and free, and a life most blessed if we will but trust in Him.

But Beloved, if you're going to get on, He's going to get off. Turn to God by faith. Call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. **This is the promise that He – God – has promised us, eternal life**

(1 John 2:25). Abide in Him, that, when He appears, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28).

1. Abide – and Live - In God's Righteousness

FOCAL Jeremiah 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is ... righteousness ... in the Holy Ghost.

The first thing we need to talk about is **righteousness**, and where true righteousness comes from. As humans we tend to believe that **true righteousness** comes from our own efforts, yet this is not so. **The thought that true righteousness comes from us is, once more, from the father of lies.** What did Satan tell Adam and Eve?

Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

“You will be LIKE GODS, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL”. Now, dear friends, if the Lord Jesus Christ tells me a thing I immediately believe it, whether I understand it or not. But if Satan tells me something I RUN FROM IT! Look at his track record!

Satan does his evil best to convince you that you can

attain **true righteousness** through your own efforts. The Bible makes it clear that **righteousness – a right relationship with God – can only come by faith in God's provision.**

The Lord gives us a wonderful illustration of this in His people Israel.

God saved Israel – not because Israel was *morally better* than the other nations around her. God did not save Israel because *she kept His Law*. The Law was not given to Israel until some *fifty days* following her release from Egyptian bondage. What saved Israel from Egypt, and kept the death angel out of her households? The Lord told Israel to **take a Lamb without blemish and sacrifice that Lamb, collecting its Blood, and to take that Blood and put it on the door and head posts of the house.** The Lord told Israel:

Exodus 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Israel did not earn – nor deserve – her salvation. She was saved from Egypt because *she trusted what God said, and did as He directed*. Though the Israelite did not understand what the Blood of the Lamb signified, every Israelite that was saved from death *followed without question God's instruction*.

The ear of faith heard God's Word, the hand of faith acted on God's Word, and the eye of faith watched as God's Word was fulfilled. Israel was saved from death because she trusted in the Word of the eternal God.

Israel followed God out of Egypt and was protected by Pillar of Fire and Pillar of Cloud. God drowned the armies of Egypt in the Red Sea when Israel stayed close to His side. But then Israel blew it – she decided to trade **The Fountain of Living Waters for broken cisterns that could hold no water.**

Israel complained and murmured, rebelling against God. Israel took the blessings that God gave her and fashioned it into a **golden calf to be worshiped**. Hear these blasphemous words:

“These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:4).

How terrible when people turn away from The Fountain of Living Water to a broken, man made cistern. And yet – Israel is not the only ones guilty in this manner. It is a common malady among mankind that we want to be *good enough*, that we feel that we must *work our way* to God. Yet it is not possible for us to save ourselves.

ILLUSTRATE Do you remember the old nursery rhyme:

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,

**Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses, and all the king's men;
Couldn't put Humpty back together again!**

Humanity is broken because of the fall of Adam. We are broken, and all the king's *horses* and all the king's *men* cannot put us back together again!

Israel tried her best to be *good enough* to please God, and time and again she failed. The Bible tells us:

Romans 9:31-32 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. {32} Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

Israel could not fulfill the **righteousness of God**, for she **sought it not by faith**. God gave Israel the Blood of the Lamb to be saved and, though she did not understand it, she believed and obeyed and was saved. God revealed to Israel **Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God manifested to take away the sin of the world**, and Israel **stumbled at that Stumbling Stone**. Israel said “I believe I am good enough by my adherence to the Law. I believe, not in Christ revealed, but in my arm of salvation. I believe in ME.”

Israel was not saved. The **hewed but broken cistern of our righteousness and our rituals cannot save us**. **Those sacrifices can *never* take away sin**. We must believe in Jesus. We must rely on that **righteousness in**

the Holy Spirit, that righteousness imparted by God through faith in Christ.

ILLUSTRATE The great preacher C. H. Spurgeon said:

“It is a gross error to tell a man to do something and be something before he believes in Jesus. No; there he stands with no hedge about him, and whosoever will may partake freely. If you hear the gospel call, your reply to it should be:

**“Just as I am, thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to rely on thee alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.”**

Christ has no barriers around him to keep you from him. If there be any they are of your own making.”¹

Do not stumble at Christ. Do not say “I can be good enough” or “I will clean myself up and then come”. No Beloved of God, just come to Him. Come to Him bleeding and bruised on Calvary. Say unto God “I do not understand *why* the Blood of Christ unites me with you. I do not understand *why* the Blood of the Lamb on the door post of my life causes death to pass me by. I do not understand Your Words, dearest Jesus, that **“whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die”**, and yet, according to Your promise, “Yes Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I believe that You are the Lamb manifested to take away my sin,

¹ *The Apple Tree In The Wood*, July 6, 1873

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(Genesis 1:26; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24; Psalm 139:14; Genesis 3:5; Genesis 3:17-18; Exodus 20:3; Psalms 96:5; Psalms 135:15-18; 1 John 2:25; 1 John 2:28) _____

1. Abide – and Live - In God's Righteousness

(Jeremiah 2:13; Romans 14:17; Genesis 3:5; Exodus 12:13; Exodus 32:4; Romans 9:31-32) _____

2. True Righteousness AND Peace Are From God

(Romans 14:17; Psalms 85:7-10; Romans 5:1; Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 2:13-14) _____

3. Our Joy Must Come From God

(Romans 14:17; Mark 11:22-23; Romans 10:17; Psalms 32:10-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1) _____

and the sin of all who believe. I believe – though I do not understand – and I call upon Your Name according to the Promise and will be saved.”

2. True Righteousness AND Peace Are From God

FOCAL Romans 14:17 For **the kingdom of God is ... righteousness, and peace ... in the Holy Ghost.**

True God given righteousness is always accompanied by peace. What did the Psalmist write?

Psalms 85:7-10 Show us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation. {8} I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. {9} Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. {10} Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Righteousness, *true* righteousness is a gift of God. The life lived in this gift is the life that is at peace.

Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Once you understand that your righteousness is *imputed* or *given to you* because of what God did for you on Calvary, you are enabled by this knowledge to be *at peace*. People who know that they are saved are **free to love God and free to love one another**. People who have the calm assurance of their salvation focus their lives on **worshiping the Lord Who saved them, not on pleasing those who are around them.**

Listen Beloved: If you are righteous *because of Christ*, righteous because you *called on the Name of the Lord and are now saved*, then you are first of all **at peace with God**. I need not fear death nor the Judgment, for the Lord has promised:

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Your **righteousness** came to you as a free gift from God once you believed in Jesus Christ. You trusted Him and called upon His Name, and are saved. God imparted to your account His righteousness. You were **born again through the operation of God the Holy Spirit**.

But being born again, you are **born into the family of God**. God is now your Father – you may address Him as **“Our Father Who art in Heaven”**. You belong to the family – now *grow in Him*. Do not trade in the **peace of God that passeth understanding for a broken cistern which cannot hold water**. What does Jesus say to His disciples? He says:

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. {30} For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The Jesus Who saves the Christian is the Jesus Who blesses the Christian. **We are commanded to take His yoke upon us**. We do as He directs. We go to Church

and worship Him because He tell us to do so. We read His Bible and pray to Him because He tells us to do so.

We do not practice the Christian disciplines of prayer, of fellowship, of solitude, and of feeding on His Word in order to *remain* saved. We do these things *because* we are saved.

Jesus Christ saved us, therefore we are to **take His yoke upon us**. The Lord saved you so that He could use you. He wants you to trust Him, to rely upon Him, and to focus on Him.

Ephesians 2:13-14 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. {14} For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us {and God}

Jesus Christ saved us by making payment for our sins. We have peace with God because of Him.

ILLUSTRATE There was a young girl who loved to read her Bible. A friend asked her, “Why do you love to read that Book so much?” The young lady said “I have always loved to read it since I found my name in it”. “Found your name in it?” “Yes, look here”. She pointed to the text, “**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**”. She said, “That is my name; that is my name. For if you are not “sinners”, I am.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners – and I was one! Think on this,

Consider this, dear Christian, God is not angry at you! You are His son, adopted into the family of God by faith. You have peace from the Fountainhead, peace in the Holy Spirit.

Do not trade the peace of God for the broken cistern of **self righteousness**. Some people spend their days judging others as to whether they are saved or not. Look to your own salvation! Are you saved? Then learn to trust and obey God. Learn to do that which God has commanded you to do. Learn to follow His direction in all things – and you will have **joy**.

3. The Christian's Joy Must Come From God

FOCAL Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is ... **righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**

Mark 11:22-23 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. {23} For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

When the Word of God, the glorious Gospel of Christ, is planted into the soil of the human life, that Word brings forth the **righteousness of God**. “**Faith cometh by**

hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). The righteousness of God, when properly understood, brings forth peace in the life of the believer. And the believer who **taking His yoke upon him, grows in Christ** is a believer filled with joy.

The heritage of the Christian is **joy in the Holy Spirit.**
The Christian should be – above all – joyful!

There is a difference between joy and happiness. “Happiness” depends on our “happenstance”, or on what is going on around us. You might be happy when you have a lot of money in the bank, but unhappy when you have none. You might be happy when your health is good, but unhappy when you are sick. You might be happy when on the mountaintop, but unhappy when you are in the valley. Happiness is based on what is happening around and to you.

But joy is based on the God Who is ever with you.

The Bible says:

Psalms 32:10-11 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. {11} Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

When you're saved and focused on the Lord, *nothing* that this world throws at you will ever destroy you. He has promised that you are immortal, dear Christian. He has promised you shall never be condemned. He has

promised that He is with you no matter what you encounter. He has promised to be a Friend and Protector for all who are His.

ILLUSTRATE I passed by a graveyard the other day and saw over several of the graves what looked to be a broken column. I wondered if vandals had caused that, but on looking saw that the broken columns were purposely made that way. A broken column over a grave is symbolic of a life that was ended before it reached its full potential. You see broken columns over little children's graves, and over those who died young.

There are many who claim Christ as Savior and yet *never reach their full potential.* They say unto the Lord **“I will follow Thee, BUT”**. Other things in life seem to take the preeminence rather than serving the Lord.

Oh, how foolish to **receive the Grace of God in vain.** You are a king and a priest unto God *now* if you have called upon the Name of Jesus and have been saved. The more you know of Him, the more you surrender to Him, the more joyous your life will become. He freed us from sin so that we could walk as victors in this life. We all have the potential to be more. The Apostle told the Corinthian Church:

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Do not receive His Grace in vain. Do not waste the potential of your life. Follow Him, love Him, and watch

Him live through you.

The Christian way of life is not just for the sweet by and by, but it is for the nasty now and now.

If we are created in the image of God, then the only way we will ever be joyful is when we let Him shine through our lives. Satan was wrong. God did not forbid the fruit of that tree from Adam and Eve **“lest they, eating it, become like gods”**. God wants us to be like Him. He wants to live through us, and wants us to live with Him forever. We are not merely born into this life to live and die. We are born into this life for something more.

God wants us to drink deeply of Him. To cease **hewing out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water,** and to begin to truly live.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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