

Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness

By Bobby Schuller

Faith is God's delivery system. I've heard that said before by many pastors and it is true. God wants to bless you. God loves to see you do well in life. God loves to see you healthy. God loves to see your family thriving. God wants you to go to heaven when you die. God wants all the best for you. And God's delivery system is a thing called faith. Faith! That's why Jesus talks about faith so much. It's the thing that opens up our soul to heaven and it opens up heaven to our whole life. That we can inherit all that is good from God right now. That despite my imperfections, my sin, my weakness, being too old or too young, my lack of education, whatever, God can do great things through someone like me. God can do great things through you and will if you just decide to stop beating yourself up and respond in faith.

Jesus taught us that if we live by faith, if we take a step by faith in the direction of the thing that scares us, that we could move a mountain. That we could walk on water. That we could change the world. I believe it because I've seen it and I've lived it. Maybe you've lived it. Maybe you remember a time in your life when you were scared or worried. Or you thought I can't do that. I can't do that. God might be asking me to do that, but there's no way someone like me could do that. And instead of living in doubt and shame and fear, you instead lived in courage and faith, and you stepped in the direction of the thing that you were scared

of. Do you remember how that felt? Probably felt pretty good. To say to your fear or to your shame 'I won't let you control my life, but I will do something that God wants me to do and not trust in my abilities, but trust in His.'

That's why Jesus is always talking about faith because Jesus loved to.. Jesus was always calling people that were told in their religious circles that God didn't want anything to do with them. That their religious report card wasn't very good. So they can sit on the fringes of religious society but that's about it. They should ply their trade. And those are the very people that Jesus went to. He had very normal people, some of them teenagers, some of them old people, some of them sick people were following Him and He was teaching them to walk by faith and not have pride in their works. But to have faith to believe that despite all their shortcomings and their imperfections, they could do something great for God. God loves using imperfect people to do impossible things. He's going to use you today. Just have faith. He's going to use you. I can't wait to see it and do something great.

Faith doesn't mean believing in me, faith means believing the God who lives in me. I know many of us go I don't know, how could I believe in someone like me? Well God believes in you, and God is giving you everything you need to succeed. And so yes, you might have shortcomings and you might have weaknesses and you might have

sickness, but it's by God's power and God's name that we're able to do great things. So to have faith is to have faith in the name of God.

For the last few weeks we've been studying the name of God and if you're just here today, you're not behind but it's been a wild ride, choir. Study the names of God. That He is bore, our creator. Nissi, our banner. Raah, our shepherd. Rapha, our healer. Shalom, peace. Shammah, He's there for us. Tseboath, He's fighting for us. Yireh, our provider. God has so many names, but all of them point to one thing – that God is for you. That He's fighting for you. That He is on your side. That He's here to make His good creation better and not worse. That He's not abandoned us and that you can do great things if you put your trust in the name of the Lord. It is a good name. It is a strong name. It is a chain breaking name and all you have to do is respond with faith. I know you will.

As we've studied these names, we've found how these names were actually located in stories. And we find that all the way from Abraham until just before Jesus, you see that God is working to redeem His good creation and to save His children through a family. He picks a family whose father's name is Abraham and He says to Abraham, 'I'm going to make a covenant with you and here's my promise. You are going to be so blessed so that you can be a blessing to the whole world. I am going to make your posterity outnumber all the sands of the seashore and all the stars of the sky. And yes, Abraham, you're a hundred and your wife is 90

and you have no children, but I'm going to do this through you.' And you just watch how Abraham responds in faith.

Now you hear a story like this, if God's going to choose one guy on the whole planet, one guy to do this through, He's probably going to be like pretty much a saint, I mean the world's greatest human being, right? That's who God's going to pick. Abraham, if he had a spiritual report card was probably a D-plus. He was not in general a really very good person. Abraham, when he went to Egypt with his wife, she was so beautiful he was afraid Egyptians were going to murder him and take his wife that he secretly said she was his sister and gave her to Pharaoh. Everybody's like oooooo, I know! I know! Right?

Sarah, who didn't believe that God could give birth to her because she was 90, said Abraham sleep with my servant girl and God will fulfill His promise through her and Abraham was like, okay. He didn't say no, he didn't like talk to her about it. He was like are you sure? Okay! On my way.

Abraham had a lot of imperfections, flaws, sin and shortcomings, but Abraham responded in faith. And you watch as from him all the way to Jesus, all of these guys, men and women were very flawed, oftentimes very sinful. From Abraham, Isaac was flawed, Jacob was flawed. Jacob tricked his blind father into giving him the blessing and not his older brother, and his very name means deception. Moses had plenty of imperfections. He couldn't speak, he stuttered and yet he was the one

who's supposed to prophesy and he was a murderer. You just look at all these stories from Joshua to Hannah, Rebekah, Gideon, David, just imperfect people who had so many flaws, so many shortcomings, none of them were saints, and yet all of them fulfilled God's destiny. Why? Not because they were perfect, but because they responded in faith. God said I will make you a blessing and you will be a blessing to the world, and they said yes Lord, I receive. And you do see how God made them better through the process of faith. He didn't say get things perfect and be perfect and then we'll see if I make covenant with you. No, they believed God and it was accredited to them as righteousness. That's good news. Because the thesis of this family, of which we are all a part now through the cross and resurrection of Jesus, is that despite their imperfections, God got them to their destiny.

Stop telling God all the reasons why He's not going to get you to your destiny. Stop telling God all the reasons why you're a mess up, or you're a failure, or you're an addict, or you're sick, or you're clumsy or foolish or embarrassed. You're so much more than that. The word of God says you're chosen. It says you're called. It says you're blessed. It says you're loved. It says you're forgiven. It says you're righteous. It says you're justified. It says you are known. It says you are at home. You are so loved. God has stacked the deck in your favor and that's very good news.

And that's why today, as we sort of finish this series, I come to the last name of God, which is Jehovah Tsidkenu: I am the Lord your righteousness. He's your righteousness. He's your righteousness. I think the greatest barrier to faith today is shame. Shame says something like I am not worthy of love and belonging. I need to prove myself. Shame is a constant sense of deep embarrassment about something in my life. I'm embarrassed that I'm not where I wanted to be, I'm embarrassed that I continue to struggle with sin or failure, I'm embarrassed that I haven't succeeded in the way that my peers have. Shame looks like strictness, rigidity, fear, and faith is the opposite of that. Faith says that despite my shortcomings, my justification is not in me, it's in Jesus. I'm not righteous because of what I've done, I'm righteous because of what Christ did for me. And when He died on the cross, He said it is finished, and He meant it. And now I can come boldly before the throne of God, redeemed, forgiven, loved, and it is by grace through faith. You receive God's unending, unmerited favor and love for you by faith. Just believe it and watch heaven open up to you.

This is what Paul talks about in Romans, our scripture reading for today. It's interesting, this is our only New Testament reading for this series, and I like this passage because Paul is giving us a commentary of Abraham. So you heard all the nasty things I said about Abraham, right? Listen to all the good things Paul says about him: "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations just

as it had been said to him. So shall your offspring be. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about, well, a hundred years old. And that Sarah's womb was also dead. That he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God. Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He promised." Do you believe God has power to do what He promised in your life? I do, too. I do, too.

"This is why it was credit to him as righteousness. The words it was credited to him were written not for him alone, but also for us to whom God will credit righteousness. For us who believe in Him, who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification." You have nothing to worry about. Just believe. Just believe that you are loved just as you are. Be at peace with your imperfections. Stop bullying yourself, beating yourself up, talking about how horrible you are. Pay attention to your self talk and notice that many of the things that you are saying about yourself are not the things God is saying about you. God is saying you are loved, you are chosen, you are able. So believe that. The word of God is true and it endures forever.

Paul, who wrote this passage in Romans came out of a society immersed in shame. He was a Pharisee, you know, so like Pharisees were all about if you do everything perfectly you're in, and if you mess up, you're out. And so here you see that Paul, who struggled with strictness,

now becomes this guy who teaches us no, it's not by being perfect, it's by living by faith. And you watch how vulnerable he is. He says 'I do the things I shouldn't do. I struggle with the things I shouldn't struggle with. I do what I hate and I don't do what I want to do.' He talks about this thorn in his side. And we don't even know what that was. Was that a sickness? Was it just an addiction, a sin? None of us know. What we do know is that was imperfection. It was something Paul hated and despite it, God used him to change the world. God is going to use you to change the world.

One of my favorite things that we learned from studying Paul that we ought to examine, and I need you to listen to this. So let me preface it this way. We should confess our sins. James says that, and I think John says that, so its mentioned only twice in the New Testament, but towards the end. But Paul, the author of the majority of the New Testament never says to confess our sins. This is super important because in Christianity, it seems like there's a lot of emphasis on confessing your sins and yes, you should confess your sins from time to time, but Paul who hates sin, who talks about how sin is death and how sin cuts us from God, says to confess in faith the lordship of Christ over your sin. To confess that you are justified. To confess grace. To confess that He who knew no sin became sin that I might be called the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Paul teaches us in a religion that says confess your sin and feel bad and beat yourself up, Paul says confess you're the righteousness of

Christ! Confess that! When I look at my life and when many of us look at our lives, we don't see ourselves confessing we're the righteousness of Christ. We catch ourselves and preachers reinforcing this that I'm a messed up sinner, I'm a horrible person, I'm unwanted, I'm broken, I'm not good enough, I have to hide, I'm unworthy of love and belonging. Hey, God loves you so much. He gave Jesus for you. It was a trade. He traded Jesus for you. Did you know God loves you as much as He loves Jesus? God loves you as much as He loves Mary. God loves you as much as He loves Paul. God loves you as much as He loves Michael Skidgel. God loves you that much.

Why? Because you're His kids and a good father loves his children. And just as I would say to my daughter if she were saying horrible things about herself, I would give her a big hug and say Haven, you're doing so good and I love you so much. And say better things about yourself. See what I see. So does the Father. Put His arms around you and say my beloved child. You're doing much better than you think. You are loved. I'm going to get you through this. I'm going to give you everything you need to endure unto victory. That's good news, isn't it. He loves you. And that's why I think the greatest barrier between your destiny and you is shame. The greatest barrier to faith is shame.

Shame is this thing that says I'm not worthy of love and belonging. I'm embarrassed of who I am. I'm embarrassed of my sin. People think I'm this one thing, but really I'm this. I can't really do much more than

I'm doing now because well just look at me. I'm not where I should be. Look at my peers. There's this sort of inner embarrasssness that comes with shame that should never be there. You are chosen, called, loved, blessed, needed. Believe it with faith! It's the enemies voice, by the way, that says you're worthless. You're a sinner. The bible calls him the accuser of the brethren. When you hear yourself, or when you hear the voice saying you're worthless, you're a sinner, you're a mess up, you're a screw up, you don't belong, and you say that to yourself, you are agreeing with the devil! When we bully ourselves and others, we're agreeing with the enemy. The bible calls him the persecutor of the brethren.

But when we say over ourselves all things are possible, we are agreeing with Jesus. When you say over yourself I can do this because of what He's given me, you're agreeing with Jesus. When you say I'm loved, I'm called, I'm chosen, I'm blessed, you're agreeing with Jesus. When you take a step on the water, when you step in the direction of the thing you're afraid of, you are living by faith and not by shame and that pleases God. It opens the doors. It opens up heaven. That you say Lord, despite all my imperfections and here they are, I'm a big old yard sale, a big old mess. Just as long as you know that with me going in, I'm going to do this. I'm going to take a step forward. God says my beloved child, I see it, I forgive it, I know it, let's go. Let's do this. Right? That's what faith is.

That's why Isaiah, when he was called, they saw the temple filled with glory, and God said who will go for us? Whom shall I send? And what did Isaiah say? He got on his knees, he was scared for his life and he said I'm a man of unclean lips and I'm not a people with unclean lips and I just told the nastiest joke at the bar last night and I feel really bad about this right now. I'm just not going to lie about that. But here I am, Lord, send me. Right?

And you see that the characters, throughout the scripture, are these very every day kind of broken, oftentimes messed up people. And they just respond in faith. They're vulnerable, they're honest, they're hurting, they're messed up, but they say no more shame. No more beating myself up. No more fear. If God has called me, He has called me. If God has chosen me, He has chosen me. Do you believe it? I believe it for you. He's called you, He's chosen you because we serve a God who loves to use imperfect people to do impossible things. That's good news.

So you are not what you do, but you will do great things. And this is so important that very often the reason we don't do the great things in life that we want to do is because we have our identity rooted in what we do. It is only at the point that our identity is rooted in the belovedness of God that we get all the freedom, joy and fresh vision we need to do amazing things. You know what separates great artists from the rest? The artists that have the freedom to make the art they want to make. The thing that makes great leaders great is the freedom to make the right

decisions, despite what people will think of them. What makes people great is giving up their identity and what they do so that they can do great things for God, despite what it will say about their reputation. So let go. Let go what people say about you. Let go of your reputation. Let go of all those things that you think matter so much. Let go of everything and fix your eyes on Him and take a step out of the boat in faith. All right? And watch as God does great things in your life. He's already doing great things, but He's going to do even more. Amen.