

Preparing your altar for prayer

Faith and righteousness - the armour of the warrior.

Ephesians 6:14 *"Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness ..."*

A few days ago, just past midnight, I stood on my balcony praying for my friend's husband, who was critical in ICU with the feared virus. I looked out over my town. Everything seemed so peaceful and yet, out there behind the walls of homes and shelters were individuals, marriages, families in desperate need of God. Families are losing loved ones, one after the other. The reality which the effect of the harshness of these challenging times had on God's people was so vivid that morning, as a close friend who loved God dearly, also gave up on life.

My heart cried out to my Maker in the silence of the night, *"Abba, will you intervene? Help Your people to stand in this severe storm and help them not to lose hope. How do I reach the people that are so disconnected from Your love and saving grace?"*

I heard His whisper so clearly, *"Amanda, the key is faith! Did I not say that the righteous shall live by faith? Motivate My*

people not to lose their faith but to build themselves up in their holy faith."

Jude 1:20 *"But you, beloved, build yourselves up on [the foundation of] your most holy faith [continually progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], pray in the Holy Spirit,"*

As the Lord placed a high emphasis on the righteous that shall live by faith, I was suddenly back in Habakkuk's days when he complained to God as he faced the situation of the imminent invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans.

Habakkuk 1:2 (NKJV): *"O LORD, HOW LONG SHALL I CRY, AND YOU WILL NOT HEAR? EVEN CRY OUT TO YOU, 'VIOLENCE!' AND YOU WILL NOT SAVE?"*

Habakkuk protested his people's violence and injustice in Judah (**Habakkuk 1:1-4**) and then against the Chaldeans' violence and injustice which God was sending to punish Judah (**Habakkuk 1:12-17**). Knowing that the situation could not be averted, Habakkuk took his stand as watchman of the nation to await his protests' response from God. The Lord answered him in a vision in **Habakkuk 2:2-3** and gave him insight and the outcome for his dilemma in **Habakkuk 2:4:** *"Look at the proud; his soul is not*

straight or right within him, but the [rigidly] just and the [uncompromisingly] righteous man shall live by his faith and in His faithfulness."

Habakkuk knew that no national effort to repent, would stop God's wrath; it was too late, but he had a powerful promise that faith in God would preserve his life through the judgment in the land. **So, individuals who hold fast to their confidence and faith in God, have protection even though God decreed destruction for the nation.**

Habakkuk, a man of God with a sober and healthy fear for the judgment of God, a man of faith, burst forth in prayer, asking God to have mercy on him, amidst God's coming wrath.

Habakkuk 3:2 *"O LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath [earnestly] remember compassion and love."*

Filled with faith in God, he sang of the greatness of God's power, and especially His power to save (**Habakkuk 3:3-15**), and then He broke out in a beautiful song of faith in God.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 *“Though the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, [though] the product of the olive fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the [victorious] God of my salvation!”*

Finally, his declaration of trust in God (verse 19): **“The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds’ feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror, but to walk] and make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering, or responsibility]!”**

“Abba, Habakkuk was truly a righteous man, a man of faith,” I said. *“Yes, always remember, in My Son you became My righteousness. Walk in it by faith.”*

2 Corinthians 5:21 *“He made Christ who knew no sin to [judicially] be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God [that is, we would be made acceptable to Him and placed in a right relationship with Him by His gracious lovingkindness].”*

Hebrews 10:38 *“But My righteous one will live by faith; and if he shrinks back, I will take no pleasure in him.”*

As I stood there, I saw Jesus on the cross, pouring Himself out for our brokenness and false identity, for our cities and nation, for every lost soul, as He judicially became sin on our behalf to satisfy the wrath of Father God so that we can become His righteousness. Exchanging the breastplate of judgment that the Old Testament high priest wore for the undeserved breastplate of righteousness given to us, His kingdom of priests. A repositioning in Christ Jesus that opened the way to the revealed will of God for our destinies. All we need to do, is to receive this immense gift, our righteousness, paid for with the blood of the Lamb by faith.

Romans 3:24-26 *“[All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favor and mercy), through the redemption which is [provided] in Christ Jesus, Whom God put forward [before the eyes of all] as a mercy seat and propitiation by His blood [the cleansing and life-giving*

sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation, to be received] through faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over and ignored former sins without punishment. It was to demonstrate and prove at the present time (in the now season) that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies and accepts as righteous him who has [true] faith in Jesus.”

Romans 5:9 *“Therefore, since we are now justified (acquitted, made righteous, and brought into right relationship with God) by Christ’s blood, how much more [certain is it that] we shall be saved by Him from the indignation and wrath of God.”*

God’s righteousness is made visible through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ who made the divine exchange possible ... our sin for righteousness!

2 Corinthians 5:21 *“For God made the only one who did not know sin to become sin for us, so that we who did not know righteousness might become the righteousness of God through our union with Him.”*

The meaning of righteous in Greek is so powerful. It is *dikaiois*: **Strong’s 1342**, *“referring to the power of the gospel that imparts to believers God’s righteousness. This is the justifying power that comes through faith”*.

Righteousness in the Greek is *dikaioisynē*: **Strong’s 1343**, *“referring to conformity to the revealed will of God in all respects, to His word, to His laws and to His voice”*. It also has a judicial root to it, meaning that you now have right-standing with God because you are in Him.

The heart of the gospel is that the righteousness which God requires, is received by faith. All sinners can have it because Christ paid the full price.

In 2021, God is beckoning His people to build up their holy faith in Him by praying often in the Spirit. It is a year where we need to seek His presence and a fresh revelation of His revealed will, God’s righteousness, so that we can walk in it by faith.

Romans 1:17 *“This gospel unveils a continual revelation of God’s*

righteousness – a perfect righteousness given to us when we believe. And it moves us from receiving life through faith, to the power of living by faith. This is what the Scripture means when it says: ‘We are right with God through life-giving faith!’”

Philippians 3:9 *“And that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, not having any [self-achieved] righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law’s demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired), but possessing that [genuine righteousness] which comes through faith in Christ (the Anointed One), the [truly] right standing with God, which comes from God by [saving] faith.”*

My prayer for you, beloved of the Lord, is that you will put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. That you will give up trying to lead your own life, establish your own worth, instead surrender your heart to Him and bank on Him for your future! That you will build yourself up in your most holy faith. Only then can your sin receive its deserved condemnation, you can receive your undeserved justification and God’s righteousness can receive its deserved glorification as you become His righteousness by faith. **Put on the strong armour of the warrior God made you to be!**



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