**CR07 - What Is Righteousness - Sermon Summary**

**Source:** <https://pastorbilllehman.org/audio-sermons/>

**Main Point 1: The Inadequacy of Human Righteousness [00:00:02]**

The sermon begins by challenging common misconceptions about righteousness. Many believe righteousness is simply "doing your best," achieving total sinlessness, or following situational ethics. While righteousness appears connected to obedience to God's law, the speaker argues that merely avoiding sin—not killing, stealing, lying, or committing adultery—is insufficient. Using the analogy of an empty house cleared of demons, he explains that the absence of sin leaves one spiritually empty rather than righteous. True righteousness is not negative (avoiding wrong) but positive (actively doing good). This is illustrated through Christ's teaching in Matthew 22 that the greatest commandments are to love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself. The speaker emphasizes that righteousness requires more than elimination of transgression; it demands acts of love for God and humanity.

**Self-Introspection Questions:**

1. Have I been focusing more on avoiding sin rather than actively demonstrating love toward God and others?
2. When I examine my motivations for moral behavior, am I acting out of fear of consequences or genuine love?
3. In what specific ways can I move beyond merely "not doing wrong" to actively blessing those around me?

**Main Point 2: The Absolute Nature of God's Righteousness [00:09:37]**

The speaker explores the impossibility of human beings achieving righteousness through their own efforts. Citing Romans 3:9-10, he establishes that "there is none righteous, no not one." However, the pivotal word "but" in verse 21 introduces God's righteousness, which is available through faith in Jesus Christ. This righteousness is described as "absolute"—meaning perfect, unlimited, free from restriction, and determined by itself rather than external standards. The law itself is a transcript of God's character, making true obedience equivalent to God-likeness. Since God is love (1 John 4:8), and the law reflects His character, righteousness is fundamentally love. The speaker argues that years of attempting self-generated righteousness have been misguided because righteousness—true love—can only come from God through Christ.

**Self-Introspection Questions:**

1. Have I been trying to establish my own righteousness rather than receiving God's righteousness through faith?
2. How does understanding righteousness as "absolute" and "God-like" change my perspective on my spiritual efforts?
3. Where do I see evidence of God's love (righteousness) being manifested in my relationships and daily actions?

**Additional Insight: The Revolutionary Definition [00:22:13]**

Between the second and third main points, the speaker makes a startling declaration that fundamentally reframes the entire discussion: "righteousness is love, and love is righteousness." This revelation means that all previous attempts at righteousness that focused on rule-keeping rather than love were fundamentally misdirected. The speaker acknowledges being "amazed that we have lived so long pursuing righteousness and so few of us have ever discovered that righteousness is love." This insight transforms the understanding of Christian living from external compliance to internal transformation through divine love.

**Main Point 3: Receiving God's Love as True Righteousness [00:30:19]**

The final section demonstrates how genuine righteousness—love—can only be received from Jesus, not manufactured by human effort. Using the example of Adam and Eve's immediate estrangement after one sin, the speaker shows how sin destroys love, making self-generated righteousness impossible after 6,000 years of human sinfulness. Christ's love, demonstrated even while dying for His enemies, represents the kind of supernatural love that constitutes true righteousness. This righteousness comes through receiving Christ Himself, who transforms hearts and enables believers to love those they once hated. The speaker concludes with Matthew 5:48 ("Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"), explaining that this perfection is achieved not through self-effort but by becoming "centers of light and blessing" that reflect God's borrowed goodness to others within our sphere of influence.

**Self-Introspection Questions:**

1. Can I identify areas where I've been trying to manufacture love and righteousness rather than receiving it from Christ?
2. How has receiving God's love through Christ changed my capacity to love difficult people in my life?
3. In what practical ways can I become a "center of light and blessing" in my immediate circle of influence?

**Closing Reflection**

This sermon fundamentally challenges traditional approaches to Christian living by redefining righteousness as love rather than rule-keeping. The speaker's passionate plea for believers to stop "wearily toiling" toward perfection and instead receive God's transforming love offers both relief and hope. The message suggests that our struggle with righteousness often stems from misunderstanding what it actually is—not moral perfection achieved through effort, but divine love received through faith and reflected to others.

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*I encourage you to listen to his audio sermons for keen insights, deeper nuggets, and delicate nuances that he has crafted into his message. Blessings.*