

LIVING IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

1 Cor. 2:1-12 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.^c ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. ⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"^a— ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us

Your Only Way Out!

The Apostle Paul had been preaching to the Corinthian church about God and the Trinity's shared relationship with them in Jesus. But after 18 months the Corinthian congregation had **hardly transformed** and they were right back at **being unruly** in their **thinking** and **living** yet again! How does Paul discipline them once he learns of their **senseless acts** and **infantile discord**? He reminds them: As it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what **God has prepared for those who love him**"— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. **But we have the mind of Christ.**" (1 Cor. 2:9-10, 16b)

Do you see the profound nature of Paul's approach? Rather than acting on the "spirit of the world" (v.12) and beating down an obviously already beaten down Church, **Paul proclaims the Trinity** and **the relationship** that is there for us! Paul reminds them of the epiphany of the "mystery of God" (v.1). The **Saving Grace** of their **situation** in Paul's mind is to let them know that **despite their issues** and slow transformation, the Father reveals Himself to them through His Spirit, and **they have the mind of Christ!**

Imagine for a moment that the Corinthians hear Paul in the Spirit and **take him seriously!** Oh, what shared creativity they have in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth, **to see the unseen solutions they think they lack!** Oh, what shared Light they have in the flesh from the Son of God Who is Incarnate and **present in them and for them and for their Salvation!** Oh, what shared Relational Power **they have in the Holy Spirit**, proceeding from the Father through the Son, **who shares with them the**

mind of Christ! Imagine for one moment what would happen if YOU took **your union with the Trinity seriously** in the middle of your beat-downs, conflicts, disharmony and slow transformation! **They heard Paul in the Spirit** and took his teaching and admonition seriously as is later shown in II Corinthians.

Isaiah 58:1-9a *“Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins. ² For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. ³ ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’ “Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. ⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. ⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? ⁶ “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness^a will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be our rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk*

Societal Anorexia

As Jesus said, our real food is “to do the will of Him who sent Me,” but a growing number of societies are being diagnosed with **societal anorexia**—a disease in which **civilizations fast from basic social nutrients** and go extinct as a result. Human history is littered with the corpses of civilizations that failed to feed themselves the minimum **daily requirement of justice**. Is your society in danger of dying from **societal anorexia**? Find out by taking our simple quiz. **Your society skips a meal each time one of the following occurs:**

- Every time a laborer is paid less than a **fair wage** (Isaiah 58.3).
- Every time a conflict is resolved with **violence**, rather than honest communication (58.4).
- Every time a human being is **enslaved** by un-payable **debt** (58.6).
- Every time someone lacks access to **adequate** food, shelter, and clothing (58.7, 10).
- Every time **blame and dishonesty** pass for social discourse (58.9b).
- Every time **lip service** is paid to any one of the above (58.5).

Your **society eats a meal each time it works together** to “remove [these things] from among you” (58.9b). **If your society is showing any of the above** symptoms, seek immediate **spiritual** help. Ask for the Great Physician to **come and heal** all societies on earth.

Matthew 5:13-20 ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. ¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

How to be a Righteous Dude

The **scribes and Pharisees** were some seriously righteous dudes. They kept the law of Moses as perfectly as one can (Phil. 3:4-6). Yet Jesus says in this section of the gospel text that we must be **even more righteous** than the **scribes and Pharisees** (Matt. 5:20). Is Jesus trying to crush our hope of ever being good enough?

Here’s what Jesus is really telling us: **righteousness is way more than following rules**. Righteousness is **living in every relationship** the way the Father, Son, and Spirit live— **freely, joyfully, and generously**. Sure, the scribes and Pharisees were **great at following rules** (just like a lot of us today), but **they were terrible at loving relationships** (just like a lot of us today). In fact, the **only human person** who’s ever really been righteous and **lived in every relationship as a reflection of the Triune Life is Jesus**. The only way we can have that kind of righteousness is if **Jesus freely gives it to us by grace—which he has done. Hallelujah!** This is the good news that will really heal our relationships. This is what will really heal our **societies**, our **nations**, and our **planet**. The Father isn’t looking for slaves who will follow the rules. He has created children through his Son Jesus who **can really live the way the Trinity lives** because we are really **included** in the Triune Life through Jesus. You can be one righteous dude by believing this truth about yourself: Because Jesus is the righteousness of God, in Jesus you are righteous. In Jesus our righteousness is even more righteous than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

Psalm. 112:1-9 (10) This is an acrostic psalm, which means that each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, beginning with the first letter. One could say this psalm is the **ABC’S** of the **adopted life**.

Psalm 112 ¹ *Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands.* ² *His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.* ³ *Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.* ⁴ *Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.* ⁵ *Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice.* ⁶ *Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.* ⁷ *He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.* ⁸ *His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.* ⁹ *He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his horn^d will be lifted high in honor.* ¹⁰ *The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste way; the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.*

Study Questions of the Week

1. How could letting a congregation know **they have the mind of Christ** actually help them **solve** conflicts and problems?
2. How does **declaring** the Trinity **cut to the root** of relational conflict?
3. On a scale of one-to-ten, how **anorexic is your city? Your country? Your planet?**
4. What can your **congregation** do in your **community** to “remove these things from among you”? (Isaiah 58:9)
5. Why **isn’t** it enough to **just follow the rules**?
6. How does Jesus **share his life** with us **in our relationships**?

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^c Some manuscripts as *I proclaimed to you God’s mystery*

^a Isaiah 64:4

^a Or *your righteous One*

^d *Horn* here symbolizes dignity.