

Audacious Faith Bible Study

Walking away from worldly comfort

By Nita Wilkinson

Week 4

Dirty Righteousness

Philippians 3:9

I was recently sitting in a coffee house when I heard two young women discussing the Bible. One appeared to be mentoring the other as she explained some verses. At one point, I listened to the mentor correct her friend, saying, "That's not what it means. I've been studying for years, and I know what Jesus is saying here." While her tone was friendly the words sounded condescending to her friend.

I was embarrassed by her self-righteousness, but only because I've been there. That self-righteousness of all I thought I knew and happily shared, in a very similar way, to everyone I came across. But all that I thought I knew kept me from being all God intended me to be.

Paul, as Saul, knew the law. As Saul, he thought that righteousness was his, that he earned it. His self-righteousness collides with Stephen's audacious faith when a Jewish group falsely accuses Stephen of blasphemy. (Acts 6:11-12)

Stephen gives a Spirit-filled speech before the Sanhedrin that incites their anger to stone him. The man quietly leading that trial and attending the stoning was Saul. (Acts 7:58) Stephen's last words were a prayer asking God not to hold this sin against them. That prayer is answered on the road to Damascus when Saul is converted and becomes Paul. (Acts 9)

The road to Damascus paved the way to Paul's righteousness in Christ. After he met Jesus, he too was filled with Holy Spirit and knew the righteousness from him was dirty and unworthy. (Isaiah 64:6) Holy Spirit is the agent of change that begins transforming us as soon as we put our faith in Jesus (Ephesians 4:13-15) and gave Paul a new desire to be like Jesus and take up His cross (Luke 9:23), putting on the righteousness of Christ.

When we trust in His sovereignty and are aware of his pure and holy love, we free ourselves from the chain of fear. Our hope and security aren't anchored in circumstance but in Christ, who will hold us faithfully in the storms.

Prayer - I want to be righteous in you, Jesus. Alone, my righteousness is just dirty rags. Change my hearts so there is only you. Amen.

Questions to consider:

Have you ever had a moment of self-righteousness? How long did it take before you realized it?

What do you do today to keep from putting on those filthy rags of self-righteousness?

Nita Wilkinson is a writer and speaker that encourages women to pursue joy and freedom with the most important tool in our toolbox of life, the Bible. You can find out more about Nita at her web page www.inthewhisper.org, through her podcast The In the Whisper Podcast and through various social media outlets.

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