

## Podcast 288 Clothed by Faith In Jesus

“Much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17)

**Scott:** Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme! I’m your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today! Good morning, Steve! How are you today?

**Steve:** I’m okay! How are you?

**Scott:** Good! I’m up and rolling. I was in Phoenix this last weekend. It was awesome meeting the people in Arizona. They had the conference at Grand Canyon University instead of the convention center downtown. I love meeting people that love God and are concerned about their families. They’re intentional about their families. I believe home education is about moms and dads wanting to do what’s right with their kids. So, I had wonderful conversations with people. I had one man come up and say that he had read my family worship book years ago and took the challenge to read it within thirty days, and he did it. And they’ve been doing family worship ever since. And his daughter won’t let them miss a day. How do you like that?

**Scott:** That’s awesome.

**Steve:** There was another fellow who heard my talk on the first day, and then the next morning he met me, looked me in the eye, and pretty soon we both teared up as he told me about how he had gone to his son and asked his forgiveness for hollering and his temper. H had grown up in a home like that, a broken home, so he said to his son, “I want to break the cycle. I don’t want this to go to the next generation.” Powerful stuff.

Then, of course, I meet all the peanuts that are using Math-U-See. I had two twin sixteen-year-olds and their eighteen-year-old sister who have all used Math-U-See since all the way up through, and they were my hosts and volunteers in one of my workshops. It’s wonderfully satisfying to see people are making steps with God.

**Scott:** Cool!

**Steve:** There is one thing that happened at a conference this year that I haven’t gotten over, when I was explaining the Gospel, about how God takes away our sins and covers us in Christ, and now when He sees us, He smiles. I sensed that people weren’t taking it in. As if it was too hard to believe, almost. I sensed they were shutting down a little bit. You know, you can tell that when you’re talking to somebody, and they are still smiling and tracking, and yet they are struggling to mix the truths of the gospel with faith. So that’s what we’re going to talk about today, and hopefully God will help us to believe the Gospel, as mysterious and as wonderful as it is, that He will give us ears to hear the Gospel a fresh way. Amen?

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** Father, thank You for Your words that are so powerful in Scripture, and thank You for the power of those words. You said the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to all who believe, and I pray that You will help us to hear the Gospel afresh, whether we've heard it a thousand times or whether this is the first time we're hearing it. Give us ears to hear Your message. In Jesus' name, amen.

**Steve:** Well, I'm going to make a plug. I will be reading from the revised Stewardship, which we call the Stewardship Second Edition. I revised it in 2018, and the primary thing I added to the book was 36 "Scripture Studies," to instruct our heart. The premise for the entire Stewardship curriculum is, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be." So I have lots of lessons about balancing your checkbook and the cost of operating a car and things which you'd expect in a personal finance program.

In the first edition I'd had 36 "Studies to Govern Your Treasure," biblical principles of how to look at your treasure, with a lot of personal testimonies woven in, addressing debt, cosigning, biblical principles of finance that God has led me to apply in my own home.

What I added to this new edition are Scripture studies to instruct our heart because if our heart is right, hopefully how we invest our treasure will follow. Instead of just looking at biblical principles of your treasure and listening to programs about how to stay out of debt and how to be wise with your money, which are valuable, but if our hearts are right, generally that's the best thing we can do for any aspect of the Christian life.

Not only is our treasure attached to our heart, but out of the heart man believes, and out of the abundance of the heart, man speaks. As Christians, we need to guard our heart, feed our heart, and that's why I put together these studies, which I think are basic discipleship 101.

This morning I'm going to read from number 7, which is called "Clothed," and then I'll comment afterwards. All right?

**Scott:** Sure.

**Steve:** "In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve disobeyed God. They knew they were guilty of sin, and they felt shame. They hid themselves from God and became aware of their nakedness. This is the fruit of sin: guilt, separation, and shame. We have all experienced these feelings. We have been learning how Jesus has provided a way for us to be forgiven, cleansed, and restored. He has also provided a way for us to be clothed in fresh, clean garments that cover our nakedness, guilt, and shame. After God spoke to Adam and Eve, He clothed them by slaying helpless animals to make their garments. "The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them." (Genesis 3:21) In this graphic account of the first sin in the garden, we see forgiveness and covering. Jesus was the helpless Lamb who died for our sin, and His wool became the source of our new clothes.

We know that Jesus takes away our sins by His death on the cross. We have been forgiven, but we are still naked. Scripture teaches that not only did He take away our sins, He also provided garments for us to be made well-pleasing in the eyes of our Father.” I’m going to interject here. This is the purpose of these studies, is to get ahold of, by faith, that just as the Father has loved His Son, so has His Son loved us. There’s this perfect sacrifice of Christ we’ve talked about, how He’s taken away all our sins, He saves us to the uttermost, but He also clothes us to the uttermost so that the Father looks upon us with joy. Not with a little sideways smirk. He looks at us with a full face of joy, and that’s what the Gospel does for us. Now, let me keep reading. “Every thread of this divine fabric is made up of the righteous acts of the Lamb of God.

For decades I was able to understand a little of this concept in my head, but didn’t fully embrace it in my heart. I knew Jesus had taken my sin, but I reasoned that it was up to me to produce good works, in other words, to clothe myself. I surmised that Jesus had given me a clean slate and a fresh start, and now I had the opportunity to do righteous deeds while seeking first His kingdom. At a summer camp in 2012, I first saw that in Christ, I am already well-pleasing in the sight of God. Jesus has cleansed and clothed me. This is the verse that opened my eyes to this incredible truth. ‘For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.’ (2 Corinthians 5:21) Notice the last nine words. ‘In Him, we might become the righteousness of God.’

I am going to try and explain this to the best of my ability. When Jesus walked on the earth, He did amazing deeds. He healed lepers, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, fed the multitudes, cast out demons, and more. The righteous acts of Jesus have been credited to each of us when we trust in Christ.

It is as if Jesus, while hanging on the cross, gave us His robe. We put it on, and in the pocket is a record of all His righteous deeds. God looks at us, sees the garment of His Son, and all of the wonderful acts which Jesus has accomplished, and sees that they have now been transferred to us. Because of Jesus, we have become the righteousness of God.” That’s exactly what this verse says. I know it’s a gulp, but that’s what it says.

“Perhaps the example of a financial transaction might help to clarify this concept. These righteous acts were paid for by Jesus, but deposited into our account.

### A Robe

We are clothed in Christ. We are covered with His righteousness. When our Father looks at us, He sees the clothing of Jesus. We are covered in His righteousness like a robe.

There is a picture of a similar transaction in Zechariah, where the prophet was given eyes to see heavenly realities.” Now I’m reading from Zechariah 3. “Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he

said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments.' (Zechariah 3:3-5)" Perfect picture. They take away the filthy garments, and they put on the clean garments.

Isaiah 61:10 says, "I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness."

"These garments are provided by Jesus alone." I'm going to read it again. "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

So, that's wonderful news, and I know that I had trouble believing that righteousness was a free gift. I mean, I knew that forgiveness was a free gift. I knew that there was nothing I could do to take away my sins. It had to be a gift. So I asked Jesus to forgive my sins, and He did. But what I didn't fully grasp was that righteousness was also a free gift. I'm going to continue reading. "We cannot earn our own salvation from sin, and we are helpless to produce righteous deeds. Forgiveness and righteousness are both gifts of grace. Forgiveness was purchased at a horrific price by Jesus on the cross. His life of service and good deeds produced righteousness.

Both are offered freely to all who would ask for and receive them by faith." And now I'm going to read a big chunk of Scripture.

"The free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification." Okay, we get that. Keep reading. "For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the" - I never saw these words - "free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:15-19)

Phew! That's a long passage. Paul's using the same language to describe grace and forgiveness as he is to describe righteousness, so they're both free gifts. The apostles labored to explain this concept to a generation in his day who believed that you could earn your salvation by doing good works. In several of his letters he emphasizes the importance of faith to receive these gifts.

"This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." (Romans 1:17 NLT)

'I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.'" What a statement.

Then he says, "I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith." (Philippians 3:5–9 NLT) A couple more passages, and then we'll chat.

It is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. 'As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life.'" (Romans 1:17 NLT)

'Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.' (Romans 5:1 NLT)

'We know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.' (Galatians 2:16 NLT)

So, for about the third podcast in a row, if I'm remembering properly, I'm going to read the definition of faith one more time. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." I have not seen sins being taken away, but I have the assurance that they have been taken away. And I haven't seen this robe of righteousness wrapped around myself, but by faith I have the assurance and the conviction that it is there because of God's Word.

**Steve:** This truth has proven transforming to me, because I had worked, worked, worked to try to please God. I spent decades seeking first the kingdom, but underneath, what I was really doing was trying to make God like me more, because I had this mistaken conviction that if I did more stuff for Him, He would like me better. And the stuff I was doing was good stuff, and it was seeking first the kingdom, and it was promoting Christianity, and it was sharing the Gospel, etc. But my motive – deep down, I really wanted to make God love me, because I really didn't think He liked me. And this is why this topic is so important to me. But as a result, I would do so much, I would put so much energy into it, I didn't have much energy for my wife and my kids, I didn't even set aside time for my relationship with God, besides reading the Bible and praying, because I had to be doing stuff all the time.

Now that I know that in Christ, I am forgiven, in Christ, I am pleasing, and He looks at me, like you said, as a loving Father, and He smiles every time He sees me. And knowing that, it's this huge burden off my back, and it frees me up to take naps and spend time waiting on God and not be pushing all the time. I don't know how to put it any differently, but it changed my life. I sat there and I went, "You are kidding. I am already pleasing to God, even if I am drooling in a cup." Sorry about that expression – it's the best I can do. If I'm just sitting there, not doing anything, He still thinks that I'm the best thing since sliced manna. And because of Jesus – Jesus has taken my sin and clothed me in His righteousness. And I hope that somehow in reading these passages, it will make the point. This is how Paul operated, and boy, he could have spent the rest of his life moaning and groaning, couldn't he?

**Steve:** All the people he threw into prison, the persecution he caused, and the heartache. But instead, he received forgiveness and he knew that he was now, as he said, "In Him we might become the righteousness of God."

Father, help us. We could fill the air with words, but help us to mix with faith the precious promises that because of Jesus, we are righteous in Your sight. We are pleasing in Your sight. You look at us and smile because You see Your Son's work, and we embrace what Your Son has done. We don't want to add to it or take away from it. Thank You, Jesus, for taking away our sins. Thank You for clothing us in Your righteousness. Thank You that Your righteousness has been – not sure what the fancy word is, transmuted or something – into our account. But I pray that You'll help us, right deep down, help us get it – that there's nothing that can separate us from Your love, there's nothing that can separate us from Christ. We are in Christ. We are forgiven and pleasing. Hallelujah! And I pray that You'll drive out the feelings of condemnation and shame and guilt that should not be there. Help us to hear afresh these words today. In Jesus' name, amen.