The Righteousness of the Kingdom of God

Another of the things above that we must walk after, and one that defines the Kingdom of God, is righteousness, or better said, the absence of sin. (Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever. Psalm 93)

The dictionary defines righteousness as being without sin, pure, immaculate, spotless, clean. The Word of Scripture describes the Kingdom of God as a Kingdom of righteousness. (Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:13)

The Son of God told us to seek not only the Kingdom of God but also "his righteousness", which means that the Kingdom of God is far more than a place with streets of gold. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33)

We find it written in Scripture that the Kingdom of God does not consist in the pleasures of the flesh, in food and drink, in the things the natural man pursues. In this Kingdom we find the **righteousness** in which God lives and **his peace**; we find the things above that define this Kingdom. (For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but **righteousness, and peace, and joy** in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

The Word of Scripture tells us that all who are in the Kingdom of God love righteousness and hate iniquity. Only those who hunger and thirst after the values of righteousness in the heavenly Kingdom can dwell in this Kingdom. (Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Matthew 5:6)

The Word of Scripture warns us that whoever does not desire righteousness and does not live in it is not received into this Kingdom of righteousness. (In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:10)

If we look more closely, we can see that there are many who believe they are born again, who speak in tongues, prophesy and work miracles, without living **a life of righteousness.** But at the end of their lives they will have a great surprise. (**Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I **never** knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:22-23)

So that we are not deceived, we have a simple test at hand by which each of us can easily check whether we belong to this Kingdom. The Word of Scripture, which does not lie, says that only the one who lives in righteousness is born again of God. (If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 1 John 2:29; Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John 3:7)

Holy Scripture states categorically that unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, who lived by the standard of the Law of Moses, we shall in no way be able to enter this Kingdom. (For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20)

The righteousness of the Kingdom above is far superior to the righteousness lived by those who kept the law of Moses, in which we find the commandments: "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's..."

To describe the righteousness of the Pharisees, we can look at the apostle Paul before his conversion. He was a Pharisee and lived a very strict life according to the law of Moses, so that he could say that, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless. (Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Philippians 3:5-6)

Holy Scripture tells us that we enter the Kingdom of God during this present life, not after we pass into eternity, as most people believe. (Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14)

We are called to live in the righteousness of the Kingdom now, not after we leave this earth. Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be able to see it and enter this Kingdom. (God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Acts 10:34-35)

God's plan is not limited to a cheap salvation that consists only of repentance **(putting off the old man)** and the forgiveness of sins. It provides for **the restoring of the image of God** in us **(putting on the new man)** and for bringing us unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ's righteousness. (Ephesians 4:13)

Putting on the new man is the border between the Kingdom of Darkness and the Kingdom of God. (And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24)

Let us list some of these things above that are found in the Kingdom:

Honesty and integrity

Whoever loves righteousness and hates iniquity receives the right to enter this Kingdom. The one who receives the right to enter the Kingdom of righteousness does not live in sin, does not rejoice in iniquity, does not cheat, does not use gifts or bribes, does not walk in deceit and does not slander. (Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not... known him. He that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:6, 8, 10)

Those who are in the Kingdom of righteousness covet nothing that belongs to their neighbour. They do not use or take for themselves the things of others. They do not enjoy things that do not belong to them.

Let us take an example from everyday life: they do not take home things from work that do not belong to them. They do not use the company car, phone or other company property for personal purposes. They do not have stolen or pirated software on their computers. (Neither shalt thou covet… any thing that is thy neighbour's. Deuteronomy 5:21)

They do not work off the books, they do not cheat the government out of taxes, they covet nothing that is not theirs. (Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. Matthew 22:21; For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers. Romans 13:6) When they sit exams, they do not cheat; they do not steal what they have not learned.

If they possess things they acquired dishonestly back when they lived in darkness, they will stop using them, returning them and making restitution wherever possible. (Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. Numbers 5:7)

They guard against all greed for money. They are citizens of the household of God, provided for by the heavenly Father through the church, which is the body of Christ, and they do not ask strangers, such as the State (the "Philistines"), for welfare to pay for heating or electricity… They follow the example of Abraham, who would not accept the cave of Machpelah as a free gift from the Hittites. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33)

A father who is in the Kingdom of God does not use lies or deceit, and does not take pleasure in iniquity by collecting government money for parental leave to care for a newborn up to the age of two, when in reality it is the mother who is looking after the little one.

Nor does he collude with his employer to be deliberately laid off so that he can claim unemployment benefits and enjoy money he has not worked for. (Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; … evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5)

A check: Do you have things from work, or from anywhere else, that you have taken for yourself and are using? Do you have unlicensed programs on your computer? Do you work off the books, cheating the government out of the taxes you owe? When you want to get money from the government (subsidies, unemployment benefits, welfare, parental leave…), do you lie when filling in the forms? If you do such things, do not deceive yourself into thinking you are in the Kingdom of God.

The citizens of this Kingdom "**hate iniquity**"; they hate every way of falsehood and every occasion of sin. They hate the practice of giving gifts or bribes. (He that hateth gifts shall live. Proverbs 15:27) Scripture tells us that those who deal in bribes have a corrupted heart. (A gift

destroyeth the heart. Ecclesiastes 7:7) According to the **dictionary**, a **bribe** is a sum of money or objects received, offered or promised to a person in order to make him break his official duties, or perform them more diligently. (They… took bribes, and perverted judgment. 1 Samuel 8:3)

Perhaps few of us are in a position that gives us the chance to receive gifts or bribes, but most of us find ourselves in a position to give them. Many people, to get their problems solved, are pushed into using gifts or bribes.

Perhaps until now we have not regarded giving bribes (gifts) as a sin, but we must understand that when we take the initiative to reward a service that has already been paid for, whether public or private, we give the other person an occasion to sin, to fall into sin.

By what we do, we are the ones who push the other person to break the Word of God; we are the ones who corrupt their heart.

The teaching of the Kingdom warns us in the most serious terms; it shows us how grave it is to tempt souls and corrupt their hearts. (It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck. Luke 17:1-2)

To corrupt our hearts, Satan brings many such occasions into our lives (one example being in hospital, with the doctor; in Romania it is common practice to slip money to hospital staff). When we are lying in a hospital bed and in need, if we persuade the nurse to be kinder by slipping something into her pocket, then we are the ones tempting her, bringing her an occasion to sin. And that nurse may even be a believer.

With our gift we are asking her to give us more attention, and so she will end up neglecting the patient who has nothing to give her. By accepting these gifts she will corrupt her heart and do injustice to the one who has nothing. She will break the Word of God, which forbids her to accept gifts. (And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. Exodus 23:8)

God commands her not to take gifts, and we tempt her to break the Word of God. Let us ask ourselves: if we do this, are we not serving Satan?

To understand how serious this sin is, it is worth noting that even the secular laws of the world condemn the one who tempts another to take a bribe more harshly than the one who takes it.

The citizens of the Kingdom must always be on the alert so that they are not among those who bring occasions of sin, so that they do not do the work of the evil one. (But judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Romans 14:13) We are aware that those who decide to live in the righteousness of Christ

will lose the advantages that gifts and bribes bring. But they will be rewarded with the peace and rest that come from above, a peace that confirms they belong to the Kingdom. (And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance

for ever. Isaiah 32:17)

A pure heart

Those who belong to the Kingdom above do not defile their hearts with filthy things. They do not walk in the counsel of the wicked, they set no evil thing before their eyes, they shut their eyes from seeing evil and stop their ears from hearing unfit words. (Isaiah 33:15)

They do not love, nor do they use, the things that feed and stir up the lusts of the flesh, among them the world's publications (magazines, books, newspapers), the world's radio and the world's television and internet. (Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15; Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners. Psalm 1:1)

Those who are in the Kingdom, in the body of Christ, watch so that there is no one among them who corrupts his heart with the things of the world and so defiles the others. (Looking diligently lest any man fail… lest there be any… profane person. Hebrews 12:15-16) They watch over one another, so that each of them keeps a pure eye and a pure heart.

They make sure the internet is used only where it is necessary (at work, for bank payments…), in a controlled and filtered way, so as not to give Satan the opportunity to tempt and feed the flesh or stir up its lusts. (Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. Psalm 119:37; And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Romans 13:14)

Those who are in the Kingdom of God are called to wear modest clothing; they will not wear skimpy clothes, so as not to bring an occasion of sin to those around them. (…adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. 1 Timothy 2:9)

Therefore they do not go to places such as beaches or other public places where people are indecently dressed, so as not to defile their eyes by looking at those who are undressed, nor to give others occasion to lust after their bodies and sin.

They are very careful about the lust of the eyes, because it affects the whole body. (The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Luke 11:34; I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Job 31:1)

They keep their hearts pure, because only so will they see God. (Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8) For this reason they have removed from before their eyes everything that makes them fall into sin. (I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside. Psalm 101:3; And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. Matthew 18:9)

They guard themselves against, and flee from, the lusts of the flesh that harm the soul. (Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. 1 Peter 2:11; For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and

the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:16)

In conclusion: if we are greedy for money and covet the goods of the "Egyptians", if we refuse to pay our taxes, if we work off the books, if we give bribes at the hospital and elsewhere, if the world's television and internet (Facebook, YouTube…) are our food… if until now we have not loved the things above, that is, the commandments of the Lord Jesus that require us to live in the righteousness of the Kingdom… if we do not delight in them, then we can be sure that we are not part of the Kingdom of righteousness.

Personal examination:

- Do you seek the Kingdom of righteousness as a treasure of great price? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you strive to be spotless, without sin?

- Do you live by the laws of righteousness that govern the Kingdom of God?

Source: *The Righteousness of the Kingdom of God* — Unmodified Word
unmodifiedword.com/articles/the-righteousness-of-the-kingdom-of-god