

Recognizing the Unrecognized

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: I John 2:29-3:1.

B. Problem: it is difficult to distinguish between phony and true Christians.

II. The believer must know that Jesus is righteous.

A. A person must know by experience that Jesus is righteous.

B. Righteousness is God's behavior—He is the standard of all human behavior.

C. If you know how God behaves, then you will know that whoever behaves like God is of Him.

III. How God behaves.

A. God acts out of love in such a way that it satisfies justice.

B. Love that satisfies justice is righteousness.

C. God is kind to the selfish and the ungrateful.

IV. How God's love is astonishing.

A. It is astonishing because it makes believers the children of God.

B. When we were utterly morally bankrupt and enemies of God, He called us and made us His children.

C. We are not all the children of God even though He created us all.

1. It is only through faith in Christ that one is a child of God.

2. All can be the children of God, however.

3. God desires that His enemies would become children and that His children would become mature sons.

V. God's righteousness in the believer is the sign that He is true over against smaller doctrinal issues.

VI. The reason that the world does not know believers is that it does not know Jesus.

A. They did not believe Jesus, so they could not accept Him.

B. The believer should not expect to be treated any different from Jesus.

C. The principle of repudiating self-interest is foolishness to the world.

D. This principle is power for the believer for patience and endurance. (Colossians 1:11)

E. The problems of the world are the church's responsibility—if it were living in light of the power that it has been given it, its witness would be effective to change the world.

Application questions:

1. What elements are essential for righteousness? When have you seen one overemphasized wrongly over the other?

2. How is righteousness a sign for belief? Is righteousness all that is required? Explain.

3. What does the cross mean to you? How did you respond to the speaker's description of the cross and the believer's responsibility in light of it? Explain.
