

Is Our Righteousness As Filthy Rags?

by Sandra Hooper



A friend of mine said, “We may think we’ve come out of her, but if we are still carrying the false teachings of the denominations we left behind, we really haven’t separated ourselves.”

This is so true. This is one of the things I have learned myself after coming out of organized religion. For instance, let’s take the example of how many times we are told *our righteousness is as filthy rags*. People like to take passages of Scripture and apply them to the wrong people. It may be true that the sinner who thinks he can buy his salvation by doing good deeds; that his own goodness will merit points while his heart is far away from God, his righteousness is as filthy rags. His motive is not pure. There are a lot of sinners who are capable of doing good deeds, but this does not score points with God when they think they are doing Him a favor by their good deeds.

But what about the saints? What about that person who has been truly converted, filled with the holy Spirit and walks about in a loving relationship with Jesus, obeying His commandments, not because he has to, but from a pure heart and out of love for his Savior? When that child of God turns from sin and begins to do righteousness (Eph. 2:10), will God turn to that child and say, “You are such a mess! You are a stench in my nostrils!” But yet every now and then the sermon behind the pulpit is that no matter what we do, even if it’s our VERY BEST, our righteousness is nothing but “stinking rags” to our Savior!

Is this how loving parents treat their children when they try to please them? When they put their best effort to try and please you, do you tell them it stinks and not good enough? When you put your best effort to do a good job at the workplace, would you appreciate your boss telling you every time that it stinks? Does that motivate us to continue to do our best?

How can a child of God really think they are loved when all the Father does is remind them that no matter what good they do, it’s a stench in His nostrils? What incentive is there to keep trying to please the Father?

Please stop listening and repeating the lies. They are not of God. God is very well pleased and smiles on us when we walk in righteousness. In fact, John tells us,

“Little children. Let no one deceive you. He who DOES righteousness is righteous, even as He (Jesus) is righteous.” (1 John 3:7).

Did God the Father look down on His Son and say all your righteousness is as filthy rags to me?

We are also told,

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.” (Rev. 19:8)

What is the “fine linen”? It is the righteousness of the saints. Notice they are not filthy rags, but the linen is clean and white.

Organized Religion is filled with many lies. It has brainwashed us to believe many things that are not true. God encourages righteous living. He never tells us that those who have turned from sin to follow Him will only produce filthy rags.