

August 29, 2010

Sermon Title: "God's inheritance for the Righteous"

Secondary Text: Matthew 10:5-10

Primary Text: Psalm 37:21-27

*21 The wicked borrow and do not repay,
But the righteous give generously;*

*22 those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,
But those he curses will be cut off.*

*23 If the LORD delights in a man's way,
He makes his steps firm;*

*24 though he stumble, he will not fall,
For the LORD upholds him with his hand.*

*25 I was young and now I am old,
Yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
Or their children begging bread.*

*26 They are always generous and lend freely;
Their children will be blessed.*

*27 Turn from evil and do good;
Then you will dwell in the land forever.*

28 *For the LORD loves the just
And will not forsake his faithful ones.*

They will be protected forever,

But the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

What does it mean to be righteous?

díkē [justice], *díkaios* [just, righteous], *dikaíosýnē* [justification, righteousness], *dikaióō* [to justify], *dikaíōma* [regulation], *dikaíōsis* [justification], *dikaiokrisía* [righteous judgment]

The Concept of Law in the OT. This concept influenced all social relationships so strongly that it affected theological reflection on the fellowship between God and man. Law is the basis of the OT view of God, and the religious use of legal concepts helps in turn to ethicize the law. Many terms are used to express the relations between God and man, and the conduct governed by these relations.

1. The richness of the Hebrew usage is well expressed by the *díkē* group, especially *dikaíosýnē* and *díkaios*. (For the relevant Hebrew terms, the statistical distribution, and the equivalents, see *TDNT*, II, 174-75.)

2. It is a basic tenet in the OT that God posits law and is bound to it. Recognition of this is a unifying factor in Israel's faith. All law comes from God, and hence God's authority extends to all Israel's historical relationships. God's law is an order of life that cannot be changed or challenged. It is righteous because he is righteous. His ways are right; they thus give us life and security. He is a righteous ruler and judge, as shown already in the victory celebrated in Judg. 5:11. His righteousness extends to other nations, so that order is seen in the world. The righteous can thus appeal to him with confidence when they are the victims of hostility and oppression (Ps. 5:8).

3. God's righteousness is not just static but dynamic. He establishes as righteous those who seek his righteousness. The righteous, then, are those who show fidelity to God's command (Hab. 2:4) and whom God vindicates against their enemies. This vindication may not be synonymous with success. Misfortunes suggest at times that God's judgment means condemnation. Refuge must then be sought in God. But even from this place of refuge a sense of right may be discerned in God (Ps. 62:7ff.). The torment of doubting God's righteousness constitutes the grief of Job. We have to be able to take God's right for granted in his dealings with us, even if it must sometimes be projected into a higher sphere than that of human understanding. [G. QUELL, II, 174-78]

díkē.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the biblical definition of righteous?
2. What is the definition of wicked?
3. How are the steps of a good man ordered?
4. What is the destiny of the wicked?
5. What should our attitude be towards the wicked?
6. What was David saying in Psalm 37, verse 25?

Digging Deeper...What is the reward of the righteous?

Prayer focus: Dear God, please give me the presence of mind to seek righteousness for my life, and fellowship with you.... Amen...