

Title: THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 1 JOHN 3:1-7  
(Chatham, NJ; 04/19/15, AM) [E – Topical]

Theme: God's plan for the Gospel from prophecy to preaching has always been to establish the practice of righteousness.

Purpose: To enable a change in our hearts by hearing the proclamation of the Gospel.

Introduction:

1. God's plan is like an unfolding telescope: demonstrate with telescope.
2. God provides enough information for one generation to see a little farther than the previous generation.
3. Sometimes we like to speak of standing on the shoulders of giants.
4. Think about how far your children or grandchildren could see sitting on your shoulders.
5. We build our lives with confidence on what God has done so that what comes next can be better for those who follow.

## I. Prophecy and Prediction

### A. Predictions of a Messianic Future

1. Jesus established his work on prophecy, Luke 18:31.
2. After the resurrection he returns to prophecy to enlighten the disciples, Luke 24:25-27, 44.
3. Peter's eyewitness is further sustained by the prophets, 2 Peter 1:19-21.
4. He utilizes this in his preaching, Acts 2:17-21, 25-28; 3:18, 22-24
5. The prophets, however, weren't privy to the full revelation, Luke 10:24 (point to the first part of the telescope)
6. God demanded faith even if they couldn't see far into the future.

### B. Prophecy, furthermore, also called people to righteousness and obedience

1. Isaiah 1:4 laments the sinful condition of Israel
2. He appeals to them in 1:18-20
3. When Micah's audiences criticized him, he challenged them, Micah 2:6-7
4. He declared to Israel her transgressions, 3:8
5. Jeremiah and Ezekiel warned Israel that their captivity was the result of a long and persistent state of disobedience.

## II. Proclamation

### A. The disciples role

1. Repentance and forgiveness should be proclaimed, Luke 24:47
2. The disciples were witnesses not only to Jesus' deeds but to the prophetic fulfillments
3. This was the next section of the telescope of God's message (point to second section of telescope)
4. Tonight's segment of A. D. will portray this.
5. Their work brought them on a collision course with the reigning world powers, both religious and secular.
6. Proclamation of the Gospel was/is subversive of the world order

### B. Continuing the legacy of the Apostles

1. Pass on to faithful men, 2 Timothy 2:2
2. Can we accept the challenge of being a giant upon whom others can see farther?
3. Has God placed us in the time of preaching "out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2)?
4. The light of this message becomes more visible during times of darkness: 3:1ff. speak of times of difficulty

5. We must sustain the proclamation not only for ourselves but for those who will come after us

### III. Practice of Righteousness, 1 John 3:1-7

#### A. An Old/New Message

1. Righteousness is as old as the prophets
2. God has always demanded that people return to his laws
3. Truth, God's nature, and the created order have not changed
4. Note recent discussion on the radio centered on one person's parents, married for 38 years, and on pre-nuptial agreements: "an earlier age stayed together in marriage, but this is 2015." (by implication things have changed and we can't go back to an earlier age)
5. This is surrender to the spirit of the age
6. But marriage is still a permanent covenant between a man and a woman
7. And God still demands obedience
8. This can sound new to a generation who has never heard these things
9. They benefit from standing on our shoulders

#### B. John's proclamation pierces the darkness, 1 John 3:1-7

1. Sin is lawlessness, and we are called to be pure as God is pure, 3-4
2. To "abide" in God means that we must cease from sinning, 6
3. Children of God or children of the devil (7-10): which will it be for you?
4. This is what the past points to: the last part of the telescope

#### Conclusion:

1. The biggest reason people resist seeing this is that it demands a change in their lives.
2. We are those who proclaim this in word and deed.
3. Can you see how this affects you?
4. Can you see how this might affect the next generation?
5. Remember the prophets; hear the proclamation; practice righteousness.
6. The church is the bearer of this message, and we proclaim to you the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
7. God waits for your response.