

Romans Session 45

How to Be Right with God 3

Romans 3:21-25 (NASB)

²¹ *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

²² *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

²⁴ *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*

²⁵ *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;*

In our last study we talked of a Righteousness that was apart from the legalism of the Law. A Righteousness that was manifested by revelation. It was apart from the Law. It had no part of the Law. It came through Jesus Christ and has been offered to man.

We want to talk a bit more about this Righteousness.

IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS BUILT ON REVELATION.

Romans 3:21b (NASB)

being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

Before he presents the means for men to receive God's manifested righteousness, however, Paul declares that it not only is apart from legalism, but is also divinely revealed, "*being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.*"

That truth was obviously directed primarily at Jews, whose whole religion centered in **the Law and the Prophets**, a phrase commonly used to encompass all of God's written Word, what we now call the Old Testament.

In other words, the apostle was not speaking about a new kind of righteousness but about the divine righteousness that is spoken of throughout the Jewish Scriptures.

Not only do **the Law and Prophets** proclaim God's perfect righteousness but they affirm what Paul has just stated, that, without exception, men are unable to achieve that righteousness in their own way or power.

The Jews had great reverence for their Scriptures, but most of them failed to realize that, although divinely revealed, those Scriptures in themselves had no power to save.

John 5:39 (NASB)

³⁹ *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;*

In other words, **the Law and the Prophets** did not show men how to achieve their own righteousness but pointed to the coming Messiah, the savior and Son of God, who Himself would provide the righteousness that God demands of men.

Although the full revelation of salvation through Christ was not given in the Old Testament, that had always been the way of salvation to which that testament pointed.

The Mosaic Laws were not given as a means of achieving righteousness but of describing God's Righteousness and showing the impossibility of man living up to it.

The Mosaic sacrifices were not prescribed as a means of atoning for sin but of symbolically pointing to Jesus Christ, who Himself became the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

The commandments, rituals, sacrifices, and godly principles taught in the Old Testament were, and still are a part of His divinely inspired Word.

But they could never remove sin, forgive sin, atone for sin, or give a new and righteous life to a sinner no matter how zealously and sincerely he tried to abide by them.

NEXT THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ACQUIRED BY FAITH;

Romans 3:22 (NASB)

²² even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, Paul mentions again that he is speaking of the absolute and perfect **Righteousness of God**, not the relative and imperfect righteousness of human achievement.

His point here is that the perfect, saving **Righteousness of God** not only is received apart from legalism and built on revelation, but is also acquired only by **faith**.

that has always been the way of salvation as far as man's part is concerned.

The very point of Heb. 11 is to show that there has never been a means of salvation other than **faith** in the true God.

That also is the repeated theme of Paul's Roman epistle.

In Chapter 4 he says;

Romans 4:5 (NASB)

⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Romans 4:13 (NASB)

¹³ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith

Romans 4:20 (NASB)

²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

Romans 5:1 (NASB)

¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is all by faith.

We must note however that there is a false faith, even in the name of Christ.

John reports that many people who had a superficial faith in Jesus did not have saving faith.

Jesus said;

John 8:31b (NASB)

³¹ *"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;*

In other words' obedience to His Word is evidence of true faith, whereas continual disobedience is evidence of false faith.

James 2:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*

In other words' disobedient faith is spurious faith.

It is by itself, that is unrelated to faith in God.

False faith may be faith in good works, faith in ritual, faith in religious experience or system, faith in one's own goodness, or simply a nebulous faith in faith that is so common in our day.

A person is saved **through faith in Jesus Christ** alone, apart from anything else.

But Scripture makes clear that saving faith is immeasurably more than simply making verbal declaration of believing about Him.

The late a. w. Tozer perceptively commented:

Something has happened to the doctrine of justification...The faith of Paul and Luther was a revolutionizing thing. It upset the whole life of the individual and made him into another person altogether. It laid hold on the life and brought in unto obedience to Christ. It took up its cross and followed along after Jesus with no intention of going back.

It said good-bye to its old friends as certainly as Elijah when he stepped into the fiery chariot and went away in the whirlwind.

It had a finality about it.

It snapped shut on a man's heart like a trap; it captured the man and made him from that moment forward a happy love-servant of his Lord. (the root of righteousness [Harrisburg, PA.: Christian Publications, 1955]. Pp. 45-46)

The saving **faith in Jesus Christ** that the New Testament teaches is much more than a simple affirmation of certain truths about Him.

Even the demons acknowledged many facts about Him.

Mark 5:1-7 (NASB)

¹ *They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.*

² *When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,*

³ *and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;*

⁴ *because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.*

⁵ *Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.*

⁶ *Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;*

⁷ *and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"*

Acts 16:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ *It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.*

¹⁷ *Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation."*

Saving faith is a placing of oneself totally in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it has certain indispensable elements that the New Testament clearly teaches.

Saving **faith in Jesus Christ** involves the exercise of will. Paul told the Roman believers;

Romans 6:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,*

¹⁸ *and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

Salvation begins (from the human standpoint) with a person's willful obedience in turning from sin to follow the Lord. Saving faith also involves the emotions, because, as in the verse just mentioned above, it must come from the heart as well as from the mind.

A person cannot be saved by good feelings about Jesus Christ, and yet many have substituted good feelings about Christ for real saving faith in Christ.

Also however the person who finds a saving faith in Jesus will also find that that will impact his emotions in a very deep way.

Saving faith also involves the intellect.

No one can think his way into heaven.

But neither can he receive Jesus into his life without some comprehension of the truth of the gospel;

Romans 10:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of God's righteousness, and it is because of that truth that He can impart divine righteousness to those who trust in Him.

During His earthly incarnation, Jesus demonstrated God's Righteousness by living a sinless life.

In His death Christ also demonstrated God's Righteousness by paying the penalty for the unrighteous lives of every human being.

The seventeenth-century English minister Joseph Alleine wrote:

All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert; he loves not only the wages, but the work of Christ; not only the benefits, but the burden of Christ; he is willing not only to tread out the corn, but to draw under the yoke; he takes up the command of Christ, yea, the cross of Christ.

The unsound closet by halves with Christ; he is all for the salvation of Christ, but he is not for sanctification; he is for the privileges, but appropriates not the person of Christ; he divides the offices and the benefits of Christ.

There is an error in the foundation.

Whoso loves life let him beware here. It is an undoing mistake, of which you have been often warned, and yet none is

more common.

Jesus is a sweet name, but men, "love not the Lord Jesus in sincerity,"

They will not have Him as God offers, "to be the Prince and a Savior."

They divide what God has joined, the king and the priest; yea, they will not accept the salvation of Christ as he intends it;

They divide it as such;

Everyman's vote is for salvation from suffering; but they desire not to be saved from sinning;

They would have their lives saved, but withal would have their lusts.

And many divide it thus;

They would be content to have some of their sins destroyed but they cannot leave the lap of Delilah, or divorce the beloved Herodias, they cannot be cruel to the right eye or right hand; the Lord must pardon them in this thing.

Lets' be carefully scrupulous here; your soul depends upon it.

The sound convert takes a whole Christ, and takes Him for all intents and purposes, without exceptions, without limitations, without reserve. He is willing to have Christ upon any terms; He is willing to have the dominion of Christ, as well as deliverance by Christ; He says with Paul, "Lord, what will you have me to do?"

Anything Lord!! He lets God set His own agenda and conditions.

John Wesley went to heaven on March 2, 1791 at the age of eighty-eight, after having preached the gospel for about sixty-five years.

One of his favorite Hymns to sing on his deathbed was:

*I'll praise my Maker while I've breath
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
While life and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.*