

Romans 3:21-31

LESSON: SET RIGHT BY GRACE — July 17, 2016

INTRODUCTION:

Romans 3:19-20 Now we know; no one escapes. All the world stands face to face before God; stands short of His glory; stands guilty of sin, for man cannot save himself. Therefore, by the deeds (works) of the law no flesh can be justified in His sight. The Law cannot justify, but only reveal the knowledge of sin.

LESSON: I. THE REVELATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS Romans 3:21-22

3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;—

- Righteousness means God's character.
- Righteousness means the perfection which God provides for man in Christ Jesus. When a man allows the Lord Jesus Christ to take his sins, he is given the righteousness of God. Christ robes the man in the righteousness of God Himself (2 Cor.5:21; Ph.3:9).

The word "**now**" is very important. There was a time before, hundreds and hundreds of years ago, God had patience in that He put up with man's attempts at self-righteousness through the law. "**But now**" the period of **God's righteousness is now revealed**; has come; **is manifested**, is brought to light without the law and the prophets. The Lord Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet totally apart from sin. It is the same— **the righteousness of God, "without the law."** The law fails in two critical areas:

1. The law does not allow disobedience. It requires obedience. Anyone who disobeys the law becomes a lawbreaker, a transgressor. He's guilty and is to be condemned.
2. The law does not have the power to make a person obedient. It does not have the power to prevent a person from disobeying. It only shows a person's disobedience and inadequate strength to be obedient. It only reveals a person's inability to secure any righteousness whatsoever by self-effort.

God's righteousness for man was foretold by the Old Testament Law which witnessed to (told about) His coming. Every time a man took his sacrifice to the Temple for a sin offering, confessed his sin, and killed the animal, he was testifying that he had faith in a righteousness that was not his own. Thus, the law bears witness to an external righteousness that God provides, but the law itself cannot provide. Likewise, **the prophets witnessed to the righteousness of God.** Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment of God's righteousness. In fact, Jesus Christ is God's righteousness; or to say it another way, the righteousness of God is Jesus Christ Himself. When Jesus Christ came to earth, He came to reveal the perfect righteousness of God—the Sinless life; the Perfect life; the Ideal life etc. Therefore, righteousness was made manifest without the law at the cross when *God the Father made God the Son to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (II Cor.5:21). God's righteousness, Jesus was made at the cross, but now comes to light first to the Jews and then to Gentiles without the law.

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:— The righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. It does not come to one who simply have faith in God, for the demons believe and tremble, but to those who by faith claim the name of Jesus Christ. Saving faith in Christ is a necessary part of righteousness God provides (Acts 4:12). Scripture is clear in its declaration that righteousness is for everyone; all. The right standing with God is available to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile. There is no difference.

II. THE NEED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS Romans 3:23

3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;— All have offended God's holy being and have broken God's righteous law, and all are short of God's glory. Therefore, all are under God's condemnation. Instead of man expressing God, man expresses sin and his sinful self. Hence, man falls short. Man was made by God in His image that man might express Him—His glory. The glory of God is God's standard for man. This means His moral glory. It means His excellence, splendor, brilliance, brightness, magnificence, preeminence, dignity, majesty, and grace. Lastly, Glory is light.

- John sees how bright the glory of God is when he has the vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:10-11).
- Jesus experienced the light of God's glory as his inner circle looks on at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt.17:1-2).
- Stephen sees the glory of God as he is stoned to death (Acts 7:55).
- Paul experienced the light of God's glory as he is struck down off his horse (Acts 22:6, 11).
- And Moses experienced the light of God's glory as he came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of testimony as the skin of His face shone brightly (Exo.34:29-30).

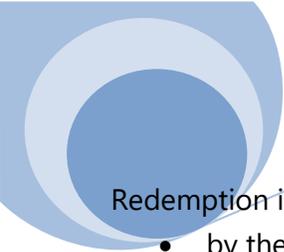
Although they saw and experienced the glory of God, they were all missed the mark; for they all have the sin nature, just like us; sin is present in all of us, and this makes us come short of being perfect of glorifying God.

III. THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS Romans 3:24

3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:— Our gift of righteousness is provided only through the action of God's redemption through Jesus Christ. His redemptive measure of His sacrifice, His cross, and His death brought it all about. Paul makes three observations about the justification of God.

1. Justification is a free gift of God. Being justified freely means being justified without any prior conditions being met.
2. Man in no way earns it. Man is justified by God's grace and by God's grace alone. Being justified by God's grace means it is graciously given. We do not merit justification, but we enjoy it. You cannot have both: merit and grace.
3. Justification is only provided through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Since the word redemption signifies a buying back, it must have been accomplished by the payment of a price. And, the price of our redemption was the blood of Jesus Christ (Matt.20:28, I Cor.6:20; I Pt.1:18-19).

Therefore, **we are justified** in the sight of God when the righteousness of Christ is placed upon us by the grace of God, freely and without cause. Only then, God views us as ransomed by the blood of Christ.



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Redemption is **not** brought about...

- by the life of Christ,
- by the power of Christ,
- by the example of Christ.

But, Scripture is abundantly clear about this. His sacrifice, His cross and His death are what brought about redemption. Because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ we are redeemed when God's very own Son paid the price on that cross!

IV. THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS Romans 3:25-26

3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;— Righteousness is by an act of God alone; the act of propitiation. "*Propitiation*" means to be a sacrifice, a covering, a satisfaction, a payment, an appeasement for sin. Two significant points:

1. God is the One who set forth Christ to be the propitiation for man's sins. "*Set forth*" means purposed, determined, resolved, and ordained Christ to be... And God set Christ before the world as the propitiation for the world's sins. It is appropriated to the sinner by faith.
2. For God to accept Christ as the propitiation for man's sin, the sacrifice would have to be Christ's blood— Christ's willingness to die for man. It meant the **supreme sacrifice** Christ paid for man's sins. It meant the **terrible sufferings** Christ underwent for man's sins. It meant the **voluntary laying down of His life** for man's sins; all on the cross that causes God to accept man.
 - *God's righteousness is seen in that He forgives sin through Jesus Christ.* Christ died for our sins, and God accepts His death as the propitiation or the sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, His forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ declares God's righteousness! The sacrifice was necessary because in the past God had not fully punished sin.
 - *God's righteousness is seen in His forbearance* (restraint), that is, in His patience and longsuffering with man's sin. God could have destroyed all flesh, but He didn't. God waited until Christ came before condemning sin in the flesh. In God's forbearance in holding back the punishment of sin shows and declares God's righteousness.

3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Righteous has one great purpose—to declare God's righteousness and justice. God is righteous and just, therefore, He always does what is right, and He always acts justly toward all of us. This is the reason He has provided a perfect righteousness for man.

- *God's righteousness is seen in His justice.* It was necessary to validate the justice of God. He did the right and just thing as He accepted the death of Christ as the substitute for our sins. He placed the punishment of sin upon Christ. And in Him being a just God, His righteousness is declared by His justice.
- *God's righteousness is seen in Him being the justifier of all who believe.* God takes our faith and counts it as righteousness. He takes our faith and judges us acceptable to Him. Therefore, all who believe in Jesus have been justified, thus declaring God's righteousness.

V. FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS Romans 3:27-31



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. The answer to where is boasting is that it is shut-out. There is no room for man's boasting in the plan of God. "*What caused boasting to be inappropriate?*" "*Is it by the law of works?*" – Paul answers, "*No, but by a law requiring faith.*" If man could work to be justified, then he would have reason to boast. But, "*we are saved by God's grace through faith, not of works.*" And why? – "*Lest any man should boast*" (Eph.2:8-9). When we consider that man is corruptible, and that man can do nothing beyond this life, then boasting is excluded.

3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Paul comes to the conclusion that a man is justified by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law. This says that faith justifies a man without the works of the law. Why does God save us by faith alone?

1. Faith eliminates human pride.
2. Faith exalts God, not people.
3. Faith makes salvation available to all.
4. Faith admits that we can't keep the law or measure up to God's standards—we need help.
5. Faith is based upon relationship with God, not on performance for God. We are to believe in God and His righteousness.

3:29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:— There is not a god of the Jews and another god of the Gentiles. There is but One God of Jews and Gentiles. Paul is a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but he is also called apostle to the Gentiles. God created everyone, therefore, He is the God of all. There are not different gods of the races and nations of the world; not a different god of Africa, and a different god of India, and a different god for Arabs, and a different god for Americans, and so on. Imagine the foolishness of such an idea, but some think that! There is only One God who created all things: "*One God, the Father of whom are all things and we in Him*" I Cor.8:6.

3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. It has been proven that there is One living God, and He alone justifies the Jews (the circumcised) by faith and justifies the uncircumcised (everyone else) through the same faith. Faith is the common denominator in which the living God upholds their justification.

3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. The answer to the question is God forbid! We do not void the law through faith. Jesus is the One who established the law by fulfilling both the statutes and penalty demanded by the law. This means: Jesus Christ established the law. He's everything that God said a man should be. He's the Ideal of all that God wants man to be. Therefore, Jesus Himself fulfilled the law perfectly. But, He also fulfilled the penalty of the law. He took the penalty and the punishment of man upon Himself and died for man. Man is thereby absolved from the penalty and punishment exacted by the law. Our faith does not nullify the law because we are justified by faith, but, we the believer establish the law when we admit we are a sinner—a law breaker. And in doing so, we admit that the law is good. It's good when it points out our sin. The law reveals sin. It makes us guilty and leads us to confess our need for help outside ourselves. It's good because it points man to Christ. It's good when we are obedient to it. Again, in so doing the believer's faith establishes that the law is good. Our faith is in One God. Therefore, in seeing what Christ has done <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>



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for the believer, the believer's faith upholds and establishes the law. It does not make the law of no affect or void.

SUMMARY:

Paul points out to the Jews that the period of God's righteousness was now revealed without the law and the prophets. But God's righteousness comes by faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (**3:21-22**).

All have offended God's holy being and have broken God's righteous law, and all are short of God's glory. Therefore, all are under God's condemnation. Instead of man expressing God, man expresses sin and his sinful self. Hence, man falls short (**3:23**).

Yet, man was freely justified by the Grace of God through the accomplishment of the redemption of Jesus Christ. Man is set free from death and hell. The redemptive measure to make us righteous was brought about by Jesus' cross, His sacrifice, and His death. (**3:24**).

God is the One who set forth Christ to be the propitiation to declare man's righteousness. In God's forbearance in holding back the punishment of sin shows and declares God's righteousness. God waited until Christ came before condemning sin in the flesh. The price paid was Jesus' blood and through our faith in Jesus' blood, our righteousness is satisfied. The animal sacrifice in the Old Testament never took away sin, but when Jesus died, He reached all the way back to Adam and took care of those sins. God accepted the death of Christ as the substitute for our sins and exacted the punishment for sin upon Christ. He did the right and just thing. And in this God is seen as a just God and justifies all who believe. God takes our faith and counts it as righteousness. He takes our faith and judges us acceptable to Him. Praise God! (**3:25-26**).

There is no room for man's boasting in the plan of God. A law of works causes men to be focused upon self. If man created himself and saved himself from sin and death by his own works and deeds, then, he is the one to be glorified. Therefore, the law of faith excludes boasting. God has provided the way for man to be saved from sin, death, and hell. Therefore, it's not a contest. Boasting should only be toward the Creator and not in man's own works. Therefore, in conclusion, man will learn that he is justified without the works of the law; without the deeds of the law. God created all, therefore, He is the God of all. There are not different gods of the races and nations of the world. It is only by faith that reveals only One God who deals with us all equally. He alone justifies the Jews (the circumcised) by faith and justifies the uncircumcised (everyone else) through the same faith. Jesus is the One who established the law by fulfilling both the statues and penalty demanded by the law. He's everything that God said a man should be. Therefore, Jesus Himself fulfilled the law perfectly. But, He also fulfilled the penalty and the punishment of the law upon Himself. Our faith does not nullify the law because we are justified by faith, but, we the believer establish the law when we admit we are a sinner—a law breaker. And in doing so, we admit that the law is good. It's good when it points out our sin. The law reveals sin. It makes us guilty and leads us to confess our need for help outside ourselves. It's good because it points man to Christ. It's good when we are obedient to it. Again, in so doing the believer's faith establishes that the law is good. Our faith is in One God. Therefore, in seeing what Christ has done for the believer, the believer's faith upholds and establishes the law. It does not make the law of no affect or void (**3:27-31**).