

Series: Romans
Title: The Righteousness of God
Text: Rom 3: 21-31
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Sinners are saved by the righteousness of God. It is righteousness which is of God: of God's providing, of God's doing, of God's applying. Sinners are saved by the righteousness of God.

Romans 3: 20: Therefore...

Since all are fallen in Adam. Since all are dead in trespasses and in sins. Since none can obey God's law

Romans 3: 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The law can only identify sin, condemn, and kill. The law is righteousness, but it can never produce righteousness. The law requires righteousness, but can never reveal righteousness.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 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: 23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25: Whom God hath set forth [foreordained] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26: To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27: Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29: *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30: Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

THE LAW AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

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

The righteousness of God is *without a sinners deeds to the law*. Even after conversion, our works and acts of obedience are not in any way connected with the law or with the righteousness of God. In Galatians 3, when Paul speaks of a professing believer going *back to the law for sanctification*, Paul calls it attempting to be justified/righteous by the law. Why? Because holiness/sanctification is not by our deeds to the law and has nothing to do with our deeds to the law. Christ sanctified his people as he justified us by fulfilling the law. So the person who turns to the law for holiness, God says is attempting to justify himself by the law. The sinner may only intend to use his deeds to the law to justify himself as a holy/sanctified man before men. But God says he is simply trying to justify himself, make himself righteous, by his deeds. But the righteousness of God which justifies the sinner is without the sinner's deeds to the law. We are not justified or sanctified by our deeds to the law.

Romans 9: 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of

the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33: As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Nor can the law reveal to us the righteousness which saves us from sin. The gospel alone does that.

Romans 1: 16: I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

But the righteousness of God *is witnessed by the law and the prophets*. The moral law bears witness to the perfection of the righteousness of God. It says this one is the righteousness of my precepts.

Isaiah 42: 21: The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable.

The ceremonial law bears witness to the righteousness of God in picture and type. The day of atonement was about the righteousness of God: the Lamb—the Scapegoat, the High Priest, the Mercy Seat.

The prophets bore witness of the righteousness of God.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Isaiah 53 is all about the righteousness of God.

Brethren, the righteousness of God is not a what but a who.

BY THE FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Rom 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 is not manifested by our faith *in* Christ but by the faith *of* Christ himself. I say it each time we read this and I say it again in case someone is listening for the first time. If your bible translates this verse as “faith *in* Christ”, throw it away and get one that reads “faith *of* Christ.” Whenever scripture says “*of* God” or “*of* Christ” it is speaking of that which is performed or provided by God himself, by Christ himself.

Matthew 11:2: Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

Acts 2:31: He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

When the bible speaks of “faith *in* Christ” it is speaking of the believer believing in Christ. By faith *in* Christ we receive the righteousness by the faith *of* Christ.

Galatians 2: 16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

So our text declares the righteousness of God is by the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. He accomplished purging his people of our sins and making his people the righteousness of God in him

2 Corinthians 5: 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Romans 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

God's Son established perfect righteousness for his people *by his obedience* unto the death of the cross and he is the Lord our Righteousness to everyone that believes on him. Through the gospel, he

2 Corinthians 10:5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Once God has brought to submit to Christ, trusting his obedience to make us righteous, then our desire is Paul's desire.

Philippians 3: 9: [to] be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

UNTO AND UPON ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE

Romans 3: 22:...unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. 23: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Now, hear this good news, the righteousness of God, the righteousness of Christ, supplies all the need of all who believe on him, no matter who you are

Christ's righteousness is *unto all that believe* in that his righteousness is appointed for them from eternity, provided for them, wrought out for them, directed and applied UNTO them.

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And Christ righteousness is *upon all that believe* in that it is put upon all of them by God as a robe of righteousness.

Isaiah 6: 10: I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

For all for whom Christ died, young or old, rich or poor, Jew or gentile, educated or uneducated, the righteousness of Christ justifies all that believe—for *there is no difference*. This phrase looks backward and forward. *There is no difference* in the righteousness of Christ. He loves all his people equally, died for them all equally and justifies us all equally whether we be weak in faith or strong in faith.

And righteousness must be by Christ because *there is no difference* in us by nature—“*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*” So the only way any sinner can be just with God is by Christ justifying us and giving us faith to receive it.

Sinner, believe on Christ and you shall be saved.

FREE TO HIS PEOPLE, COSTLY TO CHRIST

Romans 3: 24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

The righteousness of God is free to us because Christ paid so dearly to redeem us from the law’s curse.

All for whom Christ died, those he brings to believe on him, are justified. It means we have no record of sin past, present or future. Our justification is free. It cost us nothing. God did it.

Isaiah 44: 22: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Isaiah 52:3: For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

We are justified freely *by God’s grace*—by his unmerited favor. By grace he chose whom he would redeem. By grace he sent his Son who redeemed us. By grace he sent us the gospel and gave us life and faith to receive it

Yet, we must never forget, justification is free to us because it cost Christ his precious blood to redeem his people from the curse of the law.

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: 14: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Not only did he bear the shame of our sin, he bore our curse—the fierce fury of God’s wrath for three hours on the cross!

Lamentations 1: 12: *Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger.

God’s people are brought to do what the Psalmist said,

Psalm 107: 1: O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. 2: Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; 3: And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.”

SET FORTH TO DECLARE GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 3: 25: Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The reason God set Christ forth is to declare his righteousness. Our margin says the words "set forth" means "foreordained." It means from eternity, God set Christ forth or foreordained him a propitiation—a sacrifice, a mercy seat. Christ alone is where God will meet his people through faith in his blood.

God foreordained Christ to declare his righteousness in remitting sins that are past. Sins that are past are sins from the day Adam sinned and sins that are now put away forever. The reason God forbear with his people when we fell in Adam is because he would declare his righteousness in remitting our sins.

His righteousness is this. In Christ crucified, *God is just*. His law has been honored because each guilty sinner God saves he slew in Christ on the cross. He is just to declare us righteous, to impute righteousness to us, because our old man of sin is crucified and our new man is righteous in Christ.

Also, in Christ, *God is the Justifier* of all that believe in our Lord Jesus. We have nothing to do with justifying ourselves. God did it all in his Son

Romans 8:33: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

So God is just and the Justifier of every true believer. God has made justice and mercy meet in harmony in Christ.

Psalm 85: 10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

It is God's righteousness that sets the true and living God apart from all other man-made gods.

Isaiah 45: 21: Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me.

THE CONCLUSION

Romans 8: 27: Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29: Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

To be justified, to be righteous, is to have established the law. How do we establish the law?

Many religious people use verse 31 to say that believers are yet under the law who establish the law by our obedience to it. But is that the context of Romans 3 and 4? The context is just the opposite.

Remember, *the righteousness of God is without the law*—without our doing. So verse 31 does not mean we established the law by our doing. Righteousness, the establishing of the law, is by the faithfulness of Christ. So verse 31 does not mean we established the law by our doing. *Boasting is excluded*. So verse 31 does not

mean we established the law by our doing. *We conclude that a man is justified [establishes the law] by faith without the deeds of the law.* So verse 31 does not mean we established the law by our doing. *Seeing it is one God, which shall justify [establish the law for] the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.* So verse 31 does not mean we established the law by our doing.

So how do we establish the law—“*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law [through faith].*” Chapter 4 says even as Abraham established the law before the law was even given.

Romans 4:2: For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.
3: For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Now, sinner none of this will do you any good unless you repent from your pretend law-keeping, repent from your sins and believe on Christ. Sinner, hear this:

Romans 4: 23: Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24: But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25: Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Sinner, believe on Christ and his righteousness, his full establishment of the law, shall be yours. For all who now believe on him:

Romans 8:1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit

Amen!