

It Has Been Made Known!

Romans 3: 21-31

“²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”

I believe we all need to be thankful for what we have been given, and what we know. Yes, what we know, verses what we don't know? When I was in school, we didn't have “Google” or the internet for most of my school years. We had books, and lots of them to read.

Our Lord challenges us to live by the knowledge He has given us. And when we do, we find His blessings increase over and over again. So, Thanksgiving is a time when we acknowledge all that He has given to each of us. Praising the Lord. Why, because this knowledge includes all we need to know about living in a **“righteous”** lifestyle. Simply put, living a life in the right way before the Lord, as He defines it for us. This is the topic being discussed here today. Listen to this passage found in the **NLT translation**:

*“²¹ But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him (**righteousness**) without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²² **We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ.** And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.*

Thus, we become more like Him, more “righteous” in His sight. Not by accident, or simply hoping that we find that lifestyle, it is His design, and our choice. In truth, we should be thankful for that fact and promise given unto all of us!

He continues: (in the NLT)

*²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ **Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.** ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. **People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.** This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times*

past, ²⁶ **for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time.** God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and **he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.**

²⁷ Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸ So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. ²⁹ After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course, he is. ³⁰ **There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.** ³¹ **Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith, do we truly fulfill the law."**

Many are struggling to live for the Lord because they keep trying to do it on our own, without His power. Then, when we finally get it, when we give into His love and Grace, we will start living as we should. So here is an important question... **"What do we know about God's grace and love and what are the expectation He has for us as we live for Him in this world."** **By faith we fulfill the LAW!**

The truth is, we know a lot more than we want to admit sometimes. There are times when we even ignore that knowledge we have.

Illustration:

In 1829 a man named George Wilson was arrested for robbery and murder in a US mail heist. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Some friends intervened on his behalf and were able to obtain his pardon from President Andrew Jackson. But when told of this, Wilson refused it saying he wanted to die.

*Well, the sheriff didn't know what to do, how do you execute a man officially pardoned? An appeal was made to the President, who so perplexed he turned the matter over to the US Supreme court. Chief Justice John Marshall gave this ruling: **A pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends on its acceptance by the person implicated. Anyone under the sentence of death would hardly be expected to refuse a pardon, but if it's refused, it's no pardon.** Thus, George Wilson was executed while his signed pardon lay on the sheriff's desk!*

In the same way, God has offered His gift of divine purity to every person, a gift that not only provides pardon from eternal condemnation, but offers much, much more. However, this gift of Christ must be personally accepted to be personally beneficial. We each have to accept it!

Righteousness, is an interesting word. It is also a word that many followers never think about, or, discover. So, why we are told to live by it? Righteousness to the Christian, should be as normal as mud to a pig. Why do I say that, well, let me tell you short story to illustrate.

Illustration:

*There was a time when I took our youth group from Spokane to Double K Ranch, a ranch owned and operated by the Pacific Northwest Church of God Ministries. One of the activities our youth participated in was trying to catch a greased pig. **(Any of you ever try that?)***

Now, these little animals God created, with curly tails and an oinking sound, are hard enough to catch without greasing them, slap a little grease on them, and they are almost impossible to catch. But we all tried! Slipping, sliding, covered with mud, front and back, head to toe, and that was the youth group.

*To some that may have seemed normal, acceptable, or even enjoyable. For the pig, they were in seventh heaven. Wallowing in the mud, messy and running from here to there, it looked as if they enjoyed every moment of it. **As humans, most of us don't enjoy wallowing in the mud...***

Righteousness to a Christian, should be as mud is to the pig. It should surround us, encompass us, as we live in it. Still, many find **"righteousness"** to be somewhat difficult. Why is that? I believe it is because we try to live righteously without selling out for the Lord. Before we decide to live in it, or, to ignore it, all of us should look closer at what God's Word has to say about **"Righteousness."**

First - Righteousness, from where?

Paul told us, ***"Righteousness comes from faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe."*** (v.22)

Some may have thought they could become righteous by simply doing what is right in God's sight. Trying hard to be correct in our actions? Trying hard to live a ***"good life?"*** However, Paul says, ***"NO,"*** that's like trying to catch a greased pig. The righteousness we are seeking comes from ***"faith in Jesus."***

Isaiah was told,

"I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel." ISA 46:13

The righteousness we seek for, is found in the heart and life of Jesus Christ. Once He is our Savior, we have everything needed to grow in righteousness.

Illustration:

*A heavy snow storm closed the schools in one small town. When the children returned to school a few days later, one grade school teacher asked her students whether they had used the time away from school constructively. **"I sure did, teacher,"** one little girl replied. **"I just prayed for more snow."***

As little children, we often desire for things that are just outside of our grasp. As adults, we should desire to know the Lord Jesus better and more intimately, as our hopes for today and tomorrow change while we discover ***"his righteousness."*** Our focus in life should be growing in an awareness of what He wants us to do. How we are to live.

Second - Am I unusual?

Paul then said, ***"There is no difference, for all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*** (vv.23-24)

We are all the same in this matter! Remember, Paul states that the ***"righteousness"*** we are seeking, is for all who believe, therefore, everyone stands on the same level. All of us.

The Jews had a tendency to feel as though they were a **“cut above”** the rest of the people, since they are His chosen people. Yet, here we discover, that all of us, Jew, Greek, black or white, young old, whatever nationality or race, are all the same when it come to His Grace and the righteousness of God. Paul says, **“To all who believe.” That is a promise we need to hold up to this world.** The question is: **“Do we believe?”**

What do I mean by “Believe?” It is - **“an act of consenting.”**

The idea that we have chosen to do something with our lives which brings glory and honor to God. If we believe, then we act, we follow, we submit to, we live for Him in our everyday life, to the best of our ability. In a more worldly term, **“I put my money where my mouth is.”**

To all who believe, Paul says, and does something about it, these are those who will discover His righteousness. It is our choice. I don't care who you are, no of us are good enough on your own to merit this love, this is grace from Jesus. Given to all who seek Him!

Many of us have felt like we are failures, because nobody could be as bad as I have been, as wrong as me, or as helpless as I am? I must be unusual. Yet, there are no differences between any of us. We're not so unusual.

Illustration: *Did you know:*

- Einstein spent a lifetime looking for a theory that doesn't exist. People thought he was usual.
- Babe Ruth holds a record for the most strikeouts.
- Columbus never did make it to India. There were many who felt he was unusual.
- And Moses never made it to the Promised Land. There is no doubt that many who followed him, thought he was unusual. Imagine that, Moses never got to see the fulfillment of his dream. But that's not unusual either...

God sent His Son for us, all of us, Jew, Gentile, Inventors, Baseball players, Sailors, and even His chosen leaders who served Him faithfully. Many of them did not get what they set out for, yet they never lost hope. We should never lose hope! The promises and hope of Christ, are for all who believe, including us.

Lastly - By faith, we live for Him!

Paul spends most of the rest of this passage stating **“just because we live by faith, it doesn't mean we can live any old way we wish to.”** Our Lord has a plan for our lives, which includes living by His standards. If we truly live by faith in Christ, then we will seek to live our lives in ways which please Him. In fact, it should cause us to live all the more by the law, because we have a hope **many don't know or have.** I wonder, if we truly see Him as He is, and know the truth of His great love, then why are we so stale in our walk?

The answer: Perhaps we have lost sight of the intimacy we had with Him. We need to stay close to Him, seeking to understand His righteousness as we walk hand in hand.

Illustration:

When my children were small, they would often walk holding hand, they didn't want to let go. They knew that this is My Father's hand, and as I hold it, I am safe, and I have control over life because, Mom or Dad is here.

The same thing is true for each of us, as we walk with the Lord. He, is guiding us, leading us, encouraging us and helping us, and when we let go, we wonder. We begin to feel lost, and don't know what we are doing, or where we are going. Just as my children did when they were small, holding my hand tightly, so should we hold the hand of Christ tightly.

When we say we are walking by faith, if that is true, then we are walking holding His hand tightly, trusting in Him! I don't care how old we are, or what we are facing.

- **Righteousness from faith in Christ**
- **Am I unusual? No**
- **Holding on to Christ, with all I have...**

Righteousness is the result of an intimate relationship with God, holding His hand, seeking His advice, and doing His will as we walk side by side...