

Romans 3:21-31

“Righteousness from God - Defined”

5/09/12

Introduction

- The Content of Romans is not hard to understand
 - As long as you remember it is helpful to compare the content of Romans to a great theological city

The Book of Romans – The Great Theological City

#1 – The Courthouse – Romans 1-5

- Paul introduces the concept of righteousness by faith, but in order to show us our great need of salvation he spend the first five chapters showing are we are all guilty before God

#2 – The Power Plant – Romans 6-8

- Chapters 6-8 help us understand that is power to live out this Christian life God is calling us to – Pastor Rob is doing an in-depth series from these three chapters on our weekend services, but we will cover them as well, just at a much more rapid pace

#3 – The Synagogue – Romans 9-11

- in chapters 9-11 Paul shares with us how Israel fits into God plan now that there is this new thing called the church and answers the questions, has the church replaced Israel, where do they fit into God’s plan and how does God’s sovereignty fit with man’s free will – great stuff in this section

#4 – The Church – Romans 12-16

- in Paul’s final section of this book we will study how the church is practically suppose to operate in light of the all the amazing truths about God is this book – Paul ends all of his letters very practically Romans is no exception

Now last week as we saw that not only is the heathen that is far from God and has not had any religious upbringing guilty before God because He denies the witness of God in nature and in himself

- not only is the heathen guilty, but last week we saw so is the religious person
 - the one who is morally good
 - the one who is brought up to know God

We are guilty as well because even though we may not participate in human sacrifice or idol worship – we are not innocent before God as well

- Because we don’t live up to God’s standard of perfection
 - In reality we don’t even live up to what we think righteousness should be, let alone God
- And because of these things are we considered and left off last week, we are all guilty before God
 - All of us, Jew, Gentile, religious person, nonreligious person
 - We are all guilty

And now that we understand we are all guilty, now God can give to us the third great reveal of this book

- Paul has already told us “The Wrath of God is Revealed” in chapter 1, verse 18
 - And we looked at the fact that means, God’s wrath is totally justifiable – why
 - Because of the second reveal...
- Man is guilty
 - God’s wrath is justifiable – why???
 - All of us are guilty – so now...

- So now the third big reveal in the courthouse, Paul tells us in verse 21 of chapter 3
 - The Righteousness of or more literally “from God” apart from the Law is revealed

In the courthouse, Paul has proved, he has revealed that we are all sinners, and God’s wrath and our judgment is totally justifiable

- but now he wants to, reveal, Paul wants to explain, how it is we can all be saved, the good news in all of this - and friends this is good news...

Donald Grey Barnhouse, a great bible teacher of the previous generation drew a heart around these verses, Romans 3:21-31, is his person Bible, not to be cute like a girl, who sparkles and highlights verses, but he said in his journal that these verses we are covering tonight are the most important in all of the Bible. They are the heart he said, of the gospel”

- so we need to open our hearts and our minds to what Jesus wants to speak to us tonight
 - as Paul reveals to us – A righteousness from God

Now Paul reveals this Righteousness from God is three ways

- He defines it in the verses we are going to cover tonight
 - And then next week in chapter 4 Paul is going to illustrate the truth of Righteousness from God from the life of Abraham in the book of Genesis
 - And finally in chapter 5 he is going to explain how righteousness from God is possible

So tonight – Righteousness from God – Defined

- Next week – Righteousness from God – Illustrated
- Then 2 weeks – Righteousness from God – Explained – for those of you outlines, tonight...

Righteousness from God Defined – Romans 3:21-31

#1 – It’s apart from the Law – Romans 3:21

#2 – It’s through faith – Romans 3:22-23

#3 – It’s by the work of Christ – Romans 3:24-31

- So lets examine those three definitions of Righteousness from God one at a time

Righteousness from God Defined – Romans 3:21-31

#1 – It’s apart from the Law – Romans 3:21

- you see up to this point the Jews believed they were deriving their Righteousness from the Law
 - they were wrong as we will see in just a minute, they were not righteous by keeping the law
 - But the method of being right with God was pretty straight forward in their mind
- You keep the law – you are righteous
 - You don’t keep the law – you are guilty

Now in their defense they were right – that was the standard

- If you were a keeper of the law, you would have been righteous in the sight of God
 - But the problem is, in reality was no one keeps the law, not all the time

In fact by trying to derive their righteousness from the law, they were missing the point completely

- In Galatians Chapter 3 Paul tells us that the purpose of the Law was to be a teacher, showing us our need for Christ

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” – Galatians 3:24

- The law was not there to purify, it is there to teach you something
 - You need a savior

In other places of scripture, the law is compared to a mirror

You know you wake up in the morning – look in the mirror and say “Wow – I need to change” – this is what the law was intended to do – as we see the standard we respond – I can’t do it, I need a savior

But the Pharisees were trying to derive their righteousness from the law, but as you can imagine – that would produce a great sense of guilt

- I can see them – each thinking the other was actually keeping the law, because that is what they would tell each other
 - And then they would wonder, what is wrong with me, Hatri over there is keeping the law, Solomo is keeping the Law, but I am just wicked, what is wrong with me
- But the reality – no one was keeping the law, not perfectly, everyone was under guilt

And so Paul reveals another righteousness

- one that is not derived by you keeping the law
 - in fact it is “apart from the law”
- this is really good news, because if our righteousness was up to our keeping the law, everyone of us would be in serious trouble
 - more than that, we would be without hope
 - but praise God – Paul begins this definition of righteousness from God as being apart from the law

And more than that, it has always been that way

- Righteousness from the law is not something new with the New Testament, as we will see next week when Righteousness from God is illustrated by Paul in the life of Abraham, it has always been the way
 - Paul says that here in verse 21, by saying, it was witnessed by the law and the prophets
- Anytime you see the phrase –

“The Law and the Prophets” – is what they called The Old Testament in the New Testament times

- Obviously before there was something called the New Testament, they would call the scriptures they had the Old Testament, so it was referred to as...

Righteousness from God Defined – Romans 3:21-31

#1 – It’s apart from the Law – Romans 3:21

#2 – It’s through faith – Romans 3:22-23

- Next Paul defines Righteousness from God as through faith
 - Righteous from God friends is not from behaving in particular way, but it is firmly rooting in believing
- It is not through your keeping of the law, that would never work
 - But it is through faith

Now understand “faith” is only as good as the object of our faith, the object we are trusting in

- you know if you came to me and said, Pastor Jason, I lost my job, so now the bank is coming after my home, I am going to be homeless
 - now if you told me that and then said, “don’t you worry”
 - don’t worry??? – trust in God???
 - No, trust in God??? – trust in me!!! - I will take care of your home loan” – what do you need \$200,000?? \$300,000?? – just name your price, trust in me and my bank account
- Oh friends, you might be really happy when you leave that meeting with me, check in hand for \$200,000 – because you have seen these pastors on TBN with their private jets and mansions and maybe you have been fooled into think that is how all pastors

roll – so you are excited, I am trusting in Pastor Jason for \$300,000 – amen – you are happy when you leave, check in hand

- But you are going to be really sad when you go to cash it
- The bank teller is going to say to you – are you serious – I’m looking at his account – is this a joke?

You see to have faith in “me” for financial security, or to beat up someone who has wronged you

- oh you better watch out – Pastor Jason is coming to get ya!
 - That faith, though I appreciate your confidence in me as a boxer or a banker, but that confidence is really misplaced
 - You will find out there is nothing there, there

But Paul doesn’t say this Righteousness from God is through faith in Pastor Jason, or Pastor Rob or your husband, or your wife, or your boss

- nope – our faith is in nothing less than the Rock that is higher than you or I could ever be, - Jesus Christ
 - our faith is in Him
 - and why it is so essential that our faith is in Him?
 - Well because of the work that He did to secure our salvation that Paul address in our third definition of Righteous from God
- It’s apart from the law, by faith and...

Righteousness from God Defined – Romans 3:21-31

#1 – It’s apart from the Law – Romans 3:21

#2 – It’s through faith – Romans 3:22-23

#3 – It’s by the work of Christ – Romans 3:24-31

- It is essential that our righteousness be apart from the law, because you will never live up to the law
 - Through faith, again because it is not going to be through you and your action
 - It is essential that your faith is in Jesus because only He has done the work necessary to save you
 - You haven’t – He has!

Now, Bible students, listen up – the work that Christ has done for you is described in four words listed in the verses that we just read and all of you need to understand what they mean tonight – so ready students

3 Words that describe the Work of Christ for you

#1 – Justified

#2 – Redeemed

#3 – Propitiation

- We need to understand these words, which I know each of them sound like really hard words if you are somewhat new to Bible study
 - They sound like “Theology” kind of stuff
- But precious ones understand – “Theology” simply means the study of God
 - And the more I understand who He is and what He has done for me
 - The more I simply fall in love with Him
- And like Donald Barnhouse, even as a self respecting man, I start drawing hearts in my Bible because these things are so radical
 - What I am mean???

3 Words that describe the Work of Christ for you

#1 – Justified – Transfer of Innocence

- the word means to transfer innocent
 - or many of you have heard the little helpful memory phrase – justified – just as if I'd never sinned
 - and that does a good job of helping to remember what Jesus has done for you

But justification goes further than that; it is more than just “as if it never happened”

- Innocence is transferred to you, not just declared upon you
 - And I'll explain what I mean

I know it is not good to talk about the dead, but I thinking about this as it relates to Michael Jackson – twice he was accused of a crime and twice either through settling the case or an innocent verdict, before his death, he walked around as a free man as if he never did anything wrong – he was declared innocent - But how many of you would have taken your kids by there and let them stay with ole King of Pop, I wouldn't (Honey, he innocent, lets take the kids to Neverland Ranch) – no way

I have told you guys about my one and only ticket. I was hurry to get back to school, wanting to speed buy not wanting to be caught, I took side streets. And there is this wide residential street, where the speed limit is 35. I was going 75. An off duty police man was so upset, he gave me a ticket. I was busted. Now 2 years later, I go to renew my license, and at the DMV, the lady said, because you have a perfect driving record just pay 10 bucks and it's done. Now being stupid I ask what about my accident and huge ticket. And she said what accident, what ticket. They weren't there. Now God, Fresno courts, I don't know why, but to the state it is as if they never happened.

There had been an acquittal, as if he had done nothing wrong

- But there certainly has not been a transfer of innocence
 - No body I know believes it, except those extreme, you know what I mean
 - Its same thing with OJ Simpson – I don't know anyone who is like, when is the LAPD going to find the real killer
 - We know who the real killer is – He went to USC – Pastor Rob's favorite university by the way
 - He didn't go to UCLA – the University of Christians Living Awesome Christian lives
- Am man, where am I – anyway – OJ was declared innocent of that crime – but innocence wasn't transferred by the verdict

But friends that is exactly what has happened with us

- Satan accuses us – and He is right
 - But Jesus doesn't respond “He is a sinner, but I died for that sin so its like it never happened”

Our forgiveness is even greater

- It is if God says, “What sin?????” – He is innocent of the things you accuse him of
 - Radical, amazing – but not cheap

Salvation might be free for you and me to receive, but it cost Jesus dearly to provide

- And we see that in the other terms you need to learn tonight...

3 Words that describe the Work of Christ for you

#1 – Justified - Transfer of Innocence

#2 – Redeemed – To buy in order to set free

- the word redemption as we have looked at before comes from the slave markets in Greece. Once in a while a rich man would come and buy a slave, for the purpose not of working him or her to the bone, not of adding them to his or her household – which was common
 - no – once in a while a rich man would buy a slave for the one purpose of setting that slave free, of liberating him or her from the bondage they were in

And the Word used to describe that process they would go through Paul uses to describe what Jesus did for you and me

- We were in bondage to sin – and the price for that bondage was death, separation from God –
 - It was God who declared that was the way it was going to be – and so it was – Jesus was separated from the Father, He paid the price
 - But in order to set you free - how???

3 Words that describe the Work of Christ for you

#1 – Justified - Transfer of Innocence

#2 – Redeemed - To buy in order to set free

#3 – Propitiation – The turning away of wrath

- Our sin produced a debt, a price needed to be paid for that sin

You see it's not just our sin is bad, it is bad for us

- But our sin also offended a Holy God, who declared that sin must be punished

F.F. Bruce one of the most prominent NT scholars of our time says that this word was used 20 times in the OT to describe the golden cover of the Ark of the Covenant, also known in English as the mercy seat

- The reason it is used here is because of that picture – remember the mercy seat was where the High Priest would go into the holy of holies one day a year, the Day of Atonement and seven times sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on that mercy seat
 - He did this as the day spoke of – so atonement would be made for the people sin – atonement, a bonus word for you bible students to know tonight is easy to remember by breaking the word up – at one ment – the people of Israel who were separated from God because of their sin, we at that moment – at one with God – the sacrifice had been made

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins – with the shedding of blood, the punished was fulfilled

- In a much greater degree was the process of Jesus blood, a propitiation, it made us at one with God as the righteous requirements of the law and breaking the law were fulfilled once and for all in His sacrifice

You see we see in scripture many things about God but considering two – He is just, meaning He always does the right and fair thing, but then He is also all Loving

These two attributes meet at the cross of Jesus Christ

- God is just, sin must be punished
 - I mean You and I see the sickness of sin, and if you can imagine God sees that with pure eyes, and not just my sin, but the sin of the world – there is Righteous anger

But the Holiness of God, not able to overlook sin, and the love of God, not willing that any should perish due to sin – resulted in propitiation

- It resulted in God taking that wrath He felt toward sin and hurling it upon Himself – amazing the love of Christ
 - You see in the cross of Jesus Christ we see how God really feels about sin
 - He hates it – we wink and play with sin

- But sin ripped apart His son
- The cross shows me what God really feels about sin, but is also shows me what He really feels about you
 - Willing to go through all of that – for you, because He loves us so much

What does this mean to us practically???

- Well as Paul sums it up there is to be “no boasting”
- No boasting and much rejoicing

We want to drop the pride

- God got a pretty good deal when He got me

We want to drop the whining

- a great brother in this church when I ask him how he is doing always responds, better than I deserve
 - that is so right

I deserve judgment

- If Jesus was spit on and betrayed, what makes you and I think we deserve any better from this world
 - So....

Stop the pride

Stop the whining

Start the rejoicing, start the worship

- because all of us, Jew, Gentile, heathen, hypocrite, and holy roller
 - we are all saved
- Apart from the Lord
- By faith in Jesus
- Through the work of Christ on the cross
 - Justifying us – innocence transferred to us
 - Redeeming us – paying our price to set us free
 - The Propitiation for us – the very debt we owed, paid by Him showing the Love of God, and appeasing the wrath God, showing the justice of God

This is the definition of how we are all saved

- but some Jews would say, I don't think so
 - I don't think that is the way it has always been
 - So Paul then moves on from Righteous from God – defined to Righteousness from God illustrated
- In chapter 4 Paul uses the illustration of Abraham, the Father of the Jewish people to show how salvation has always been by grace through faith, apart from the law
 - And we will look at that illustration next week together, hope you can be with us and we unpack chapter 4 next week.