

Title: Justification through Faith

Text: Romans 3: 20-31

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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. 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;

Subject: Justification through Faith

Proposition: When God makes us know we are sinners, the gospel—the good news—is that Christ justified us and God imputes his righteousness to us through faith, apart from our works.

Christ Jesus, God's Son is the Righteousness of God. He gets all the glory! The only way God will accept sinners is if we are robed in Christ's righteousness alone. God imputes Christ righteousness to us through faith, apart from our works. The only way we establish the law of God in perfect righteousness is through faith in Christ!

THEREFORE

The text begins with the word "Therefore." The Holy Spirit declared through Paul that there is none righteous, not one. He declared the sins of the Gentiles. Then he declared that the Jews were guilty of the same sins. The Holy Spirit knows what self-made religious man thinks. So after declaring the awful sins of the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit turns to Pharisees, Jewish religious men and says,

Romans 2: 1: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest **DOEST THE SAME THINGS.**

He is not speaking of only outward sins. But this speaks of the vile sin-nature. For some reason men do not think they are sinners, are not as damnable, if their sin is only inward. But having a sin-nature is to be guilty and sinful like the Gentiles were outwardly. Christ said to the Pharisees

Luke 11:39: And the Lord said...Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Matthew 15: 19...out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20: These are the things which defile a man:...

A sinner must be born-again of the Spirit of God. A new nature must be created by Christ our Holiness being formed in us.

Romans 2: 28: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; 29: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God.

So the Spirit of God moves Paul to conclude.

Romans 3: 9: What then? are we [Jews] better *than [those Gentiles]*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10: As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12: They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one...19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 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.

No sinner can be justified before God by keeping the law. God did not give the law for us to seek life by it. God tells us clearly "*by the law is the knowledge of sin.*"

Romans 5: 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

Galatians 3: 21: *Is the law then against the promises of God?* God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The righteousness of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

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 BY FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST...

The righteousness of the law is manifested. This righteousness is witnessed by the law and the prophets. All the law and the prophets bear witness that Christ is the Righteousness of God.

We see this in type. Moses was both a prophet and he represented the law because the law was given through him. By Moses not being able to take the children of Israel into the promised land, we see a picture that the law cannot justify us and make us accepted with God. But Moses—the law and the prophet—laid his hands on Joshua, bearing witness that Joshua would lead the children of Israel into the promised land. Joshua is the same as Jesus—Savior. Joshua typified Christ. Moses laying his hand on Joshua pictured the law and the prophets bearing witness that the Lord Jesus is the Righteousness of God who delivers his people into the promised land of heaven.

The Lord Jesus declared this. On the road to Emmaus, Christ declared he is the Righteousness of God which all the law and the prophets bear witness of.

Luke 24: 27: And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Romans 1: 1: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,

The Lord Jesus is the Seed of Woman who Moses declared in Genesis 3:16. Christ is the lamb slain in place of Adam and Eve. God put the coats of skins on Adam and Eve. Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer sinner through faith in Christ.

Abel came to God through faith in the blood of Christ. That is who his lamb typified. God accepted Abel because he came through faith in the righteousness of Christ alone.

The Passover Lamb is Christ.

Isaiah declared Christ is the Righteousness of God in Isaiah 53. All the law and the prophets bear witness that Christ Jesus is the Righteousness of God.

Righteousness is manifest "*by faith of Jesus Christ.*" The righteousness of God is manifest by the obedience of Christ unto the death of the Christ. Most newer translations of the Bible read "the righteousness of God by faith IN Jesus Christ." But verse 22 says the righteousness of God is manifest "by faith OF Jesus Christ." The faith OF Jesus Christ is Christ's faithfulness—Christ's obedience. Sinners believe IN Jesus Christ that we might be justified 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.

JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER

By Christ Jesus the Lord laying down his life on the cross, the righteousness manifest is that God is both just and the justifier of his people.

Romans 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.

In order to show his elect mercy, God had to honor his law because God is holy; he will by no means clear the guilty. By Christ taking the place of God's elect and bearing our sin and our curse, he honored God's law. God is just in Christ.

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

By Christ putting away the sin of his people on the cross, God is the Justifier.

2 Corinthians 5: 18...all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21: For He made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

By Christ bearing the sins of his people, God was just to impute our sin to Christ and pour out justice upon him. Since Christ gave God's justice the full payment it demanded, now God is just to impute Christ's righteousness to us who believe. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Righteousness of God.

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.

HOW DO WE OBTAIN THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

The one-way sinners obtain the righteousness of God and establish the whole law is through faith in Christ.

Romans 3: 22: the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ [is] unto all and upon all them that believe: 23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

There is no other way we can obtain the righteousness of God, except through faith in his Son. His Son is the Righteousness God requires.

Romans 3: 24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation [a mercy seat] through faith in his blood,

In the holiest of holies, there was a mercy seat, over the law. The high priest entered once a year on behalf of the children of Israel alone. But not without blood. He entered with the blood of the lamb slain in their place. He sprinkled the blood seven times on the mercy seat. In type and picture, atonement was made for the children of Israel who came to God in the lamb. Christ is our High Priest and the Lamb who shed his own blood in place of his people and redeemed his people. He justified us freely by his blood.

Hebrews 9:12 : Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us

Christ is the mercy seat. God receives the sinner only through faith in Christ's blood.

Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 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;

This declares three things.

One, our boasting is excluded by faith. We do not establish the law by our doing. Christ did it. His righteousness is imputed to us through faith in him.

Romans 3: 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.

Two, it is only through faith in Christ that God justifies all his elect--Jew and Gentile. It is God that justifies all his people, Jew and Gentile. Christ's righteousness is given us only through faith in Christ.

Romans 3: 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 [elect among the Jews] by faith, and uncircumcision [elect among the Gentiles] through faith.

Three, the Spirit of God answers an objection. He declares it is through faith in Christ that we establish the law. We do not establish it by our obedience. Christ established the law. Through faith, God imputes to the believer the perfect obedience of Christ as being our obedience. God imputes Christ's righteousness to us.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law [through faith in Christ]

We are accused of being anti-nomians, that is, of making void the law because we believe that the only way we establish the law is through faith in Christ. But we do not make void the law through faith, faith in Christ is the only way we establish the law. The next chapter gives Abraham as the example. Abraham established the law 430 years before the law was given at Sinai. How? Through faith in Christ.

Romans 4: 1: What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 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. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Sinner, turn from trying to make yourself righteous by your law-keeping and believe on Christ. Christ is the Righteousness of God. God only imputes Christ's righteousness to us through faith in his Son.

Believer do not turn back again to trust in your law-keeping. We have never kept it in the righteousness God demands. Do as Paul. Paul declared what ever believer wants. We want to...

Philippians 3:9...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:

Amen!