

## **SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

### **Bible Study/Prayer meeting**

**Date 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Preacher Pastor Philip Knowles, Hymns Read Romans 3:21-26 Text Romans 3:21-26**

**Series – The Doctrine of God series (21) Title The Righteousness Of God**

As we continue our study in the doctrine of God, seeking to grow in grace and be strong in the Lord, today we consider the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God follows on from the holiness of God because **the righteousness of God is the outworking of God's holiness.**

The word **holiness** means **to separate, or to be set apart**, the idea is to separate from and unto.

God's holiness means He is separated from all that is evil and defiling, therefore, all God does will be right or righteous, this includes rewards for obedience and punishment for disobedience.

God has revealed Himself through His word as **righteous** or **righteousness**. **Romans 3:22** **“the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.”**

**Psalm 11:7** **For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; Ps 92:2** **“...righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.**

**Ps 92:15** **“The LORD is upright...there is no unrighteousness in Him.**

**Psalm 145:7** they.. **“shall sing of thy righteousness.”**

**R o m a n s 1 : 1 7** “ *F o r t h e r e i n*  
*is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it*  
*is written, The just shall live by faith.*”

**Revelation 16:5** “*Thou art righteous, O Lord...*”

*Jesus Christ while praying called God in John 17:25 “O*  
*righteous Father...”*

With the Lord help we will consider some though regarding the  
righteousness of God.

### **I FIRST, THE STANDARD OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

The standard of God's righteousness is perfect conformity,  
obedience or agreement to His holy law, which is His own divine  
standard.

The Hebrew word for **righteous or righteousness** is the same  
for **justice**.

While **righteousness**, and **justice** are distinct, yet both flow from  
**holiness**.

God does right because He is holy. His justice or judgment is  
always righteous. **Psalm 145:17** “*The LORD is righteous in all*  
*His ways, and holy in all His works.*”

Therefore, it's interesting to note that the word **righteousness**  
comes from a word which means **straight, level, or that which**  
**is straight**.

The idea of the word is to expose something that is crooked,  
showing it doesn't match up.

There must be examination, but what is this examination based  
upon? or what is the standard or line are we following.

For example, think of building something, lets say's a wall, to  
know its straight or level, we use a level or lever to measure, to  
see if the wall runs in line, to see if its straight.

If the level is straight then the wall is straight.

But we don't look at the wall we are building and compare it with other walls or parts of another wall as the standard, because if any part of the other wall is not level, not straight, then the rest of the wall we are making be will crooked.

When it comes to God's standard, His standard is His Holy law.

God uses His moral law as summarised for us in the Ten Commandments, as the measurement or level for humanity.

Or we can say like this, God will judge men according to His law, His righteous standard.

God's standard is His own moral law as revealed at the very beginning of creation, written on the mind and heart of Adam; and plainly in view throughout the early history of man as recorded in Genesis.

God's law was stated again in Ex 20, but please notice this was not the first time the law was given, but the first time the law was recorded in writing, the law was written in stone, in Exodus 20.

On that occasion at Mt Sinai, God audibly or externally, spoke His commandments. His voice was heard.

He said in **Exodus 20: 22** "***I have talked with you from heaven***", what God said was then written by God Himself on the two tables of stone, which **Exodus 31:18** calls the "***two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God***"

Now if you remember after Israel sinned in creating the golden calf to worship in the place of God, Moses then took the two tablets of stone and they were broken by Moses.

However, they were written again by the finger of God as stated by **Deut 5:22**.

Moreover, the giving of the moral law shows that it is a reflection of God's own nature.

Paul speaks in **Rom 7:12&14** of the moral law and underlines certain details about it as the standard of righteousness that is required.

God's law, His standard, is **holy, just, good and spiritual** and it is such because God is holy, just, good and spiritual.

The law is a reflection of the very nature of its Giver.

**God's law is holy because God is holy.** **Exodus 15: 11** He is glorious in His holiness, **1 Sam 2: 2** perfect in His holiness, and **Lev 19:2** He demands the same holiness from men, "**be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.**"

Then **God's law is just because God is just.** **Acts 7: 52** Christ as God is the **Just one**. He lived in perfect conformity to His own moral law, and the same is required of men.

Moreover, **God's law is good because God is good,** In **Matt 19:17** Christ is spoken of as the good master. The law is like its giver, namely good and demands this goodness from men.

Paul also states that **God's law is spiritual because God is Spirit.** we have thought upon this point when we considered the Spirituality of God.

God's standard of righteousness is perfection, absolute conformity to God's law. **James 2:10** "**For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.**" To break one of God's law is to break them all.

Therefore, by measuring ourselves according to or to line up against God's word shows we have failed, we are imperfect and thereby are crooked having gone astray.

**So man then seeks to remove the standard to suit himself.**

By doing so man becomes his own standard, as in the days of the Judges, where **Judges 21:25** states “...*every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*”

He judges his life in comparison to everyone else, as the self righteous Pharisee, who in **Luke 18:11-12** “*prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*”

Man judges himself or basis his own examination by matching his life against others.

And such a standard is imperfect, and unacceptable to God.

God is righteous He must judge in righteousness. He is righteous, Holy and just.

**Ps 45:7** “*Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.*” Since God is righteous, He can never act unrighteous in all His ways, and works, or His rewards and punishment.

Because God is unchanging, his law does not change. His standard by which He judges will not change. **Ps 119:142** “*Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.*”

**II SECOND, THE REQUIREMENT OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

God requires of humanity perfect obedience to His standard.

Remember, since God's law, His standard was written on Adam's heart at creation, then Adam was created under this law and was commanded to give this perfect obedience, demanded by God.

God entered into a covenant of works with Adam, this was the only time a covenant with God, depended upon man.

Now let me stress, there are some who deny such teaching because the word covenant or the phrase covenant of works is not found in this passage, and so they put it down to the error of the reformers, covenant theology. Nonsense.

It is the same with the word Trinity, the word is not used in the Bible, but the teaching and meaning of the word is taught in scripture.

Therefore, the covenant of works is taught in Genesis 2.

God said to Adam, in **Genesis 2:17-18** ***And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: <sup>17</sup> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.***

In other words, do this, disobey and thou will die, but do it, obey and thou shalt live.

Paul said it like this in **Galatians 3:10** ***“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.***

If you take out the negative, just at this moment in the message, and the see Adam was **to continue in all things that God has written in the book of the law to do them, what God required of Him** which was to perfectly obey His command.

By doing so, He would show love to God and then love to his neighbour or fellow mankind, which at time was His wife Eve.

**There were rewards for obedience but punishment for disobedience.**

However, Adam disobeyed God, he failed to give God what God required of him. He failed to give to God a perfect obedience to His law.

**This is then what is termed the fall of man into sin.**

Adam on that day in the Garden of Eden entered this covenant on behalf or representing all mankind that would soon follow. What would be true of Adam would be true of all humanity.

**Romans 5:12** “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*”: From that very moment Adam sinned, all mankind sinned and fell in him and with him.

**Romans 3:23** “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*”; the glory of God is His standard of perfect obedience to His law.

The words **come short** mean *to miss the mark, or fall behind*.

The idea is often used of an archer aiming for the target, but the arrow falls short, it does not even come close, it misses the mark, we fail to approach target.

Also, it is in the continual tense meaning daily continually sinners fall short of God standard, His perfect righteousness as revealed in His law.

But here is something vital to see, after man fell into sin, **God never changed the standard of perfect obedience**, He never lowered it, He didn't even create a new standard.

This means God still requires perfect obedience to His law for entrance into heaven.

Because the law is within the heart of man, he knows God must be obeyed, though due to sin he is blinded to which god to obey, as fallen humanity have created their own gods to worship, even worship themselves as their own god.

Therefore, man tried to obey God by his own standard, thinking God will accept it.

This is why sinners try to get to heaven by their own obedience, their own works, **Romans 10:3** *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.*

Sinners, even as Paul in his unconverted days, speak about a self righteousness or mine own righteousness, meaning men and woman claim they have a righteousness that naturally belongs to them.

However, man's righteousness that he thinks he has achieved by his works, will never be enough to find acceptance with God.

**Isaiah 64:6** *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..;"* **Romans 3:10** *"...There is none righteous, no, not one:"*

The Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 5:20** *"That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

In other words, we need a righteousness that is beyond the imperfection of man, or that is accepted by man, we need a perfect righteousness which God accepts.

The questions is where can this righteousness be found? And who is able to give this perfect righteousness?

This leads on as God's righteousness is revealed through Christ, **Matthew 3:15** He came *"to fulfil all righteousness"*.

### **III THIRD, THE PROVISION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

Since, God requires perfect righteousness, obedience to His law for entrance into heaven, and man is unable to give a perfect



obedience for he is unrighteous, then the question is asked in **Job 25:4** “How then can man be justified with God?”

Remember, **Ex 34:7** God “*will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*” To not judge sin would be unrighteous for sin must be punishment.

How can God as **Romans 3:27** declares “... *be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*”

God has provided for the unrighteous a perfect righteousness that He accepts.

Such a perfect righteousness is found in Jesus in the everlasting covenant of life or grace. **Roman 3:22** “*the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*”

God can only clear the guilty by the payment of sin. He can only declare unrighteous sinners righteous, by providing that righteousness required.

Paul states in **1 Cor 1: 30** that Christ “..*is made unto us...righteousness.*” Christ is the provision for sinners, the righteousness that they need.

Christ Himself is our righteousness on the basis of His person and His work. **1 John 2:29** “*He is righteous...*”

After Adam and Eve sinned, they learned of the promised Saviour. In **Gen 3:21** “...*the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*”

That word **clothed** points *to payment, a covering or atonement on the basis of the shedding of sacrificial blood by a substitute in their place.* God covered over Adam and Eve’s

sin, making it invisible to His sight, by faith in the person and work of Jesus the promised Saviour.

When the promised Saviour came into the world He fulfilled what the picture presented, He fulfilled in the NT, what was symbolised in the OT.

Paul refers to that time in **Galatians 4:4-5** ***But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, <sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*** At the incarnation, Christ took to Himself a true but perfect humanity without which He could not accomplish His great purpose of becoming our righteousness.

The lawgiver placed Himself under His own law, to suffer its penalty of death, which Paul referred to in **Romans 5:6** “... ***Christ died for the ungodly.***”

The broken law demanded death and full satisfaction by its penalty being inflicted.

God’s righteousness means He cannot not save men by setting aside His law, rather, Christ came to obey God’s law perfectly.

***By His Sinless life Christ perfectly obeyed every precept or command of the law and by His substitutionary death, Christ perfectly obeyed the penalty of the law.***

Paul said in **Rom 10:4**, “***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.***” The word “***end***” signifies **satisfaction**; and the word ***for*** in the phrase “***for righteousness***” signifies **in order to provide righteousness**.

That is, Christ has fulfilled the law, met all of its demands, resulting in the redemption of His people through His blood.

Therefore, Christ could only become our righteousness by suffering that penalty in His substitutional sufferings throughout His life and in the death of the cross, **Gal 3: 13**. Only in this manner Christ become the sinner's righteousness.

Paul said in **Romans 3:24-25** "**Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup> 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**; the word **propitiation** means **a covering, atonement**.

It is the same word for mercy seat, where the shed blood was presented to God. Christ propitiated or covered over or atoned for sin by His blood, in turning away the wrath of God against sinners who believe on Him.

**Jeremiah 23:6** **The Lord our righteousness.** **Isaiah 61:10** "... **He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation...**"

#### **IV FOURTH, THE IMPUTATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**Roman 3:22** "**the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.**"

In thinking about the life of Abraham, Paul quoting **Gen 15:6** said in **Galatians 3:6** also repeated in **Roman 4:3** "**Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**"

The word "**accounted**" is the word meaning **impute, or imputation**. **Imputation** means **to put on someones account**.

What did God **account or impute or charge** to Abraham, the answer is given **righteousness**.

Therefore, the truth of imputation, is how God views and treated ungodly sinners whom He justifies or pardons.

He views and treated those whom He justifies as righteousness, just, forgiven in His sight. God viewed Abraham as righteous, and treated him as righteous.

How can this be, because as the gospel was preached to Abraham he saw himself unrighteousness, and unacceptable to God, and therefore in need of a righteousness that God would accept.

By faith Abraham believed, that Jesus Christ is the sinners perfect righteousness and acceptance with God. He understood that Christ would live a perfect life and die as the sinners substitute, as the only way God would declare a sinner righteousness.

Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:21** ***“For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.***

God took all the guilt, all the sin, of sinners He came to save, and He made Christ accountable for it. Christ took full responsibility for their sins and paid all their debt, by having all their sins laid upon Him.

In other words, **God took our unrighteousness and all that we deserved and imputed, accounted placed it to Christ’s life, as if He sinned, though He didn’t,**

**and God took all that Christ earned, deserved and He imputed, accounted, placed it to our lives, as if we perfectly obeyed the law, though we had not, but in Christ, God views and treats us as if we had.**

**God views and treats all who rest in Christ by faith as righteousness.**

We are delivered from condemnation, to live for God, **1 John 2:29** ***“He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him.***

**1 Peter 2:24** ***“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*** **Eph 4:24** instructs ***“put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*** **Romans 6:13** ***“...yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. In Justifying ungodly sinners, Micah 6:8*** ***“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, (do right, righteously) and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?***