

The Righteousness of God

Sunday, November 19th, 1989

Romans 3:19-28;

“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. 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.1 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 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: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

The scripture that I will be using today will be found in Romans Chapter 3. I would like for you to open your Bible to the 3rd Chapter of Romans. I'm going to speak on the subject: “The Righteousness of God.” I would like for you to follow along in the Word and listen to me. This is so important, the subject that I will be dealing with today, “The Righteousness of God.”

In the First Chapter of this Book of Romans, the apostle Paul exposes the evil and the iniquity and the unbelief of Gentile nations. Paul says of these Gentile nations in Chapter One, *“When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.”* When they knew God or when God had revealed Himself to them, by conscience and by law and by creation and when they saw His glory and His power, they did not believe and they did not glorify Him as God.

He describes their conduct in Romans Chapter One. *“They became vain in their imaginations and wicked in their conduct.”* They worshipped creatures, idols and everything else to keep from believing God. Paul uses this three times in regard to these unbelieving, evil and wicked Gentile Nations. They were pagan and they were heathen. He says three times, *“God gave them up, God gave them over.”* First, He says; *“God gave them up to uncleanness.”* He gave them up to do what they would, the uncleanness and wickedness of their evil imaginations. He just gave them up to it.

“He gave them up unto vile affections,” (unnatural affections). Then, it says; *“He gave them over to a reprobate mind,”* completely contrary to anything good, decent or holy.

God just gave them up. *“He gave them over to uncleanness, vile affections, and to a reprobate mind.”*

This is a picture today of nations in general. You know that. What rules and what reigns today? There is drunkenness, idolatry, and dishonesty of government, all the way down to the people on the street. There is just plain dishonesty. There are unnatural affections and corruption. There is corruption in every area of life.

We have murder. Some of our cities are called, “The murder capitals of the world.” There is evil on every hand. These things just go unchecked. There are drugs, drunkenness, dishonesty, and unnatural affections. We are like these pagan, Gentile nations of the first century of which the apostle Paul is writing in Romans Chapter One. Read it some time, carefully. God gave them up. *“God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”* Paul describes the condition of these nations in Chapter One.

In Chapter Two, of Romans, the apostle Paul deals with somebody else. He exposes the hypocrisy of the religious people of his day. All of Chapter One deals with the exposing of the wickedness and perversion and corruption of Gentile, heathen nations. But, Chapter Two of Romans, Paul deals with the hypocrisy in religion, the complete sham and hypocrisy on the part of people who claim to believe in God and who claimed to respect and rest in the law of God.

He says, *“There is no difference.”* Isn’t that something? Two or three times He uses this term. *“There is no difference.”* There is no difference between these heathen, pagan, unbelieving, corrupt and wicked heathen and the folks who claim to be religious. He says, *“There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile. They have all sinned; they have all come short of the glory of God.”*

What He shows us in Chapter One is the evil and the wickedness of the Gentile nations. Their wickedness was open and public, it was “Right out front or up front” as someone would say. The religious Jews’ evil was secret and hidden. The religious people committed their evil under the cloak of religion. Their iniquity, to them, was a different form of iniquity and a different form of transgression. It was an iniquity of the heart. It was an iniquity and corruption of mind as well as in deed and in act. That is religion today!

Romans One, perfectly describes the nations of this day. And, Romans Two describes the religion of this day. There was an outward profession of religion, an outward veneer of religion that covers pride, jealousy, hatred, envy, dishonesty, covetousness, lies and all manner of hypocrisy. This religious cloak covers it. It is like Paul said, *“There is no*

difference.” In reality, while the heathen is sinning openly and publicly with no care or concern, the religious clothe themselves with this religious veneer and religious righteousness and religious talk. Their inward thoughts, hearts, minds and conduct are contrary to the Holy Law of God.

Paul closes Chapter Two, that chapter which exposes the false claims of the religious with these words; *“He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; he is a Jew which is one inwardly.”* A man is not a Christian; he is not a child of God, who is one only and outwardly in profession, dress and association. He is a Christian, a child of God who is one inwardly. That is what He is saying. He is a believer, a child of God, who is one inwardly. *“Circumcision is of the heart; it is not of the letter.”*

The pagan is wicked outwardly and makes no claim on God, while the religious are wicked inwardly and profess holiness while they hide their sins under a profession of religion and claim to believe the Bible. Paul says, in Chapter Three, *“There is no difference.”* Do you see that? You take Romans sometime and read it. Start at Chapter One, it explains the corruption, dishonesty, the evil and wickedness of the pagan nations. In Chapter Two there is hypocrisy and the phony veneer of religious people who claim one thing outwardly and who live another way inwardly. In Chapter Three, Paul comes down to this, *“There is no difference.”*

There is no difference in Jew or Gentile, no difference in religious people and unbelievers. *“There is no difference and they are all under sin.”* Listen to it in Romans 3:10-12; *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.* In Psalm 14 it says, *“The Lord God looked down from heaven to see if there was any that did do good.”*

Then, He describes us in that 3rd Chapter. He talks about *“Our feet being swift to shed blood. The poison of snakes is under our lips.”* Our eyes are evil and our thoughts are evil, all about us from head to toe is evil, and full of sin. Then, He says in verse 19 (this is where I want to start in Romans 3): *“Now, we know that what the law saith; it saith to them under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.”* I’m talking about Jew and Gentile, the pagans and the religious. I’m talking about every mouth.

What is this saying? He says, *“Now we know;”* there is no doubt this is true. We know this, *“What the law saith.”* What does the law say? Well, the law says; *“We should love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength.”* Isn’t that what the law

says? The law says, *“Thy shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”* The law says, *“As you would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them.”* The law says, *“Thou shalt have no other God before Me.”* The law says, *“Thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not kill.”* The law says, *“Be ye Holy for I am Holy,”* saith the Lord God. That is what the law says. *“Now we know what the law says.”*

To whom does the law say this? The law says this to *“All who are under the law.”* Well, who is under the law? Everyone is under the law who is under the reign of God. Everyone who is on God’s earth, everyone is who under God Almighty’s sky, Gentile and Jew, pagan and religious, old and young, male or female, are under the law. This law says it to all. What does it say to all? Keep the law perfectly. There are no deferments. That is what the law says.

The laws and the commandments of God are unchanging, unbending, and unrelenting. If you would be accepted of God, do not sin, do not think evil and do not speak evil. Do not speak it in word, deed or thought at any time. That is what the law says and that is the people to whom the law says it. That is what we know.

What are the results of this? The results of this are the conclusion to which Paul came to at the end of Chapter Two, *“There is no difference. Every mouth must be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.”* In Romans 3:23 it says, *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* It is not that we have come short of the standard set forth by religious people, *“We have come short of the glory of God. There is not a just man upon the earth, not one. There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.”* That is the conclusion to which Paul has come in these first three Chapters; *“There is none good, no not one.”*

Let’s look at verse 20: Therefore, this being the case, Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male or female, verse 20 says; *“Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified before God.”* Paul said, *“no flesh.”* What is it to be justified before God? What are we talking about? To be justified before God is to be accepted of God. It means to be approved of God. It means to walk with God. It means to be a child of God. It means to be acknowledged by God as having no guilt. That is what it is to be justified!

Therefore, when we understand what we are by nature, birth, and choice and by practice, it means no flesh, religious, pagan, old or young, mothers or fathers, male or female, rich or poor; no flesh is accepted. No flesh is justified. No flesh is good. No flesh is approved of God by the law. The reason is, *“Because all have sinned.”*

No man can, do or has kept the law of God perfectly. You see; the law was never given to save. First of all, the law reveals our sins. Paul said, "I would not have known sin had not the law said, *'Thou shalt not covet.'*" That is when he realized his sin. The law reveals our sins. The law declares us guilty before God. *"What the law saith; it saith to everyone who is under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God."* The law reveals our sins, the law declares us guilty, and the law shuts our mouths.

You may ask, "Is there no hope, is there no way of salvation, is there no way to God, is there no way of holiness?" Oh, yes there is! I will tell you this, we need to take our place before God as sinners and shut our mouths. It says in verse 19, *"That every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty."* Then, there is a possibility that we might have the way of righteousness revealed to us. Salvation is certainly of the Lord.

There is righteousness and a holiness to be had. There is one provided only in Christ. In verse 19 it says, *"Let every mouth be stopped and all the world become guilty."* Romans 3:20, says; *"Therefore, because of our guilt we cannot be justified before God by the law, deed or works."* But now, in Romans 3:21, it says; *"But now, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested."* Without the law is it manifested? Yes, without the law! I can't have a righteousness based on the law, because I have broken it and am still breaking it. I can't have righteousness, and holiness and an acceptance with God by my deeds, because my deeds are sinful before God.

If I have righteousness, as far as I'm concerned, it is going to have to be without the law. By the law I am not going to be able to enter into this righteousness; it has to come to me freely, not by works, deeds, or religious performances. It says, *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."* In other words, it has already been established. It has already been provided. The righteousness of God which He hath provided for us and in which He will accept us, is not in the law; it is in Jesus Christ.

Verse 21 says, *"But now;"* it acknowledges our condition. We are fallen, wretched, depraved and incapable. Wait a minute; don't despair. There is a righteousness of God without the law, manifested. Verse 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."* It is even the righteousness of God which comes by the obedience and death of Jesus Christ by His faithfulness. It is not my faithfulness. It is by His life, not mine. It is by His obedience, not mine. It is by looking to Him and not looking to the law. Do you see that?

This righteousness, this holiness and this perfection are *“Unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.”* Here we are again; *“There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* There is no difference. It is unto all and upon all who will believe Jesus Christ. There is no difference!

What do you mean, there is no difference? You drunks out there, you have not kept the law of God perfectly. You might say, “We know that preacher.” Guess what? You preachers haven’t kept the law perfectly, either. That is what He is saying, *“There is no difference.”* Both are sinners. You harlots out there, you have not kept the law have you? You might say, “Well, you know we haven’t.” Well, you dear old mothers haven’t kept it either.

Now, that is what Paul is saying. We’re about to bring it home now. You can talk about Gentile nations and religious Jews and say that there is no difference. Wait a minute! There is no difference between pagan people and religious people as far as God’s Holiness and God’s Law is concerned. You rich men; you have not kept the law. You, poor, hard working coal miners haven’t kept the law either. *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* All are sinners in some way or some fashion before the law of God. Judgment is upon all men. Therefore, by good works, human morality, or religion zeal no sinner can be accepted of God.

We need a perfect holiness. God is perfect. He can be satisfied with no less. *“God is Holy.”* He is immaculately, infinitely, unchangeably, Holy. He can be satisfied with no less. So, this God determined to have a people and to save a people. He has provided for us what we could not provide or produce for ourselves. He did it in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

“In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, (made flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone). Took upon Himself the form of a servant and became obedient.” God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under that law. If he is a man, he’s under that law, even the God-man. If he is born of woman, he is under that law just like you. It doesn’t matter if he is born in America or whether he is born in Jerusalem; He is under that law. He is in God’s world. *“He was made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem us who are under the law.”*

First Peter 3:18 says, *“Christ has suffered, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.”* Do you see that? What the law says, it says to everybody who is under the law. And, what the law says shuts our mouths. It better shut our mouths! It establishes a condition of guilt upon all people. Therefore, by religion, deeds, or morality, shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight. But now, there is righteousness, the righteousness, and

the holiness of God, which is manifested. It is even the righteousness of God, which is in the faithfulness and the obedience and blood and death of Jesus Christ. Who was tested, *“tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.”*

Our Lord’s redemptive work was two-fold. I wish preachers would preach on this today. They keep telling people to believe. I wish they would tell them what to believe and whom to believe. The redemptive work of Christ on behalf of His people is two-fold. Number one: His obedience before God as a man satisfied the law. That law is unchanging. We’ve been reading about it, that law is unchanging.

Jesus Christ came and didn’t go around the law; He didn’t compromise the law and make it easier to keep. Christ just kept it in every thought, word and deed. He did it perfectly. *“He knew no sin; He had no sin, He did no sin.”* His obedience was perfect. He did that for us. It is a perfect obedience before God’s law. Our Substitute did it for us, His sheep.

Do you know what the word imputed means? It means reckoned or charged to us as if it were our own. It says in Romans 4:6-8, *“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”*

Secondly: He went to the cross. On that cross, as our sin offering, He satisfied and honored God’s justice. The law says, “Do this and live.” God’s justice says, “Because you haven’t done it; die.” Jesus Christ came and honored the law and satisfied the law and did it. He went to the cross and there, He died the death, the death of deaths for all who believe.

Paul says, *“I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God, (the dynamite), the power of God unto salvation, (to redemption, to justification), to all who believe, to the Jew and to the Gentile,”* (to the religious Jew and to the pagan Gentile). It is the same way for all. *“For therein (in that gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed.”*

Look at verse 25 in Romans 3: *“For God hath set forth His Son, Jesus Christ to be a propitiation.”* Do you know what propitiation is? Propitiation is a mercy seat. It is the mercy seat in the tabernacle, which was over the Ark of the Covenant, where were the tables of stone, the Ten Commandments that we had broken. The mercy seat was over the broken law. Once a year, the High Priest would come in and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat, the blood of atonement. Once a year, in the Holy of Holies, God said, “I’ll dwell between the cherubim’s on the mercy seat. That is where I will meet you, on

the mercy seat.” God would meet those who believed because of the blood on the mercy seat.

This is what the Publican prayed in the temple in Luke 18. He said, “God, let Thy blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat.” God has set forth His Son to be our mercy seat that He might reveal His righteousness even for the sins of people of the Old Testament before Calvary, “*the sins that are passed.*” Look at verse 26: “*To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*” And the life and death of Jesus Christ manifest, or declares, that God’s righteousness that God may be just and justify the ungodly.

I will tell you this, it is so important and yet, rarely, do I hear anybody preach on this subject, “How can God be God and accept a sinner like me?” How can God be Holy and Just and Righteous and True and be Judge of all the earth? “*Shall not the judge of all the earth, do right?*” Well, how can He accept as perfect and sinless and guiltless, folks like you and me and still be Holy and Just? There is just one way. That is because He did it for us, He honored that law. He died in our place and stead; to satisfy that justice. So, because Christ loved us and lived for us and died for us, and made atonement for our sins, God can be just and Holy and “*justify the ungodly.*” In Christ, that is what we are and He can accept us, being justified in the Beloved.