

Romans Class 3

1. Recap: First week

(Rom 1:17) For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

(Rom 1:18) The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

2. Recap: Last week

(Rom 3:9) What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that **Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.**

(Rom 3:20) Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

3. This week: Righteousness by Faith

(Rom 3:21) But now a **righteousness from God, apart from law,** has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. *[Paul's main point, from 1:17. Law here is Gen, Ex, Lev, Num, Deut. Paul will use Law and Prophets to prove his points]*

(Rom 3:22) This righteousness from God **comes through faith in Jesus** Christ to all who believe. **There is no difference,** *[ie Jew vs Gentile]*

(Rom 3:23) for **all have sinned and fall short** of the glory of God, *[Paul just proved this, ch 1:18-3:20]*

(Rom 3:24) and are **justified** freely by his grace through the **redemption** that came by Christ Jesus. *[Record of sins wiped out. Regarded by God as righteous. Penalty paid in full. Redemption refers to the price that was paid, Jesus.]*

(Rom 3:25) God presented him as a **sacrifice of atonement,** through faith in his blood. *[propitiation—expiation; something that removes guilt by making reparation or appeasement. Jews knew that animal sacrifices were inadequate:*

(Psa 51:16) You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

*(Mic 6:6) With what shall I come before the LORD
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?*

*(Mic 6:7) Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?]*

He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished--

(Rom 3:26) he did it to demonstrate **his justice** at the present time, so as **to be just and the one who justifies** those who have faith in Jesus. *[God is just. Sin cannot go unpunished. Sacrifice shows God's respect for the law: would not pardon without atonement.]*

(Rom 3:27) Where, then, is **boasting? It is excluded.** On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. *[not saved on our own merits]*

(Rom 3:28) For we maintain that a man is **justified by faith apart from observing the law.** *[Law by its very nature convicts, since no one is innocent. So pardon is necessarily outside the law.]*

4. Paul's Response to Righteousness that comes by Faith

(Rom 11:33) Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

(Rom 11:34) "Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"

(Rom 11:35) "Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay him?"

(Rom 11:36) For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Think back to the last time you ***felt*** what Paul expressed

- passion
- awe
- joy
- amazement at the glory of God

What inspired Paul to write such exalted praise of God?

- About eight chapters explaining the grace of God

5. Luther and Rom 3:28

(Rom 3:28) For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

- 1517: 95 theses condemning works salvation in Catholic church (penance, indulgences, etc)
- 1522: translated Bible into common German language
- inserted “alone” in his translation: *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith **alone**, apart from observing the law.*
- Moved Hebrews, James, Jude, Revelation to appendix as uninspired books
- introductory comments: “*it is flatly against St. Paul and all the rest of Scripture in ascribing justification to works (James 2:24).*”
- Classic overreaction!

Remember what Peter said about Paul

- some things difficult to understand
- some people would distort them

Should use clearer scriptures (James) to clarify more difficult ones (Paul). Luther did the opposite, and beyond (rejecting the plain scripture and accepting a distortion of the difficult passage).

Note Luther's circumstances. Understandable in a way. But devastating result.

6. Justification by Faith for Jew and Gentile

(Rom 3:29) Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,

(Rom 3:30) since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

(Rom 3:31) Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

- Justification for Jews and Gentiles alike
- Faith is basis for justifying both
- Still uphold the law (for Christians, the one written on our hearts)

Adam Clarke: *On considering this glorious scheme of salvation, there is great danger, lest, while we stand amazed at what was done **For** us, we neglect what must be done **In** us.*

Albert Barnes: *The plan of justification by faith leads to an observance of the Law. The sinner sees the evil of transgression. He sees the respect which God has shown to the Law. He gives his heart to God, and yields himself to obey his Law. All the sentiments that arise from the conviction of sin; that flow from gratitude for mercies; that spring from love to God; all his views of the sacredness of the Law, prompt him to yield obedience to it. The fact that Christ endured such sufferings to show the evil of violating the Law, is one of the strongest motives prompting to obedience.*

William Barclay: *Take a human analogy. Many a man is tempted to do a wrong thing, and does not do it. It is not so much that he fears the law. He would not greatly care if he were fined, or even imprisoned. What keeps him right is the simple fact that he could not meet the sorrow that would be seen in the eyes of the one who loves him if he made shipwreck of his life. It is not the law of fear but the law of love which keeps him right. It must be that way with us and God. We are rid forever of the terror of God, but that is no reason for doing as we like. We can never again do as we like for we are now for ever constrained to goodness by the law of love; and that law is far stronger than ever the law of fear can be.*

6. Abraham, Faith and Law

Paul continues explaining faith and law from the example of Abraham:

(Rom 4:1) What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?

Gen 12

- commands Abram to leave his home
- promises:
 - son
 - great nation
 - blessings
 - all families of earth will be blessed
- Why Abram? not answered

Gen 13

- promise of land
- still no explanation of why Abram?

Gen 15

- promises:
 - offspring numerous as stars
 - believed God, credited as righteousness
- still no explanation of why promised to Abram?

Gen 17

- new name (Abraham)
- covenant of circumcision
- reaffirms promise of son, names him Isaac
- still no explanation of why promised to Abraham

Gen 22

- command to sacrifice Isaac
- Abraham obeys; God stops him before harming Isaac.

(Gen 22:15) The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time

(Gen 22:16) and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that **because you have done this and have not withheld your son**, your only son,

(Gen 22:17) I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,

(Gen 22:18) and through your offspring ^[2] all nations on earth will be blessed, **because you have obeyed me.**"

- God made the promise *before* Abraham obeyed
- Promise was made *because* Abraham obeyed
- God blessed in advance because of deeds he knew Abraham would do.

James clarifies:

(Jas 2:21) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

(Jas 2:22) You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his **faith was made complete** by what he did.

(Jas 2:23) And the **scripture was fulfilled** that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

So by offering Isaac

- Abraham completed his faith
- fulfilled Gen 15, "Abraham believed God"
- fulfilled Gen 15, "it was credited to him as righteousness"

Back to Romans 4

(Rom 4:2) If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about--but not before God.

(Rom 4:3) What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

If credited because of works, then not

- 1) not credited as grace (a gift), but as debt (wages earned)
- 2) believing would not be a factor.

Quotes David

- Forgiveness is never deserved or earned!
- Guilty of sin, but not counted against him

Abraham credited with righteousness (Gen 15) before being circumcised (Gen 17)

- therefore not only for the circumcised

Rom 4:13 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but **through the righteousness that comes by faith.**

- Promises came through righteousness of faith
- Promises began in Gen 12. righteousness credited in Gen 15.
- Promises given because of obedience Gen 22
- God sees future. Sequence not an issue.
- God sees heart. Knew what kind of faith Abraham had.

(Rom 4:18) Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."^[4]

(Rom 4:19) Without weakening in his faith, **he faced the fact** that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead.

(Rom 4:20) Yet he **did not waver through unbelief** regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,

(Rom 4:21) being **fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.**

(Rom 4:22) **This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."**

(Rom 4:23) The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone,

(Rom 4:24) but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

(Rom 4:25) He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Justified by:

- unwavering faith in power of God (Rom 4:20-21)
- faith that is completed by deeds (James 2:22)
- Genuine faith!

Next week: What this justification means to you and me!