

Righteousness Through Faith (*Part One*)

Romans 3:21-26

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: We receive God's gift of righteousness (right standing and right relationship with Him) through faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Romans 1:18-3:20 Paul has demonstrated that Righteousness is Needed by all people because all of us have rejected God and rebelled against the authority of His Word over our lives. Consequently, we are the objects of God's wrath, judgment and condemnation, and rightfully so because we are all guilty before Him. In the next major division, Romans 3:21-8:39, Paul declares the Good News that Righteousness has been Provided.

I. The Divine Provision of Righteousness

- Remember: Righteousness is the Central Theme of the book of Romans.
- There are two aspects of righteousness that Paul speaks of in Romans:
 - 1) Positional Righteousness, which has to do with our relationship with God, our Position in Christ before God.
 - 2) Practical Righteousness, which has to do with how we live our lives before Man.
 - Positional Righteousness reveals or manifests itself in Practical Righteousness.
 - Our relationship with God (or the lack thereof) reveals itself in our relationships with Man.
 - Paul will have much more to say about Practical Righteousness in chapt. 12-16.
- Righteousness is rightness. Here in Romans 3:21-26, Paul is speaking of Positional Righteousness, our relationship with God.
- Righteousness is rightness before God; being in right standing before Him; the condition of being in right relationship with Him.
- How do we obtain a right standing and a right relationship with God? Is it through the works of the Law, as the Jews believed, or is it by faith?

A. God is the Source of Righteousness (3:21-22, 24-26)

1. Vss. 21-22 (stated twice) – this righteousness is from God.
2. Vs. 24 – we are justified (declared righteous) by His grace through the redemption (that God provides) that came by Christ Jesus.
3. Vs. 25 – it is God who presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement...
 - a. What Paul is stressing throughout this passage is that it is God who took the initiative to provide righteousness for us.
 - b. God did all the work; He did everything that is necessary to make it possible for us to be in right standing and right relationship with Him.
4. Vs. 26 – God is the one who justifies (declares righteous) those who place their faith in Jesus.

5. Vs. 21 – "...apart from law..."
 - a. As in Paul's day, many today believe that righteousness is somehow earned by the observance of the Law.
 - b. This is the essence of a man-made, works-based religion—earning our way to heaven.
 - c. We cannot earn a right standing with God by means of the works of the Law. Righteousness is not a result of religion.

B. God Has Revealed His Provision of Righteousness to Us (3:21)

C. God Has Graciously Provided Righteousness for Man by Means of Justification, Redemption and Atonement (3:24-25a)

D. God's Provision of Righteousness Demonstrates His Justice (3:25b-26)

II. The Human Appropriation of Righteousness

A. Our Sin Makes God's Provision of Righteousness Necessary (3:23, 25)

B. We Appropriate God's Gift of Righteousness Through Faith in Christ's Blood, His Atoning Sacrifice on the Cross (3:22, 25a, 26)

1. All their lives the Jews had believed that they could earn God's approval by means of the works of the Mosaic Law.
2. Paul was telling them that righteousness is a gift from God that must be accepted through faith in Jesus Christ.
3. Verse 25 – "...through faith in his blood," His atoning sacrifice on the cross.
4. Righteousness is not obtained by means of who we are and what we do; it is appropriated through faith in who Jesus is and what He has done on our behalf.
5. We obtain righteousness, a right standing with God, salvation, by believing that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be—the Son of God, God in human flesh—and by putting our trust in Him as our Sacrifice for sin on the cross.
 - a. An atoning sacrifice is a sacrifice that is acceptable to God as the all-sufficient payment for our sins, that satisfies His just demand that sin be punished by death.
 - b. An atoning sacrifice is a sacrifice that satisfies the wrath of God and removes the death sentence that we deserve because of our sins.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:21 – "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
 - d. 1 Peter 3:18 – "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

**Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ
as the all-sufficient sacrifice for your sins?**