

The Righteousness of God by Faith

We will start with a definition this week and have several definitions throughout this lesson as there are some key theological terms involved. Righteousness -the state of him who is as he ought to be, the condition acceptable to God- innocent, faultless, and guiltless. [Strong's]

Verse 21- Having shown already that there is no one who is righteous and that the law is insufficient as a means to obtain righteousness, Paul now declares The wonderful news of God's way for man to become righteous: through faith in Christ and what He has done for us! Think about that little phrase that is often repeated in these few verses- "the righteousness of God". It is His righteousness- the plan He devised- the means he approves of -that which satisfies whatever needed to be satisfied in Him in order to make and declare a man or woman **righteous!** -It's the "righteousness of God" because it is all of His doing: it originated with Him, was planned by Him, was executed by Him, and was announced and declared by Him! There's hardly a mention in these verses of man- It's all God and what He did. Our part is to believe (to trust in, commit ourselves to- turning from all other forms and means of obtaining righteousness.) "This is the work of God: to believe in the one He has sent!"(John 6:29) "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"(2 Corinthians 5:21). God's righteousness is what Jesus told us to seek first in Matthew 6:33, and it is what Paul said that he pursued above all else in Phil. 3:9.

Verse 22- It's a righteousness without the law and apart from the law, but it was "witnessed" by the law and the prophets. It was foretold and foreshadowed and promised all through the OT. It wasn't just suddenly sprung out of nowhere, but it was repeatedly shown, declared, and promised throughout the OT. You might want to share some choice passages from the OT that illustrate this, as well as ask the class if any verses come to their minds from the Old Testament .(I think of Gen. 22:8, Ezekiel 36:21-36 where God says 16 times "I will" do, Isaiah 54:17, and on and on.) In Jer. 23:6 God declares one of His names as Jehovah -Tsidkenu- the Lord our Righteousness.

Verse 23- This righteousness is given to whoever believes whether Jew or Gentile because there is no difference between them: All have sinned! (Verse 23) and come short of the glory of God. When the standard is the glory of God, we are all hopelessly far away unless God Himself does something about it. No mere reformation of life will do here.

Verse 24-Thank God He did do something! “Being Justified (He made us righteous, pronounced us as righteous, and regards us as righteous! [what we ought to be- innocent, faultless and guiltless before God]) freely by His grace”. I like that word freely. It means without a cause or case- without our having to earn or perform He Justified us through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Redemption-ransom in full, the price paid to buy back slaves or captives (Strong’s) It is a “full” ransom- nothing lacking or needed further! We were all captive slaves, but we were ransomed in full- Praise God! Whatever needed to be paid was paid- whatever needed to be done was done.

Verse 25- God set Jesus forth to be a propitiation-an atoning victim (literally a “mercy seat”) an offering that satisfied every righteous demand of a Holy God. (Remember Jesus’ words on the cross- “It is finished!”: not, “It is started”, or “It is half done”) How do we appropriate this? Through faith in his blood! God wants us to believe in His blood- God’s blood(Acts 20:28)- to put our trust in the perfection and power of the flawless blood of Jesus covering the mercy seat in heaven on our behalf.(Hebrews 10:12-14) This is the divine means of bringing righteousness to man- not man striving to earn or perform and be “good enough”!

Verse 26-this perfect offering upholds God’s justice and enables Him to be the justifier of all those who believe in Jesus. We are the simple, foolish, weak, and base believers that all the glory may be to God alone! (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Questions to ponder:

- 1-In order to have faith in God’s blood what are we going to have to believe about ourselves? What are we going to have to believe about God?
- 2-What has God done in the work of making a man or woman righteous? and what is it that we are called to do?
- 3-What does our performance have to do with our receiving the righteousness of God?
- 4- What am I going to do with what I learned today?

We are now in Christ and have died to our old, sinful, disconnected from Christ selves. We are in Him and his righteousness is now our righteousness. His standing before God is our standing (by faith). Let us turn from the righteousness that is of the law, and embrace the “righteousness of God” and let that righteousness work itself out in our lives as we yield ourselves to Jesus and allow Him to change us into His image more and more! God bless you as you teach and announce this good news to your classes this week. I believe that knowing and believing these powerful truths will make a difference in our lives. The truth does make us free. (John 8:32)