

The Righteousness Of God Revealed

Studies in Romans

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I guess I can tell you about just for your information from the website out where we have the videos uploaded out at Google video, I found this last week, I found part of the program where you can go in and you can actually see how many people have viewed each one of the messages and, you know, have either clicked on or might not have watched the whole thing, they might have clicked on it and watched the first minute, five minutes, and thought, "That's enough of that man I wanna hear." But it'll tell you how many times during the last day or the last week or the last month our whole time have been on there and I was very encouraged. One of the messages that we've got out there, it tells you how many times the message has actually been downloaded and one of the messages that we preached from back in 1 Timothy entitled "What is Salvation?" has been downloaded 64 times out on the internet so that's a pretty amazing thing to me. I would have thought that not very many people have heard it but 64 people out there somewhere on the worldwide web have downloaded that message to their computer.

So you continue to pray for that aspect of our ministry. I am excited about being able to get this gospel out to men and women to hear, and I'd like for you to take your Bibles with me this morning and turn back to Romans 1. Romans 1 and we had spent the last couple of Sundays basically we saw the introduction of the Apostle Paul, of himself to these saints, to these believers, to these brethren at the church of Rome. And we need to, again, keep in mind that one of the things that was in the forefront of his heart and in his mind as he sought to preach the gospel to these people was to encourage them and make them fully aware of who they are and what they were by virtue of their oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. He had called them saints. He had called them those that Christ had come here to redeem. He had shown very clearly that these men and women who he's writing this glorious letter to are the elect of God, that they're redeemed sinners.

So we basically today because we make it down, we want to look at verse 16 and 17. This is always, to me, then the key to understanding the book of Romans. I love Romans 8 and I love Romans 9 and I love Romans 3, 4 and 5, but the key to understanding all that Paul's going to say, God the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul will say to all of us, it all keys on these two verses right here where he tells them the purpose or basically the theme of this epistle that he writes. Let's read it together, Romans 1:16, Paul says,

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it [the gospel of Christ] is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein [in the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

If someone were to ask you, "Well, what's the theme of the book of Romans?" Well, Paul tells us right here. Here we see the Apostle Paul as he opens this great letter, he gives us the theme of the book of Romans. He, having concluded his opening address, he now begins to explain all the particulars of the ground, I used to use the word ground but as we grow in maturity in the faith, I like the word hope, the hope of salvation. Do you have a good hope through grace this morning? I guess that's the most important thing of all.

So Paul is trying to and going to in this book give us all the details concerning this hope of salvation that includes justification and reconciliation and adoption, and he starts off by saying this and this is an unusual phrase to make, he says, "I am not ashamed." Do you see that? "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Now that's a strange thing to say. Why in the world would anybody be ashamed of the gospel of Christ? He says, "I'm not." So I guess some people obviously would have been ashamed of the gospel of Christ if he's making it clear to them that he's not ashamed of it. If you think about it, why does he make this kind of a statement? Well, when you think about what had occurred in his life, who in the world would attack anybody who preached free grace to guilty sinners? What was Paul doing that was so wrong? He was telling sinners that God sent his Son into this world to redeem his children; not to make salvation possible but to actually accomplish redemption on the behalf of all of God's elect. Now who in the world would be against that? Who in the world would say, "You can't say those things about what Christ actually accomplished"? You know, I grow so weary of men and women who think that you have to keep people under bondage to get them to be obedient. Listen, you do in religion, you have to hang over every person in every false religious activity they do either the threat of punishment or the promise of reward to keep them faithful to attend, faithful to give, faithful to do what they call grow in grace and knowledge of the truth, faithful to grow in righteousness and outward holiness that men will admire and applaud. But listen, we tell sinners, and Paul told sinners, and he said, "This is what I'm not ashamed of. I tell sinners it's finished. There's nothing for you to do. You can't add anything to it and, thank God, you can't take anything away from it. The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished all of salvation. He bore by himself our sins in his body on the tree, and by his stripes we are healed."

Now that's the truth of the gospel. The Apostle Paul knew from experience, personal experience that true Christians what's going to happen to you? You're going to bear the reproach of the world. You're going to bear the persecution of the world. He knew all too well that, listen, true believers, true men and women who stand up and dogmatically proclaim this glorious truth of redemption full and free based on the blood and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, they're going to be attacked and they're going to be ridiculed in every way possible because the gospel of Christ, do you know what it does? It addresses every man and woman by nature as being in the same

condition, all equally guilty, all equally spiritual kin to Satan, and all in their hearts and their mind by nature, what are they? They're enemies of God, you and I too before God regenerated and converted us.

Our mind, Paul said, not at enmity, he said the carnal mind is enmity against God. It's not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. That's why there's such a difference and a distinction between the true gospel and every other false gospel because the gospel, unlike the false gospel that's preached in our generation, it removes the cloak of self-righteousness, that self-righteous religion is staying there and it exposes that all the efforts at worship, and all the efforts at obedience, and all the efforts of morality before true faith, do you know what they are? They're fruit unto death and we wouldn't admit that by nature. I can think and I can remember back before God taught me the gospel and regenerated and converted me through the preaching of Christ and revealed Christ in me, the hope of glory, I used to think my preaching meant something for us. I did, and I thought all the hours that I spent in prayer that God was just really happy about it. I did. And do you know what else that gendered? I thought when I didn't pray, what did I think? The same thing every other lost person thinks, when I didn't pray, God was unhappy with me. So listen, even though I claimed I believed the sovereignty of God, and even though I claimed that Christ actually put away my sin, by my own doctrine that I proclaimed and professed with my words and with my life, do you know what I taught? Conditional salvation. It was conditioned on what I did. My faith. My works. My morality. My sincerity. My holding out to the end.

Look over at, hold your place here and look over at 1 John 3. You see, the gospel when it's preached correctly and we make it clear to men that everything that they did before true regeneration and conversion, before Christ in them the hope of glory was revealed, that all their deeds and all their efforts and all their morality aimed at the ground of salvation was as evil as the most ungodly act they could ever think of, how were they going to respond? Notice what John writes here, 1 John 3, notice verse 13, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world," does what? Dislikes you a little bit. No, "Marvel not, my brethren," now this is very important. Who is going to be the ones that are hated here? Not lost religionists. Not those who are outwardly moral in their character and their conduct, those who are doing their dead level best to avoid every known sin and do every possible good. That's not who's going to be hated. The world loved the pope, did they not? He's a symbol of morality and sincerity and in their minds purity, but before God do you know what the pope is? He's a sinner who stands in need of a righteousness he does not possess by nature and therefore all that he did in our great country when he came here a few weeks ago, do you know what it was? It was evil. Every day he gets up and he puts that robe and all that garb on and goes through all that stuff that he does, what is it? It's not something that God's just sitting there thinking, "My, my, my, my, how impressed I am." Huh? Look, it's enmity. It brings the wrath of God, not the blessings of God, and that's what he said, "Don't be surprised, brothers, to what happens to you, the world hates you." Why do they hate you? Because you won't speak peace to them, you won't tell them they're all right in their false religion.

And do you see this? Hatred is aimed at true Christians when they tell lost religionists that their deeds are evil, and I'm telling you, if you withhold that one specific truth, just that one, the world won't hate you in that sense because the world loves her own. Now she does. You'll tell them they're all right, you'll tell them they're going to heaven, if you tell them we're all worshipping the same God, we're just trying to get there a little differently, they won't hate you. But if you tell them there's one God, one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus and him alone, and you tell them not by works of righteousness which we've done but by his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, they will not love you for it. Make that clear to your family and see how they respect you and see that they think you've lost your mind. That's what they'll think. You see, a justified sinner's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it condemns their self-righteousness and exposes their false hope.

Now notice how he starts this thing off in verse 16. He says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." This word "power," you know what it is in the original language, it comes from the word in the Greek that we get our word dynamite from, it's *dunamis*. He says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," because what is it? It's the dynamite that literally blows men, blows his children to him. It kind of goes hand-in-hand with what David wrote, "Thy people shall be made willing in the day of thy power." You see, we're not willing in and of ourselves. You say, "Well, I'll come to Christ when I will." No, you won't. You have to be made willing because in and of yourself you will not come. That's the false hope that's held out to this religious world, "All we gotta do is preach this, tell men and women Christ came, he lived and he died and he rose again. Won't you come to him?" And the big problem with that "won't" thing, "won't you come," that's exactly what they will do, they won't come because they can't come, "You cannot come to me that you might have life." Now that's the Scripture. It's not Richard, that's the Scripture. It's not a problem of won't, it's a problem of can't.

So when he talks about the gospel being the power of God, he's not talking about power as an attribute of God. We know God's omnipotent, right? We know God is all-powerful. We know that our God is in the heaven, whatsoever that he pleased that he did in heaven and earth, and like Nebuchadnezzar said none can stay his hand or say to him, "What doest thou?" He's omnipotent. Even our Lord Jesus Christ is omnipotent but the gospel is not an attribute of God. The gospel does reveal how every attribute of God is honored in the salvation of sinners by Christ. The gospel, do you know what it is? It's good news. That's what the word "gospel" means, an evangel, good news. Why is it good news? Why is the gospel such good news to you this morning who believe? It's God's absolute unconditional promise of salvation conditioned on Christ alone. It's not conditioned on you in any way, to any degree, at any time.

So this phrase that he used, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God," the power of God refers to the gospel as an instrument that God has ordained and uses to accomplish his goal of revealing Christ in them, the hope of glory. When the Apostle Paul writes that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," do you know what he does right there? He said, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of

God unto salvation," do you know what he excludes there? Everything else. You can't look to mysticism or visions or voices or emotion. What's the power of God unto salvation? He says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel."

People say, "Well, let's have a testimony ceremony." That's not the power of God unto salvation. Or, "Let's live a good life, a good, moral, sincere life before men and women, the best," like I always tell you about that church that had that sign out front, "The best gospel message you can preach is the one you live." That's not good news. Not at all. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation only as God the Holy Spirit, he applies it to the heart and to the mind, to the will, to the affection of sinners in regeneration and conversion, and that's when a sinner by the Spirit of God under the true gospel preached, heard, understood and applied comes to true faith in Christ and true repentance. God the Holy Spirit is the only agent of salvation and the gospel preached, do you know what it is? It's the only means God uses to bring his children to true faith, true repentance.

So what I'm saying there to put it as simply as I can is this: apart from the gospel preached – do you hear me – apart from the gospel, the true gospel, not a hybrid gospel. I remember I used to have a thing when I was in a state of lostness, I used to tell people there was a muddy water gospel and all that and a clear water gospel. God uses one gospel to save his children. Just one. Which one is it? The true gospel. You say, "Why are you so dogmatic on that?" You'll know the truth – do you hear me – you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free. Not an error.

So why do we have to be so specific? Why do we seek by God's grace to be so precise? The truth is the only way of salvation. The truth is the only thing that sets men free. So you say, "Well, what are you saying, preacher?" This is what I'm saying. If you don't get any other statement that I make this morning, you get this one and you take it to heart. We aren't saved based on visions. We aren't saved based on voices. And we're not saved based on mysticism. The gospel is the power of God in salvation and since that's the case, the gospel, the true gospel is the only source of salvation, any notion, any thought, any idea that salvation has come or can come without the gospel or before the gospel of salvation, conditioned on Christ's imputed righteousness alone, was preached, heard and understood, do you know what you do? You deny the truth of the gospel because what did Paul say? "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation." Let me say it again: any notion that salvation has come or can come under a false gospel is a denial of the true gospel to be the only power of God unto salvation. Can I make that any clearer? What have you got it here? You'll know the truth. The truth will set you free.

Notice verse 17, "For therein," what's revealed in this gospel that sets men free? "Therein," in the gospel what's revealed, "the righteousness of God is revealed." What is that righteousness? Well, hold your place there and turn over to Romans 10. You see, Paul is showing us here specifically why the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Why is it so powerful? What makes this message so distinct from everybody else that's running around out there? I know everybody in every place thinks their preacher preaches the gospel. Well, I'm going to tell you what, if somebody is up today preaching a message

about how you ought to give, he has not preached the gospel. Do you hear me? If somebody is standing in some pulpit today and he's talking about faithfulness to go to church or trying your best to be the best you can be for God, that's not the gospel.

Think about it like this, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. I'm telling you, 99.9% of what's preached today, do you know what it is? It's works salvation. It's God will do this if you'll do that, and there's no good news in that. As a sinner I'm telling you this morning, if you're here this morning, can I give you anymore good news than to tell you everything is accomplished? That there's not one thing, not one? You say, "Well, I gotta believe." Oh yeah, you do believe, what do you believe? You believe that not one thing is left for you to do. You rest on the fact that everything required to bring you to glory Christ accomplished it. That's it. You say, "That's all I've got to rest in?" That's all you've got to rely on. And when you sing, "Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe," rest in it. When he said, "It is finished," he meant it. That wasn't a condition that he told you, "Okay, now you're kind of in a halfway savable condition, now you finish it out." No. That's not good news. They're not telling people good news when they say you've got to hold out to the end, you've got to finish the work, you've got to make it the very gates of heaven and then you still might not make it through if you haven't done enough or gave enough or loved enough or tried hard enough. There's no good news in that. The only good news is what? "Therein," in the gospel, "is the righteousness of God revealed." Well, everything that God requires, that's the righteousness of God. Everything required to glorify and honor God as a just God and the Savior is revealed in one place, in that righteousness of God in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice what he says here in Romans 10. He says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record," talking about Israel, national Israel, "that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Now what is he saying? He's saying, first of all, he's told us one thing that we know upfront, Israel had the law, did they not, and Israel as a nation and as a peculiar people, they had sought to keep the law, had they not? Remember back in Joshua's day when they told him, they said, "Give us his law and we'll obey his law and he'll be our God and we'll be his people," based on their obedience, and he said, "You cannot serve the Lord." They said, "Give us his law and we'll keep it, we'll obey it, we'll honor it." He said, "To those people that said we're going to keep the law, you cannot serve the Lord." Why can you not serve the Lord? "For he is a holy God." What is that? Your attempt at keeping that law instead of getting into good favor with God, what does it do? It brings you under condemnation. Now that's not being told. They're being told just like little children are told good people go to heaven, bad people go to hell, sinners go to heaven, sinners for whom Christ established this righteousness and he said to his brethren they are in a state of lostness. Now they got the law, they got the priesthood, they go all the ceremonies, they got the Passover and yet what are they? They've got all the types and all the shadows and all the pictures that should point them to Christ and he says they're lost in it. Why? Go back, I'm not going to read it, go back this afternoon and read Romans 9 and read specifically verse 30 through verse 33. That is an assignment for you, read prayerfully Romans 9:30-33 and then if you think you can get to heaven by what you do, put yourself in their place.

They could not attain righteousness by the law and he says, "they being ignorant," of what? What are they ignorant of? What is it to be lost, to be ignorant of God's righteousness? It's not being an immoral pervert. No, if a man is an immoral, ungodly pervert, yeah, he doesn't know God but I'm going to tell you what, there are some ungodly men and women who have done some audacious activities that are true children of God because do you know what they know? They're not ignorant of the righteousness of God. And on the flipside of that, you can be the most moral, sincere, dedicated, committed religious who prays 3, 4, 5 times a day and fast and go to church and knows this book from cover to cover and can even quote it cover to cover, you're ignorant of this righteousness and what are you? You're lost. Now that's how clear it is. Now I don't care whether it's my friend or my family or folks I do not like out there, being ignorant of this righteousness, they're lost. You say, "Oh preacher, you're too clear on that." I want to make it as clear as I can because it's a life or death issue. Ignorant of this righteousness, you're lost.

He tells us this through his prophet and since they're ignorant of it, what do they do? Do you want me to tell you how I can tell you if you're in a state of lostness this morning? You're doing what he says right here, you're ignorant of this righteousness, you're trying to establish one this morning on your own. Maybe that's why you're here. You think, "Well, if I go to church God will be happy." That shows your ignorance of the righteousness of God. God's children are here because they are righteous, because they are the holiness of God in him. We're here out of grace and gratitude to him who loved us and gave himself for us.

He says they go "about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ," listen to me, dear sinner, Christ is the end, he's the fulfillment, he's the completion of the law of righteousness. Do you hear that? What did he say? He satisfies all the law requires, the righteousness. He's the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

Now that's the good news of the gospel and that's why this gospel, turn back over to, that's why it's so powerful and that's why I'm telling you if I don't get up here today and tell you about this righteousness established, and Wednesday night when I come stand here and in the Sunday school, the Sunday Bible class this morning, what did I tell you about? What have I told you about for 20 years? And if the Lord lets me live 20 more years, do you know what I'm going to tell you about every single solitary time I stand before you? I'm going to tell you about that righteousness. Now sure we'll talk about church attendance, you ought to go to church, you ought to give your money, you ought to pray, men ought always to pray, right, Russ? Men ought to pray without fainting, pray without ceasing, but don't you dare pray apart from the knowledge that you're already accepted in Christ. Now that's a big deal of difference. Don't you dare come to church and sit in worship apart from the fact that you are already redeemed based on the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you come, come to hear that message because you think, "Man, I want to know what it is to be truly a child of God," to rest and rely on a righteousness I cannot produce, to look outside of myself, and that's what the

gospel does, it causes us to look outside of ourselves for righteousness we cannot produce and that's why it's so powerful.

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed," and what is it? It's revealed. And this religious world, do you know what they're waiting on sinners to do? Figure it out for themselves. I can't make you believe this gospel. If I could, if I really could make you believe this gospel I'd make you believe it today but I can't. But I can tell you about it and tell you about Christ's righteousness. I can tell you what he accomplished and if God is pleased to open your heart and your mind to see it, do you know what you're going to do? You're going to rest in it too. Apart from him revealing it to our hearts and our minds and our understanding, we'll rest in anything and everything but what Christ accomplished.

And notice what he says and we'll quit with this right here, he says it's "revealed from faith to faith." What does that mean? It's revealed from subjective faith. What's subjective faith? This book. It's revealed from this book, from this faith written down in here. What is it revealed to? To faith. What's that? Objective faith. Where do you get that from? "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself." What's not of yourself? Faith. "It is the gift of God."

Do you believe this morning? Have you relied upon this righteousness alone as your only ground of hope or cause of salvation? Do you look to Christ's imputed righteousness as your only hope of salvation? If you do, you didn't figure it out on your own, what was it? It was revealed from faith to faith and this is how we live, dear brethren, "The just shall live," do you hear that, "The just." What does it mean "the just"? Those who are made perfect and righteous and holy and unblamable and unprovable in his sight. The just, what do we live, "shall live by faith." Faith in what? Faith in that righteousness established. When times are bad, when sin has overrun us, when sin like a river overflows my heart, where do I look? Look to him. When times are good and everything's wonderful and my life is peaceful and I have no troubles or difficulties, where must I look? What do you have that you didn't receive? God help us to be men and women who have had this righteousness revealed, who rest in his righteousness accomplished, who our only hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ and what he did for us at Calvary by his obedience unto death.

Let's stand together and we'll be dismissed. I appreciate your presence this morning. The Lord bless you and keep you until we see you.