

The Righteousness of God

Romans 3:20~28, part 1 of 4

The task I have before me this morning is to speak to you on the subject of, “*The Righteousness of God.*” Four times in this section, Paul makes reference to *the righteousness of God*, or *his righteousness*...

Righteousness carries the meaning of *innocence*, it is the act of being just, the act of *rightness*...

Webster defines “righteousness”...“*acting in accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin.*”

If I understand it correctly, it is a reference to “*The Holiness of God.*”

God is HOLY...**thus every act** that comes from Him *is right*, completely pure and *just* ...

(**Illustration**...**ORANGE/JUICE**) In this analogy, God would be the orange, while the juice represents the acts that flow from Him!

Every “*Act*” or “*Deed*” that flows from God, are “*without error.*”

They are *completely* and *utterly right actions!* Actions FREE from any trace of “WRONG!”

Acts that Paul describes using the term, “*Righteousness*...” The “*Righteous Acts*” of God...

The more I realized what the term “*Righteousness*” means, the more difficult and seemingly impossible my task this morning became... I mean...

How do I, an “*Unrighteous man*” teach about the “*Righteousness of God?*”

How does the “*Impure*” teach about the “*Pure?*”

How does the “*Sinful*” teach about the “*Holy?*”

How do I...the “*Guilty*”...teach about the “*Innocent?*”

The more and more I thought about what I was going to have to try and teach this morning, the more incapable and inadequate I became...

Who am I, to teach about the righteousness of God?

- It's kind of like asking “*Martha Stewart*” to give a teaching on “*Insider Trading with Integrity.*”
- Or asking “*Hugh Hefner*” to teach on “*Sexual Purity.*”
- Or asking “*Rich Brooks, UK football coach*” to teach on a “*Winning season.*”

Completely incapable...much the way I feel as we approach the subject before us this morning.

“*The Righteousness of God,*” carries a two-fold message in this passage...

On one hand, it refers to the “*Righteous Act*” of God, in that of the *life and work of Jesus Christ*...

On the other, it speaks to the “*Implications*” of what God did...

As we look at this passage, we will be considering both the “*Righteous Act*” and the “*Implications*” of it. Because, it is only when you see both together, that we can truly grasp, “*The Righteousness of God...The Holiness of God.*”

Paul begins...**By making it clear, what “Righteousness” is not...**

(Vs 21) ²¹But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested...



To receive TRUTH...one must dispel ERROR...

I'm convinced that this is the most important part of learning... Regardless of the subject, we each have our "own idea", what "we think" about it... Many may "hear" what is being taught, but because of their "belief" that has been "ingrained" in their minds, there is no change! Truth does not control their life, they continue in error...

Paul's statement, "*The Righteousness of God*" refers to man's Justification before God... In essence, he is saying... "*The Justified Man*" is now made known...

The question that this passage is answering is this...

How is a man made right with God?

And you'd be amazed, the *various answers* people have to that question!

When it comes to "**RELIGION**," it is amazing to know what people believe! There's a vast difference of opinion here locally, among the local churches in Estill County! People are confused, searching, trying to find the truth... Who has the right answer? Are they all right?

And no clearer answer is there, than the one made than here in Romans...

★ And the first thing we **MUST KNOW**, is how man is not justified!

What does he mean by that... without the law?

(Vs 20) Marks a "transitional" point in the book of Romans... ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Scripture makes clear... No one is made right with God, justified with God, by his righteous deeds...

This one statement "Separates" Christianity from ALL OTHER RELIGIONS!

Religion is best "defined" as Man's attempt to reach God... There's something inside every man/woman, that causes us to be mindful of God, and the need to do what he says...

(Vs 21) ²¹But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested...

...without the law ...is a reference to the fact that there are 2 forms of Righteousness...

Before the "*True Righteousness*" or as Paul calls it... "*The Righteousness of God*..." can be known, there is...a "*false righteousness*" that comes as a result of conforming to the law...that must be done away with!

Paul is speaking to the "*Form of Righteousness*" that comes by a man's adherence to religion. It is the righteousness that comes as a result of man's efforts to "*be right with God*" by doing this or that...

There's not a clearer picture of this than in "*The Sermon on the Mount*..." Where Jesus "*denounced religious activity*," and preached a worship of God from the heart! (*Giving, praying, fasting* ...)

That's why the first 3 chapters speaking too the "*Sinfulness & Unrighteousness*" of man!

And that's exactly what Paul has just done leading up to this passage... Back in chapter 2, he described a man who "*outwardly*" appeared righteous by his conformance ace to the law.

In 2:17~20, the picture that is portrayed is that in **all outward accounts**, is that of a “*righteous man...*” He does all the right things...

Best illustrated in Mt 9... “*Self-Righteous People...*” are **BLIND** to their own sinfulness...
(Matthew 9) ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eat your Master with publicans and sinners? ¹²But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, **They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.** ¹³But go ye and learn what *that* means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: **for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

Self-righteousness makes one “*Blind*” to his/her own need, and by placing little or no value on Him!

This righteousness blinds us to the “*Beauty of Christ*,” a person will never truly “*value Christ*” until this “*false righteousness*” is removed!

And “remove it” he does, in **3:9~20**...

Paul “*shatters*” that image by exposing this man for what he is on the “*inside!*”

(Vs 10~12) Speaks to the “TOTAL DEPRAVITY” of man!

Paul declares that ALL men stand GUILTY before God! There is not the first “*Fiber*” of righteousness in us! Regardless of how we may appear, by our “*apparent obedience*” to God’s word, the truth is, our “*apparent righteousness*” is a “*Filthy rags*” before a holy God!

(Vs 13~18) Only validate the truth of Paul’s words...

Conforming to the LAW may make him beautiful on the “*Outside*”...but Paul says, that on the inside, lies a man who is **DEAD in his sins!** *Paul uses the analogy of a sepulcher...*

Confirming Paul’s point, that the LAW can’t do a thing for man’s sin...

¹⁹Now 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. ²⁰Therefore **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:** for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The righteousness Paul speaks of, the way a man is justified and made right with God is distinctly different than every other religion on earth!

(Vs 21) ²¹But now the righteousness of God **without the law** is manifested...

Then... How is a man made right with God?

(Vs 21~22a) ²¹But now the righteousness of God without the law **is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;** ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of **Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe:

Through **God’s righteous act of Justice...**

Through **God’s righteous act of Love...**

Through **God’s righteous act of Mercy...**

“Manifested” in the person of Jesus Christ!

Man can be found “Just” before God...by FAITH in Christ... *The just shall live by faith...*