



BUT NOW... THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD!

Introduction

Having exposed everyone's need for salvation in chapters 1-2, Paul begins to shift focus to God's intervention on behalf of all mankind. Both the obviously bad and self-righteous hypocrites are doers of the same wicked deeds, condemned in sin and death. We have been thoroughly shown our helplessness and hopelessness apart from God. But as we reach the end of chapter 3, the glorious gospel light starts to break through. The sinless son of God rescued us from drowning, even while we were doing nothing to earn his favor.

The Righteousness Of God

The righteousness of God is a key theme of Romans. God's standard for justness is so much higher than ours. All the wickedness of man cannot stop him from doing what is right, and yet in the face of the rebellion of humanity he found a way to justly save the sinner without compromising his perfect holiness. **He is just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus.** Humans are unrighteous, but God transfers his own righteousness to us through Jesus.

The Gospel Changes Everything

In every problem we face, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the answer. We can appreciate how the dying and rising of Jesus affects every aspect of our lives. We ought to stand in thankful awe of him instead of going back to what we used to be. This is why we should not skip over the "unpleasant" parts of Romans. It means nothing to have salvation from nothing, but it means everything to have salvation from sin.

Chapter Highlights

VS 9-18

As captives dead in sin, unable to escape, we all needed someone sinless to save us. When we let sin rule in our lives, it may feel like freedom, but it actually controls us until it brings destruction, keeping us in bondage so we don't know we need help.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

Sin is so ungodly that under its power no one seeks God or does good. It makes us separate ourselves from God, so that we are altogether unprofitable. **There is none righteous, no, not one. "There is none good but God,"** as Jesus taught.

THE PERVASIVENESS OF SIN

Without God, all we do is affected by sin. The words from our mouths are like an open grave and our feet fly swiftly to do evil. From head to toe, it ruled us. We were fearfully and wonderfully made in a good world to do good, and yet humanity didn't fear God or live in reflection of him as their creator. And though we didn't personally introduce sin into the world, we quickly joined in the same.

VS 19-20

So why the law of Moses? It served to point out what was already true before it was issued: everyone is a sinner. No one will be justified by the deeds of the law, but under it all mouths are stopped at the guilt and inadequacy of humanity, compelling us to admit we must repent. We are desperately in need of crying out, "Lord have mercy!" and "What must we do to be saved?"

VS 21-25

BUT NOW righteousness without the deeds of the law is manifested, freely given through faith by his grace. Through the forbearance of God, we have remission of sins. God invaded a sinful world with grace and truth. The only truly righteous one shares his goodness and rightness with people. Righteousness is something he is and gives.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

ROMANS 4:6-8

Our sins are forgiven, wiped away, and forgotten. We've been given the gift of a right status before him. How amazing it is that sinners can be reinstated into the presence of God, loved and accepted unconditionally. Though we deserve to be held to our sins, he holds us to the standard of Jesus Christ the righteous. The source of the righteousness imparted to us is God's grace, received by faith in Jesus Christ. Our hope is not in our own goodness, but in someone else: the seed of David declared to be the son of God. **No matter who you are, it makes no difference to God.** He doesn't make distinctions between types of sinners who believe, for all have sinned.

VS 21-25 CONT.

God moved first toward us. He relentlessly pursued us when we gave him no reason to. He chose to love us and favor us in Christ, offering us redemption by grace. This means he bought us back, ransoming us from the power of sin like a slave bought out of slavery. Though this justification is freely given to us, it did come at a cost— one we didn't have to pay. The cost of sin is death. We owed death as the outcome for our choices, but Jesus' death was the payment on our behalf so that we are released from our debt. Before, we didn't even deserve to be in God's presence. Now we are co-heirs with Christ. The sinful can now be justly deemed sinless because of the cross, where love and justice meet. Jesus was the righteous sacrifice who took our place; one perfect lamb to represent all the unclean sheep. He is God's offering for us. He is the propitiation for our sins, meaning he is the place of atonement where our sins were cleansed and our guilt was extinguished. His reconciling payment made amends for the defilement of sin and satisfied God's wrath against it. This way, God can hold sin accountable while also justly showing grace and forgiveness for the sinner. Jesus hung on that tree, bearing our punishment as the curse for sin; yet it is an emblem of God's love. God poured out this unfathomable mercy, all while remaining just toward sin.

VS 26-31

In divine forbearance, God is holding back from punishing sin in order to offer the opportunity for justification to everyone who believes in Jesus. He graciously invites all people into forever fellowship with him. He is zealous for his glory, but he has provided an answer for us to share in it with him.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

ACTS 17:30-31

Conclusion

He is the God of all, justifying all who believe: both Jew and Gentile. No one is beyond his reach. This is through no boasting of our own, but by faith. Faith doesn't make void the law, but rather establishes it, since its purpose was to point out the need for salvation. Now, faith ushers in a new law governed by the spirit, as we shall see as Romans continues. Let us be so thankful that God loved us, justified us in His sight, and accepted us. May the truth of God's love and grace motivate us every day to submit to Christ's lordship in all aspects of life.

Romans

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