

The Righteousness of God ***Romans 3:21 - 31***

²¹But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. ²⁷Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Paul's theme in the latter part of chapter three is righteousness. We possess NO inherent righteousness. Our righteousness comes from Christ through faith in Christ. God has freely provided righteousness for us through the accomplishments of Christ at the cross. We celebrate the good news of verse 21..."but now a righteousness from God...has been made known." This same author of righteousness also authored the resurrection of Christ that we celebrate this Sunday!

Some have called 3:21-26 the main heart and section of the letter to the Romans. Paul repeatedly emphasized the necessity of man responding to God in and with faith. David Jeremiah identified ten aspects of divine righteousness. God's righteousness is...

- 1. Apart from the law**
- 2. Affirmed by Old Testament scriptures**
- 3. Accepted by faith**
- 4. Available to all who believe**
- 5. Acquired by justification**
- 6. Awarded freely**
- 7. Accessible because of grace**
- 8. Acquired through redemption**
- 9. Accomplished through Christ assuming our place**
- 10. An authentication of God's character**

In a nutshell, the righteousness that God requires of us is accessible and available only from and through God. The blood of Christ satisfied the justice of God so that our sins could be punished and addressed for all times. There is a universal tone present in this section of Scripture. Verse 29 indicates that God works among Jews and Gentiles. The biggest distinction for the Church in

Paul's day would have been the differences between Jews and Gentiles. Today's differences might center around race, ethnicity, national origin or sins. But suffice it to say that the righteousness of God is available to all who call upon the Lord and exercise faith in Him (see Romans 10:9, 13).

Sacrifices in Old Testament times involved the High Priest sprinkling blood over the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark contained the Law of God. Sprinkling blood over the cover of the Ark was a symbol of the sacrifice covering the people's breaking of the Law. Without the shedding of blood, there was no forgiveness or remission of sin. Blood over the cover of the Ark symbolized an act of human contrition and repentance for sin. On Good Friday, we remember the death of Christ that covers our sins and on this Sunday we celebrate His resurrection.

The death of Jesus on the cross provided the ultimate sacrifice for human sinfulness. We often call the death of Jesus "atonement." The act of atonement is the taking away or removal of sin. When sin is removed, righteousness is imputed or infused into us. One of the greatest rebukes of self-righteousness is found in Romans 3:23. No one can claim any stand or righteousness before God based upon the quality of one's life. We have all fallen far short of His glory.

Applications . . .

1. Look up the word righteousness in a concordance or the index in the back of a Bible. Read some other verses in the Bible that deal with this word.
2. What words come to mind when you think of "righteousness?"
3. Give thanks today for the sacrifice of Christ in your behalf. In fact, make it a day of thanking and praising God. Anytime you see the letter "C" thank God for the Cross of Christ and the righteousness that God makes available to us.
4. Give a special gift or offering to the church in honor of the death and resurrection of Jesus. On this Sunday, we celebrate the Lord's resurrection. Give thanks to God for that.

"Donald Grey Barnhouse super-scribed a heart over these verses in his Bible, and in his notes he said that this passage was

***not only the heart of Romans
but the heart of the New Testament
and the heart of the whole Bible.”***

From David Jeremiah