

Part Eight – Righteousness In God’s Eyes By Faith, Not By Law-Keeping

Last time we covered the essential subject – ‘*why the law?*’

And I gave you six reasons why God gave the law. (Not only reasons but the foremost ones).

1. To show us the reality and power of sin.
2. To show we are unable to achieve righteousness by our own efforts.
3. To foretell, foreshadow and lead us to the saviour [Messiah]
4. To keep Israel as a separate nation to which the Messiah could come.
5. To provide mankind with an example nation governed by just and humane laws.
6. To provide mankind with inexhaustible material for spiritual meditation.

We now continue on in chapter three of Romans with the proven background in our minds that the law and the keeping of it is **not** God’s intended way for us to attain righteousness.

What then is the solution?

Romans 3:24 [NIV] “*and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*”

“*Justified*” – “*Dikaios*” [imputed, righteous]

Having justification offered to us for we are only justified when we respond to God.

As a gift.

Definition of “*justified*”: [same word in Greek can be translated righteous]

a) **Acquitted**, my case has been tried before the highest court in the universe and the verdict handed down is **not** guilty.

When the heavenly court says you are **not** guilty it doesn’t matter what any other person may say or think about us.

b) **Being considered to be righteous**, on the basis of our faith, as a result of this something happens inside of us. There may not be any obvious immediate change but God chooses to call us righteous and when He calls us righteous we become righteous.

c) **Being “just as if I” never sinned** – why because I’ve been credited with the righteousness of God, not my own righteousness, **not the result of my best efforts**, they are likened to filthy rags by God.

Isaiah 64:6 [NIV] “*All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*”

If we don't receive righteousness as a gift we will never receive it.

You cannot work for it.

You cannot earn it, it is as high above the best we can do as heaven is above the earth.

Isaiah 61:10 [NIV] *"I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. **For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.**"*

This is describing justification imputed righteousness of God.

Something we should be so joyful about that we long to tell others and let them share in that joy.

Isn't this something to get excited about?

If you feel at times I go *"over the top"* with excitement preaching God's Word this is the reason why.

Last part **likened to the splendour of a bride and groom on their wedding day.**

This is God's ultimate goal that **all** to be clothed with His Righteousness as children in His Kingdom.

Romans 3:24 [NIV] *"and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*

"grace" – the supernatural working of God's Spirit doing for us things we can never do ourselves.

This too is freely offered.

If we have anything we have earned, it is **not** grace.

Grace starts when we come to an end of all we can do.

"Redemption" – Apolutrosis [Ap-ol-oo-tro-sis] **complete release or ransom from slavery to sin** – used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the mercy seat which covered the ark in which were stored the broken tablets on which the law was written, where the atonement with God was made.

The mercy seat is where the sacrificial blood was placed on the Day of Atonement depicting the future sacrifice for sin of Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:25 [NIV] *"God 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"*

God displayed to the whole universe the only one sacrifice that could atone for all the sins of mankind throughout time.

The Blood of Jesus Christ.

In this demonstrating God's Justice because for nearly 1,500 years under Old Covenant God had left the sins of humanity covered yet **not** put away [dealt with].

All humanity could do under Old Covenant was to look forward in faith to the future Messiah.

No sacrifices they could make could ever cleanse their sins.

Under the Old Covenant when a person sinned they at once put themselves in a wrong relationship with God.

To get back to a right relationship they offered an animal sacrifice, with the idea of averting the Wrath of God, and restoring a right relationship.

Human experience showed that this failed to accomplish the intended goal, as it was done out of fear, not out of love for God.

David understood this.

Psalms 51:16-17 [NIV] *“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**”*

What God desired was a humble attitude and willing spirit.

Micah 6:6-8 [NIV] *“With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. **And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**”*

However great and expensive the sacrifice may be, it does not accomplish the right end result.

This is what God seeks in us, justice, mercy, humility.

James 2:12-13 [NIV] *“Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, **because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!**”*

How is this accomplished?

Through grace.

The sacrifice God has already made for us through Jesus Christ.

We are humbled before God when we realise that this great act of mercy is undeserved.

Justification by God is something we can **never earn or deserve** but has to be accepted as a gift.

Deuteronomy 15:12-17 [NIV] *“If a fellow Hebrew, a man or woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, **in the seventh year you must let him go free.** And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing-floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. **But if your servant says to you, “I do not want to leave you,”** because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, then take an awl and push it through his ear lobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your maidservant.”*

We can be likened to this “bankrupt”.

It was out of the great love the servant had for his good and bountiful master that he humbly desired to be a bond slave for ever.

This is the end goal God is seeking, a loving relationship between Himself and us.

Romans 3:26 [NIV] *“he 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.”*

Key verse in Romans **when Christ came He more than covered sin, did away with our sin.**

Hebrews 9:26 [King James] *“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”*

He “put it away” once and for all time.

All this shows God’s great patience and forbearance with humanity.

From the beginning God knew what He was going to do and in faith covered the past sins in the assurance that Jesus would provide the ultimate sacrifice to “put away” man’s sins.

Everything God did in respect to the Old Covenant He did in faith. In Jesus Christ His only Son.

Jesus died in faith.

There was not one piece of evidence of any real permanent result from His Ministry.

All this so that God can remain just [righteous] and at the same time justify [make righteous] sinners.

God **could not** pass over sin without compromising His own righteousness without the sacrifice of Himself through Jesus Christ.

This is the main theme throughout the letter to Christians at Rome.

God’s problem is **not** punishing sinners.

God’s problem is forgiving sinners without compromising with His own righteousness.

Now we see the effects of receiving this Grace of God.

Romans 3:27-28 [NIV] *“Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”*

The law of faith leaves us with nothing to boast of.

It precludes any pride.

We can do nothing for ourselves.

All we can do is receive from God through faith the free gift of righteousness which God offers us.

People like a religion of works because they then have something to boast about.

It suits human pride.

Boasting and pride are incompatible with faith.

Habakkuk 2:4 [NIV] *“See he is puffed up; his desires are not upright, but the righteous shall live by faith.”*

Very important to remember this.

We do some little thing for God and we very easily get puffed-up.

We have some success in our ministry and we feel we are the ones with the answers.

That is very dangerous.

In His earthly ministry, Christ praised two people for their great faith, neither of them were Jewish. The ones who knew the law of God.

One was a Roman centurion:

Matthew 8:5-10 [NIV] *“When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralysed and in terrible suffering.” Jesus said to him, “I will go and heal him.” The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” **When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.”***

The other was a Canaanite woman:

Matthew 15:21 [NIV] *“Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.”*

Matthew 15:22 [NIV] *“A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.”*

“Son of David” – Christ did **not** answer her for she was **not** a Jewess and that was His Jewish title

Matthew 15:25 [NIV] *“The woman came and knelt before him. **“Lord, help me!”** she said.”*

“Lord help me” – Christ responded.

Christ really tested her faith.

Christ had a Covenant with Israel but **not** with this woman’s nation so He was **not** her healer under Old Covenant.

Matthew 15:28 [NIV] *“Then Jesus answered, **“Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.”** And her daughter was healed from that very hour.”*

Humility and faith, the New Covenant attitude healed her child.

Romans 3:29-30 [NIV] *“Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, **since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.”***

Faith does **not** set aside the law.

Faith upholds the law, when it is used correctly.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 [NIV] *“**We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.** We also know that law is made **not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.**”*

This is the full gospel message that the Holy Spirit directed Paul to preach.