

# Gods Righteousness apart from the Law

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read in the letter to the Romans chapter 3 and as God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on two or three verses beginning in verse 21.

Romans chapter 3 verse 21. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law on the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe, for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood to be received by faith.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.

Paul has just said that every single soul is under sin.

He has just said every human being is guilty before God. He has just emphasised every individual in the universe is depraved.

[ 2 : 06 ] And without exception, the whole human race is under the curse of God.

And then as it were, as if to add insult to injury and the whole human race is utterly helpless to do anything about it.

That's what he's just said, reasoning from what we've read before actually in Romans chapter one verse 18 that the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven.

But now, now text in chapter three verse 21 is, but now the righteousness of God apart from the law.

It's the law that condemned us. But now he's saying that the righteousness of God apart from the law, he's been saying the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven and he does not water that down one iota, but he says, wait a minute, something else has been revealed from heaven.

[ 3 : 27 ] A righteousness apart from the law. Now, if you've understood what Paul has said up till now, how that we are all guilty before God, and we cannot improve the situation, sure you're interested in what Paul says now, something else has been revealed from heaven, a righteousness apart from the law.

Now what on earth is a righteousness apart from the law? Because what is the definition of righteousness?

What is righteousness? Righteousness is perfect conformity to law. Righteousness is a true alignment with the law.

It's just total allegiance to the law, the commands of God. Righteousness is faultless obedience, faultless obedience to God's law.

So what in the world is righteousness apart from the law? That's a wonderful thing about the gospel.

[ 4 : 58 ] That's exactly, that's what Paul is concentrating on here, the gospel. What is the gospel? What is this righteousness apart from the law?

What on earth does he mean? If righteousness means perfect conformity to God's law, how can there be a righteousness apart from the law?

Understand that whatever else you understand. What does Paul mean by that? What does he mean by this? A righteousness that can be obtained in a different way than from keeping it perfectly.

That's what the gospel is. It's another way to get to heaven when you're not good enough for it. Am I speaking to anyone here?

Do you think you're good enough for heaven? You're not. I'm definitely not. You're elders aren't. The members of this congregation aren't good enough for it.

[ 6 : 01 ] But they'll be in heaven. Why? Because of this righteousness that can be obtained. This absolute perfect righteousness that you can have.

And I trust I have. Apart from being good enough. Apart from being able to keep the commandments that should be kept.

That's what's on offer when the gospel is preached. A righteousness that you can get as your own. Without being able to keep God's law.

Surely, surely that's interesting. Surely you're listening. Another system has been adopted for a Bible who just can't keep the commandments of God can get into heaven.

That's what the gospel is. Another system of getting to heaven other than being good enough at keeping the commandments.

[ 7 : 16 ] What righteousness is this? It's Christ's righteousness. It's his perfect righteousness that he can give to you and he can give to me.

Now listen. Christ was perfect in heaven. Christ was righteous in heaven.

But that righteousness which he had in heaven was what we would call non-transferable. It's his and his own.

But see when Christ came to earth. When he walked on earth for 30 odd years, what was he doing? He was producing a righteousness that could be legitimately transferred to human beings that were bad to human beings that just couldn't keep God's law properly.

Is that you? That certainly me. I can't keep God's law perfectly but I'll be in glory by believing and trusting in Christ so that he gives me his transferable righteousness.

[ 8 : 40 ] Well surely you're asking a question. How do I get it? If it's available freely, how do I get it?

Well we're told categorically. Verse 22, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

For all who believe. For all who believe. Wonderful, isn't it?

Through faith in Jesus Christ. Will you remember this? Faith requires an object.

It's who your faith is in that's important. I used to be in the printing trade before I went to the ministry and I remember a customer coming up to me and said, oh I see I heard about you and your twin brothers.

[ 9 : 44 ] Yes you're leaving the printing trade and you're going in for the ministry. Oh I see I've got my faith. So I said to him, what in Bob?

He looked at me and he said, I've got my faith. I said, what in? Oh I've got my faith. I said, Bob, what have you got faith in?

Who have you got faith in? And he just looked at me and said, don't worry about me, don't worry about me, I've got faith, I tell you I've got faith. I said, Bob, what in?

And he didn't know. You know this, the average Buddhist probably has more faith than the average Christian.

Why do they burn themselves? Why do they pull petrol on themselves and burn themselves?

Because they haven't got faith. Of course they've got faith, but they're faiths in Buddha.

[ 10 : 42 ] But listen, Buddha can't forgive you your sins. You know that Buddhists don't believe in heaven. If you're too, I remember doing a course for it, the world religions, and I was terrified doing it because I thought I would lose my faith through it.

And instead of losing my faith, my faith was strengthened. When you read it, all these false religions have to believe in what they swallow. And they said, if you're too, I ask Buddha, what about my sins?

What about God? He would just say, well, if there is a God, there's nothing to do with us. Don't believe in God, don't believe in sin. It's just about a way of living.

Buddha can't save you because he hasn't paid for sin. But Christ has. Christ came to pay for sin and to produce a righteousness that could be transferred to you and me.

Anyone, for all who believes, for anyone who believes, we need faith in Christ. It's not faith that saves, it's Christ that saves.

[ 12 : 05 ] Now, further is no distinction between Jew and Catholic. There's no distinction between any of us because as Paul has just said, every single, solidly individual in the universe has sinned before God and is guilty before God.

So we're all the same. Whatever line you follow, before God our Creator, we are all guilty. Jesus has come to provide for us a righteousness that's absolutely perfect.

And you can only get it by trusting Him, by confessing your sins as I was trying to say to the children, confess your sins to Him and He will forgive if you only believe.

There's no difference. You know, I've met people and they've said to me when you explain the gospel to them, they say, ah, but you don't know me.

You don't know how bad I am. You don't know what I'm doing. I say, no, it doesn't matter. I know you're bad. It's all I need to know. Let's gospel your sins if you trust in Christ, if you believe in Him.

[13:31] This burden had a great gospel sermon once on Noah's Ark and he said, I'll never know how this snail managed to get into Noah's Ark.

But he got in. He got up very early that morning, he said, but he got in. And it doesn't matter if you got in, you're safe. The lion got in, the snake got in, the snail got in.

It doesn't matter what kind of creature you are. If you're a human being, you get into the Ark, into Christ, you're safe.

It's Christ that does His saving. You're safe in Him. Did I use the illustration here recently? I can't remember. The illustration was given to people who walked the West Highland Way.

And there was this old man there. He hid a walking stick and he was crumbling. He said, man, I like this guy. This guy snuck in the making.

[14:38] Well, when they arrived at their destination at the end of the day or something, the first guy saw me. It was this old man with a walking stick.

I said, man, I like it. How did you get here? I said, I took a bus. In Christ, doesn't matter how, if you're in Christ, it doesn't matter how crippled you are.

It doesn't matter how sinful you are. If you're in Christ, Christ takes you to heaven and you're safe in Him. That's the glory of the gospel.

That's the transferable righteousness of Christ. He can give it to you if you go to Him and if you confess your sin to Him and if you continue trusting in Him and depending upon Him.

Now there's this huge word in the paragraph, this paragraph which we read. I didn't read it all, just most of it. This word, propitiation.

[15:47] Christ is the propitiation for our sins. What does propitiation mean? Well, it means a lot of things, but we'll try and go through a few of them to help us.

Some weaker translations use the word expiation, but expiation is not the same thing as propitiation. There's an additional attribute in propitiation and it's the attribute of appeasing the anger of God.

I think we explained last week or at least last time I was here that God is angry with a wicked every day.

Every day God is angry with a wicked. All as He unfolds this Gospel to the Romans in chapter 1, He begins by saying, all have sinned, just what we've been explaining about.

That's where you start, the problem. Now this anger has to be placated, has to be put out.

[17:00] And the only thing that can put it out is the blood of Christ, the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross, appeasing the anger.

God is angry with the sinner. Amazing. He can love sinners and yet He's angry with them. Amazing. But you'll never appreciate the love of God until you first appreciate the anger of God, that God is holy.

And He hates sinned and He must deal with it. And He's dealt with it on the head of His Son.

There's a wonderful verse in Isaiah 12, His anger is turned away.

The Bible does not say that His anger was turned off. It was turned away from the head of His people and transferred onto the head of Christ.

[18:18] Christ endured the anger of God for us. He will transfer to us not simply His righteousness, but He will transfer to us.

He has absorbed. God has redirected, redirected the anger due to us. He redirected onto the head of His Son.

So that He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our inequities.

Here's the great exchange. Christ takes our anger, our sins and its consequences and Christ gives us His righteousness.

So propitiation at the heart means placating, appeasing the anger of God.

[19:23] Also atoning for sin, paying the debt in full. The debt we owe to sin has not been written off.

The debt we owe to God for ourselves has been paid in full by Jesus. When He cried out on the cross, it is finished.

What's finished? Paying your debt and my debt to God for sin if we're believers. It's been paid.

God has to be paid for sin and Christ paid the debt and that idea is involved in propitiation.

And a third idea, we'll just mention maybe three today, appeasing the anger of God was mentioned, atoning for sin but three also abolishing sin.

[ 20 : 22 ] Taking it away. You remember John the Baptist said, or was it John the Baptist? When they saw Christ coming along, behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

Christ can take your sin away to a place where it will never be found, not even by God.

You got that? Not even by God. For God has sworn you will not find it. And all this you know was pictured, illustrated in the Old Testament.

The book of Daniel were told that He will finish transgression. He will make an end of sin.

See God can't look upon sin. He's got to make an end of it. He's got to finish it. Consume it. There's a story total out.

[ 21 : 30 ] You can read it in the Leviticus chapter 16, the day of atonement. This was pictured on that great day of atonement. The High Priest, and he could only do this once a year, the High Priest would present to the High Priest two goats and they would cast lots for the goats.

One goat was to be slaughtered. The other goat was called the Scape goat. And I'd have to confess it's not all that long since I understood that apparently the term Scape goat is short for the Escape goat.

The goat that escaped death. But what happened to Scape goat? On that day of atonement the goat on which the lot fell, the Scape goat, the High Priest would put his two hands over the head of the live goat.

And he would, as it were, confess over the head of the Scape goat all the sins of Israel since the last year. It was an annual thing.

He'd confess. And once he did that they would put a kind of tether around the head of the goat with a lead. And they appointed a strong man in the congregation and he would lead that goat, that Scape goat, way out into the wilderness.

[ 23 : 05 ] And it's very interesting how the Bible describes the wilderness. Into a place not inhabited. The goat on which all the sins of Israel were illustrated, symbolised, put on the goat, was led to a place not inhabited.

And they say, they say that goat was never ever seen again. Illustrating Christ take away the sin of the world to a place where it will never ever be seen again.

We didn't, Psalm 103 verse 11 has the same picture. Psalm 12, Psalm 103 verse 12, same picture, same illustration about our sins being taken away.

Yeah. We say, as far as East is distant from the West, so far has he, as far as East is distant has he from us removed in his love all our iniquity.

This is a wonderful, wonderful version. This is why I believe, one of the reasons I believe in the, in every word in the scripture is inspired by God.

[ 24 : 45 ] It does not say here as far as North is from the South, but as far as East is from the West. Maybe I said this before, I don't know.

But if you're standing on North Pole, God takes your sins and moves them to the South Pole. That's as far away as you can get on the earth.

But they could still be found. But you see the inspired world of God sees as far as East is distant from the West.

There's no East Pole. There's no West Pole. You stand anywhere, stand anywhere and move West. Now, where's the West? Oh, around here. Now, where's the West now? Oh, around there. Now, where's the West now? Oh, around there.

[ 25 : 46 ] You go round and round and round. You never arrive at a spot called the West. You go round and round. As far as East is distant from the West, a place where you'll never arrive at.

That's a picture of Christ. And that concept is involved in the word Pūpushiknīsh.

But there's something else. There's a victim, the idea of a victim. All this is free to you.

Free to me, but not free altogether. Someone has to pay. There has to be a victim.

A victim is crushed. He is the proposition for our sins. Glorious gospel, a victim.

[ 26 : 51 ] One other thing, and it's a letter A, a peasing anger, a Tony person, a abolishing sin, a meeting place. This idea is in the word of Pupushiknish, a place to meet God in peace.

You see, if you've any conviction of sin, you realize you've sinned against God. And you see, how, Eric, I meet my Creator whom I have seen.

Is there a safe spot anywhere in the universe where I can meet with Him? Yes, the place called Calvary.

You can meet with God in peace at the foot of the cross. A meeting place. He is the propitiation for our sins.

He is the meeting place, the place where anyone can meet with God in peace. Regardless of the number of sins you've committed, regardless of the frequency you've committed, the same old, you can meet with God in peace at the place called Calvary.

[ 28 : 16 ] So you see, friend, all you need is Christ. That's all you need. Maybe you had head bamboozled with all this theology.

Just concentrate on one thing, Jesus. Jesus crucified for our sins, and you've got the lot.

What a lot is involved in the economy of salvation. And that's why eternity will be forever. We'll never get our heads round at all.

And we'll never get our heads round a fraction of it in time. But it's helpful to learn as much as we can about it.

It's strengthened, it builds that. So, my friend, as we close, you see what's exciting, Paul? There's another way, apart from being good enough, that another way to heaven gets into Christ.

[ 29 : 16 ] Trust Jesus, depend on him, believe that when he was on that center cross, it was quite different from the other two crosses, one on either side.

He was there as the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. But now, but now, there's no need for anyone to perish now.

Anyone can be saved. The whole world can be saved now. If the whole world will breathe, the whole world will be saved.

That's why Paul started world missions. Because the whole world can be saved if the whole world will believe.

Now, there's an option. You needn't perish. You needn't be lost. You needn't despair. Now, there's an alternative in Christ, and that alternative, that second way of getting to heaven, is not simply a possibility.

[ 30 : 29 ] It's an absolute Saturday, if you believe. If you believe, whatever you do, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved. May God, the Holy Spirit, make His word effectual to every one of us. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Father, take the things of Christ and apply them to us, effectively, we humble pray. Bless our meeting with your word.

Keep us in your love, keep us in your fear, and for all we pray, we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

We conclude our service by singing from Psalm 31 in the Sing Psalms. That is page 36. Psalm 31, page 36, we think, verses Mark 3 to 8.

Full Stanzas, you are my fortress and my rock. For your name's sake be my sure guide.

[ 31 : 50 ] Preserve me from the trap that's set. You are the refuge where I pikes. Psalm 31, verses 3 to 8. You are my fortress and my rock.

For your name's sake be my sure guide. Preserve me from the trap that's set.

You are the refuge where I hide. Reaching before all God of truth, my spirit I call it to you.

I ain't no low to trust false gods. I trust the Lord for he is true.

I will rejoice untamedly by and all the love that you have shown.

[ 33 : 16 ] For my affliction you have seen. To you my soul's distress is known.

You have not left me to my foe or given me into his hand.

But you have set my feet with them. Ask they just me when I may stand.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore.

Amen.