

“The Solution: God’s Righteousness”

Romans 3:21-25a

Intro: Review sermon series thus far: **G.O... (S.P.E.L.!)**

Job 9:2 = *I know what you've said is true, but...*
how can a person be justified before God?

May 14, 1804 -- Lewis & Clark Expedition begins

Long Haul... The expedition traveled over 8000 total miles over a period of 2+ years

Good Boy... Lewis' Newfoundland "Seaman," believed to have made the entire journey.

What's for Dinner?... While almost starving on many occasions, when game was plentiful, each man ate about 9 pounds of meat per day.

Oops... While hunting Lewis was accidentally shot (in the behind)

Often times the journey defines the destination...

September 2, 1805 (nearly 16 months into the expedition...)

William Clark... proceeded on through thickets in which we were obliged to cut a road, over rocky hill sides where our horses were in perpetual danger of slipping to their certain destruction & up & down steep hills, where several horses fell, some turned over, and others slipped down steep hill sides, one horse crippled & two gave out.

If you want to get where you're going, you've got to go the way that gets you there... even if you don't like it.

Not everyone will make it... some turn back, some fall, some stumble, and still others will perish along the way.

September 15, 1805

William Clark... "When we arrived at the top... very cold and cloudy."

From this mountain I could observe high rugged mountains in every direction as far as I could see."

September 18, 1805

William Clark... "The want of provisions together with the difficulty of passing those eminence mountains dampened the spirits of the people..."

T/S: Sometimes sharing the gospel is like taking part in the Lewis & Clark Expedition...

You have to make your way through the "bad news" to get to the "good news"

If you give up & turn back-or-away because you don't like going thru the thickets of reality, you'll never see the promised land...

Sadly, there are many who give up on the biblical gospel...
many give up on the "truth in love" of Romans 1:18-3:20
because they see these verses like the challenging Rocky Mountain peaks that stood between Lewis & Clark and their pursuit of reaching the Pacific... And while the truth and consequences of Sin and God's righteous wrath are real, they too can be overcome by every grace-empowered child of God!

THE CHALLENGE = A lot of people say they want God's direction & guidance in their lives - until they get it...

Luke 3:7-10 = *John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." 10 Then the crowd asked: "Then what should we do?"*

Read Jeremiah 42-43:7 (The people plead with Jeremiah to go to God on their behalf and get His instructions for them because they are afraid... Jeremiah does what they ask, God gives the instructions to stay where they are... but, not trusting... they rejected God, His way & instructions... and went to Egypt.

Sadly, the modern "church" is full of people who say they would like to hear from God and get His guidance for their life... until they hear Him and see that His way is narrow, selfless, and truly Christ-like... then they head to Egypt...

Too many are called to the "ocean," but head into the desert!

***** VIDEO ***** "[Hopelessness Solution](#)"

T/S: In closing out Roman's opening section on Sin & Wrath, we learned from God's Word that both the facts, as well as our "feelings" testify to our universal, sinful condition... and our known need for a Savior.

Man's problem is NOT a lack of awareness... it's not that we don't realize our need for a Solution... Our problem is our prideful, disbelief and unwillingness to repent, believe, & obey as the One true God commands...

We tell God... we're god... & that we'll come up with our own solution.

"Scripture makes clear that there is indeed a way to God, but that it is not based on anything that men themselves can do to achieve or merit it. Man can be made right with God, but not on his own terms or in his own power. In that basic regard, Christianity is

distinct from every other religion. As far as the way of salvation is concerned, there are therefore, only two religions the world has ever known or will ever know - the religion of divine accomplishment, which is biblical Christianity, and the religion of human achievement which includes all other kinds of religion, by whatever names they may go under.” - John MacArthur

Today’s Text:

21 But now, apart from the law, God's righteousness has been revealed—attested by the Law and the Prophets **22** —that is, God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe, since there is no distinction. **23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. **24** They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. **25** God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood...

- ONE: God’s Righteousness vs. Religious Legalism**
- TWO: God’s Righteousness & Biblical Revelation**
- THREE: God’s Righteousness Comes by Faith**
- FOUR: God’s Righteousness Custom-Fit for ALL His Children**
- FIVE: God’s Righteousness is a Gift Given thru Grace**
- SIX: God’s Righteousness is Accomplished by Redemption**
- SEVEN: God’s Righteousness Was Paid by Atoning Sacrifice**

ONE: God’s Righteousness vs. Religious Legalism

(But now, apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been revealed)

“But...” = CONTRAST - note the abrupt distinction that is being made right from the onset of the passage. God is saying: “Pay attention, I am about to draw a very real distinction between what I just said and what I am about to say.”

Looking back... **Sin, Law, & Wrath**

Looking ahead... **Salvation, Righteousness, & Grace**

“...now...” = TIME COMPONENT - this word shows that something of eternal importance (*evidenced by the fact that God has included it in the Bible*) exists in the “present” (*a.k.a. “now”*), that was not available in the past.

Looking back.. **Pre-Christ, Cross, & Christianity**

Looking ahead... **THE Christ, Cross, & Real Christianity**

"...apart from..." = TOTALLY INDEPENDENT OF - this may be one of the toughest truths for most people to grasp in all the Bible, and even more, in all of life. Why? Because it is the ground work for God's grace... the most mind-blowing, under-appreciated, often-perverted, GIFT... the world has ever known *or blown*.

What God's Word is telling us is simple and straight forward... In essence, the Bible teaches that what you are about to hear and learn has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to do with traditional, ritualistic thinking...

"...the law..." = RULES & REGULATIONS - (Read Galatians 2:16)

Maintaining the "standards" does not equate to "one-ness" with God. Read **Matthew 7:21-23** and you will see that not only doesn't living by the rules create Christians, neither do exemplifying or "All-Star performances."

At this point in the passage, all we know is that "the law" is "apart from" (a.k.a. totally independent of... or has absolutely nothing to do with), whatever is about to follow...

God is saying: "By contrast, at this point in time, what I am about to explain, has absolutely nothing to do with, and cannot be combined with/into, the rules and regulations associated with our standards for living."

So... the million dollar question is: "What is it that stands so independent of God's law that we need to have this kind of introduction?" The answer is:

"...God's..." = DIVINE OWNERSHIP - Whatever is about to be disclosed and described, we know this (and only this) about it:

It is God's!

Consequently, whatever comes next, we KNOW (per God's Word) that it is "set apart" (stands independent of) God's Law.

Here is an interesting thought... think about some of the times God's Word differentiates between two things: Heaven or Hell, Sheep or Goats...

Have you ever noticed that when God emphasizes a distinction, they tend to be HUGE distinctive? Well here again, God is making sure that we recognize the defining and HUGE difference between His Law and what comes next... His:

"...righteousness" = RIGHT-STANDING - This term gets its roots from a trial setting... To be in right-standing is to have the judge rule in your favor. In the original Hebrew context, there is a behavioral component as well... as to say that you are in right-standing, in part, because you are acting/living in adequate, "standard-keeping" behavior. In the Old Testament world, to live in line with the Law was to be called righteous.

(The truly universal problem; however, which was nearly universally denied, was that no one could literally live out the Law's sin-less standards, thereby proving

that none were righteous, not even one... whether they were willing to admit it or not).

Matthew 3:15 = God's Righteousness equates to God's saving plan

Matthew 5:20 & 6:1 = God's Righteousness & call on Christian's lives

Philippians 1:9-11 = *I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, 10 so that you can determine what really matters and can be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that [comes] through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

Qt: "The central biblical discussions of righteousness thus principally concern membership in the covenant and the behavior appropriate to that membership." - Dictionary of Theology (Ferguson/Packer)

***** God's righteousness is a parallel concept to "the full armor of God" - it's God's armor... it's God's righteousness... while both are given to us, neither originates with us, nor do they have our attributes/characteristics...**

Isaiah 64:6 = *man's righteousness is "filthy (menstrual) clothes"*

Isaiah 45:8 = *"Drip down, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness, let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and righteousness spring up with it. I, the Lord, have created it."*

"...has been revealed..." = NOW YOU KNOW - That which many have said that they were looking for or hoping to find *"has been revealed."*

Note that this forces us to realize this revelation is new... Stated differently... our old "default" position did not include what has now been revealed. That means the old us did not have access to what has now been revealed in the present... Moreover, this "contrast," is more than "neat," it is necessary... it's not an "add-on," it's an essential!

Eureka! No more excuses... the Lights are on!

TWO: God's Righteousness & Biblical Revelation

(being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets)

"...being witnessed/attested by..." = FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED!

That which has been revealed is EXACTLY what the Old Testament Scriptures foretold.

What Paul is saying is simple: "No surprises here... everything we were told to look for has come to fruition."

"...the Law..." = REASON for the RULES & REGULATIONS - As discussed last week when unpacking the first half of Romans 3, the "Law" serves two primary purposes. First, the "rules & regulations" of the Law were given out of love, not to handcuff people and remove their source of fun, but rather as an aide to reveal their sins and universal need for a Savior; thereby introducing hope to otherwise hopeless lives.

The second reason/purpose for the Law is what is referenced here. In short, we have the Law to point us to Christ as our One and Only Savior.

Taken in context, what is being stated here is again simple and direct. "The righteousness of God is what the Scriptures have told us to watch for... and now it/He has been revealed."

"...and the Prophets..." = GOD'S TRUTH-TELLERS - The righteousness of God was also told of and shared widely by the Prophets of old... Paul is underscoring the point that what he is sharing is neither new nor surprising.

John 5:39 = *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me..."*

THREE: God's Righteousness Comes by Faith

(that is, God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ)

"...that is, God's righteousness..." = GOD'S "NOT GUILTY!" VERDICT

How in the world can a just and holy God declare guilty sinners "not guilty?" The question forces one to ask: "How can this be?" It appears to be impossible... at least to the extent that we continue to presume God to be holy & just. Right? Wrong!

There is an option that only God would choose...

That only God could satisfy...

Here it comes!

"...through..." = A CONDUIT - This one word reinforces the fact that the righteousness of God is not to be found "in us" originally, but rather that it "comes to us" through a conduit.

The point made here cannot be overstated! So many people today, and throughout history have been deceived into thinking that "man is basically good," at least "good enough" to get to heaven, based on the lives they live, without the necessity of "God's righteousness" in their lives & souls.

As nice as that sounds and as much as countless people want to believe it, such thinking directly contradicts the truth of God's Word. Consequently, we know two things:

It is a lie from the pit of hell.

All that buy the lie will end up in hell.

Thus, the truth that will lay waste to the lie is simply this: God's righteousness comes "through faith in Jesus Christ."

"...faith..." = THE CONDUIT - God's righteousness is what every sinner needs... and faith is the conduit through which it travels into the soul of saved sinners!

What is faith?

Answer: "Now FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]" - Heb. 11:1

In whom or what does biblical faith trust?

Answer: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." - Jesus Christ... per John 14:6

Beware the trappings of FALSE FAITH... which **carries NOTHING!**

John 8:31 & James 2:17 = saving faith is obedient faith...

"So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples... So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (dead)."

Quote: "Something has happened to the doctrine of justification. The faith of Paul & Luther was a revolutionary thing. It upset the whole life of the individual and made him into another person altogether. It laid hold on the life and brought it unto obedience to Christ. It took up its cross & followed along after Jesus with no intention of going back. It said good-bye to its old friends as certainly as Elijah when he stepped into the fiery chariot & went away in the whirlwind. It had a finality about it. It snapped shut on a man's heart like a trap; it captured the man and made him from that moment forward a happy love-servant of his Lord." - **A.W. Tozer**

Ephesians 2:8-10 (focus on the **prepositions**)

*For **BY grace** you have been saved **THROUGH faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **FOR good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

"...in Jesus Christ..." = GOD the SON

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." - Jesus Christ... per John 14:6

FOUR: God's Righteousness Custom-Fit for ALL His Children

(for all who believe since there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God)

"...to/for all..." = ALL MEANS ALL (Amen!) - The message here echoes the most famous promise in all the Bible:

"For God so loved **the world** that He gave His only Son, that **who-so-ever** believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life." - **John 3:16**

"...who believe..." = **BIBLICAL BELIEF** - While faith is the conduit through which God's righteousness is delivered, biblical belief is the active form of faith.

It is critical to differentiate between faith's cause and faith's affect.

The "root" of "biblical belief" is God Himself...

The fruit of biblical belief is the gift of God's righteousness!

"...since there is no distinction..." = **HUMAN IS HUMAN** - Without saving faith in Jesus Christ, all human beings are the same... lost! Conversely, there is no "unique faith" that brings God's righteousness. There is one and only one way to receive God's righteousness... biblical belief (a.k.a. faith) in Jesus Christ as one's Lord & Savior.

"...for all..." = **UNIVERSAL APPLICATION** - As God inspires Paul to teach us in this passage, He reiterates *humanity's universal condition*.

"...have sinned..." = **GUILTY!** - Sin separates man from Maker.

"For the wages of sin is death." - **Romans 6:23**

"There is none righteous, no, not one." - **Psalms 14:3**

"...and..." = **CONJUNCTION to CONSEQUENCE**

"...fall short..." = **MISS THE MARK** - The most common Hebrew word for "sin" is fundamentally defined as "missing the mark." Taken from the archery motif, to sin is to miss the mark... to not measure up to the established standards. In this passage, the "missing" is not to the left or the right of the "target," but rather a "falling short" - a not even reaching of the target...

"...of the glory..." = **PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS** - God's perfection exemplifies His glory. In this case, the focus is on the perfection an unattainable dimensions of God's character, as expressed through His righteousness.

"...of God..." = **THE ONE and ONLY** - Don't ever forget whose glory and righteousness saves... and whose does not. Self-righteous feelings and attitudes of being "good enough" are both deceiving and damning.

Take courage & hope from:

Acts 13:39 = "Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses."

Galatians 2:16 = "know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified."

1 Timothy 1:15 = "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."

FIVE: God's Righteousness is a Gift Given thru Grace

(being justified freely/as a gift by His grace)

"...being justified..." = NOT GUILTY! - This clause is linked back to the phrase: "since there is no distinction." With that said, "being justified" refers to the verdict of "just before God" that is given to all who have received the righteousness of God.

Understanding the pre-text ("no distinction") & context (how to be justified) is key...

In short, Paul is about to tell us the one and only way, anybody and everybody that is just before God, becomes just before God.

Think about where we are going here... We have just learned that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Stated differently, Paul has told us that all of humanity is GUILTY.

How then can a guilty soul be acknowledged as "not guilty?"

What's it take for a guilty sinner to be saved?

"...freely/as a gift..." = GOD'S GIFT - Justification cannot be earned - period. Justification is received as a gift. If it were given in connection to any act, attitude, or effort on the part of a sinner, the gift would not be a gift at all, but rather compensation.

Can you imagine standing before the Creator of the universe, and the Christ who voluntarily and sacrificially accepted being nailed to a cross... and saying: "You owe me."

"...by His grace..." = GOD'S UNMERITED FAVOR - Grace carries God's righteousness to His elect. Where faith (in Christ Jesus) is God's chosen conduit for His righteousness, grace is His "courier" of righteousness.

Galatians 2:20-21 = "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. **21** I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

SIX: God's Righteousness is Accomplished by Redemption

(through the redemptions that is in Christ Jesus)

"...through..." = ANOTHER CONDITIONAL CONNECTION...

"...the redemption..." = FREED for a PRICE - God's gift of grace, which carries God's righteousness, through the conduit of faith... is realized once a person is redeemed. The cultural context in the Bible often involved a ransom being paid for the release/freedom of one's family member or loved one out of slavery.

The sinner is set free because the Christ was crucified.

The elect's sin-debt was paid for by their Savior's death.

"...that is in Christ Jesus..." = ONLY HE CAN PAY THE PRICE - Not only is Christ the only One who would be willing to pay the necessary price (personal death) for a diverse collection of people known as God's elect, Jesus was also the only One capable of paying the price... it called for the sacrificial death of a perfect, sin-less life.

Sadly, so many people around the world put their eternal trust in counterfeit redeemers. For some, it is their money, for others it is a false gospel/religion, and for still others it can be one or some of a limitless number of idols that are leading people away from truth that will set them free.

1 Timothy 2:5-7 = *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

Colossians 2:11-15 = *In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, **12** having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. **13** When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14** having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

SEVEN: God's Righteousness Was Paid by Atoning Sacrifice

(whom God presented publicly to be a propitiation/sacrifice-of-atonement through faith in His blood)

"...whom God displayed/presented publicly..." = GOOD FRIDAY - The crucifixion of Christ was not some back room deal hidden from humanity. No. In fact, Jesus told His followers that the sharing of His life, death, resurrection, ministry, and teachings were to be the Great Commission of every Christian (Read **Matthew 28:18-20 & Acts 1:8**)

"...to-be a propitiation/sacrifice-of-atonement..." = PAID IN FULL!

The atoning and sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross is the central doctrine of Christianity. While it is not the only unconditional, absolute truth essential to biblical Christianity, **Christ's "propitiation" (satisfying of God's wrath)** for God's chosen children is more than critical, it defines the person and title of "Christian."

Christians are those who were saved out of their sins through the sacrificial and atoning death of Jesus, the Christ. The gift of God's grace comes through faith and brings with it God's righteousness, which justifies the individual before God; in part because they believe and receive what only God the Son could do for the entire family of God.

1 Peter 1:18-19 = *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*

Hebrews 10:10-14 = *By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD**, waiting from that time onward **UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET**. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

"...through faith..." = PROPITIATION'S DOORMAN - God's offer of salvation is to all, but its effectual blessing is only applied to those who accept God's grace by faith...

2 Corinthians 5:21 = *God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

1 Peter 2:24 = *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."*

Psalms 119:142 = *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness. And Your law is truth."*

"...in His blood." = THE PRICE HE PAID! - Is your faith in the historicity of a man named Jesus? Is your faith in the fact that Jesus is/was 100% God and 100% man? Is your faith found in your head, your heart, or both?

Is your faith *"in His blood"* - the price He paid that you might go free?

Do you remember Job's opening question?

"How can a person be justified before God?" (Job 9:2)

Answer:

Romans 5:8-9 = ...*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

***** VIDEO *** "Justified"**

Close:

Quote: Nov. 7, 1805 - **William Clark**... his most famous journal entry:

"Ocean in view! O, the joy."

It is my prayer that this is your November 7th **day of jubilee**... that this is your mountain top experience...

Be this a "new adventure" or a home-coming...

I pray you can say on this day...

"Solution in site! O, the joy!"