

# “The Righteousness of God”

## Romans 1:17

**Intro:** WHAT’S IT TAKE TO GET INTO HEAVEN?

**HOW GOOD DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO GET INTO HEAVEN?**  
(Read Andy Stanley’s “How Good is Good Enough?”)

<b>Review:</b>	Romans	G.O.S.P.E.L.! (intro/overview of the book)
	v. 1	Set Apart for the Gospel
	v. 1-7	Portrait of the Promise
	v. 8-15	DNA of the Disciple
	v. 16	The Power of God

**Today:** v. 17 “The Righteousness of God”

**T/S:** While we will be focusing on v.17... it is critically important that we connect back to v.16 and take a peek at v.18, so as to ensure that we understand God’s Word in its proper context... For, you see... **v.16 explains the “How?” and v.18 explains the “Why?” of v.17’s “What.”**

**Read Text:** *16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” 18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...*

**T/S:** Before we dive into the Righteousness of God... Do you see that it is **the Power of God (v.16) that under-girds the Righteousness of God (v.17), both of which are divine gifts, given so as to save us from the Wrath of God (v.18)?**

\*\*\* **Don’t miss that... Here’s the “big picture” on eternity!**

THE Gospel (“good news”) of Jesus the Christ... brings with it:  
**God’s Power...** for salvation... for all who believe... thru...  
**God’s Righteousness...** from faith to faith... to save us from...  
**God’s Wrath...** which awaits all ungodliness & unrighteousness

**Jump in:** “For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous shall live by faith.” - **Romans 1:17**

This text leads to **three obvious questions** which we will answer today:

1. **What is the “Righteousness of God?”**
2. **How is it that the gospel reveals God’s righteousness?**
3. **What is the relationship between God’s righteousness & His command for “*the righteous*” to live by faith?**

## 1. **What is “the Righteousness of God?”**

What do you think of when you hear: “righteous” or “righteousness?”

Our English definition typically denotes: “uprightness with a set of norms”

We often associate it with some positive, pleasant, personality trait...

You might be surprised... the Bible has a very different perspective...

O.T. = rooted in promises & relationships between God & people  
= not a character trait... but a “choice” / an “action”

**“God’s righteousness is what God does to fulfill His promises...”**

- Holman Bible Dictionary

**Ps. 7:9 =** *O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.*

**Jer. 9:24 =** *...I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.*

**Dan. 9:14 =** *The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.*

**Ps. 7:11 =** *God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.*

**VIDEO:** [Mark Driscoll - Wrath of God](#)

\*\*\* Most people don’t want to acknowledge this truth.  
...like a doc that surveys patients to determine meds!

**“Salvation & condemnation exist together as the 2-sides of God’s righteousness...”** - Holman Bible Dictionary

Don't miss this...

**God's righteousness is His commitment to Holiness & Justice... which will always lead to one of 2-ends... Salvation or Damnation!**

God reveals His righteousness thru His Word & "the Law," not as a ladder to be climbed up to God, but as a light to guide our walk with, & worship of, Him, in the midst of an intimate, personal relationship... for His glory!

In the same way, God reveals His righteousness thru His Power & His wrath... for His glory... thru His fulfilled promises... revealed most beautifully in the context of intimate personal relationships between we the created and He, our Creator... between we His slaves and Him, our Master!

**"From this perspective, we realize that, in light of God's LOVE, POWER, & WRATH... His RIGHTEOUSNESS is always present, ready to either REMIND or REWARD humanity." - JDP**  
(Read Lev.16 and Psalm 40 for more perspective)

As hard as this is going to be to swallow... that means:

***"EVERY reality is helping to fulfill God's righteousness."*** - JDP  
(*"If it is your reality, it is God's will."* - JDP)

**VIDEO:**     *God's Tools & Instruments*

***"This makes the gospel the more welcome. We must first see the righteousness of God condemning, and then the righteousness of God justifying will appear worthy of all acceptance."*** - Matthew Henry

**New Testament on GOD's Righteousness:**

**Matt. 6:33** = *...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, & all these things will be given to you as well.*

**Acts 17:31** = *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."*

**Eph. 4:24** = *put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

**James 1:20** = *man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

### **New Testament on BELIEVER's Righteousness:**

**Luke 18:9ff** = *Parable of the Pharisee & Tax Collector*

*9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

**NOTE:** Pharisees was praying to himself...  
He was hiding his self-Righteousness  
\*Illustration = Angry wife/Quiet, smug hub  
10 foot pit vs bottomless hole  
\*Illustration = S.School teacher/Pharisee/Us

**Phip. 3:2-11**= *No Confidence in the Flesh*

*2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in*

*the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 & be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, & so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

**VIDEO:**     [How to Tell about Righteousness...](#)

Whose Righteousness, if any, are you revealing?

If it comes from your head and is worn on the outside... it is man-made! God's Righteousness... a gift, comes from the heart and permeates every attitude, motivation, priority, and goal.

**Key Contrast:**

“Obedience does not MAKE you a Christian, but rather, it MAY REVEAL that you are a Christian... Faithful obedience comes out of a Christian the same way hot lava comes out of a live volcano... it is the unstoppable overflow of the inner inferno of faith!” - JDP

**2. How does the gospel reveal God's righteousness?**

**Answer:**    **2 Corinthians 5:21** = *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Note: God's initiating love... (John 3:16)

Note: Christ is the perfect, sinless Sacrifice! ("the power of God")

Note: the Need... Sin kills... eternally!

Note: Christ is the Conduit ("in Him we...")

Note: Christ is the Content ("the righteousness of God")

Note: Christ gives Salvation, gets Condemnation

Note: the Wrath of God will be poured out on sin!

### **3. What is the relationship between God's righteousness & the command for "the righteous" to live by faith?**

**Answer:**    "Human righteousness in the N.T. is absolute faith in and commitment to God."    - Holman Bible Dictionary

Our text:    *"...the just will live by faith."* (Qt. Hab. 2:4)

**1 Pt 2:24**    = *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

*"It is said to be from faith to faith, from the faithfulness of God revealing to the faith of man receiving; from the faith of dependence upon God... to the faith of dependence upon a Mediator... from the first faith, by which we are put into a justified state, to after faith, by which we live..."* - Matthew Henry

*"...from faith engrafting us into Christ, to faith deriving virtue from him as our root... The just shall live by faith. Just by faith, there is faith justifying us; live by faith, there is faith maintaining us; and so there is a righteousness from faith to faith." - Matthew Henry*

To show that this is no novel upstart doctrine, he quotes for it that famous scripture in the Old Testament, so often mentioned in the New ([Hab. 2:4](#)): *The just shall live by faith. Being justified by faith he shall live by it both the life of grace and of glory.* - Matthew Henry

*“Faith is all in all, both in the beginning and progress of Christian life. It is not from faith to works, as if faith put us into a justified state and then works kept us in it; but it is all along from faith to faith; it is faith pressing forward, and gaining victory over unbelief.”* - Matthew Henry

**Righteousness:** “Set apart” = God’s righteous children!

Think about it...

**God’s righteousness is both His “fruit initiator & inspector.”** - JDP

\*Matt. 5:6 = Blessed if you hunger & thirst after R

\*Matt. 5:10 = Blessed if persecuted for R

\*Matt 5:20 = Unless your R surpasses the phony pharisees...

\*Matt. 6:1 = Beware practicing your R before men...

\*Matt. 6:33 = Seek first the kingdom of God & His R...

John 16:8 = Holy Spirit will convict of sin, R, & judgment...

\*Acts 13:10 = You sons of the devil... enemies of all R...

Acts 17:31 = Jesus will judge everyone per His R...

\*Acts 24:25 = Paul scares Felix with talk of R...

Romans... used “R” 35+ times but we will see them soon enough

Romans... on “faith” & R... 4:5; 4:13; 5:1; 10:17; and more...

1 Cor. 1:30 = By His doing you are in-Christ & have His R...

- \*2 Cor. 6:7 = ...weapons of R...
- \*2 Cor. 6:14 = Do not fellowship with unR...
- \*2 Cor. 9:10 = He will increase the harvest of your R
- \*2 Cor. 11:15 = demons will be disguised as servants of R...
- \*Gal. 5:5 = Waiting by faith for H.S.... hope of R...
- \*Eph. 4:24 = New self created in R and holiness of the Truth...
- \*Eph. 6:14 = put on the breastplate of R...
- \*1 Tim 6:11 = flee sinful desires and pursue R...
- \*2 Tim.3:16 = all Scripture God breathed for... training in R...
- \*2 Tim. 4:8 = ...a crown of R waiting for us in heaven
- \*Titus 3:5 = not saved by deeds, even R deeds...
- \*Heb. 11 = God's Hall of Fame of faith (11:6)... & R
- \*Heb. 12:11 = God's discipline leads to R...
- \*James 1:20 = R is never sown in anger...
- \*James 3:12 = seeds of R sown in peace by peace-makers
- \*1 Pt. 3:14 = if you suffer for R don't fear, you will be blessed
- \*2 Pt. 1:1 = you receive your faith by the R of God thru Jesus
- \*2 Pt. 2:21 = better if you did not know vs turn away from R...
- 2 Pt. 3:13 = R reigns in heaven!
- \*1 Jn. 2:29 = those who practice R walk the talk = born of Him...
- \*1 Jn. 3:7 = don't be deceived by R "talkers"... walkers only!



\*1 Jn. 3:10 = R talkers = devil's kids... R walkers = God's children

Rev. 19:11 = Heaven opens... He judges & wages war in R!

**CLOSING:**

It is the power of God that brings you to heaven,  
and the righteousness of God, given to you as a  
gift of grace that gets you in!

**REMEMBER...**

***Only THE gospel of Christ Jesus...***

***gives you God's goodness...***

***and ONLY God's goodness...***

***is good enough for heaven!***

**Let's PRAY!**

## Psalm 97

- 1** The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;  
let the distant shores rejoice.
- 2** Clouds and thick darkness surround him;  
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
- 3** Fire goes before him  
and consumes his foes on every side.
- 4** His lightning lights up the world;  
the earth sees and trembles.
- 5** The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,  
before the Lord of all the earth.
- 6** The heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
and all peoples see his glory.
- 7** All who worship images are put to shame,  
those who boast in idols—  
worship him, all you gods!
- 8** Zion hears and rejoices  
and the villages of Judah are glad  
because of your judgments, LORD.
- 9** For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth;  
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10** *Let those who love the LORD hate evil,  
for he guards the lives of his faithful ones  
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*
- 11** *Light shines on the righteous  
and joy on the upright in heart.*
- 12** *Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous,  
and praise his holy name.*