

- ° Last week we ended our lesson with *Romans 3:20-22*.
 - It was a kind of crescendo to the past five weeks of trudging thru Paul's detailed account that all men, are hopelessly sinners & need Jesus as savior.
 - *Romans 3:20* begins, what may be the most important paragraph in the bible.
 - I don't make this claim lightly;
 - These words sum up the gospel message, that Jesus died, in our place, for our sins.
 - It's faith in Him that sets us free from the sin & death we're trapped in.
 - They also clearly tell us our efforts add nothing to our standing before God.
 - And the righteous position we now stand in is in fact Jesus' own righteousness, being accounted freely to us who believe. All my righteousness is as filthy rags, (*Isa 64:6*).



Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ²¹But now, the righteousness of God apart from the law, is revealed being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He would be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

- ° This verse makes it clear; Acceptance with God can not be earned by our efforts.
 - The Law was given to show mankind that we can't live up to God's standard of holiness.
 - The Jews had been trying for 1500 yrs to live up to God's righteousness in their own strength, with no success.
 - Most Christians still try to earn God's blessings by living by the ten commandments, or worse; trying to live by the sermon on the mount; the golden rule.
 - They are destined to fail miserably.
 - The righteousness of God can only be accessed, apart from the law.
 - This means we have to stop & rethink how it is that we can please God.
 - It's only when we abandon our own attempts to be justified before God & all our own good works, & trust in His works, that we attain true righteousness.
 - Understanding this one fact will set you free.
 - If you'll meditate on this one aspect of our salvation, you can enter into a new realm of worship & love for our Savior that you've never experienced before.

²¹ But now, the righteousness of God apart from the law, is revealed being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

- ° *But now;* After the cross, after the Apostles explained it to us, the righteousness of God is finally revealed to us; & it has nothing to do with us, but everything to do with God.

- This revelation Paul's talking about is the gospel, it's Jesus & what He did for us.
- o Most Christians know *Rom 3:23*; *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*
 - Few of us spend time on the verses just before it.
 - These verses explain that because we all fall short of God's glory, God Himself made the way for us when we had no hope.

²² *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.*

- o Access to God's righteousness is available to everyone who believes on Jesus.



Jn 14:6 Jesus said; I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- God's righteousness is available solely, *through faith in Jesus Christ.*
- Only those who believe in Jesus have access to God's righteousness; period!
 - The good news is; everybody can come, belief in Jesus is the only requirement.

^{22b} *For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

- o There is no difference because both Jews & Gentiles fail to meet the standard, we're all sinners.
 - Paul has spent almost three chapters hammering this home.
 - For the previous 2000 yrs, Jews were the only ones with access to God.
 - They were the ones who had the covenant with Him, & yet they failed to understand.
 - The **New Covenant** Jesus made, now grants everyone access to God thru Him.

²⁴ *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

- o *being justified; Gk- dikaioo,* is a passive verb which means; we are not doing it.
 - God is doing it to us; It is being done for us; It is being done outside of us.
 - It isn't that God makes us just or makes us righteous; it is that God declares us just & declares us righteous apart from whether we are in that moment or not.

Rom 4:5 Now to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted to him for righteousness.

- This is a declaration, a decision on God's part to account our faith in Jesus as righteousness.
- This is not a transformation of our lives, yet.
 - Our lives are as messy as they were 10 minutes before we made the good confession, but God now sees us, & deals with us as though we were actually righteous.
- This is Justification; it is not sanctification, it is not a changed life, but a changed heart.
 - After our hearts are changed, it's only then that can we begin to please God.
- o This free gift of being declared righteous, is granted to believers by God's grace.
 - It is God's free gift to us, completely devoid of our merit.
 - To try to earn God's free gift is an insult to His blood; it's blasphemy to think we could achieve the same results as Jesus blood with our good efforts.
 - Here is something to think about;

- If we can't earn our salvation by our good works, how can we lose it by our bad works?
- Don't misunderstand me on this; sin is terrible & we shouldn't do it.
 - BUT, we will never earn His righteousness, that's given to us by faith thru grace!

²⁵*whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness,*

- *Propitiation; Gk- hilasterion; the act of appeasing wrath & gaining good will of the offended.*
 - Jesus became the means of appeasing God's righteous indignation against our sins.
 - This word is only used two times; The 2nd is *Heb 9:5* where it's translated *mercy seat*.
 - The mercy seat of God, over the Ark of the Covenant, is a symbol of Jesus as the one who appeased God's wrath against our sins.



- *whom God set forth;* God sent Jesus to earth for this very reason; to be the only acceptable payment for mankind's sin.
- *through faith;* To acquire this merciful forgiveness, we must access it thru faith.
 - The very essence of faith is that it looks away from itself, & to God's grace.
 - The instant that faith takes its eyes off of grace and begins to look at the quality of its performance, it is no longer faith, but works.
 - If faith looks at itself & says: Oh, I was spiritual, way to go; it stops being faith.
 - That's just not what faith does, Faith does not do that; It looks to God.
 - The very essence of the meaning of faith is that it is the gift by which we relentlessly focus on unmerited, undeserved grace that God is freely pouring out on us.

Eph 2:8-9 By grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, not of works. It is the gift of God lest anyone should boast.

- The reason boasting is excluded at the end of that verse is that faith by its nature cannot consider itself, & still be faith.
 - The very faith we do have is not even ours, but it's a gift from God.
- Faith looks to God, trusting solely on Him; Boasting looks inward at my accomplishments.



^{25b}*because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,*

- *Forbearance; Gk=anoche; patience, holding back, truce, pause.*
- *passed over; Gk=pareisis; a deliberate act of leaving out or passing over something.*
 - The idea here is that in His mercy, God waited to judge those sins previously committed before the cross, patiently waiting for Jesus to be the propitiation; our substitute.

Heb 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

- Although there was forgiveness of sins under the 1st covenant; *Lev 4:31*, those sacrifices were not able to free mankind from the bondage of sin.

Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

- All the OT saints were saved by faith in God, trusting in Him.
- Because of their faith in Him, God **passed over** their sins, waiting for Jesus sacrifice.
 - We'll talk more about this next week when Paul looks at David & his salvation.

²⁶ *to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

- ° God was holding back His judgment until the cross to show us His perfect righteousness displayed by His Son, willingly dying for all of mankind.
- ° *that He might be just*; God's absolute righteousness & justice cannot be indefinitely postponed; Sin eventually had to be judged & paid for.
- ° *And the justifier*; God Himself paid for our justification, took on Himself our sentence of death so we wouldn't have to bear it.
 - God showed us His perfect justice, being completely satisfied when His sinless Son willingly gave Himself, to take our place in death.
 - This open display of His love for us was so overwhelming, it not only satisfies God's absolute justice, but it also accounts, thru faith, His righteousness to our account.

²⁷ *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*

- ° Because Jesus took our sins on Himself; *2Cor 5:21*, Because we were dead in our sins; *Eph 2:1*, we have nothing to boast about before God.
 - If we could have saved ourselves, we could boast, but since Jesus paid our debt for us we have nothing to boast about; *Rom 3:20*.

DEFINE YOURSELF BY WHAT
JESUS DID ON THE CROSS,
NOT WHAT YOU
DO ON SUNDAY

²⁸ *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*

- ° Because we were so hopelessly destined for hell without Jesus' intervention, Paul concludes that it's faith in Him that justifies us, not our works.
 - Immediately after the gospel was preached, men tried to pervert it thru the lie that we must please God thru our works.
 - They say faith in Jesus is too simple; God surely requires more of us; NO! this is the lie.
 - God made it simple on purpose, so no one could miss it.

1 Cor 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

- His goal is for all men to believe & be saved; It's so simple a child can get it.
- ° James seems to disagree with Paul on this point of faith vs. works.

Jms 2:21-24 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ...

²⁴ *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*

- In chapter four Paul is going to use Abraham as an example of being **justified by faith alone** & he uses some of the same scripture as James.
- We'll look at that apparent contradiction next week when we get to chapter four.

²⁹ *Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,* ³⁰ *since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.*

- Because we come to God based on faith in Jesus' work, both Jews & Gentiles have equal access to His grace & mercy.
 - The circumcised Jews didn't live by the Law any better than the uncircumcised Gentiles;
 - Neither group has any standing before God without the blood of Jesus.
 - Both come to God the same way; by faith in the blood of Jesus.
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- ³¹ *Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.*
- Just because men can't keep God's perfect Law, doesn't mean the Law is the problem.
 - God used the law to show us what sin is; that's the purpose of the Law.
 - We'll talk more about that when we get to chapter five.
 - Faith in Jesus alone is the answer.

 - These first three chapters were the tough part; explaining in detail the problem of sin.
 - We couldn't appreciate the solution until we understand the problem.
 - Today we started to move on to the solution; chapters four & five will go deeper into that.

Homework: Read Romans chapter 4.

Chapter four; Abraham & David, how were they saved?

Do Paul & James disagree on what salvation really is?