

Romans Part 7 (3:25b - 3:31)

Tuesday Night Bible Study, December 19, 2006

--INTRO / RECAP OF LAST WEEK:

--before we have faith in Christ our score is 0% when measured against God's standard of righteousness, and when we place our faith in Christ His perfect righteousness is "credited" to our account so that our score of 0% is replaced by His score of 100% – "the righteousness of God apart from the law... through faith in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:21-22)

--this is the central truth of the gospel that Paul touched on in his introduction to Romans back in chapter 1: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" (Romans 1:16-17)

--in his introduction Paul also touched on the fact that saving faith, or "genuine faith" as it's called in 2 Timothy 1:5, isn't just a mental acknowledgement; but rather it affects every part of our life. Saving faith is something that we live by – "the just shall live by faith." (1:17)

--in the section before us tonight (3:25b-3:31) Paul addresses certain key aspects of living by faith; throughout the rest of the book he continues to develop the theme of living by faith, especially in the section on sanctification (6:1-8:39).

--Romans 3:31: "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

--the fact that saving faith is something we live by and affects every part of our life is related to the fact that Jesus is not only the Savior who saves us from hell but He is also the Lord who calls us to follow Him

--false faith, or incomplete faith, is faith in only part of who Jesus is...

--such as having faith in Jesus as Savior but then not following Him as Lord

--this kind of false faith is like a child who wants his parents to provide for him but at the same time wants to have no rules and be able to do whatever he wants

--or having faith in Jesus as the Lord, but not trusting in His payment for sins and living life in bondage trying to earn salvation

--like a child who obeys his parents but lives in constant fear that his parents are going to abandon him

--in Romans 10:9 Paul writes one of the classic statements about faith in Jesus as both Savior and Lord: "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

--"believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead" is another way of saying *trust in His payment for your sins* while at the same time emphasizing the proof and result of salvation in Christ... the resurrection of Christ proved that He was able to make payment for our sins and also demonstrated that there truly is resurrection from death to eternal life (for further explanation see 1 Corinthians 15:12-23)

--Romans 3:24-26: "...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 might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

--"to demonstrate His righteousness" (v.25)

--God didn't just say *this is My standard of righteousness that you must follow*, but rather, He became a man and demonstrated His standard and said "follow Me..."

--humility is a great example of the qualities He demonstrated... "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:5-9)

--Jesus not only demonstrated His standard of righteousness for us to follow, but He sent the Holy Spirit, "the Helper" (John 15:26-16:15), to help us follow His standard of righteousness and to be a sign of the "guarantee" (Ephesians 1:14) of our salvation so that we don't have to be fearful about losing our salvation when we struggle with sin...

--Romans 8:13-16: "if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons [and daughters] of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear [*fear of losing our salvation when we struggle with sin*], but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' [to help us overcome our sin through His Spirit]"

--'Abba' is an informal Aramaic term for Father, connoting intimacy, tenderness, dependence, and complete lack of fear or anxiety. Modern English equivalents would be Daddy, or Papa. --John MacArthur commentary on Romans

--the false, imaginary gods of Roman culture constantly changed their mind like misbehaving children, and some of them demanded high moral standards from humans while they themselves were grossly immoral

--before the fall, Adam and Eve followed God's righteous standard; a person focused on the human traits of Roman false gods might expect God to change His mind about His standard of righteousness if He was faced with the same temptation as Adam and Eve...

--but God doesn't change: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

--in becoming a man and living on earth for 33 years, God subjected Himself to the same forces of temptation that every human faces and demonstrated 100% perfection, opposed to giving into the temptations and changing His standard

--Hebrews 2:17-18: "in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

--because God is perfectly righteous and doesn't change, we can trust Him!

--"in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness" (v. 25-26)

--Paul repeats the phrase "to demonstrate" with additional points....

--IF God "in his forbearance... [HAD NOT] passed over [*withheld judgment for*] the sins" of mankind before Christ made actual payment for those sins, then God's wrath would have destroyed the entire human race immediately after the fall, and God would then not have been able to demonstrate His righteousness "at the present time"

--from the moment of the fall, God in His mercy allowed sinful mankind to continue because a day was already appointed for Christ to pay for mankind's sins... "He [Christ] indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times..." (1 Peter 1:20)

--"that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (v. 26)

--in demanding a high moral standard of people while they themselves were grossly immoral, the imaginary gods of Roman culture were unjust

--because Jesus personally upheld the righteous standard He established, He is just in basing His judgment on that standard

--and because Jesus paid the penalty for our failure to meet His righteous standard, He is just in allowing those who have faith in Him to go to heaven

--on the day of judgment we will be justified before God because of His legal payment on the cross for our sins

--again, because God doesn't change and because He is just, we can trust Him!

--Romans 3:27-28: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

--Paul reiterates the fact that our salvation is not based on our good works and then adds the point that since it isn't based on anything we do then we can't boast about it

--Ephesians 2:8-10: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."

--Galatians 6:14: "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

--quite the contrary to boasting about what we have done, we should only boast about God's amazing grace in dying for us on the cross

--even though obedience is important, we should never pride ourself in our obedience!

--pride is like cold water on the flame of intimacy with God!

--Romans 3:29-30: "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."

--Paul again states a rhetorical question in anticipation of what the religious leaders would ask

--against the backdrop of the polytheistic Roman culture, although the Jews believed there is only one God, the Jewish religious leaders tended to think selfishly that Jehovah was "their" God whom they didn't want to share with Gentiles

--because God declared Himself to be the only God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 46:9) Paul states the logical conclusion that since there is only one God then He is the God of everyone, both Jews and Gentiles; and everyone is saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

--again, as Paul stated in his introduction to Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for all who believe, for the Jew first and also for the Greek [*Gentile, non-Jew*]."