

Guest Preacher - Rev RJ Campbell

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Date: 19 June 2022

Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

[0 : 00] Now let us turn to the chapter that we read, and as the Lord enables us, let us reflect upon the words that we find in verse 21 to 23.

That is Romans chapter 3, verse 21. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and 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.

Now in his letter to Romans, Paul speaks much about the law of God, especially in chapter 7. Paul speaks about the law and its function and the relationship of the Christian to the law.

Christians are in an entirely new relationship to the law. And he lays emphasis that this new relationship is essential so that the Christian may bring forth fruit unto God and that the Christian will be unable to serve God in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

[1 : 29] Now the law of God is quite clear and just in its demands and it is just as clear and just in its deserved punishment for breaking the law.

The soul that sinned and the soul that sinned and the soul that sinned and it shall die. And there the law leaves the sinner. And of forgiveness or mercy there is not the least intimation.

All the law says, the soul that sinned and it shall die. However, that does not mean that the law is absolutely hopeless because it is the law of God that brings a person to realize their standing before God as sinners.

To use the words of Paul, that sin through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. Because the law of God, it reveals to us the holiness of God.

What the law says to us, it says to us in the name and with the authority of God. It must be believed.

[2 : 49] Otherwise, we make God a liar. John says to us, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

Guilt and punishment according to the law cannot be separated. They're twins. They cannot be separated. And as Paul says here to us, now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law.

So that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God. The law brings us to the judgment of God.

And there it pronounces upon us the sentence of guilt. In other words, we are all guilty before God as lawbreakers.

Now up to this point in his letter, Paul has been looking at the sad story of sinful mankind. And how sinful mankind is under the wrath and the condemnation of God.

[4 : 04] Because we have broken his law. Therefore, we are under his wrath and we are under the condemnation of God. Whether we like to hear that or not.

Whether that is popular or not. That is the truth. And we must adhere to the truth. The truth is that we are lawbreakers. We break the law of God.

Therefore, we are guilty. We are under the judgment of God that pronounces us as guilty. That is fact. That is something that we cannot hide ourselves from.

We may try to set that out of our minds and our thinking. But we cannot. Because that is truth. None is righteous.

No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside together. They have become worthless. No one does good.

[5 : 00] Not even one. Paul brings before us the hopelessness state of sinful man. Paul has established beyond any doubt that no man, no person has ever been or be able to justify themselves before God.

No one has ever, no person has ever provided or ever will provide a righteousness that will satisfy God's justice.

God's justice that is upon me and you. Because we have broken his law, we are guilty before God. And we cannot provide a righteousness that will satisfy God's justice.

No man, no person has or ever will be able to provide a righteousness that will meet the demands of God's most holy law.

For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin. So you ask yourself, and I ask myself today, is there any hope?

[6 : 21] I stand before the judgment of God. I am guilty. I have broken his law. I deserve the punishment that his law demands.

I cannot justify myself. I cannot provide a righteousness that will justify his justice. Is there any hope?

Maybe you are saying to yourself this morning, is all this talk about the law and sin actually necessary? Maybe you are beginning to close the year, for you have heard enough about the law and sin.

Maybe you are beginning to close the law and sin.

You are beginning to close the law and sin. You are beginning to close the law. You are beginning to close the law and sin. And they must come to understand and accept that they are sinners in the sight of God.

[7 : 42] That they have broken God's law. That they are accountable to God for breaking his law. Because without that, can we understand the Savior?

To truly understand why we need a saviour, we must understand that we need to be saved from something.

Why did Christ have to die on the cross of Golgotha? What actually was happening at the cross of Golgotha?

How do we understand the grace of God? To understand the love of God that was demonstrated at Golgotha, we have to understand the words of the prophet.

He laid on him, that is Christ, his own son, he laid on him the iniquity of us all. That is why we want to talk about the law.

[8 : 49] And about sin. For us to truly understand the love of God demonstrated on the cross of Golgotha. For us truly to understand why we need a saviour, we need to know, first of all, what we are by nature.

We need to know that we are sinners. We need to know that we need to be saved from something. What? The wrath and condemnation that is due to us as the lawbreakers of God.

We need to be saved from that. And we need to know that. And we need to acknowledge that. And we need to accept that. And only when we acknowledge that and accept that, that we truly see the love of God in providing a saviour through his son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ. Paul writing to the Galatians says, So then the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

Or as the authorised version puts it, Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we may be justified by faith. So you see, the reason why I say the law is not useless, the law is very useful, because it shows me who I am.

[10 : 14] It shows me who I am in the presence of God. It shows me my relationship now with God is a broken relationship because of sin. But the law leads me, my schoolmaster, to bring me to Christ, to bring me to a saviour, so that I can be justified by faith.

That I can be given a righteousness which meets the demands of God's holy law. Given a righteousness that I cannot provide myself.

But God has provided a righteousness. And by faith, he imputes that righteousness to me and to you.

So that we can have a standing before a holy God. And that is what we have here in verse 21. Where Paul says, But now the righteousness of God has been manifested.

It is clear. He is contrasting this with his earlier declaration in chapter 1, where he says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

[11 : 36] But here he says, But now the righteousness of God has been manifested. Now he is saying, The righteousness of God has been made known.

The righteousness that was required by the law, and which we could not obtain through the law because of sin, God has made that known.

Martin Luther called verses 21 to 26 of this chapter, The chief point and the very central place of the epistle, and of the whole Bible.

In this passage, the phrase righteousness of God stands out. We have it in verse 21, verse 22, verse 25, and 26. It is something that the apostle has already hinted at in this letter in chapter 1, when he says, For 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.

For it is, for in it, that is in the gospel, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.

[12 : 56] Now Paul is going to elaborate upon it, and he's going to show us how the righteousness of God imposes the gospel to give the sinner a hope, to give the sinner the hope of salvation, to give the hope of salvation to sinful man, that the person can be delivered from the consequences of their sin.

Here the apostle brings before us a turning point, and he begins by saying, But now the righteousness of God has been manifested. The righteousness of God has been made clear.

A way by which we can be justified, by a way by which we can stand before a holy God, a way whereby we can be set free from the wrath and the condemnation that is due to us because of our law breaking, a way has been now made clear, has been made manifest.

The law leaves us guilty before God. The law leaves us in a hopeless condition. It leaves us under the sentence of death. That is why we must be delivered from being under the law.

And this is the deliverance that is achieved by faith, for the Christian is not under the law, but he is under grace. Those who are not Christians are still under the law.

[14 : 27] It speaks the very truth, and it speaks in the name of God, and his testimony is to be received. You cannot provide a righteousness that can satisfy its demands.

However hard you may try, it will always fall short. Is there hope? Yes, says Paul. There is still hope. Because the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and 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 shall fall short of the glory of God.

And this is the good news. This is the gospel. This is the heart of the gospel, that there is a righteousness that can now satisfy the law of God.

But it is not a righteousness that is achieved by me or you, but a righteousness that is provided by God.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested. Paul is speaking of something that God has done to provide for the salvation of sinful man.

[15 : 49] something that he has done to provide for the salvation of sinful mankind. If God had not done this, man's position would be hopeless.

If God had not done this, I would be in a hopeless condition today, and you would be in a hopeless condition today. If God had not done this, there would be no gospel.

There would be no preaching of the gospel. There would be no good news. The law leaves us guilty before God. The law leaves us under the curse.

The law leaves us under the wrath and condemnation of God. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested. But now God has provided a way of escape, as it were, from his wrath and condemnation.

That is due to our sin. God has provided a way. That's the gospel. That's the good news. If God had not done this, man's position would be hopeless.

[17 : 01] You would be, as Paul puts it in his letter to the Ephesians, you would be without hope, and without God in the world. But now things are different, because now there is hope.

There is hope. Because of what God has done, and what God has revealed. This is why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. That is why we are not ashamed of the gospel.

Although it may be ridiculed by many, and the majority outside this house today, yet we are not ashamed of the gospel. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith.

For in it, a way of escaping the wrath and condemnation that is due to me, for my sin, has been revealed. I am not ashamed of the gospel.

For in it, there is a righteousness revealed, a righteousness provided by God, a righteousness prepared by God, a righteousness that is made available by God, for me and you.

[18 : 10] A righteousness that is made available by God, for the sinner. But now he says, the righteousness of God. What man, and especially the Jews, had been trying to do, was to produce a righteousness that would satisfy God.

The Jews thought they were doing it, with their morality and law keeping us. We have seen Paul himself was, at one time, of that self-same mindset, until he came to realize that it was all in vain.

It took him some time to see it and to believe it. Nevertheless, once he came to understand, and once he came to believe it, he saw, the day that he saw the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, what happened?

All his own righteousness, all his own works, faded into insignificance. A realization of this was, that brought an end to Martin Luther's struggle, spiritual struggle, when he discovered that the righteousness of God, could mean not only the righteousness, by which God is righteous in himself.

And that's, we shall look at in this evening. And if you have time, I hope you'll come with us this evening, because we'll be looking at the righteousness, by which God is righteous in himself.

[19 : 37] But this morning, we're looking at the righteousness, by which we are made, righteous by God. That is the righteousness, we're looking at today, this morning. The righteousness, by which we are made righteous, by God.

In the evening, we'll look at the righteousness, by which God is righteous in himself. It is important for us, to remember that, inner salvation or redemption, that the entire action is of God. I have no hand in it. You have no hand in it. It is entirely of God. He has provided this righteousness through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. These words can be written over the cross of Golgotha. What's happening there? God was in Christ. God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. It is God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. It is God who delivered him up. It is God who spared him not on the cross of Golgotha. Peter, in his first epistle, chapter 3, reminds us that the whole object of the work of

Jesus Christ, the whole object of the work of Golgotha, was to bring us to God. For Peter says, for Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. Because of our sin, we are separated from God. We are out of relationship with God.

But through the cross of Golgotha, through Jesus Christ, we are brought to God. We are brought back into fellowship with God. We are brought back into our relationship with God. So here Paul reminds us that it is a God-provided righteousness that is now available to us. Here in verse 21, he says, but now, and these words as we have them here, has reference to time. For what Paul here is emphasizing is that something has taken place recently that has changed everything. Paul has been bringing before us the sad story of man's kind helplessness to escape God's wrath and how sinful man is justly condemned. But now, says Paul, something has happened. And it happened recently.

God has intervened. Paul uses change from the standpoint of time or history with reference to the coming of Jesus Christ. Something has happened recently. Jesus Christ has come. He brings before us his incarnation. He brings before us his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, everything.

[22 : 43] He says something has happened that has brought about hope for the hopeless, that has brought hope to the sinner. That is why he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. In Christian experience, there also has to be a but now.

A but now. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

And then he says, but now. In Christ Jesus, you who were once afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

There has to be a but now in Christian experience. In 1 Peter chapter 2, we read, once you were not a people, but now you are God's people.

Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. There is a but now in the Christian experience.

[23 : 54] Well, has there been a but now in your own experience. Can you say, well, once that was true of me, but now this is what's true of me.

Once I was blind to spiritual things. I was blind to my own spiritual condition. But now I see. And now I am aware of my own spiritual experience.

Has there been a but now in your own life, in your own experience. Paul says that this righteousness that God has provided has been manifested apart from the law.

What does Paul mean when he says, but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law. Well, some people say that God has done away with the law altogether.

And that Jesus came into the world and therefore the law has ceased to be of any significance. They say that until Jesus came and died on the cross and rose again, that man was judged according to the law.

[25 : 08] But that is no longer the case. They say that what judges man now is not the law of God, but his response to the Lord Jesus Christ. They say that because man failed to keep the law of God, that God has brought in something that was much easier.

And that judgment is now wholly based on whether we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, such conclusions are not correct. They are totally against the Bible.

The law has not been abolished. The law of God has not been abolished. It has not disappeared. It has not been cast aside. The law of God is still the basis of judgment.

In this chapter, verse 31, he says, Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means, he says. On the contrary, we uphold the law.

And we'll see that this evening. What then does it mean? It means that our attempting to keep the law perfectly ourselves as a means of salvation has been entirely set apart.

[26 : 16] But now the righteousness of God has been made apart from the law. That is, apart from our attempts to keep that law. Not because the law no longer applies, but because another has rendered this perfect obedience to the law on our behalf.

You know, sometimes, and rightly so, we lay emphasis on the cross of Golgotha. And that's right. You should. But don't forget the life of Jesus.

From the time he was born into the world until the cross, he kept a perfect life. He obeyed the law of God.

And he obeyed the law of God for me and for you. As well as dying on the cross, he kept the law perfectly for me and for you.

We must remember the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's righteousness is now attained without any contribution from us in keeping the law.

[27 : 27] Paul letters make it clear that the law has failed to rescue us from the power of sin. It has failed. Because compliance to the law that was necessary for a person to be justified before God has not and cannot be met by me or you, by mankind.

Our inability to attain the righteousness that is necessary for us to be justified before God by keeping the law, God himself, by his grace, has now provided this righteousness for us.

He has intervened to deliver us from the condemnation that the law justly has upon me and you. The law is still there. It's still the means of judgment.

And there is no way, there is no standing in the presence of God without a righteousness that answers its demands. He says that this righteousness was witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, he says. Here Paul relates it to the Old Testament. He hastens to add that the Old Testament as a whole anticipated and predicted this work of God.

[28 : 48] This righteousness of God, he says, is witnessed by the law and the prophets. You find it in Genesis 3.15 with the promise about the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head.

You find it in the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 where God promised Abraham and you shall all the nations be blessed. Paul writing to the Galatians says, Forseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preach the gospel beforehand to Abraham.

Preach the gospel beforehand to Abraham. The gospel is not something belonging to the New Testament. It was there in the Old Testament. It was there in Genesis 3.15.

It is there in the days of Abraham. Paul says that God preached the gospel before a hand to Abraham saying, In you shall all the nations be blessed.

And we can see it again in the event on Mount Moriah, can we not? In Genesis 22 when Abraham went to offer his son Isaac. Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see his day.

[29 : 53] Whether it was in the promise of Genesis 12 or on Mount Moriah, different opinions prevail. I think it was in Genesis 12 in the promise.

But he saw the day of Christ. He saw the day of the gospel and he believed it. He saw that God was going to provide a righteousness by which he could be saved.

You see, Abraham was saved by faith in Jesus Christ. The same as I and you will be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. It wasn't a different way of salvation in the Old Testament and a new way of salvation in the New Testament.

It is all in Christ. Adam was saved in Christ. Abraham is saved in Christ. Isaiah was saved in Christ. I and you are saved in Christ.

Yes, for Abraham and the Old Testament saints, there was a Christ to come. They believed and we look at the Christ in its fulfillment. He has come. But it's in Christ.

[30 : 53] It's the same righteousness by which he stands before God as I and you will stand before God. Again, it is found in the ceremonial law and all the sacrifices, the offerings, the rituals that Israel was commanded to keep.

The writer to the Hebrews says, The law has but a shadow of the good things to come. There were shadows of the Lord Jesus Christ and all that he has done. Throughout the Psalms and the prophets, you will find them witnessing to what God has done once and for all in the person of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are Masonic Psalms, for instance, like Psalm 22, where one would think that you were at Golgotha sitting below the cross. There is Isaiah chapter 53, which speaks of the suffering servant.

That was the righteousness that God has now made manifest, has made clear and revealed to me and you. It was witnessed by the law and the prophets.

It was in promise. It was in types and shadows. But now, says Paul, recently, what has happened at Golgotha, it has made it clear.

[32 : 03] A righteousness provided by God through his Son, by which I and you can escape the wrath and the condemnation that is due to me and you because of our sin has been revealed.

And how can this righteousness be obtained? Well, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe, for there is no distinction.

Paul highlights faith or trust as the means by which God's righteousness becomes applicable to me and to you.

God's righteousness is available only through faith in Christ. Christ. We spoke to the children about Christ saying, I am the door. Well, it is the same teaching here.

It is only available through Christ. We can only enter the kingdom of God through Christ. It is through Christ that I will go to heaven. It is through Christ that we enter heaven.

[33 : 05] Through Christ. There is no other door. There is no other means of happiness. And it is available to anyone and everyone who has faith in Christ.

For there is no distinction. For we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Time has gone and I have to bring it to a close.

But we speak here of the writer, Paul. A man who thought that he was working out a righteousness that would grant him salvation.

That would grant him a woman in heaven. He thought he was working it out. But when he met Christ on the road to Damascus, things changed. A bud now came into his experience.

And what does he say? I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish. In order that I may gain Christ and be found in him. Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law.

[34 : 05] But that which comes through faith. The righteousness that comes through faith. A righteousness that comes through faith. I'm going to close with this quote.

It's from a commentator. It's from a man called Haldim. And he says this. To that righteousness is the eye of the believer ever to be directed.

That's the righteousness that God has worked out through his son. Through the cross of Golgotha. That righteousness that can be put to my account and your account.

That is imputed to us. Put to our account. If we trust in Christ. That righteousness by which alone we can stand before God.

Haldim says. Haldim says. To that righteousness is the eye of the believer ever to be directed. On that righteousness must he rest.

[35 : 05] On that righteousness must he live. On that righteousness must he die. In that righteousness must he appear before the judgment seat.

In that righteousness must he stand forever. In the presence of our righteous God. May the Lord bless our thoughts.

Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed God. As we stand before thee at this hour. We acknowledge that.

We are sinners. That by nature. That we are out of relationship. Without God. But we give thanks to thee. For the gospel.

For the good news. That thou in thy love. In thy mercy. In thy grace. Hast provided through thy son. A righteousness.

[36 : 06] That can be put. And reckoned. To the accounts of sinners. That can be imputed to us. By faith. And whereby we can stand.

In thine own presence. Clothed with the righteousness. Of another. Not our own righteousness. But the righteousness. Of Christ.

We give thee thanks. O Lord. That today. That sinners shall not live. In a hopeless condition. Under the wrath. And condemnation. That is due to their sin.

But that there is hope. There is the hope. That is proclaimed in the gospel. There is the hope. Of eternal life. Through the righteousness. That has been provided by thee.

In thy love. In thy grace. We pray. O Lord. That each one of us. Here today. May be assured. That we are. Clothed in that righteousness.

[37 : 02] That brings us. Into a relationship. With our God. And in which we. Can stand. At the judgment seat. With all confidence. And with all boldness.

As those clothed. In the righteousness. Of Jesus Christ. Pray. O Lord. That thou would.
Go before us. That thou would. Come with us. In the evening. If that is in accordance.

With thy. Own sovereign will. That we meet here. Again. We pray. O Lord. That thy mercy.
And thy grace. Would always. Be around us. And abound with us.

Now that we ask. Is in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. We shall conclude. Our service. This
morning. By singing to the Lord's praise. From Psalm 85. And at verse 8.

Psalm 85. At verse 8. I'll hear what God. The Lord will speak. To his work he'll speak
peace. And to his saints. But let them not return. To foolishness. We shall sing down.

[37 : 58] To the end of the psalm. Yeah. What is good. The Lord shall give. Our land shall yield
increase. Just as to set us in his depths. Shall go before his face.

That is Psalm 85. In the Scottish Psalter. Verse 8. To the end of the psalm. To the Lord's
praise. I'll hear what God. The Lord will speak. To his work he'll speak peace.

I'll hear what God. The Lord will speak. To his folk he'll speak peace.

Unto his saints. But let them not return to foolishness.

To them that fear is generally near.

[39 : 08] It is salvation. That glory in our land may have.

Her habitation. Truth met with mercy.

Righteousness. And give his peace beautifully.

Truth springs from earth. And righteousness.

Truths come from heaven high. Yea.

[40 : 12] What is good. The Lord shall give. Our lands shall yield increase.

Justice to set us in his depths.

Shall go before his face. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Now and
forevermore. Amen.