

# My Favorite Thing About ROMANS

ROMANS 3:20-24

November 06, 2021

Since coming to the priesthood in 1505, Martin Luther had lived in turmoil. Despite his solemn promises and very best efforts, he could not live a pious and sin free life and the thought of divine justice terrified him.

After considering the advice of a superior, *"Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that he has shed for you; it is there that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in him—in the righteousness of his life—in the atonement of his death....."*, Luther began to study Scripture.

As he pondered the book of Romans, the truth began to dawn on him. **The righteousness that we need in order to stand before the holy God is not a righteousness we can attain by our own effort. In fact, it is not human righteousness at all. It is divine righteousness, and it becomes ours as a result of God's free grace. Our part is merely to receive it by faith, and to live by faith in God's promise.**

At the heart of the Reformation is the book of Romans, but when it was written, it was just a letter to believers, whom Paul had never met.

Paul wrote Romans:

- Around 57-58 AD
- While he was in Corinth

**My Favorite Thing About ROMANS is ---- "Because and Therefore" as it applies to Righteousness by Faith.**

There is a pattern throughout the book called *The Imperative and The Indicative or Because of this.... Therefore this.*

After Paul's lengthy introduction, he made a bold statement:

- **Romans 1:16-17** - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <sup>17</sup> For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: **"The righteous will live by faith."** {Habakkuk 2:4}

These two verses set the tone for the rest of the letter. They are the foundation on which everything else stands.

The target audience of Paul's letter was a church divided. The Jews thought they were better because they were of *"Abraham's Seed"* and the Gentiles thought they were better because they had not rejected and crucified Jesus nor had they been kicked out of Rome. So, Paul spent quite a bit of time insisting that the ground is level at the foot of the cross.

**The Pagans/Gentiles are guilty before God**

**The Jews are guilty before God**

**The Whole World is guilty before God**

- **Romans 3:9-19** - What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." <sup>13</sup> "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." <sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark their ways, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they do not know." <sup>18</sup> "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

**BECAUSE** all have sinned by breaking the Law of God, either unknowingly or knowingly.... **THEREFORE**, all are guilty.

- **James 2:10** - For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Up to this point, Paul has been talking about law keeping and guilt and if he had stopped there this would be a very short sermon. Luckily, he continued:

- **Romans 3:20-24** - Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the **Law and the Prophets** testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

**BECAUSE** the law only makes me aware of sin.... **THEREFORE**, law keeping cannot produce righteousness.

**BECAUSE** I cannot produce righteousness on my own.... **THEREFORE**, my righteousness has to come from elsewhere.

The Old Testament has been accused of putting extraordinary emphasis on Law Keeping and that only in the New Testament do we find Righteousness by Faith. So, before we get too far, I want to take a moment to return to the Old Testament:

- **Jeremiah 24:7** - And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.
- **Jeremiah 31:33** - "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
- **Ezekiel 11:19-20** - And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup> that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.
- **Habakkuk 2:4** - Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the **righteous will live by his faith.**

Righteousness that comes from God is an Old Testament promise. It is fulfilled when we put our faith in Jesus.

- **Isaiah 53:3-11** - .... <sup>5</sup> But He was pierced through for **our** transgressions, He was crushed for **our** iniquities; the chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, and by His scourging we are **healed**.... <sup>11</sup> As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it* and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will **justify** the many, as He will **bear** their iniquities.
- **Philippians 3:7-9** - But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

We, you and me, are the ones who intentionally ran from God. We rebelled against him. **YET**, despite our **CHOSEN** condition and while we were not seeking to be reconciled to Him, God sent Jesus to bring us back ---- while we were running the other way:

- **Genesis 3:8-9** - Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "**Where are you?**"
- **Romans 5:6-8** - For while we were **still helpless**, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were **yet sinners**, Christ died for us.

It is not your nationality or culture or religious affiliation that matters to God, it's what you believe to be true that matters.

Do you **believe** that you are a sinner in need of a Savior?

- **Isaiah 64:6** - For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
- **1 John 1:10** - If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Do you **believe** that Jesus died for you – for **YOU PERSONALLY** – because He loves you?

- **John 3:16** - For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- **1 John 4:9-10** - By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Do you **believe** that when you accept Jesus' Righteousness, God no longer sees your **SINFUL** life, instead, He sees Jesus' **SINLESS** life?

- **Isaiah 61:10** - I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** - He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- **Ephesians 4:24** - .... and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

If the answer to the above is yes, then **BECAUSE** you believe, **THEREFORE**, you are declared righteous.

- **Genesis 15:5-6** - He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." <sup>6</sup> Abram **believed** the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
- **Romans 4:3** - What does the Scripture say? "Abraham **believed** God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
- **James 2:23** - And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham **believed** God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

Do you know how amazing that is? God did not wait for us to become *"good enough"* before He came looking for us and when we trust Him as Lord, He saves us from the **penalty** and **power** of sin, and makes us righteous before Him through the perfect life, atoning death, resurrection, and heavenly ministry of Jesus.

As a result, there is an expectation of a transformed life.

- **Romans 12:2** - And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** - But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come!
- **Titus 3:5-7** - He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by **the washing of regeneration and renewing** by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> that being justified by His grace we might be made **heirs** according to *the* hope of eternal life.

So, where does law keeping fit in to this new found life? Obedience absolutely matters, but it is **WHY** you obey that is important. Obedience should flow from a place of gratitude and love for what God has **ALREADY** done for you. You don't keep the law in order to **GET SAVED**, you keep the law because you **ARE SAVED** - Big difference.

- **Exodus 20:2** - "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" ..... and then the 10 Commandments.

**BECAUSE** you love, **THEREFORE** you obey:

- **Deuteronomy 10:12-13** - And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to **walk in all his ways**, to **love** him, to **serve** the LORD your God with **all your heart and with all your soul**, <sup>13</sup> and to **observe** the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?
- **Deuteronomy 11:1** - **Love** the LORD your God and **keep** his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always.
- **John 14:15** - If you **love** me, you will **obey** what I command.
- **1 John 5:3** - This is **love** for God: to **obey** his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,
- **2 John 1:6** - And this is **love**: that we **walk in obedience** to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

The law does not go away, it simply changes locations. Righteousness by Faith turns outward law keeping into an inward reality – law keeping becomes as natural as breathing – You just **ARE** a law keeper. It's a heart thing!!

- **John Ortberg {The Life You've Always Wanted}** - When morphing happens, I don't just do the things Jesus would have done; I find myself wanting to do them. They appeal to me. They make sense. I don't just go around trying to do right things; I become the right sort of person.
- **Ellen White {DA 762.2}**: The law requires righteousness, -- a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus, they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus, the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ....

Notice the last few words..... *"Thus, the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled IN the believer in Christ."*

- **Romans 10:8-10** - But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: <sup>9</sup> That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.
- **Galatians 3:26-29** - You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**BECAUSE** all have sinned.... **THEREFORE**, all are guilty.

**BECAUSE** the law only makes me aware of sin.... **THEREFORE**, law keeping cannot produce righteousness.

**BECAUSE** I cannot produce righteousness on my own.... **THEREFORE**, my righteousness has to come from elsewhere.

**BECAUSE** I believe, by faith, in the righteousness of Jesus.... **THEREFORE**, I am declared righteous apart from keeping the law.

**BECAUSE** I love, **THEREFORE** I obey.

**“The righteousness that we need in order to stand before the holy God is not a righteousness we can attain by our own effort. In fact, it is not human righteousness at all. It is divine righteousness, and it becomes ours as a result of God’s free grace. Our part is merely to receive it by faith, and to live by faith in God’s promise.”**

Simple, really.....