

Romans 3A

- Last week we reached the end of Paul's opening section of his essay on righteousness
 - His opening volley was to demonstrate man as sinful and in a desperate situation
 - He first discussed mankind's overall sinful nature, then Gentiles and finally Jews
 - We've moved into chapter 3
 - Remember we noted in the first night how Paul seems to suspend his essay on righteousness in Rom 1:17
 - Then he dives into a discussions of unrighteousness
 - Then we noted that in 3:21-22 that his theme on righteousness picks up again
 - So tonight we will return with Paul to the topic of righteousness
 - But first, let's finish Paul's argument for the unrighteousness of men

[Rom. 3:9](#) ¶ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

[Rom. 3:10](#) as it is written,

“ THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

[Rom. 3:11](#) THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,

THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

[Rom. 3:12](#) ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;

THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,

THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

[Rom. 3:13](#) “ THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,”

“ THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;

[Rom. 3:14](#) “ WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;

[Rom. 3:15](#) “ THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

[Rom. 3:16](#) DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

[Rom. 3:17](#) AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”

[Rom. 3:18](#) “ THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

- All men – Jews and Greeks – are under a charge of sin
 - Paul cites two Psalms (14 & 53)
 - Not even one man can stand on his own before God and expect to be called righteous
 - Verse 11 – no man even understands his own predicament
 - All men have and will stray from God
 - And absolutely none of them – no man – will of his own nature and volition ever seek after God in such a way as to find Him truly
- These Psalms form a capstone argument
 - Scripture's own testimony concerning the reality of man's unrighteousness
 - The very nature of men is such that not only do they sin habitually, but they are enslaved to sin
 - All have turned aside
 - Together they have become useless
 - But the original word in Hebrew was corrupt
 - None do good
 - And there is no fear of God before their eyes
 - The message of scripture – not just of Paul - is one of man's hopelessness and heedlessness

[Rom. 3:19](#) ¶ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

[Rom. 3:20](#) because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

- Paul begins to transition back to righteousness
 - At first glance, he appears to be returning to a discussion of the Law, since Paul mentions the Law
 - But the English text is a bit deceiving here

- In my version, and numerous others, the translators have assumed that Paul was speaking about the Mosaic Law in verse 19 & 20
 - But these are Paul's concluding statements intended to summarize all that's been said in the preceding 2 chapters
 - So he's not talking specifically about the Mosaic Law – at least not in verse 19 & 20
 - Let me try to give you a sense of what Paul is saying here
- Remove "the" – just "law"
 - Young's Literal Translation of the Bible

[Rom. 3:19](#) ¶ And we have known that as many things as the law saith, to those in the law it doth speak, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may come under judgment to God;

[Rom. 3:20](#) wherefore by works of law shall no flesh be declared righteous before Him, for through law is a knowledge of sin.

- Paul is describing the effect of laws, rules, standards
 - Whatever law says, it says it to those who under that law
 - Whatever a Law "says" –
 - Its impact
 - Or the limit of a law's reach
 - It speaks to those under (in) law
 - So that every mouth would be closed
 - All the world becomes accountable
- The idea here is that laws don't produce righteousness in an of themselves
 - They only reveal unrighteousness
 - Therefore, there chief purpose of every law is to put people to conviction
- So God used law to demonstrate our collective unrighteousness

- And our efforts to work our way out of the hole we're in will never succeed
 - Because our only response to our predicament is to try and perform works in keeping with God's Law
 - But we can't do it
 - Paul says by the works of law, no flesh shall be declared righteous before Him
 - Like two people trying to throw a rock and hit the North Pole
 - Law merely reveals sin
- Now Paul links the unrighteousness of man with God's plan for righteousness

[Rom. 3:21](#) ¶ But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
[Rom. 3:22](#) even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
[Rom. 3:23](#) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
[Rom. 3:24](#) being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
[Rom. 3:25](#) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
[Rom. 3:26](#) for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
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- Perhaps the most succinct, most elegant statement of God's plan of salvation ever penned
 - Honestly, we should all memorize the verses I just read, and understand every word
 - Consider where Paul has left the Roman church
 - If they followed his arguments from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2 to the mid point of Chapter 3 has be on the verge of panic

- All men are sinful, there is no hope, and all is lost
 - No man can save himself, since our works are never sufficient to please God
 - Now what?
 - Paul then unfolds God's solution – this is the unique, distinguishing feature of Christianity
 - Elsewhere Paul preaches against accepting a false gospel
 - How do I recognize a false gospel? A gospel that cannot save us truly?
 - Learn the truth and you'll be able to distinguish the false messages
- Point 1 (The Disclaimer)
 - Apart from the Law
 - The word is choris – which means separately from or independent from
 - Remember we're talking about law, not necessarily The Law
 - So point number 1 is God's plan for saving men is a plan that is independent of any law, any rules of human action or behavior
 - The salvation of our souls isn't accomplished through our own effort or actions in keep some set of rules or law
 - It is not by works
- Point 2 (The Gospel is about God's righteousness – not our righteousness)
 - The righteousness of God has been manifested
 - God solves the problem of our unrighteousness by manifesting His righteousness
 - First, consider the word manifested
 - Phaneroo, which means disclosed or made visible

- So God made His righteousness visible to a world that previously only knew unrighteousness
 - Therefore, notice it's not our righteousness
 - God didn't manifest in us our own righteousness
 - The Gospel doesn't turn us into righteous people
 - He made visible His righteousness (important later)
- Point 3 (The Gospel is a promised fulfilled)
 - This righteousness of God was witnessed (or testified to) by the Law and Prophets
 - Here for the first time in this section, we see a reference to the Mosaic Law
 - We know it's the Mosaic Law because it's frame with "prophets"
 - Now we see the true purpose of the Law and Prophets
 - They Mosaic Law and the Prophets met their ultimate purpose in testifying god's plan to reveal His righteousness to men
- Point 4 (Faith is the means of manifesting God's righteousness)
 - The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ
 - Notice he didn't say righteousness comes because of our faith in Jesus Christ
 - It's not a cause and effect relationship
 - It's not a call and response
 - God manifested His righteousness through our faith not because of it
 - Paul clarifies this point more in a moment
- Point 5 (The Recipients)
 - For all who believer, for there is no distinction, all have fallen short
 - The second part is better read in parentheses and makes the point

- All men are saved the same way – there is no second way to be saved
 - God has one plan for salvation
- Point 6 (The Result)
 - Being justified as a gift by His grace
 - The word justified is one of the most important in the Bible
 - Dikaloo
 - To be declared righteous, acquitted, vindicated
 - It's the success outcome of a judging process
 - Believers are justified
 - God declares believers righteous, innocent
 - God doesn't make us righteous

We now come to the greatest single verse in the entire Bible on the manner of justification by faith: We entreat you, study this verse. We have seen many a soul, upon understanding it, come into peace." William Newell

Justification is an act, not a process. And it is something God does, not man.

- God's decision to bring us to this result was purely a gift, His grace
 - Nothing can explain it
 - Nothing we did or thought or sought after contributed to it
 - Remember, no one seeks God
 - He sought us
 - And by grace, through faith, He declared us righteous
- Now what gives God the right to overlook our sins in that way since we know we deserve condemnation?

- Point 7 (The Price)
 - Through redemption in Christ Jesus
 - Redemption = apolutrosis
 - Obtaining release of someone through a payment
 - Ransom
 - A payment made on our behalf by Jesus Christ
 - So our justification was made possible because we were ransomed
- Point 8
 - Jesus' ransom permits God to declare us righteous because it is a propitiation

The act of appeasing the wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person –
Webster

- Paul describes what he means by clarifying that God displayed Jesus publically as an atoning sacrifice
 - And then Paul says Jesus was a propitiation in His blood through faith
 - The better rendering of the phrase is through faith in His blood
 - Or through faith in the effectual atonement of Christ on the cross
 - God made a public display of His Son by spilling His blood on behalf of the sins of the world
 - And through a faith in that sacrifice, that ransom, our debt is paid
- Paul goes further here
 - He explains how God's own righteousness was demonstrated in this process of ransoming men by His Son's death
 - First, at the moment of the cross, God demonstrated righteousness by crushing His Son

- Paul says because of God's forbearance (anoche = delaying) in dealing with the sin of mankind
- Sin had occurred
 - Justice was required
 - If He is just, then God must act to punish sin
 - Yet God had not yet brought His wrath against the sins committed among all men
- Remember, Sheol (Luke 16)
 - So as God crushes His Son, He remains true to His own righteousness by demanding a price be paid for sin
- But having placed His wrath on Jesus, God now can be just and also be the justifier of the one who has faith in His Sons blood atonement
 - So in the present time (now) God demonstrates His righteousness each time a sinner comes to faith in this atonement
 - God receives the rightful praise for His righteousness
 - That He could be the one to keep the Law, even keeping it to the point of demanding a sacrifice for the sin
 - And His righteousness is demonstrated in that our salvation comes as a result of Christ's good works on our behalf
- So again, it's all God's righteousness
 - Gospel worksheet

[Rom. 3:27](#) ¶ Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

[Rom. 3:28](#) For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

[Rom. 3:29](#) Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

[Rom. 3:30](#) since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

- Paul ends chapter 3 with a defense of justification by faith alone
 - I'm sure Paul anticipated the negative reaction his message would have with many in his audience
 - But especially the Jew
 - Because the Jew had been conditioned to believe that redemption depended on some inherent qualification or status among those who were saved
 - Jewish birthright
 - Keeping of the Law
 - And the same problem still exists today
 - People still approach this topic with assumptions about what's required to enter heaven
 - Certain works, qualifications, some effort
 - The history of Christianity is littered with factions, denominations and theologies that have tried to add some measure of human worth or human work to God's grace
 - So Paul launches a preemptive strike here
- Where there is boasting?
 - The Greek word can be translated proud self-confidence
 - Paul asks is there any room in God's plan for man's pride or boasting of self?
 - Paul says it is excluded (ekkleio) – shut out
 - He didn't say it's not necessary – it was specifically shut out by God
 - Not permitted
 - Paul ask what kind of law can declare men righteous but do so in such a way that it excludes boasting by men?
 - It must be a law or principle other than a law of works
 - It is a law of faith

- God has established a law that leads men into righteousness
 - This law doesn't yield human righteousness
 - Rather it imparts God's righteousness to men
- And this law that leads men to this righteousness is a law with only one requirement – faith in Christ
 - And that faith itself was a gift
 - Leaving men nothing whatsoever to boast about
- Now talking to the Jewish foundation and leadership of this church, Paul says clearly
 - We maintain that men are justified apart from the works of the Law
 - Only by faith
 - We maintain means the Christian position is this view
 - Any other view that introduces the requirement of human works according to any law as a means to righteousness has departed from Christianity
- For God is working in all mankind through the same means
 - Both as God of the Jews and as God of the Gentiles
 - He will justify both the circumcised and uncircumcised the same way

[Rom. 3:31](#) ¶ Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

- A powerful verse
 - It can be understood simply yet it's very complex
 - In a sense, the rest of Paul's letter is an explanation of this one verse
 - Did God's use of a law of faith, nullify (katargeo) – abolish, bring to an end – the Mosaic Law?

- Not at all
 - On the contrary, we establish it (or confirm it or make it stand)
- How so?
 - Well, the Law is to be understood as a picture of God's righteousness, specifically His plan to redeem men
 - So as men obey the law of faith and are justified, the Law's purpose is being met in that moment
 - It's true purpose is being fulfilled
 - Secondly, the Law stands as a model of righteousness lived out
 - Righteous behavior is displayed in the Law's commandments
 - And so the believer, having been justified is then empowered by the Spirit to live in righteous ways
 - And so what the Law couldn't do in the weakness of our flesh, the Spirit of Grace is doing through the power of Christ living in us
 - Ironically, what we couldn't accomplish in our own efforts, God is now at work doing on our behalf
- So when we are saved by faith, the Law's two purposes are established
 - Salvation by atonement is accomplished
 - Righteous living becomes possible
 - The great connecting thread of the OT vs. NT is that the OT demands a solution to sin that only the NT can fulfill