

Romans
Message 16
Not Ashamed 03
Rom 1:13-19

- 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.
- 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
- 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
- 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
- 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. KJV

Introduction:

Last week we focused on verse 16 and the first part of 17 and the talked about the Righteousness, the Holiness, of God as revealed in the Gospel and we talked about what Paul envisioned the Gospel to be, the Whole Counsel of God attended by the Powerful Working of the Holy Spirit. When that is in play revelation occurs. But, as we know, and as Paul states here, this does not occur in a vacuum. He will visit the necessity of and God's Plan for human agency in this text as well as in a future one.

Rom 10:12-15

- 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.
- 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
- 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! KJV

Never should we be heard to say or to insinuate that the proclamation of the gospel is unnecessary or irrelevant. God has ordained this to be the way as we shall see from the last part of verse 17.

1 Cor 1:21

- 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it

pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. KJV

Look again at v.17 because I want you to see that it is a most enigmatic and cryptic statement.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

In the Gospel, the Righteousness of God is revealed. I was a little uncertain about this text after contemplating it all week with the idea of speaking to you from it, so I looked at several commentaries and listened to one very good sermon on it from Dr. Jones several times.

Many, including some commentators, want this to say that what is revealed here is “the way that God makes men righteous,” i.e. “The Plan of Salvation,” whatever they conceive that to be. This is very pragmatic of them... because it then yields itself to support their theory of redemption. But I have concluded that it is an incorrect use and understanding of the words here.

As we said last week, we cannot speak of the “Way” that God makes men righteous without speaking of Him Who is Holy and the Source of All Righteousness. Man’s need of Righteousness is created by the fact of God’s Holiness.

- It was in Holiness that He made man and set him in the Garden.
- It was in Holiness that He created the Two Trees (Life and The Knowledge of Good and Evil)
- And it was the same in requiring Adam to avoid one of them.
- In Holiness He decreed that the soul that sinned would die.
- And, it was in Holiness that He enforced His Law.

You see, if I tell this story and leave out the principle of the Holiness of God at every juncture, you risk seeing Him blamed for being capricious and unjust.

Paul held back nothing that was spiritually profitable to those who hear him and neither should we.

The person who truly believes that God is Holy and that His Mercy and Love do not overrule and overthrow that Holiness also knows that he dare not live in sin presuming that God will pardon him in the end. Holiness will not allow it.

The whole story of God’s Righteousness must be told from Creation to the Cross to the Resurrection, Ascension and Coming Again of Christ.

But then Paul made a cryptic comment concerning the Gospel and its’ revelation of the Righteousness of God.

It is revealed, he said, “from faith to faith,” and then he “explained” that statement with another enigmatic comment, “As it is written, the just shall live by faith.” Unfortunately for us, this does not explain much.

Now, tell me the truth. Do you understand what those who phrases mean?

What does “from faith to faith” mean and where is that quote coming from?

What if I told you that there is a book of the OT that you are going to need to understand before you can see what Paul intended here?

The source of Paul’s quote is Hab 2:4

Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

KJV

The Greek OT, called the LXX, is quite different in the first part of that verse.

“If he (*or any man*) should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by my faith”

Actually this verse is referenced in another place in the NT.

Heb 10:36-39

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. KJV

The writer of Hebrews was using this passage to define the difference between those who have faith and those whose do not, those who “draw back unto perdition.” This can also be read “shrink back and are destroyed.”

The book of Hebrews, if you recall, is written with a specific audience in mind, Jews who had professed faith in Christ who were being tempted to turn back to their old religion.

Habakkuk was using it in much the same way. Those who have true faith are those who live out that faith in obedience to God.

It is necessary here to take a look at this little ‘book’ of Habakkuk. It is one of the shortest books of the Bible, just 3 chapters as our Bibles break it down.

But, before we do that, let us think for a few minutes about the *way* the writers of the NT used passages from the OT.

Many, if not most, preachers and ‘Christian’ writers today do what we call ‘prooftexting.’ That is, they desire to make a point and want to summon the authority of scripture for their point, so they search for and find a verse that seems to say what they want and they quote it in support of their idea, regardless of whether the setting from which they are pulling the verse is in any way connected with the idea they are affirming.

They ‘shop’ the Bible, as it were, and some go ever further. They ‘shop’ the various translations to find an arrangement of words that seems to best ‘fit’ their idea. My father once took the time to research a so-called ‘Christian’ book that has been very famous over the last 20 years or so. He found that the author, a noted ‘pastor’ of our day, used no less than 8 different translations to find the words to use to support ideas that are profoundly unscriptural. (I have never had that kind of patience!)

In the first place, this is the wrong way to handle scripture. What we affirm should flow out of the text, whichever one we may be using, rather than out of our minds with a ‘shopped’ verse to quote as our authority.

It is often completely dishonest (as in the book my father researched), the quoted verse having nothing to do with the thing being affirmed. But given the fact that most people do not study their Bibles, these men get away with their scheme and the people presume that the message was ‘Biblical’ since Bible verses were quoted to affirm the points.

I am convinced that the writers of the NT nor Jesus Himself ever did this. If they quoted a verse, it was taken from a setting which was and is consistent with what they were teaching.

(End of Rant)

Paul pointed to Habakkuk for help on this idea that the Righteousness of God in the Gospel is revealed ‘From Faith to Faith.’

Now, we do not know who Habakkuk was other than he was a prophet of God. That he was quoted twice in the NT lends much affirmation to that belief. We do know that he lived in Judea in the years before the Babylonian invasion and that he was prominent enough that other prophets of the time either quote him or allude to things he said. Most of his little book is taken up with the issue of Judah’s sins and the coming invasion from the Chaldeans.

From his writing we know that he was troubled about several things.

- He was grieved by the wickedness of his people.

Hab 1:3-4

3 Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.

4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth. KJV

- He was grieved that God had not answered his prayers for his people.

Hab 1:2

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! KJV

- It bothered him that God was going to use such a wicked people to bring judgment upon the Jews, who were supposedly the people of God.

Hab 1:12-13

12 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he? KJV

In response the Lord affirmed that He was in no way endorsing the wickedness of Babylon but was purpose to judge it.

Hab 2:6-20

6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!

7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?

8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!

10 Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.

11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!

13 Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?

14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory.

- 17 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.
- 18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?
- 19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.
- 20 But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. KJV

Again the text of the LXX

“If he (*or any man*) should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by my faith”

And:

Heb 10:36-39

- 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.
- 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.
- 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.
- 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. KJV

Those who ‘draw back’ are those in Israel both in the days of Habakkuk and in the First Century who, knowing the Truth ‘drew back,’ another phrase for Apostacy, the abandonment of Truth and Obedience.

There is a huge contrast drawn... “However!” We are not of them... The Just shall live by, live out, his faith.

This is what James said.

James 2:18

- 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. KJV

The man who is righteous before God, the Just man, lives his faith by repenting of sin, believing on Christ.... obeying God.

But, how does this explain, “The righteousness of God is revealed *from faith to faith*”?

Well, let us remember what we know. How is the message revealed? What examples do we have of that? Well, we have a fairly compact one in Acts 17. You will remember that Paul was

in Athens awaiting the arrival of Timothy and Silas.

Acts 17:16-31

- 16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.
- 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.
- 18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.
- 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?
- 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.
- 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)
- 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.
- 23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.
- 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;
- 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;
- 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;
- 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:
- 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
- 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.
- 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
- 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. KJV

Notice that in v.31 he declared the Righteousness of God and the resurrection of Christ as the reason men should repent of their sins. He declare the Holiness and the Wrath of God to these people who had never heard anything about this idea. Please also remember that this is only a summary of a message that probably was much more lengthy and exhaustive.

But look further at those to whom this Gospel was revealed.

Acts 17:32-34

- 32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.
- 33 So Paul departed from among them.
- 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.
KJV

Some left as spiritually ignorant and lost as when they came but “certain men clave unto him *and believed.*” Some were granted faith as they listened to Paul to embrace with the whole heart what he had said. And, how came they by this faith?

Eph 2:8

- 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: KJV

God opened their hearts, spoke life into their souls, and that life had as one of its qualities the ability to believe the gospel.

The Righteousness of God was revealed “*from faith to faith.*”

Because the *Just* (Paul) live by (live out) their faith.

If Paul had taken the opportunity, being alone in one of the most wicked places on earth, and wallowed in the filth and slime of the immorality of Athens, he would not have been used by God to awaken those souls. But he “Lived by Faith.” He took advantage of his situation to proclaim the gospel by life and by words.

Do you see now how v.17 is connected?

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

The one who has faith is right with God, this is Justification by Faith.

He lives a life of obedience.

When he declares the Righteousness and Wrath of God some are granted faith to believe. This is the way it has worked since the beginning. In some places the “some” was a very small number. For Noah it was eight. For Peter on Pentecost it was thousands. The same for Paul at Ephesus.

But to declare the gospel... to speak the Whole Counsel of God with the attending power of the Holy Spirit... The Just must Live by Faith.

Now, I cannot leave this topic without saying this.

There are many declaring a message they call 'the gospel' in our day who are very corrupt people.

I was reading just this week of a man very high up in the "Name It and Claim It" movement who has been exposed as a complete pervert.

Another has been exposed in the Sovereign Grace movement as the same. We are finding this all over what is called 'Christianity' in our day.

Not only are we seeing it exposed, many are openly embracing it and affirming it as acceptable to God.

Some ignorant people say, "well, they were preaching the gospel so some good must have been done."

This is nonsense! The Righteousness of God and the Wrath of God in the Gospel is revealed "From Faith to Faith." That is the only way that this works.

That which those men have wrought is "wood, hay, and stubble" destined to be burned up on the Last Day... and it is with great grief that I say to you, some of that will be the deceived souls of religious people.

Listen, the Gospel concerns the Holiness and Wrath of Almighty God. It is not a little sales pitch one can memorize nor a little 'repeat after me' prayer.

It is the most serious message that has ever come from heaven to man and it is being made into a laughing stock in our day.

- 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
- 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Can you say that, in all honestly, with Paul and with the Christian Church that has survived these three thousand years?