

Transformed!

How God Renews the Lives of His People

Get Personal

Part 4: *Righteousness from God and by Faith*

A Note from Pastor Keith...

Last time we learned the consequences of being “given over” to sin (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). It is spiritual bondage, it’s serious, and it’s universal. “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Rom. 3:10). What can we do? Clean up our act? We already know that won’t work. “No one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law” (Rom. 3:20). Yet there is hope! Let’s find out what it is.

Righteousness from God and by Faith

Focus Passage:

²¹But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ^{22a}This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

Romans 3:21-22a (all references are NIV)

There’s Bad News and Good News:

1. Bad News: We are all sinners—me, you, everybody.

^{22b}There is no difference, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Romans 3:22b-23

2. Good News: If we put our faith in Christ, *God will declare us righteous* (even though we’re not).

²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ^{25a}God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

Romans 3:24-25a

3. Being “good enough” has NOTHING to do with it!

^{27a}Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. ²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. ³¹Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Romans 3:27a, 28, 31

“But what about...?”

Q₁: “What about the whole Old Testament?”

A₁: *It was righteous from God through faith then, and it’s righteousness from God through faith now. That hasn’t changed!*

Get Personal!

Today we’re going to focus on clearing away our misconceptions and misinformation, and hearing what God is *actually telling us*.

If you are going to be considered righteous by God, where will that righteousness have to come from—you or God?

What does God ask you to do to receive that righteousness?

Is God’s declaration that you are now righteous something you have to earn or deserve?

Let’s be absolutely clear: Does this declaration depend *in any way* on your good works—on you observing the law?

⁴What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ⁷"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Romans 4:1-8

Q₂: "What about all those religious ceremonies?"

A₂: *The ceremonies and rituals come later—after faith and after righteousness is credited. They don't make us righteous; they're just symbols.*

¹⁰Under what circumstances was it [righteousness] credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹²And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Romans 4:10-12

Q₃: "What about the Ten Commandments and all that?"

A₃: *That came later, too—after faith! Besides, if obedience to the law is required, we're sunk.*

¹³It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham.

Romans 4:13-16a

Conclusion: *Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead so that through faith in Him sinners like us could be declared righteous.*

²³The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Romans 4:23-25

Next Week: *A New Source, a New Life*

Get Personal!

What are you trusting as the solution to your sin problem?

If you find all this hard to believe, why? What exactly are you struggling with? What doesn't make sense to you? Try to summarize your concern below.

If you are struggling with all this, can you at least agree that this is what the Bible is saying?

Perhaps you feel that, for the first time, you understand what the Bible is saying. You never understood it before, but now you do. Is there anything keeping you, right now, from putting your trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the answer to your sin problem?

You can do that right now. It is simply a decision you make—a decision to stop trusting whatever you were trusting to get you to heaven, and to start trusting Christ alone. You can make that decision right now. If you do, tell God about it and thank Him for it.