

**The Footsteps of Faith Series**  
**Lesson # 6 “Righteousness apart from the Law”**  
Romans 3:21-31

**Scripture:** Romans 1:16-17

*“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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”*

**Introduction:**

One of John Wayne’s movies was called Big Jake. In this movie his grandson was kidnapped and held for ransom. So John Wayne set out with his son’s to go and get his grandson back. Along the way one son had some new pistol that was fancy and very powerful and he was trying to figure out a better holster for it. John Wayne scoffed at the idea of trusting anything except his old colt 357. Also along the way his other son road a motorcycle instead of a horse to which John Wayne also thought was ridiculous because he trusted horses.

Is it true that change comes hard for many of us today. I don’t know about you but boy do I love routine. I like things to be the same day after day. They have just came out with a new DVD player called Blue Ray....I don’t really care if it is better technology or not I like my old DVD player.

Why do we resist change? I think it is complacency some times and fear other times. But sometimes it is simply because of a lack of understanding. The story is told of a man asking his wife why she cuts off the ends of the ham. She says that her mother always did it, so she called her mother to inquire. Her mother said she didn’t know either and that her mother had always done it. So she called her mother only to find out that her pan was to short.

**Transitional Statement:**

Church, many times, the righteousness of God leads us down unfamiliar paths. These paths most of the time are uncertain and even scary. It is only through the footsteps of faith that we will arrive at the destination that God has marked out for us. Jeremiah 10:23 says that it is not within a man to direct his own steps.

**Lesson:**

**I. But now !**

Romans 3:21a *“But now...”*

- A. In the first three chapters Paul has been describing the Jews and Gentiles and their hopeless condition in regards to sin.
- B. But here Paul says “but *now*”
  - 1. Something is different
  - 2. Things have changed
    - a. That was then ...and this is now !
- C. The Jews had a real struggle letting go of the past and realizing the present.
  - 1. If you have seen the movie Lion King you might remember the part where Simba a young lion who is destined to become the king of the jungle someday was taught a lesson by a wise old monkey named Rafiki. Rafiki hauled off and wacked Simba in the back of the head and Simba complained about how it hurt and told him to stop. Rafiki told him that the good thing about the past is that it is in the past, just move on. The point being that you should learn from the past but not let it rule you.
  - 2. I think there are a lot of people in this world today, maybe even some sitting here today, who hold so desperately to the past and its baggage that they have trouble living out the present.
- D. In our text shortly after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ the Apostle Paul inspired by God points to God’s ultimate intention through the reality of Christ.
  - 1. The past was but a class room for learning Gal. 3:24
- E. But what happens when people live in the past and will not embrace the present?
  - 1. Well just think of our current fuel crises.
  - 2. We have turned a blind eye to this mounting problem for years.
    - Building gas guzzlers
    - Raising speed limits.
    - \*Now our goose is cooked !

## **II. Righteousness apart from law has been manifested**

Romans 3:21b-23

*“...apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*

A. Now, apart from The Law (Moses) , a righteousness of God has been made known.

1. The Jews thought The Law could make them righteous before God
  - a. If they observed enough of it without flaw that God would accept them.
2. Basically they had taken their trust away from God and placed it in the Law keeping.

- a. Verse 22 says that this righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus

- For there is no other name under heaven given by which men must be saved Acts 4:12

- b. Here Paul points to a righteousness of God and makes a distinction from man's efforts.

- c. And Paul word's this idea well in Philippians 3:7-10

*“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 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 so that I may gain Christ, 9 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, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;”*

3. You see, the righteousness of God could not be made known until Jesus had finished His redemptive work on the cross of Calvary.

B. And the Law and the Prophets stood as witnesses, testifying to the righteousness of God available now under Christ.

C. Oh, and this righteousness is available to all who believe

1. In reality God's chosen people are simply those who trust in His Son
2. Without distinction

Galatians 3:28

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

- D. A righteousness sought by works of law falls miserable short of God's expectation.

### **III. Justification is a matter of grace**

Romans 3:24-26

*24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.*

- A. Justification is a gift.
1. Not earned
  2. Given when helpless (Redemption)
- B. Justification comes through Christ's redemptive work on the cross.
1. Through faith in His atoning blood sacrifice

*This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 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.*

- A. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was a demonstration of God's own rightfulness, His ultimate sovereignty, and justice.
1. God had passed over sins under the old law in His forbearance
  2. But now sins would be dealt with...either washed away in an eternal flow of His son's blood or counted against eternally condemning the soul to death.

### **IV. Therefore, boasting is excluded.**

Romans 3:27-30

*27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.*

- A. Have you played around with your kids and locked them out of the house or car watching them knocking at the door pleading to come in or maybe at the window with their face smeared against the glass?
1. The idea here is that we shut prideful boasting out of our lives
  2. Boasting has no place with Christians

B. Boasting is excluded by what kind of law?

1. There are different kinds of law.
2. Not by the law of works. (Law of Moses)
  - a. If a man works he takes pride in what his mind and hands have accomplished.
3. Boasting is excluded by the law of faith. (Christ)
  - a. When we trust in God we don't lift ourselves up.

C. Justification comes apart from works of law

1. God is the God of everyone
2. And God's method of justification is through faith

**V. Faith doesn't do away with law**

Romans 3:31

*31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law."*

- A. Does faith in Christ eliminate the law with boundaries and expectations
- B. Certainly not, trust in God establishes the law of faith which moves us to carefully consider through devotion and desire the will of God.
- B. The ultimate goal of any law is not to restrict but to establish

**Conclusion:**

The only basis for a right relationship with God comes through trust in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus the Christ.

Today where is your trust?

Corporations often send their employees to weekend ropes courses. Have you heard of them. In a ropes course people are taken to a place with a little bit of height and blind folded, then asked to fall backward and let their friends catch them. Many people struggle with this even to the point of tears because they are scared so deeply.

It could be today that some of us need to just close our eyes and through the footsteps of faith just fall into the arms of the living God.