

Romans 1.14-17

“Everlasting Comfort for Eternal Contagion”

SCARRIEST Time in ANY of our LIFETIMES! WORLD on LOCKDOWN!

WHAT is our GREATEST Need in WORLD Right Now?

CURE Virus /Restart ECONOMY/ SAVE My JOB/ GRADUATE w DEGREE

GET NBA Playing Again – Get BACK to Favorite BAR – Eat a HAMBURGER

SOME See BEYOND Creature COMFORTS Feeling DEEPER PAIN / LOSS

Our EXPERTS are HELPLESS – WORLD OUT of Control – GOD – He,She,It?

Seems FAR AWAY – UNCONCERNED – Powerless - perhaps ANGRY

EMPTINESS of Heart and Soul – ESTRANGED from God – AFRAID of GOD

Over 500 years ago – Martin Luther > Filled with FEAR when thot about GOD  
BOY Luther Trembled to Go into Family Church > saw Frowning Face of Jesus!  
Righteous Judge! ALL HIS YOUTH / Feared Death > FEARED JUDGMENT

1505 Martin Luther left Law School > ENTERED MONASTERY @ age 21

NOT to Study Theology > but to SAVE HIS SOUL

DEVOTED SELF to Augustinian Orders / Fasted, Prayed, Confessed Sins

CONFESSED MOST TRIVIAL SINS / TOOK MANY HOURS at a Time

Superiors banned him from Confession Box UNTIL he has Something Serious  
Meticulously followed Monkish Wisdom of Day /Self Righteous by Works

Later wrote to Duke of Saxony “If ever a monk could obtain heaven by his  
monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it...If I had continued  
much longer, I should have carried my mortification even to death”

Wise Spiritual Father / Vicar General of the Congregation / John Staupitz

“Why are you so sad brother Martin?”

“I do not know what will become of me,” Luther deeply sighed.

STAUPITZ “More than a thousand times I have sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know I cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the love of Christ and grant me a happy departure when I must quit this world, I shall never with the aid of all my vows and all my good works stand before him. I must perish.”

With those SURPRISING WORDS / Staupitz sent Luther to study Scripture  
TEXT WHICH JUMPED OFF THE PAGE TO LUTHER WAS Romans 1.17

Romans 1.14-17

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup>So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

### 1. God’s Righteousness – what is the message?

GREAT THEME of this LETTER to the ROMANS > GOD: Good, Right, Just

#### a. Who God is – Righteousness God’s Characteristic, Attribute

Luther SAW this CLEARLY in STERN FACE of JESUS on CHURCH WALL  
UTTERLY CONSISTENT, COMPLETELY FAITHFUL, ALWAYS RIGHT  
HOLY: “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong” Hab

VERY NATURE OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUS > He Cannot DO WRONG

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness” Psalm 45.7

JESUS Challenged Attackers “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” John 8.46

#### b. What God does – Activity, Behavior

Learn from Abraham “The Judge of all the earth will DO RIGHT” Gen 18.25

ROMANS – God’s Righteousness SUPREMELY SEEN in Cross of Christ

v. 17 “For in the gospel a righteousness from God IS REVEALED”

JESUS - PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS “I always do what pleases Him” John 8.29  
 WAS BAPTIZED “to fulfill all righteousness” Matthew 3.14

FULFILLED PROPHECY OF ISAIAH “I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away, and my salvation will not be delayed” Isaiah 46.13

RIGHTEOUSNESS & SALVATION are SYNONMS / Keep Covenant Promise  
 “You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior” P 65.5  
 “The Lord has revealed his righteousness to the nations” Psalm 98.2

c. What God gives – Status, Position

GOD MAKES US RIGHTEOUS – THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD!  
 FIRST 2 ALONE –God is Righteous, God Acts Righteously – NOT Good News  
 TERRIFYING NEWS – WE’RE IN TROUBLE – WE ARE UNRIGHTEOUS

“Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness” Ps 71.2

“In your righteousness bring me out of trouble” Ps 143.11

What made Luther love God he previously hated / GOD GIVES Righteousness

JOHN STAUPITZ TO LUTHER “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. Do not shrink back. God is not angry with you; it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God”

“My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long”  
 Psalm 71.15

TERM “Imputation” – Application of Righteousness of X to Sinner

“The righteousness of God is God’s righteous initiative in putting sinners right with himself by bestowing on them a righteousness which is not their own but his. The righteousness of God is God’s just justification of the unjust, his

righteous way of pronouncing the unrighteous righteous, in which he both demonstrates his righteousness and gives righteousness to us. He has done it through Christ, the righteous one, who died for the unrighteous.” John Stott

**HOW does GOD GIVE this RIGHTEOUSNESS? – By Faith from First to Last**

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee. Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling; Naked, come to thee for dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior or I die.”

Augustus Toplady

**QUOTE from Habakkuk = Faith is the WAY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**What we are talking about DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH**

1. By Faith entirely
2. From the faith of the OT to the faith of the NT
3. From faith of the Jew to faith of the Gentile
4. From weak faith to stronger faith
5. From God’s righteousness revealed by faith to our faith in that righteous God

**IT IS ALL GOOD / AND CONSISTENT WITH BIBLICAL TEACHING**

Other religions are about being saved through giving to God a righteousness. Christianity is about being saved through receiving from God a righteousness.

Tim Keller

“It is like putting the infinite moral capital of the Lord Jesus Christ into our empty bank account”

James Boice

## 2. Gospel Recipients – who is the message for?

**Romans GOOD NEWS of God’s Righteousness for ALL PEOPLE / PLACES**

a. Religious – v. 16 “Jew First”

v. 13 “other Gentiles” – Roman Church largely a GENTILE CHURCH

## v. 16 “Jew First” - THEOLOGY and CHRONOLOGY

THEOLOGY - 9.4 “The people of Israel, Theirs is the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises”

REMINDS THEM – Gospel is FROM the Jews and FOR the Jews

OT – Jewish Book / Jesus and the Apostles – Jewish

CHRONOLOGY – Jesus to Samaritan woman “Salvation is from the Jews”

Paul in Synagogue at PISIDIAN ANTIOCH to Jews

“We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life we now turn to the Gentiles” A 13.46

TRAGIC REJECTION BURDENED THE HEART OF JESUS

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, BUT YOU WERE NOT WILLING” Luke 13.34

PARABLE OF TENANTS CONCLUDES – Jesus strong words to Jews

“I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit” Mt 21.43

ROMANS 9 – 11 / Paul discusses Rejection of Jews / Reception of Gentiles

TRAGEDY TODAY Most Jews think Jesus is ONLY FOR GENTILES

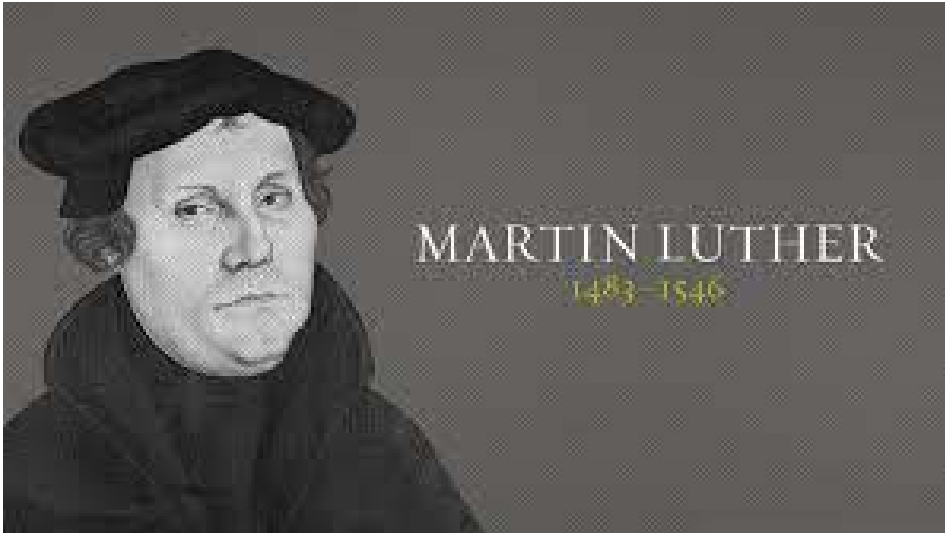
SURPRISING – Religious People, who were promised Messiah REJECTED

NOT SURPRISING – No Religion – NOT EVEN Xtianity – CAN SAVE US

RELIGION OFTEN INFLUENCES ONE to TRUST SELF – Ex. Paul/Saul

Christian Gospel is about FULLY TRUSTING CHRIST, CHRIST ALONE

GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS is for RELIGIOUS / Often Too Proud to Ask for It



“I labored diligently and anxiously as to how to understand Paul’s word [in Romans 1:17], where he says that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. I sought long and knocked anxiously for the expression “the righteousness of God”

blocked the way, because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore, I did not love a righteous and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant.

...Then I grasped that the righteousness of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise... When I saw the difference, that law is one thing and gospel another, I broke through. And as I had formerly hated the expression “the righteousness of God”, I now began to regard it as my dearest and most comforting word. So that this expression of Paul’s became to me in very truth a gate of paradise.” Martin Luther, 1545

b. Advantaged – “Greeks” / “wise”

**PRIORITY for Jews Does NOT MAKE Gospel LESS RELEVANT for Gentiles**

**“Greeks and non-Greeks” OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO NATIONALITY**

**ADDITION of Phrase “wise and foolish” SOMETHING MORE MEANT**

**Greeks were the people of EDUCATIONAL PRIVILEGE & OPPORTUNITY**

**Greeks – Hellenists / Philosophers / GOOD NEWS FOR EDUCATED**

**HOW DIFFERENT FROM TODAY – Higher Education Largely Secular**

RELIGION PLAYS LITTLE OR NO PART IN MOST ACADEMIC CIRCLES

ACADEMIC World – Produces REASONS WHY should IGNORE RELIGION  
EX - RELIGIOUS IDEAS RELATIVE – formed by CULTURAL FORCES

QUESTION – What about claims of Christ and the Bible? ARE THEY TRUE?

Paul to Athenian philosophers / Greek academics – BRUSHED OFF IDEAS

“He seems to be advocating FOREIGN GODS” Acts 17.18

TRUE – Few in Athens HEARD GOSPEL of JESUS of NAZARETH / Foreign!

PAUL “what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you”  
Acts 17.23

QUESTION NOT – Is it Foreign? // REAL QUESTION – Is it True?!

EVERY TRUTH comes from SOMEWHERE /

GOSPEL of Jesus Christ Foreign to All / JESUS Came from Heaven

SAVING FAITH 3 Elements – Knowledge, Heart Response, Commitment

KNOWLEDGE – Faith in something or someone NOT EMPTY FEELING

Content of our Faith recorded in Bible, Revealed in Christ

HEART RESPONSE – Expressed in LOVE for God, His Son, His Word

COMMITMENT – Not just Savior for others, MY SAVIOR, My Lord, My God

“Faith is not a blind thing, for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts which are sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation...Faith...is the eye which looks...Faith is the hand which grasps...Faith is the mouth which feeds upon Christ”  
Charles Spurgeon

c. Disadvantaged – “non Greeks” / “foolish”

Anyone who was NOT Greek was a BARBARIAN / Most of US!

Not a SOCIAL DESIGNATION – not too Offensive >> LINGUISTIC

Speech of Foreign Neighbors / Sounded like Stammering, Babble “bar, bar, bar”  
WITHOUT Knowledge of GREEK / Cut off- Cultural & Academic Storehouse

PERHAPS YOU FELT Disadvantaged, Limited, Cut off from Opportunities  
NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION, MONEY, CONNECTIONS WITH POWER

Jesus Christ NOT go ONLY to Wise, Wealthy, Influential Citizens of His Day

ALSO to EVERYDAY PEOPLE – Whoever and Wherever they Were

“Friend of Outcasts & Sinners” carpenters, fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes

Peter to Cornelius – “God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every  
nation who fear him” Acts 10.35

Rom 2.11 “For God does not show favoritism”

CHURCH IS NOT A CLUB FOR “Our Kind of People” / WE DON'T OWN IT

CHURCH of LORD JESUS CHRIST – for All Nations

v. 15 “you who are at Rome” / MULTI-Cultural City /4 million from all World

MAY BE YOUNG PERSON Parents Drag you Here

SPURGEON in a talk to Children – “You may be young; but you are old enough  
to sin, and you are old enough to die”

DIVERSE Family of Faith - “Jesus, only Jesus, Savior of World”

JOHN MURRAY “The purpose of these classifications is simply that the gospel  
is for all without distinction of nationality or cultural background and that he as  
the apostle of the Gentiles is under divine obligation to preach the gospel to all.”



### 3. Godly Response – what must we do?

#### a. Debt “obligated” – an obligation that must be discharged

UNDER DIVINE OBLIGATION TO PREACH GOSPEL TO ALL PEOPLE

“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” 1 Corinthians 9.17

2 Kinds Debt – 1. Taken something for Self / 2. Given something for Another\*\*

SEMINARY STUDENT – Mission Trip to Uganda / Country at War / Collapse

Staying in Orphanage / Given Package to Carry / Difficult Travel

FINALLY PRESENTED \$30,000 TO DIRECTOR OF ORPHANAGE

I was DEBTOR / NOT MY MONEY / Given that money for the Orphanage

NOT OUR GOSPEL – From God – Must faithfully give Gospel to All People

NOT ALL HAVE GIFT OF EVANGELISM, or OFFICE OF EVANGELIST

BUT ALL BELIEVERS are RESPONSIBLE to SHARE GOOD NEWS of Jesus

HUDSON TAYLOR spent 51 yrs PREACHING this GOSPEL in CHINA

Inspired 800 OTHERS to Join him in MISSION – Started 125 SCHOOLS

18,000 Chinese BELIEVED this Good News

PRAISED in Later Years --- “You LOVED the Chinese > You DID So Much!”

“No NOT because I loved the CHINESE, because I LOVED GOD!”

v. 16 “the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation”

MORE THAN JUST TELLS ABOUT – or Announces – God’s Saving Power

THE GOSPEL ITSELF IS THE POWER

#### b. Delight “eager”

SEEMS A STRANGE RESPONSE TO A DUTY – Very UnAmerican

Characteristic Response of Americans / Not Me / Nobody tells me what to do!

Paul NOT YET COME to Rome – NOT DUE to any RELUCTANCE of His  
ON THE CONTRARY – he is EAGER TO PREACH IN ROME

Everyone WANTED to Visit Rome at Least ONCE – Look, Stare, Wonder

Paul Not want to Visit as TOURIST but as an EVANGELIST – Preach Christ

BIBLICAL PARADOX – Believer WANTS to do WHAT HE HAS TO DO  
TRUE IF HE IS WISE – AND WANTS JOY AND PEACE OF GOD

“O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of  
whom standeth our eternal life, *whose service is perfect freedom*”

Book of Common Prayer

TRUTH DISCOVERED by Psalmist “I rejoice in following your statutes as one  
rejoices in great riches...I delight in your decrees, I will not neglect your word”

Psalm 119.14-32

c. Determination “not ashamed”

STRANGE TO HEAR – Apostle who GLORIED in the Cross / BOASTED!

HONEST WORDS – even an Apostle of God is part Sinner, part Saint

WRITING TO ROME – EPICENTER OF WORLDLY POWER

GOD saves through Lifeless, Broken, Naked, Bleeding Man / CRAZY NEWS!

WORDS OF CONVICTION / DETERMINATION – thought and reflection

Gets CRITICISMS, INTELLECTUAL ATTACKS, MOCKING LAUGH

FELT LIKE AN IDIOT – Porcius Festus – Roman Government Official said

“You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you mad” 26.24

ABSENCE OF SHAME is a PROOF of FAITH

JESUS “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words....the Son of Man will be  
ashamed of him”

Mark 8.38

## PAUL'S FAREWELL LETTER TO TIMOTHY

2 Tim 1.8

“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me his prisoner.”

## LOGICAL PROGRESSION

1. He is ready to preach the Gospel
2. He is not ashamed of the Gospel
3. Because it is the Power of God for Salvation
4. Because in the Gospel the Righteousness of God is Revealed

GOD'S SAVING POWER is Operative through the GOSPEL ALONE

Word of God living and active / Sword of the Spirit / Life Giving Good News

OPERATION – not UNCONDITIONAL or UNIVERSAL

v. 16 “everyone who believes” SALVATION APPLIED THROUGH FAITH

TO SAY “I am NOT ASHAMED” – BOLD DETERMINATION

“I have suffered ridicule, counted the costs, I stand for Jesus & Him crucified”

3 COMMON RESPONSES of Modern Believers to EVANGELISM

1. Option
2. Reluctance
3. Shame / Fear

MODERN BELIEVER “I do not have to evangelize, not my gift or interest”

PAUL “I am obligated to preach”

MODERN BELIEVER “I do not want to evangelize, no one can force me”

PAUL “I am eager to preach to all in Rome”

MODERN BELIEVER “I am ashamed to evangelize, what will people think?”

PAUL “I am not ashamed of the gospel”

1510 > 5 yrs as a Monk > 2 years Teacher of Bible Univ of Wittenburg

FULFILLED LIFE LONG GOAL > Visit to the Holy City of Rome

EAGER TOURIST > saw Shrines, Relics, Churches, heard Legends

Church of St. John Lateran in Rome / Medieval Stone Stairs

ALLEGEDLY original Staircase from home of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem

FAITHFUL climbed “Holy Stairs” on their KNEES, praying at each point

KISSING STAINS on Stairs / Claimed to be from the Blood of Jesus

DURING this Painful Devotion / Our Text filled Luther’s mind

“The just shall live by faith” / Realized he lived by FEAR not FAITH

OLD SUPERSTITIONS fought against NEW BIBLICAL FAITH IN HIM

“By fear” said Luther

“By faith” said the Apostle Paul

“By fear” said the scholastic father’s of medieval Catholicism

“By faith” said the Scriptures

“By fear” said those who agonized with him on those stone Holy Stairs

“By faith” said God the Father

Stood & walked down stairs / Rejecting Superstition / Embracing Scripture

REAL BEGINNING OF REFORMATION / in heart of Martin Luther

1517 > 95 Thesis to Church Door Wittenburg

Luther echoed Paul “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God”

Romans 1.14-17

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup>So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”



“A pepper outwardly seems cold to the senses, but the person who crunches it between his teeth experiences the sensation of burning fire.” Theodoret (393-458)

### Content of the gospel

v.17a God provides a perfect righteousness and record for us.

v.17b It is received by faith permanently and exclusively

v.17c The result of reception is a new way of life.



“I labored diligently and anxiously as to how to understand Paul’s word [in Romans 1:17], where he says that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. I sought long and knocked anxiously for the expression “the righteousness of God”

blocked the way,

because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore, I did not love a righteous and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant.

...Then I grasped that the righteousness of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise... When I saw the difference, that law is one thing and gospel another, I broke through. And as I had formerly hated the expression “the righteousness of God”, I now began to regard it as my dearest and most comforting word. So that this expression of Paul’s became to me in very truth a gate of paradise.

Martin Luther, 1545

DISCUSSION: In what ways can the Gospel offend or be despised?

- a) by telling us that our salvation is free and not earned, is really insulting.
- b) by telling us Jesus died for us, is also really insulting.
- c) by telling us that “trying to be good and spiritual isn’t enough”
- d) by Jesus’ suffering and serving (not conquering and destroying), and that following him means to suffer and serve with him.

v.17 Righteous God makes us right righteously

How is being made righteous different from merely being forgiven?

“righteousness” English word: It is positional, no debts or liabilities, nothing against you

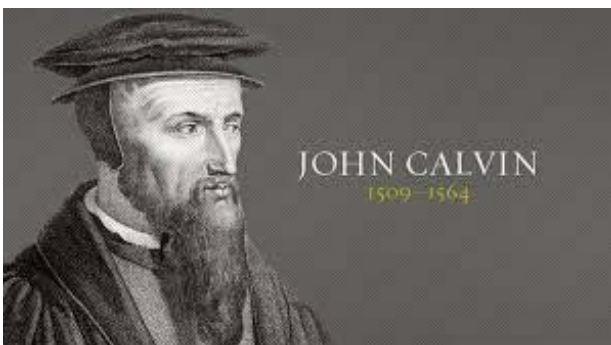
More is being promised here than mere forgiveness.

1. Our sins were laid on Jesus, and when we believe in him, we are pardoned. But that “wiped clean” slate is only half of Christian salvation.
2. We are declared “not guilty” AND “perfectly righteous.”

## SHORT DEFINITIONS OF THE GOSPEL

“Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ’s righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has becomes ours.”

Martin Luther



“...a man will be justified by faith when, excluded from righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous.”

John Calvin

## Heidelberg Catechism

Q. 60: How are you right with God?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments and of never having kept any of them, and even though I am still inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without my deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.

Q. 61: Why do you say that by faith alone you are right with God?

A. It is not because of any value my faith has that God is pleased with me. Only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness make me right with God. And I can receive this righteousness and make it mine in no other way than by faith alone.

Q. 62: Why can't the good we do make us right with God, or at least help make us right with him?

A. Because the righteousness which can pass God's scrutiny must be entirely perfect and must in every way measure up to divine law. Even the very best we do in this life is imperfect and stained with sin.

Q. 64: But doesn't this teaching make people indifferent and wicked?

A. No. It is impossible for those grafted into Christ by true faith not to produce fruits of gratitude.

Just as our Lord was crucified between two thieves...the gospel keeps two truths together,

1. God is holy so our sins require that we be punished.

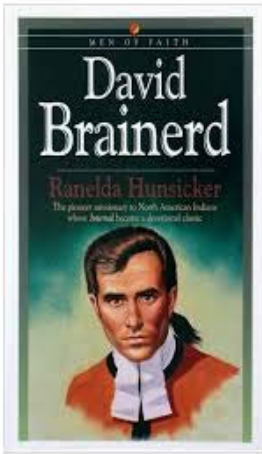
The gospel tells us: "You are more sinful than you ever dared believe."

To forget this leads to license, permissiveness.

2. God is gracious so in Christ are sins are dealt with

The gospel tells us: "You are more accepted in Christ than you ever dared hope."

To forget this leads to legalism, moralism.



## EXPERIENCES OF THE GOSPEL

When I was about twenty years of age I was engaged more than ever in the duties of religion. I became strict, and watchful over my thoughts, words, and actions; and thought I must be very seriously religious, because I considered entering the ministry. I spent much time every day reading my Bible and praying, and I gave great attention to Sunday sermons. In short, I had a very good outside, and trusted entirely in my religious duties, though I was not then aware of what I was doing wrong.

Though I often confessed to God that I, of course, deserved nothing, yet still I harbored a secret hope of recommending myself to God by all these duties and all this morality. When I prayed affectionately, and felt some melting of my heart in love to him, I hoped God would thereby be moved to care for me. So, I thought that through my repenting and praising him and seeking him, I could make good steps toward heaven. When my heart seemed full of love and faith, I felt that God would be affected by that, and would hear my prayers for their sincerity. In other words, I healed myself with my duties. I told myself, "God must accept you, because look at how whole-heartedly you serve and seek him." Now here was the problem. The more I tried to love God with all my soul, the more I saw how little I really loved him. The more I sought a soft heart, the more I felt how hard my heart was, and I supposed it must be softened before Christ would accept me. One night I remember in particular, when I was walking alone, and I had opened such a view of my sin that I feared the ground would cleave asunder under my feet and become my grave. I saw it was impossible for me, after the utmost pains, to answer the demands of God's law. I saw it condemned me for selfish and angry and fearful and envious and lustful thoughts, which I could not possibly prevent.

Then, after a considerable time spent in such distresses, one morning I was alone and I saw that all my contrivances and projects to effect or procure salvation were utterly in vain. I had thought many times that the difficulties were very great, but now I saw them in a different light — that it was totally impossible to do anything toward delivering myself. The tumult that had been in my mind now quieted. I saw that all my prayers and repentances and feelings and obediences had not laid the least obligation upon God to bestow his salvation on me.

Then I realized why they were of no avail. When I had been fasting, praying, obeying, I thought I was aiming at the glory of God, but I was doing it all for my own glory — to feel I was worthy. As long as I was doing all this to earn my salvation, I was doing nothing for God, all for me! I realized that all my struggling to become worthy was an exercise in self-worship. I was actually



trying to avoid God as saviour, and to be my own saviour. i.e. I was not worshipping him, but using him.

Then, at that time, the true way of salvation opened to my mind. I saw so much of its wisdom and suitableness and excellence that I wondered how I ever was blind to it. I wondered why everyone did not see this way of salvation — not by my own contrivances, but entirely by the righteousness of Christ. I felt myself in a new world, and everything about me appeared with a different aspect from before. David Brainerd's Diary (1718-1747)



Every little touch would hurt my tender conscience. But one day, as I was passing through a field, suddenly I thought of a sentence, “your righteousness is in heaven,” and with the eyes of faith, I saw Christ sitting at God’s right hand. And I suddenly realized —

THERE is my righteousness. Wherever I was or whatever I was doing, God could not say, “where is your righteousness?” for it was right before him. I saw that my good frame of heart could not make my righteousness better nor a bad frame of heart make my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Now my chains fell off indeed! I felt delivered from slavery to guilt and fears. I went home rejoicing for the love and grace of God. Now I could look from myself to him, and I realized that all those weak character qualities in my heart were like the pennies that rich men carry in their pocket, when their gold is safe under lock and key. Christ is my treasure, my righteousness. Now Christ was my wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and salvation.”

John Bunyan, from “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners” (paraphrased and abridged)

Romans 1.14-17

“Convinced and Commissioned”

1505 Martin Luther left Law School > ENTERED MONASTERY age 21  
NOT to Study Theology > but to SAVE HIS SOUL

Boyhood trembled > Frowning Face of Jesus in Church > Righteous Judge  
ALL HIS YOUTH / Feared Death > FEARED JUDGMENT

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STAUPITZ “More than a thousand times I have sworn to our holy God to live  
piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know I  
cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the  
love of Christ and grant me a happy departure when I must quit this world, I shall  
never with the aid of all my vows and all my good works stand before him. I  
must perish.”

With those SURPRISING WORDS / Staupitz sent Luther to study Scripture  
TEXT WHICH JUMPED OFF THE PAGE TO LUTHER WAS Romans 1.17

#### 4. God’s Righteousness – what is the message?

GREAT THEME of this LETTER to the ROMANS > Good, Right, Just

d. Who God is – quality, characteristic, attribute

LUTHER SAW this CLEARLY in STERN FACE of JESUS on CHURCH  
WALL

UTTERLY CONSISTENT, COMPLETELY FAITHFUL, ALWAYS RIGHT

HOLY – “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong”

VERY NATURE OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUS > He Cannot DO WRONG

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness” Ps 45.7

JESUS Challenged Attackers “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” Jn 8.46

e. What God does – activity, behavior

Learn this from Abraham “The Judge of all the earth will DO RIGHT” Gen 18.25

ROMANS – God’s Righteousness SUPREMELY SEEN in Cross of Christ  
v. 17 “For in the gospel a righteousness from God IS REVEALED”

JESUS WAS PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS “I always do what pleases Him” Jn 8.29

WAS BAPTIZED “to fulfill all righteousness” Matt 3.14

FULFILLED PROPHECY OF ISAIAH “I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away, and my salvation will not be delayed” Isa 46.13

RIGHTEOUSNESS and SALVATION are SYNONMS / Keep Covenant Promise

“You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior” P 65.5

“The Lord has revealed his righteousness to the nations” Psalm 98.2

f. What God gives – status, position

GOD MAKES US RIGHTEOUS – THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD!  
FIRST 2 ALONE –God is Righteous, God Acts Righteously – NOT Good News  
TERRIFYING NEWS – WE’RE IN TROUBLE – WE ARE UNRIGHTEOUS

“Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness” Ps 71.2

“In your righteousness bring me out of trouble” Ps 143.11

What made Luther love the God he previously hated / GOD GIVES  
Righteousness

JOHN STAUPITZ TO LUTHER “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. Do not shrink back. God is not angry with you; it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God”

“My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long” Ps 71.15

TERM “Imputation” – application of the righteousness of X to sinner

JAMES BOICE “It is like putting the infinite moral capital of the Lord Jesus Christ into our empty bank account”

JOHN STOTT “The righteousness of God is God’s righteous initiative in putting sinners right with himself by bestowing on them a righteousness which is not their own but his. The righteousness of God is God’s just justification of the unjust, his righteous way of pronouncing the unrighteous righteous, in which he both demonstrates his righteousness and gives righteousness to us. He has done it through Christ, the righteous one, who died for the unrighteous.”

HOW DOES GOD GIVE THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS? – by faith from first to last

Three Elements – Knowledge, Heart Response, Commitment

KNOWLEDGE – Faith in something or someone NOT EMPTY FEELING  
Content of our Faith recorded in Bible, Revealed in Christ

HEART RESPONSE – Expressed in LOVE for God, His Son, His Word

COMMITMENT – Not just Savior for others, MY SAVIOR, My Lord, My God

SPURGEON “Faith is not a blind thing, for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing: for faith believes facts which are sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation...Faith...is the eye which looks...Faith is the hand which grasps...Faith is the mouth which feeds upon Christ”

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY – wrote in

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee. Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling; Naked, come to thee for dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior or I die.”

“from faith to faith” or “faith from first to last”?? / quote from Habakkuk

3. By Faith entirely 2. From the faith of the OT to the faith of the NT

3. From faith of the Jew to faith of the Gentile 4. From weak faith to stronger faith

6. From God's righteousness revealed by faith to our faith in that righteous God  
**IT IS ALL GOOD / AND CONSISTENT WITH BIBLICAL TEACHING**

**QUOTE from Habakkuk = Faith is the WAY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS**  
**What we are talking about DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH**

**LUTHER** "This doctrine is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler and the judge over all kinds of doctrines...If this article of justification is lost, all Xtian doctrine is lost at the same time...without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour"

### 5. Gospel Recipients – who is the message for?

**GOOD NEWS of God's Righteousness is for ALL PEOPLE / PLACES**

d. Religious – v. 16 "Jew First"

v. 13 "other Gentiles" – Roman Church largely a GENTILE CHURCH

v. 16 "Jew First" - THEOLOGY and CHRONOLOGY

**THEOLOGY** - 9.4 "The people of Israel, Theirs is the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises"

**REMINDS THEM** – Gospel is FROM the Jews and FOR the Jews

**OT** – Jewish Book / Jesus and the Apostles – Jewish

**CHRONOLOGY/Time** – Jesus to Samaritan woman "Salvation is from the Jews"

**Paul in Synagogue at PISIDIAN ANTIOCH to Jews**

"We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life we now turn to the Gentiles" A 13.46

**TRAGIC REJECTION BURDENED THE HEART OF JESUS**

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **BUT YOU WERE NOT WILLING**" Lk 13.34

**PARABLE OF TENANTS CONCLUDES** – Jesus strong words to Jews

"I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit" Mt 21.43

1515 German professor was also in SPIRITUAL CRISIS / Intellectual not Moral  
DEVOUT CATHOLIC MONK

“I was a good monk, if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I”

DESPITE Good MONKERY / No Peace w/ God / Prof: Bible at Wittenburg Uni

“I had greatly longed to understand Paul’s letter to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression ‘the righteousness of God’, because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and acts righteously in punishing the unrighteous...Night and day I pondered until...I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on new meaning, and whereas before ‘the righteousness of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven.”

Dr. Martin Luther > moved by these words Romans > Father of Reformation

ROMANS 9 – 11 / Paul discusses Rejection of Jews / Reception of Gentiles  
TRAGEDY TODAY Most Jews think Jesus is ONLY FOR GENTILES

SURPRISING – Religious People, those who were promised Messiah  
REJECTED

NOT SURPRISING – No Religion – NOT EVEN Christianity – CAN SAVE US

RELIGION OFTEN INFLUENCES ONE to TRUST SELF – Ex. Paul/Saul  
Christian Gospel is about FULLY TRUSTING CHRIST, CHRIST ALONE

GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FOR RELIGIOUS / often too proud to ask for it

e. Advantaged – “Greeks” / “wise”

PRIORITY for Jews Does NOT MAKE Gospel LESS RELEVANT for Gentiles

“Greeks and non-Greeks” OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO NATIONALITY

ADDITION of Phrase “wise and foolish” SOMETHING MORE MEANT

Greeks were the people of EDUCATIONAL PRIVILEGE & OPPORTUNITY  
Greeks – Great Historical Epic / Philosophers / GOOD NEWS FOR  
EDUCATED

CONTRARY TO MODERN IDEAS – Higher Education Largely Secular  
RELIGION PLAYS LITTLE OR NO PART IN MOST ACADEMIC CIRCLES

ACADEMIC WORLD – Produces REASONS WHY should IGNORE  
RELIGION

EX - RELIGIOUS IDEAS RELATIVE – formed by CULTURAL FORCES

WEST – Xtian / ARAB or TURK – Muslim / ASIAN – Buddhist, Hindu, Shinto  
TRUE GENERALIZATION – MANY STARTLING EXCEPTIONS

QUESTION – What about the claims of Christ and the Bible? ARE THEY  
TRUE?

Paul spoke to Athenian philosophers / Greek academics – BRUSHED OFF  
IDEAS

“He seems to be advocating FOREIGN GODS” Acts 17.18

TRUE – Few in Athens HEARD GOSPEL of JESUS of NAZARETH / Foreign!  
PAUL “what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you”  
Acts 17.23

QUESTION NOT – Is it Foreign? // REAL QUESTION – Is it True?!  
EVERY TRUTH COMES FROM SOMEWHERE / Foreign to All / from  
Heaven

OTHER CRITIQUES AND ATTACKS FROM SECULAR EDUCATION  
These have been answered by Bible believing scholars / READ WORKS

PAUL – one of the Brilliant Scholars of his day / WISDOM OF FAITH IN X

f. Disadvantaged – “non Greeks” / “foolish”

Anyone who was not Greek was a BARBARIAN / ICF many Barbarians  
LINGUISTIC – not a SOCIAL DESIGNATION – not too Offensive

Speech of Foreign Neighbors / Sounded like Stammering, Babble “bar, bar, bar”

WITHOUT Knowledge of GREEK / Cut off- Cultural & Academic Storehouse

PERHAPS YOU FELT Disadvantaged, Limited, Cut off from Opportunities  
NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION, MONEY, CONNECTIONS WITH POWER

DANGER – Feel that Christianity is NOT FOR YOU / DO NOT QUALIFY  
GOSPEL FOR RICH AMERICANS / and FIVE-STAR HOTEL BALLROOMS

Jesus Christ did NOT go ONLY to Wise, Wealthy, Influential Citizens of His  
Day

ALSO to EVERYDAY PEOPLE – Whoever and Wherever they Were  
“Friend of Outcasts and Sinners” – carpenters, fishermen, tax collectors,  
prostitutes

Peter to Cornelius – “God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every  
nation who fear him” Acts 10.35

Rom 2.11 “For God does not show favoritism”

CHURCH IS NOT A CLUB FOR “Our Kind of People” / WE DON’T OWN IT  
Not American, Korean, Kazakh, Russian – CHURCH of LORD JESUS  
CHRIST

IF CHRISTIANS HAVE PRESENTED our Faith as CLIQUISH or for Select  
Few  
PLEASE ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES / misrepresentation of our God and  
Gospel

v. 15 “you who are at Rome” / MULTI-Cultural City /4 million from all World

MAY BE YOUNG PERSON – parents drag you here – SS stops at 10 years old!!

SPURGEON in a talk to Children – “You may be young; but you are old enough  
to sin, and you are old enough to die”

DIVERSE Family of Faith at ICF Displays - “Jesus, only Jesus, Savior of World”

JOHN MURRAY “The purpose of these classifications is simply that the gospel  
is for all without distinction of nationality or cultural development and that he as  
the apostle of the Gentiles is under divine obligation to preach the gospel to all.”



## 6. Godly Response – what must we do?

d. Debt “obligated” – an obligation that must be discharged

UNDER DIVINE OBLIGATION TO PREACH GOSPEL TO ALL PEOPLE

“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” 1 Corinthians 9.17

2 Kinds of Debt – 1. Taken something for Self / 2. Given something for Another\*\*

SEMINARY STUDENT – Mission Trip to Uganda / Country at War / Collapse  
Staying in Orphanage / Given Package to Carry / Difficult Travel  
FINALLY PRESENTED \$30,000 TO DIRECTOR OF ORPHANAGE

I was DEBTOR / NOT MY MONEY / Given that money for the Orphanage  
NOT OUR GOSPEL – From God – Must faithfully give Gospel to All People

NOT ALL HAVE THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM, or OFFICE OF  
EVANGELIST

BUT ALL BELIEVERS are RESPONSIBLE to SHARE GOOD NEWS of Jesus

v. 16 “the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation”

MORE THAN JUST TELLS ABOUT – or Announces – God’s Saving Power  
THE GOSPEL ITSELF IS THE POWER

e. Delight “eager”

SEEMS A STRANGE RESPONSE TO A DUTY – Very UnAmerican  
Characteristic Response of Americans / Not Me / Nobody tells me what to do!

Paul NOT YET COME to Rome – NOT DUE to any RELUCTANCE of His  
ON THE CONTRARY – he is EAGER TO PREACH IN ROME

Everyone WANTED to Visit Rome at Least ONCE in Life – Look, Stare,  
Wonder

Paul did not want to Visit as a TOURIST but as an EVANGELIST – preach  
Christ

BIBLICAL PARADOX – Believer WANTS to do WHAT HE HAS TO DO  
TRUE IF HE IS WISE – AND WANTS JOY AND PEACE OF GOD

TRUTH DISCOVERED by Psalmist “I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches...I delight in your decrees, I will not neglect your word”

f. Determination “not ashamed”

STRANGE TO HEAR – Apostle who GLORIED in the Cross / BOASTED!

HONEST WORDS – even an Apostle of God is part Sinner, part Saint

WRITING TO ROME – EPICENTER OF WORLDLY POWER

GOD saves through Lifeless, Broken, Naked, Bleeding Man / CRAZY NEWS!

WORDS OF CONVICTION / DETERMINATION – thought and reflection

HE KNOWS CRITICISMS, INTELLECTUAL ATTACKS, MOCKING

LAUGH

FELT LIKE AN IDIOT – Porcius Festus – Roman Government Official said

“You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you mad” 26.24

ABSENCE OF SHAME is a PROOF of FAITH

JESUS “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words....the Son of Man will be ashamed of him”  
Mark 8.38

PAUL’S FAREWELL LETTER TO TIMOTHY 2 Tim 1.8

“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me his prisoner.”

LOGICAL PROGRESSION

5. He is ready to preach the Gospel

6. He is not ashamed of the Gospel

7. Because it is the Power of God for Salvation

8. Because in the Gospel the Righteousness of God is Revealed

GOD’S SAVING POWER is Operative through the GOSPEL ALONE

Word of God living and active / Sword of the Spirit / Life Giving Good News

OPERATION – not UNCONDITIONAL or UNIVERSAL

v. 16 “everyone who believes” SALVATION APPLIED THROUGH FAITH

TO SAY “I am NOT ASHAMED” – BOLD DETERMINATION

“I have suffered the ridicule, counted the costs, I stand for Jesus & Him crucified”

### 3 COMMON RESPONSES of Modern Believers to EVANGELISM

1. Option                      2. Reluctance                      3. Shame / Fear

MODERN BELIEVER “I do not have to evangelize, not my gift or interest”

PAUL “I am obligated to preach”

MODERN BELIEVER “I do not want to evangelize, no one can force me”

PAUL “I am eager to preach to all in Rome”

MODERN BELIEVER “I am ashamed to evangelize, what will people think?”

PAUL “I am not ashamed of the gospel”

1510 > 5 yrs as a Monk > 2 years Teacher of Bible Univ of Wittenburg

FULFILLED LIFE LONG GOAL > Visit to the Holy City of Rome

EAGER TOURIST > saw Shrines, Relics, Churches, heard Legends

Church of St. John Lateran in Rome / Medieval Stone Stairs

ALLEGEDLY original Staircase from home of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem

FAITHFUL climbed “Holy Stairs” on their KNEES, praying at each point

KISSING STAINS on Stairs / Claimed to be from the Blood of Jesus

DURING this Painful Devotion / Our Text filled Luther’s mind

“The just shall live by faith” / Realized he lived by FEAR not FAITH

OLD SUPERSTITIONS fought against NEW BIBLICAL FAITH IN HIM

“By fear” said Luther

“By faith” said the Apostle Paul

“By fear” said the scholastic father’s of medieval Catholicism

“By faith” said the Scriptures

“By fear” said those who agonized with him on those stone Holy Stairs

“By faith” said God the Father

Stood & walked down stairs / Rejecting Superstition / Embracing Scripture

REAL BEGINNING OF REFORMATION / in heart of Martin Luther

few years Change of Heart / swept across Europe / eventually World

Luther echoed Paul “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God”