

Topical Message
The Saving Righteousness of God
Pastor Mac

KAPONO: Lord, thank You. Lord, would You continually remind us that our praise and worship, Lord, is for You and You alone? And it's caused by because of who You are, not the music, not the arrangement, not the key that we're singing in. Not because there's only one guy up here, Lord, but because You call us to worship and praise Your name, the name above all names. Lord, You are mighty God.

And so we praise Your name this morning, Lord, with thanksgiving in our heart. Lord, we thank You for everybody that walked into this building this morning, Lord, and those who are tuning in online. It's not by accident, Lord.

So would You speak to all of us this morning, Lord, and calm our hearts, clear our minds, Lord, and keep us focused on Your word, Lord? Thank You, Lord, for Pastor Mac. Continue to give him strength, Lord, to do Your will. So we ask these things in Your name only, Jesus. We say, Amen.

PASTOR MAC: Amen. Praise the Lord and thank you. And please be seated.

[Congregant says, "Nice shirt."]

Yeah. Thank you. My wife got it from the swap meet. 15 bucks, family! That's right. That's how we get down. Thank you, baby. I love you so much, honey. We have no idea. You dress me and caress me.

[Laughter]

That's my better half right there. You know what I'm saying? Well, good morning, church. We're starting off on a good foot. All right.

Well, on behalf of Pastor JD Farag, we'd like to welcome you here to Calvary Kaneohe. For those of you joining us online, we'd like to welcome you as well. And if we have any visitors here, we'd like to give you a special, warm welcome and pray that you've been blessed by the fellowship and love that you receive here at Calvary Kaneohe. And as always, if you have not received that love yet, let me know after the service, and we'll take care of that for you. We'll make sure you get a double dose of pure love.

Okay. I do want to remind everyone about our next prayer meeting. It will be here in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. on the 3rd of February, which is this coming Tuesday. So if you're

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able to come out and join us for corporate prayer, we would indeed invite you to do so. We want to fill our sanctuary up with prayer warriors. But again, we know that schedules are tight and times are busy.

And if you're unable to come out and make it, wherever you are, just pray, pray for us during the time of that meeting. And don't forget to pray without ceasing. It is so important. We have that ability to pray, pray, pray, and we need to take advantage of it. All right.

So but if you can, we'll look forward to seeing you on Tuesday. And I also want to announce Kellie Farag's celebration of life and of eternal life will be held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, February the 7th. That's this coming Saturday here at the church, followed by a luncheon afterwards. Also for our online church, the service will be livestreamed in its entirety beginning at 11:00 a.m., Hawaii Standard Time at the JDFarag.org website, mobile app, and Roku, as well as our social media platforms.

And for those of you who are visiting or will come to visit the island at that time, you're also welcome to come and celebrate Kellie's celebration of life and of eternal life. And when you do come, come at 10:00; doors will be open. We'll look forward to a time of fellowship prior to as we settle in and get ready to celebrate as well.

In addition to this, Pastor JD will be returning to the pulpit starting Thursday, February the 12th, and before resuming our verse- by-verse study through Zechariah, he will talk openly about his wife's death in a topical teaching out of *Ezekiel, Chapter 24, verses 15 through 27*. Also, he will resume the Prophecy Updates and sermons beginning Sunday, February 15, all of which will be livestreamed for our online church as well. So pray for his return again. Again, we wish the circumstances were different, but we're so thankful that our beloved sister is with Jesus. So continue to pray for him and his family.

On Sundays, we have two services, and the First Service, as you know, is normally dedicated to the Prophecy Update, and the Second Service, the sermon. But you know where we are. We're in the *Book of Romans*. I will ask that you join me there, *Chapter 3*, beginning in *verse 21*, and we'll read down the *verse 26*. And I will also ask all who are able to stand to do so for the reading of the word of God this morning, followed by a word of prayer.

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The *Book of Romans, Chapter 3, and verse 21*. The word of God reads, **“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.**

For there is no difference; [Verse 23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Man. Let's get to it and pray and ask for God's blessing. Father in heaven, oh, my Lord, first of all, we thank You so much for Your word of truth. We thank You for allowing us to be able to come together to hear Your word. And Lord, we ask that You would just meet us here in a unique way, especially in this passage that we have read this morning. It is so important. And there's nothing we can do of our own to fully understand it without the power of your Holy Spirit.

And we ask now for a new anointing, afresh, and fill our cups full, and may they run over with Your Spirit and the power of Your might. So go before us now and ready us and steady us. In the mighty name of Yeshua, Jesus, the Christ, we do pray. Amen. Thank you. And please be seated.

So our teaching for our First Service this morning is titled, 'The Saving Righteousness of God.' And you'll notice, actually, there's a part 1. And believe it or not, this was going to be one single teaching, but that did not work out at all. So even though we read six verses, we're only going to get through the first two verses in this teaching.

And I really tried. I'm serious. You're laughing. But I tried to push through this, but it was not going to happen. But I do have some most excellent news regarding this teaching. And that is, as a church we are finally here. You see that? We are out of the hellish portion known as section 2 in the *Book of Romans*.

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So after everything that we have been through since the onset of these teachings, we are finally at a place where we can see that grace of God coming into full view. And what we have just read many theologians consider this to be the most important single paragraph ever written in the history of mankind.

And I will tell you what; I wholeheartedly agree with them. It's packed with goodness, covered in righteousness, and sealed with the love of God. So whatever has been discussed prior to this, no matter how hard it was, makes what is being spoken about here today all the sweeter.

And that's the point. Because in God's divine wisdom, He knows that many of us have to be broken down to the lowest level in our ignorance, not condemned, but broken down in order to be truly built up by His knowledge. And that's facts. And this is what we have been witnessing through our teachings in the *Book of Romans*.

And the thing is all of it is because of the love of God. So we are now in what's known as section 3 of the *Book of Romans*. And in this section, we have the details regarding the provision of God's righteousness.

And when I say, "the details," I mean the details, so much so that's one of the reasons why we're not getting through *Chapter 3* today. And even when we do, it's safe to say that we could spend months or even more trying to break down all of the information contained within these verses, just to have a simple idea of the implications of what is being communicated.

And the thing is, is that section 3 goes into *Chapter 4* until the end of the chapter, in fact, and aspects of God's righteousness are spoken of all the way until Chapter 8. Now, some other good news is that if we make it into *Chapter 4* — that's a big "if" — we are very familiar with much of the content.

So as you go through it, or if we go through it, it would afford you the opportunity, as well as all of us, to go through it with a better understanding because we've been through a bulk of it in regards to faith. But there is still a lot contained within this section that I want to encourage each and every one of you to add to your study list and do it because there's no doubt that you would be extremely blessed by what the Lord is expressing.

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I mean, this is what we have been waiting for. And I truly believe that it's really important that we spend on our own twice as much time in this section than we did in the last section. Are you feeling me, church?

Now, we won't have that time together, unfortunately. But again, let's do it on our own, as the Lord leads. And as we ended section 2 last week, we did so in our teaching titled, 'Humanity Under Sin.' And like we discussed, this was basically the capstone that showed how all of mankind is truly condemned under the weight of sin. And we talked about how being under sin is being condemned by sin, as well as being controlled by sin. And all of this is on top of being incapable of achieving the righteousness of God.

And the reason behind all of this is because absent the righteousness of God, sin keeps us in total depravity. And we would go on to define total depravity as being every aspect of the human makeup being negatively impacted by sin.

And this is so true. Even think about it. After we come to Christ, our makeup is still negatively impacted by sin. The good news is that we are saved, and we should be able to recognize the negative impacts that sin has on each of us because we should no longer be deceived by sin. But absent the righteousness of God, we are all doomed. All of humanity has to come to realize that something is wrong with us.

Do you feel me? We are truly all kinds of messed up. Right? Reason? Sin. And as the Apostle Paul would take us through portions of the Psalms, verses in the *Book of Isaiah*, as well as the Proverbs, what we would end up with is a collection of verses that would speak to the total depravity of mankind. And we would see that total depravity means exactly what it says because it encompasses our character, our conduct, and our conscience. And this is the reality that the entire human race has to face.

This is us in a nutshell and the point that the Apostle Paul has been making ever since *Romans, Chapter 1*. And a part of his argument is in regards to the law but not just isolated to the law of Moses, but also in regards to the natural law of man. And it's in the natural law of man that the righteousness of the law of God can be seen, and it's within the righteous law of God that sin is clearly made known to all of mankind.

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So we ended in *verses 19 and 20 of Chapter 3*, and that speaks to what we just mentioned in regards to the knowledge of sin. And because of that knowledge, no flesh, or no human being, will ever be justified in the sight of God on their own. And this is where we are.

So with the Lord's permission, we're going to expound on these first two verses and spend most of our time looking into our justification by the imputation of God's righteousness. That will speak to how we are righteous in the sight of God as well as how faith prevails, in order to see the amazing, intricate working of the saving righteousness of God that is offered to all of mankind by having faith in the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Are you with me, church?

With that said, *verse 21* of our text. And the word of God reads, **“But now the righteousness of God, apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets.”**

Here, we see the Apostle Paul starts off with the words, **“But now.”** And what this does is indicate for us a shift in the narrative from what he was previously discussing. And this shift has what appears to be at least two significant points.

One is in regards to a timeframe, such as this age of righteousness that we are now afforded to be living in, which is a new kind of implementation of righteousness because of what it brings with it. And everything that's associated with it was initiated with the death of Christ, as well as His burial and resurrection. But the atoning blood of Christ is the key, and that can't get lost.

Also this **“but now”** speaks to how the righteousness of God has now been made known in comparison to the unrighteousness of man. So I believe what we have are both of these elements acting as a part of this shift that we are witnessing. And what a shift it is. We need this shift, by the way. And there's something else that we should stress about this **“but now.”**

Like we briefly mentioned, we are living in this **“but now”** right now. So when it comes to expressing as well as professing the righteousness of God, what is now revealed is what needs to be expressed. That's the message.

And the reason why I mention this is because too often we can become fixated on much of the historical, pre-finished work of the cross content of God's righteousness without

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explaining how much of it was a foreshadowing of what we are experiencing today. Do you hear me, church? Or how this new revelation changes how God sees us as His children. His plan has never changed, but His dealings with man has. And when they have, it's always been to our benefit, as we will see.

So let's remember that this is where we are in His story. Follow me? This is where we're at according to the word of God, and we should embrace it. This is an amazing time period that we are afforded to be a part of. We're so blessed to be living in it. And as we continue in *verse 21*, we see that what has been revealed is the righteousness of God apart from the law.

Now, this signifies a completed action that we know continues to produce results from what Christ has accomplished. But there is nothing else that can be added to this righteousness of God. It is finished. And this is the difference maker, to say the least. Because before Christ fulfilled the law, the nation of Israel's righteousness had to be conducted by the law that nobody could keep. But if there was a way for a mere man to keep the law, righteousness would have justly been accredited to him.

As captured in the *Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, in verses 24 and 25*, the word of God reads, **“And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. [Verse 25] Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all [Did you hear the word “all”?] these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.”**

And that “if” was, and it still is a big “if” that will never happen. And we know that this is by God's divine design. So in other words, the law of righteousness is a righteous law unable to be kept by mankind. But it's a law that had to be this way, completely righteous by its nature in every respect that sinful man could not keep because of the righteousness of God. Stay with me. Think about this. If sinful man could actually keep the righteous law of God, then what does that say about God? Do you hear me, church? It would make God unjust to punish anyone that can do it because that sinful man would have proven his ability to be righteous before the Lord, even in a sinful state, and that will call into question the law itself.

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This is why the righteousness of God must be out of the reach of all of mankind, requiring that righteousness is only able to be administered by God himself. That's the key. This is why sinful man cannot. But the God-Man can, and He did.

Now, with that understood, the question that we need to ask ourselves as well as answer is: What is exactly meant by the righteousness of God as well as the question of what does it mean to be righteous in the sight of God? Because if we do not fully understand the meaning behind questions like these, especially, then it will negatively impact our walk. And this is what I believe we're going to see here in a moment.

So let's tackle this from the bottom up, if you will. What does it mean to be righteous in the sight of God? Think about this question because it's very important, especially how the word "righteousness" is used throughout the Scriptures. We have to be aware of that. We can see that righteousness can mean God's divine nature and character as well as aspects of, listen, our human character that are sometimes called out as being righteous. We see that in the Scriptures. And we also have the Holy Spirit empowered righteousness and last but not least, the imputed righteousness that ties into justification, and that's the righteousness that justifies us before God.

And before we get into the word "justification," what I want to do is try to paint a more vivid picture of what this being righteous before God looks like that happens once we believe. Prayerfully, what we will see is not only what it means to be righteous before God, but nearly as equally important is what it does not mean.

So again, we are simply slowing all of this down in order to see what happens, as we believe that causes us to be righteous before God. Are we tracking? Okay. Because when we do, we will see that in order to be righteous before God, one must acknowledge God's righteous judgment. Remember, we're just slowing this all down.

And we have seen this stressed throughout our teachings in the *Book of Romans* alone, but it's clearly stressed throughout the Scriptures. God's judgment is completely righteous in every respect. And the reason why one comes to believe is because of the recognizing of that righteous judgment, especially as it pertains to sin. And the one who paid for our sins and the sins of the world is Christ Jesus, who knew no sin at all. But by taking on all of the

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sins of the world and being judged justly by God in the righteous act that all who come to believe acknowledge.

Another thing that must happen in order to be righteous before God is that one must be tried by God's righteous judgment. And we've seen this spelled out in our teachings in the *Book of Romans* as well. The standard that any and every one will be judged by is by the standard of God's truth, because only by His word of truth can morality be judged righteously.

And we know that all of humanity will fall under God's righteous judgment. And lastly, in order to be righteous in the sight of God, one must be justified by God's righteousness. Do we see this? Because this is the key, indeed, in order to be righteous before God. And being justified by God's righteousness is our justification, and that justification comes by the righteousness of God.

So let's look at this word "justification" before we get into the righteousness of God that's being presented. So we have a simple, straightforward definition of justification, and it is the act of justifying; a showing to be just or conformable to law. Do we see that? Because this is a very important definition, because it sets the stage for us to view justification from a legal standpoint. It has to be viewed from this standpoint, a legal perspective concerning the law of God.

In fact, condemnation is also a legal term, and it's the opposite of justification. And in order to pass judgment, to justify or condemn, there must be a standard that both are weighed against. And that standard has to be in accordance with a law. Because if there is no law, then any judgment that would be passed would be unjust.

And if we think about it, there's never been a time in human history where God has not provided for man His desires in regards to how mankind should live. Never been a time. Every directive, word of the living God is the law of God. Period. And let's not forget, a natural law has been placed within all of mankind by God as well.

Let's get an example of this. Remember that Cain killed his brother Abel, right? We all know the account. And it was done before there was a written law in regards to murder. Do we realize that? However, Cain was punished for it because God's righteous judgment and the

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natural law given to man. But notice that Cain was not put to death. Do you hear me, church? That's your homework assignment.

Now, getting back to justification. The only way for one to be righteous before God is to be justified by the righteousness of God, and being justified in righteousness requires judgment by a righteous judge. And since that means complete perfection, this disqualifies the entire human race based on that judgment of perfection. See where we're going with this? But God gave us the solution in order to obtain this righteousness.

And we saw this back in *Romans, Chapter 1*, in *verses 16 and 17*.

The word of God reads, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”**

So we come back full circle, seeing that the Gospel of Christ contains the righteousness of God, and in order to obtain the righteousness of God, one must have faith. And that faith spoken of here is specifically in regards to the Gospel of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. But faith in God's salvation has always been the object of obtaining the righteousness of God. Do you hear me? That's important to understand. This has been the standard. It's all about faith.

So as we circle back to *verse 21* of our text, let's also be reminded of the purpose of the law. It was never to be kept by man because it's impossible even though we know the law is righteous, and it produces honorable outcomes in the sight of the Lord. There's no question because the law is just.

But as we discussed in our review this morning, by the law is the knowledge of sin as well as to make sin abound. And having faith in the law does not, cannot, and will not produce salvation. Only by having faith in the Lord does salvation come. And although this law cannot be kept by anyone other than Christ, faith in God's promises would be accredited as the righteousness of God to those who would believe. Do you hear that?

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And we see this belief as it pertains to the righteousness of God captured in this well-known verse that we've already went over before in *Genesis, Chapter 15, and verse 6*. The word of God reads, **“And he believed [Speaking of Abraham] in the Lord, [Do we see that?] and He [Speaking of God] accounted it to him for righteousness.”**

And the word that I have outlined is the word that we need to focus on. And that word is “accounted” as it’s rendered in the New King James version. And as we look at this word in the Hebrew, it means to impute or reckon. And as it pertains to being accounted for righteousness, this accounting, reckoning, or imputation is external in nature, meaning it is a covering or a clothing of God's righteousness upon those who believe, but not an infusion of righteousness within the believer.

Do you hear that, church? If you hadn't been paying attention, please pay attention now. The righteousness of God is a clothing, a covering, but not an infusion of the righteousness of God in the believer. And this is very critical. And we need to make sure we understand this. And this being clothed in God's righteousness is not something new.

We see this truth captured throughout the Scriptures, like here in the *Book of Isaiah, Chapter 61, verses 10 and 11*. The word of God reads, **“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”**

So again, technically speaking, we are not made righteous. We are imputed with His righteousness. Because remember, only the righteousness of God can allow anyone to be righteous in the sight of God. He must see complete righteousness, and that can only be done by the righteous One himself. So when He looks on us, Christ is who He has to see.

And all of our righteousness are as what? Filthy rags. Not our unrighteousness. All of our righteousness are like filthy rags in comparison to the true and living God. So justification is a judicial, divine decree that declares all of those who believe to be eternally clothed with the righteousness of God.

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And as one commentator would note, this is not in relation to the resurrection of Christ, but based on what He died for, which are the sins of mankind. The bottom line is that we are imputed, imputed with His righteousness. And yes, even as believers, as we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us, that does not make us righteous.

And the reason why I'm spending a lot of time on this and making this a big deal is because we have some denominations that hold to the view that we are infused with the righteousness of Christ. And this line of thinking carries with it that there is some automatic, internal, righteous transformation that occurs when we become believers because of the righteousness of Christ. Do you hear me?

And looking at righteousness from that standpoint is a set-up for failure. Because what it does is place an expectancy of some immediate physical transformation based on the spiritual implications that now we are somehow righteous.

♪ Onward, Christian soldiers, marching on to war ♪

You think? And then you feel: oh yeah, I am changed because I'm righteous. Do you hear that? Then soon as the first round goes off. Bing! You're in the foxhole of fear. Not only that, people in the church place these high expectations on new believers that should not be there. And when this is allowed to happen, many people find themselves completely defeated because they're not walking in some way that someone has been expectation of. Aren't you a believer? You're supposed to be righteous.

And what's sad is what should be happening is that when we come to Christ, we should be aided in cultivating a spiritual relationship with the true and living God in order for us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in doing so, that would indeed have a change that would be reflective of Christ's character. But this is not something that automatically happens as soon as you become a believer.

Now, I know that many people have had immediate, positive, psychological, as well as physical, responses to the Gospel of Christ and have immediately been vindicated or ridded of vices that they had all their lives. I know that. But that is the grace of God, not His infused righteousness. That's the difference. And we need to understand this.

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Now, I want to try to prove this point by utilizing, of course, the Scriptures, and I'm going to do so as it pertains to Christ taking on the sins of the world. And we just referenced this verse. It's captured in the *Book of 2 Corinthians, in Chapter 5, and verse 21.*

The word of God reads, *[Now listen.] "For He [Speaking of God] made Him [Speaking of Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

We see this? Okay. So the question that we need to ask ourselves is that when Christ was made sin for all of humanity, did that make Him a sinner? Hmm? No answers? No takers?

[Congregation says, "No."]

No. Thank God. Right? Sin was imputed onto Christ, and we know that He never inherited the sin nature because He was born by the Holy Spirit and neither was the nature of sin infused on Christ when sin was imputed on Him.

And this also goes for our righteousness that comes because of Christ. Just like sin is not infused into Christ, righteousness is not infused into any one of us. Also, unlike Christ, who knew no sin, we inherited the sin nature genetically because we are all born in the flesh, in the likeness of Adam. We are created in the image of God, but we are born in the likeness of Adam. This is why we must be born again. So even if we were not condemned by our own sins, guess what? We're still condemned because of the sin of Adam.

Now, one last thing that I want us to look at as it pertains to *verse 21* of our text, and it has to deal with the righteousness of God being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Now, as many of you know, when we see the statement, "**the law and the prophets,**" this is speaking to the entire Old Testament. And one of the things that makes this statement so powerful is that it proves that God's word never opposed the law of God. Do we see that? In fact, what he says confirms the validity of the law and the prophets in one way or another, because it all confirms the Messiah himself.

And another reason why this statement is so powerful is because it brings the reality of all of this to the forefront of the minds of all who would hear it. Remember who he's talking to.

They would realize that this is not some secret. It never was. And as it pertains to the Jews,

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they were the keepers of what? The law and the written word of God. So everything that the Apostle Paul is discussing is available for them to search out for themselves in great detail.

Now, the mystery or secret that was never revealed within the Old Testament has to do with the church herself. But as far as the plan for salvation and in regards to it coming about faith in the Messiah, this was spoken of throughout the Scriptures, meaning the law and the prophets. And to get his brethren to fully recognize all of this had to be a challenge. And again, what better way to get them to fully understand than by pointing them to the word of God. And let this be our takeaway using the Apostle Paul as an example.

And what I mean is that sometimes when a topic within the Scriptures come up, we can be very knowledgeable about it, know it from front to back, have an Apostle Paul-like skill set in that area. But even if we do and we give a detailed explanation, let us always point them to the word of God. Always. And on the flip side, if we are on the receiving end of this instruction, this detailed account, this detailed explanation, let us be Bereans and search a matter out for ourselves. This is our duty.

Now, that does not mean we cannot be taught by those teachers of the word of God. No, absolutely. But search the matters out for yourselves. There's an old Russian proverb: Trust but verify. Right? A lot of truth in that. We need to do that for ourselves. We need to be in communion with God as we're seeking His word out. What happens during that time period cannot be gained without it. Do you hear me, church?

Verse 22 of our text, the word of God reads, "...even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference."

Now, we've already gone through much of the faith portion as it pertains to having faith in Jesus Christ that imputes the righteousness of God on all who would believe. And for those believers in Rome, this would be the beginning of solidifying of what faith in Christ entails. And for us, what we need to make sure that we are clear on is that the object of our faith is Christ Jesus. So no matter how small that faith may be that we have, so long as it is faith in Christ Jesus, the righteousness of God is upon all of those who believe.

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And we see at the end of the verse, the Apostle Paul states, **“For there is no difference.”**

And that speaks to the entire breadth of mankind. But the reason why I stress this faith part is because of how some denominations look at faith in Christ as it pertains as believers in a way that's not biblical. And it's this saving faith doctrine.

Now, there are many facets to this doctrine, but we need to be aware of some of the common ground that's associated with them that's false. Do you hear me, church? Because at the core, most who lean in this direction says that a saving faith is a faith that would be evidenced by good works. And this is not what the scriptures speak to.

In fact, there are many people who actually perform lots of good works but don't have faith in Christ at all. And on the other hand, there are those who have faith in Christ and Christ alone, but live carnal lives as Christians.

Now, I truly believe that we who are of the faith, pray that each of us will come to a place where we all produce good works. But salvation is not proven by works at all. Also, those who hold to this saving faith view suggest that it produces what God commands. Do we see this?

Now, I understand that having faith in God and growing in His word should indeed convict us to follow His word. But again, this is not the metric that's used in regards to salvation. And even if it was, at what point do we consider this achieved by anyone who comes to the faith? Do you hear me? Who makes that call?

This leads into Lordship salvation. It has people guessing or questioning: Am I saved? There's a famous theologian, Calvinist, lordship salvationists on his deathbed requesting people to pray for him that he doesn't lose faith. Think about that. Did you hear what I said?

And lastly, many who hold to this saving faith doctrine also believe that this saving faith is a gift from God. Now, you think about that. Now, we've already seen in the Scriptures that everyone has been given a measure of faith. And it's by that measure of faith that we are able to decide who or what to put our faith in. So having a category of saving faith that's a gift of God is not what the scriptures speak to.

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Now, the word of God does speak to God, giving more faith as a gift, a spiritual gift, but not a saving faith. Now, please remember there's several different explanations in regard to this saving faith doctrine with some of them actually explaining it and aligning it with faith alone, in Christ alone. But they end up sprinkling in some of these parameters, which is wrong. People talk about historical faith, intellectual faith, and a failing faith, and then they compare it with this saving faith that can grow over time. You see what's being done here?

Now, again, our faith can indeed grow. But the way that this doctrine speaks to, it makes faith the object of our belief — do you see that? — instead of focusing on and believing in the author and finisher of our faith who is faithful even when we are faithless. The Lord alone is the one who measures faith. And the only faith that is necessary for salvation is the faith to believe.

So I would encourage any faith doubters to really look at the *Book of Hebrews, Chapter 11*, and read it slowly and allow the Lord to minister to you, because this is the chapter that many of those who have this saving faith doctrine love to come to because they look at what? Faith. And then how it produced something. But they're not looking at it in a detailed manner. And this should be an encouragement for us as well as a benchmark, as well as believers, without losing sight on who to put our faith in.

Now, we'll take a look at this, verses 1 through 6, just to see and get some flavor. The word of God reads, **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”**

Verse 1 should just shut it down. Do you see any requirements from this? Huh? **“For by it [By what? Verse 1] the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”** *[Do you see that?]*

And then *verse 4* and on is where they start to get in. But trust me, read through the whole thing and you'll see that it goes back and forth, back and forth. Bottom line is faith. **“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, [Because of faith] [Do we see that?] God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken away so that he**

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did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him;” for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [How did he please God? Faith.] [It goes on to say] But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

And this is just a sample of getting into various believers who, by faith, listened to the word of God and believed in Him. So with this, as well as many other examples, I just don't see it necessary to have any other words associated with faith that presents itself as an additional doctrine in regards to faith itself.

Now, as we close, going back to *verse 22* of our text, the main point that I am trying to make is that our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ is it. That's the faith. Not the kind of faith that we are somehow supposed to have. It's faith in Christ. And like others have noted, there is nowhere in the Scriptures that speaks to some kind of special kind of faith, a special believing, saving faith. No, you either believe or not.

Again, faith alone in Christ alone, by whatever faith that has been given by God. So let's speak like the Apostle Paul. We conclude

[Laughter]

that faith is not a merit for earning salvation, and anything outside of this is taking the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and making it into a complicated challenge of faith. And this promise of the righteousness of God is for all of us, because we are all sinners in need of a Savior. For there is no difference.

And this is where we will end our teaching for this morning, First Service. Lord willing, we'll dive into Part 2 Second Service and continue to witness this amazing righteousness of God that is found ultimately in the person of Jesus Christ. Why don't we stand?

Father in heaven, oh, how we love Your word. It's so comforting. It takes away all fear because of our faith in You. And Lord, let us not complicate Your word, even though Your word is so detailed and we can never search everything out to have Your complete knowledge. But what You have revealed is more than enough. And we're indebted to You

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for eternity. And we thank You for eternal life. And we thank You for giving us a measure of faith to allow us to choose You. And it's You we choose.

So Lord, go before us and keep us with our eyes on You and hearts desiring to know you more. And we thank You in advance for all that You will continue to do in and through our lives, as we seek You out. In the mighty name of Jesus, the Christ, we do pray, Amen.