

Take Away – Unlocking the Kingdom: What in the World is Righteousness?

Text: Romans 5: 15 – 18

Date: 11-13-22



With your group...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by the text and/or today's sermon.

1. From Luther's 1532 recollection of his famous "Tower Experience," he is quoted as saying. "The words "righteous" and "righteousness of God" struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified." Why was Luther's conscience struck so intensely resulting in his being "terrified"? What was it about God's righteousness that affected him so?
2. Webster's dictionary defines "righteous" as "acting in accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin." With respect to Paul's teaching in Romans is this the way he would define "righteousness"?
3. In all your attempts in life to "make yourself righteous" did you feel righteous? How long did the "righteous" feeling last, if at all?
4. What came into the world through Jesus Christ? (5:15)
5. What is God's solution to the inevitable problem of sin and death? (5:16-17)
6. How is the free gift of Christ not like the offense of Adam described in Romans 5:18 - 19?
7. Many Christians have no problem saying we are all sinners because of Adam, but tell them that we are TOTALLY forgiven, holy, justified, at peace with God, and always in fellowship with Him because of Jesus you might get a debate. The fact is God successfully solved the problem that man-caused. Who gets the benefit of the gift of righteousness and how? Can we lose the gift of righteousness?
8. How is the righteousness of Christ more than solely legal forgiveness? See what Jesus says about this in John 10:10; 14:18, 27; 15:9-11. How does knowing the fullness of the righteousness Christ has won encourage you?

Small Group Leader – Answers

With your group...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by the text and/or today's sermon.

9. From Luther's 1532 recollection of his famous "Tower Experience," he is quoted as saying. "The words "righteous" and "righteousness of God" struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified." Why was Luther's conscience struck so intensely resulting in his being "terrified"? What was it about God's righteousness that affected him so?

"From the year before Martin Luther's death, we have this moving 1545 autobiographical testimony of his decisive theological conversion in the 1510s: I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was not the cold blood about the heart, but a single word in Chapter 1[:17], "In it the righteousness of God is revealed," that had stood in my way. For I hated that word "righteousness of God," which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner. Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted. At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which [the] merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire

Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise."

10. Webster's dictionary defines "righteous" as "acting in accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin." With respect to Paul's teaching in Romans is this the way he would define "righteousness"?

When we think of the word "righteousness," we tend to think of the word "right." Righteousness, in its easiest definition, means we are "right" with God. It's not the word "right" as in "I've got the right answers," ... but "right" as in "good, justified, or acceptable before God." If God demands perfection from guilt and sin...then righteousness means we are living up to the standards God expects in every thought, word, and deed. If we are righteous, then we have a proper relationship with our Heavenly Father.

11. In all your attempts in life to "make yourself righteous" did you feel righteous? How long did the "righteous" feeling last, if at all?

Answers vary. Be prepared to share your own personal testimony as appropriate.

12. What came into the world through Jesus Christ? (5:15)

God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man

13. What is God's solution to the inevitable problem of sin and death? (5:16-17)

God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life

14. How is the free gift of Christ not like the offense of Adam described in Romans 5:18 - 19?

Adam gave an offense that had consequences for the entire human race — as a result of Adam's offense, many died. Jesus gives a free gift that has consequences for the entire human race, but in a different way. Through the free gift of Jesus, the grace of God...abounded to many. Adam's work brought death but Jesus' work brings grace.

15. Many Christians have no problem saying we are all sinners because of Adam, but tell them that we are TOTALLY forgiven, holy, justified, at peace with God, and always in fellowship with Him because of Jesus you might get a debate. The fact is God successfully solved the problem that man-caused. Who gets the benefit of the gift of righteousness and how? Can we lose the gift of righteousness?

Those who receive, by faith in Christ. It's a gift. We can reject it.

16. How is the righteousness of Christ more than solely legal forgiveness? See what

Jesus says about this in John 10:10; 14:18, 27; 15:9-11. How does knowing the fullness of the righteousness Christ has won encourage you?