

THE TRUE GOSPEL - I

I. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

A. Greek word means “good news”

B. BASIS of gospel is the historical fact of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection

- I Cor. 15:1-4- *“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I have preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.*

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve...”

C. CONSEQUENCES or RESULTS of those facts is a more accurate definition of that the gospel is:

- Apostle Paul concisely states that in Ro. 3: 21-24-

“But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, as attested by the Law and the Prophets. 22 And this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

- In this text we find the following basic elements of the gospel:

- 1) God’s righteousness has been made available
- 2) It is **NOT** appropriated through works of law
- 3) It is **AVAILABLE** only as a gift. - That’s called “grace”
- 4) It is **APPROPRIATED** (“received”) individually by faith.

THEREFORE, the TRUE GOSPEL IS “The good news that God’s righteousness is available to every person by grace (God’s part), through faith (man’s part) *apart from the works of law.*”

- Ro. 3:28- *“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing law.”*

- Gal. 2:15-16 – *“We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ knowing this, a man is not justified by works of law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of law, because by works of law no one will be justified.”*

D. In this series, I want to examine the concept “...*righteousness apart from (w/o the deeds of) law*”.

II- DEFINITION OF LEGALISM:

A. What is a “Legalist”-

- not a Biblical term... but it is a biblical concept
- “A legalist is someone who believes that works of law are necessary for salvation”
 - An Extreme Legalist would believe that salvation is **TOTALLY** by works of merit.
 - Perhaps closer to what I am personally familiar with is the belief that salvation is partly by grace and partly by works of law.

B. Problem is not new: Much of the content of the New Testament epistles is written to combat this common doctrine: - Namely, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews and (surprising to some) James.

– Paul’s insistence on preaching the **PURE GOSPEL** made him unacceptable to many of his Jewish Christian brethren.

– If he would have added “Just a little bit of the works of law”, he would have been acceptable to his legalistic Jewish brethren

- Gal. 5:11- *“Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.”*

- Paul refused.

- Gal. 2:4-5- "...some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you."

C. Now the big question: WHY? (...did Paul refuse to add even a little law to his gospel)?

- Because to return to law (IN PART OR WHOLE) is to return to a system Christ died to deliver us from!

- THERE ARE TWO (AND ONLY TWO) WAYS A MAN CAN BE MADE RIGHTEOUS:

1) BY LAW- In which case you earn righteousness by keeping every commandment perfectly... Not one violation is allowed. - Gal. 3:10 *All who rely on works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*

- Not practically possible:

- Jas. 2:10- "*For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles at just one point, is guilty of breaking all of it.*"

- Gal. 2:21 - "*I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through law, Christ died for nothing!*"

- Gal. 3:21- "*Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.*"

CAN RIGHTEOUSNESS BE GAINED BY KEEPING LAW?

- Read Ro. 10:1-4 - Paul explains why his brethren (Israelites) refused to submit to "faith righteousness"

and stubbornly insisted on pursuing "a righteousness that comes from law."

CAN EVEN PART OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BE GAINED BY WORKS OF LAW?

- That's what the "Judaizers" of the New Testament era were trying to do!

- Acts 15:1 - "*Certain men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."*

OR 2) BY RECEIVING GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A GIFT THROUGH FAITH ("obedient trust") in JESUS CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH ON OUR BEHALF:

- II Cor. 5:21- "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*"

III- REGARDLESS OF OUR BACKGROUND, WE MUST MAKE A CHOICE!

A. What some have tried to do (since the gospel was first preached) is to blend the two systems ("law" & "grace through faith") together.

- Exactly the situation in churches of Galatia to whom Paul writes

- Gal. 1: 6-9- "law righteousness" and "faith righteousness" cannot coexist

6 I am amazed how quickly you are deserting the One who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—7 which is not even a gospel. Evidently some people are troubling you and trying to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be under a curse! 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be under a curse!

B. What can it hurt to "add a little law"?

- Gal. 5: 2-4-

2 Take notice: I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I testify to every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by the law have been severed from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

CONCLUSION

A. We are not JUSTIFIED (“initially made a Christian”) and we are not SANCTIFIED (“kept saved”) by law!

- Our initial response to gospel is FAITH (and that includes **baptism**):

- Let me prove it: - Gal. 3: 26-27-

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

B. Our life is a continual response of obedient trust to God (guided by His word)

- I Jn.1:5-10 – We don’t claim sinlessness... we just walk as close to Him as we can (“walking in the light”)

5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.

- Result:

- v7 – “...blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from every sin.”

- Ro. 8:1 – “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

C. How many of you saw the movie “The Shawshank Redemption”?

- Remember the old man that was the prison librarian all his adult life ... and they paroled him?

- He took one of his friends hostage at knifepoint to keep from being released.

- When he was released, he couldn’t handle his freedom... he hanged himself.

- In the words of the movie, he had been “institutionalized”

D.. How many of us, brethren, have become institutionalized... by bondage to law?

THE TRUE GOSPEL – II

INTRODUCTION

A. These lessons on **LAW** and **LEGALISM** are like “ground-clearing” before we build.

B. In our last lesson we defined “the gospel”:

- “The good news that God’s righteousness is available by God’s grace through faith **apart from works of law.**”

- Ro. 3:21-24, 28- “good news” is that righteousness is available “apart from law”

- It has always “been available” through law... but unreachable for us... regardless of our effort!

- Gal. 2:15-16- “*15 We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile ‘sinners’ 16 know that a man is not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*”

C. We also defined “Legalism”:

“Any effort to gain righteousness through works of law”

D. We discussed the fallacy of attempting to join a “faith system” to a “law/works system”.

- Ro. 11:6- “*And if it is by grace, then it is no longer by works. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace.*”

- Epistle to Galatians is pleading with Christians to not return to a law system.

- Ro. 10:1-4- Jews were determined to gain righteousness through “law system”

1 Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is for their salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they are zealous for God, but not on the basis of knowledge. 3 Because they were ignorant of God’s righteousness and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law, to bring righteousness to everyone who believes.

- There are numerous reasons why we do not want to appeal to a law system for righteousness: -

I- SOME DOCTRINAL CONSEQUENCES

[basically in Galatians----- That’s the purpose for its writing!!!]

A. TRYING TO ESTABLISH “OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS” RATHER THAN SUBMITTING TO GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS: (... Therefore, **rejecting** God’s righteousness)

- Ro. 10:1-3-

B. FALLEN AWAY FROM GRACE

- Question: When we say “someone has fallen from grace”... What are we usually saying they have done? What has caused their fall?

- Some sin? Unfaithfulness? Immorality?

- That’s not how you “*fall away from grace*”.

- You return to law for justification!

- Read the first part of Gal. 5:4- To whom is this addressed? What were they doing? - Going back to law!

4 You who are trying to be justified by the law have been severed from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

- Question: When they “*fell away from grace*”... What did they fall into?

- WORKS OF LAW! (There is no other alternative!)

- A sobering realization... Even the way we interpret and use this passage has been influenced by our doctrinal convictions regarding “Law and Grace”

C. SET ASIDE GOD’S GRACE

- Gal. 2:21- “*I do not set aside the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, Christ died for nothing.*”

D. PUTTING OURSELVES UNDER CURSE – (perfect obedience required)

- Gal. 3:10- QUESTION: To whom is this verse directed? . “*All who rely on observing law...*”

E. TRY TO USE LAW TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING FOR WHICH IT WAS NEVER INTENDED

- Gal. 3:21- **cannot give life!** “*21 Is the law, then, opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come from the law.*”

- What WAS its purpose? - Gal. 3:24 “*So the law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*”

- Watch how Jesus vividly illustrates this truth- Jn. 5:39-40 “*You pore over the Scriptures because you presume that by them you possess eternal life. These are the very words that testify about Me, 40 yet you refuse to come to Me to have life.*”

Let’s read it again- Ro. 3:20- “*...no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing law...*”NIV

F. YOU KILL YOUR FAITH

- Gal. 3:11-12- “*...law is not based on faith.*”

Another “scriptural” consequence:

- A doctrinal concept: We separate “works” from “faith” - James 2:

“GRACE + FAITH + WORKS = SALVATION”

“GRACE + FAITH = SALVATION”

- Question: Which one of those is true?

Do you see what we have done?

- **Our denominational friends** have *taken works out of FAITH* - And have thrown works away!

- **We** have *taken works out of FAITH* – And have made works SEPARATE FROM FAITH!!!! –

- And if they are separate from faith, they become MERITORIOUS!!!!

WE BOTH NEED TO PUT WORKS BACK INTO FAITH!!!

CONCLUSION

A. Brethren... It’s not easy to watch something come down that we’ve lived in for a long time!

- I promised you... I won’t take away something if I can’t give you something better!

B. It’s no harder for you than it was to those converts from Judaism and Paganism in the first century!

- Before God can give you what He wants you to have, He has to take away from you what you have trusted in all your life! ... Whatever it is!!!

THE TRUE GOSPEL – III

Introduction

- A. We are doing some “ground clearing” in preparation for “foundation laying” so we can build our faith.
- B. We have defined “the gospel”
“*The good news that God’s righteousness is available by grace through faith **apart from works of law.***”

We have defined “legalism”
“*Any attempt to gain righteousness through works of law.*”

- C. Last lesson we discussed some DOCTRINAL CONSEQUENCES of legalism:
- 1- **Trying to establish our own righteousness rather than submitting to God’s righteousness**
- Ro. 10:1-3
 - 2- **Fallen away from grace**
- Gal. 5:4 – back to law
 - 3- **Set aside God’s grace**
- Gal. 2:21- count it worthless
 - 4- **Putting ourselves under a curse**
- Gal. 3:10- perfect obedience demanded
 - 5- **Trying to use Law to accomplish something for which it was never intended**
- Gal. 3:21 – law can never give life
 - 6- **It kills your faith**
- Gal. 3:11-12

- D. In this lesson, I would like to show you some PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES of legalism:

I- RESULTS IN SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ARROGANCE

- A. Lu. 18:9- Pharisee & Publican “*To some who trusted in their own righteousness and viewed others with contempt, He also told this parable:*”
- contrast attitudes
- B. Legalists become “mean-spirited” and judgmental
- Listen to how Paul describes them in Phil. 3:2-9 “
- “*dogs...evil workers...mutilators*”
- C. They can become “cold and callous” toward others:
- Jn. 5- When Jesus healed paralytic unable to get in Pool of Bethesda on Sabbath day:
 - Pharisees asked him “*Who told you to carry your mat?*”
 - They did not care at all that he had been healed
 - When they knew Jesus was going to heal the man’s withered hand in the synagogue – Mt. 12:10: “*and a man with a withered hand was there. In order to accuse Jesus, they asked Him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”*”
 - They tried to stop him before he healed him by asking, “*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?*”
 - Mark says (Mk. 3:5) – “*Jesus looked around at them in anger and, [was] deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts*”
 - When he went to Zacchaeus’ house – Lu. 19:
 - They said, “*He’s eating in a sinner’s house*”
 - Notice the HARSH JUDGMENTS
 - Remember when they brought the adulterous woman to Jesus and put her in middle of crowd? – Jn. 8
- D. Jesus told these legalists that they needed to learn the meaning of this- “*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*”.

II- LEGALISTS ARE CONTROLLED BY TRADITIONS RATHER THAN SCRIPTURE

A. Col. 2:8 “*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, which are based on human tradition and the spiritual forces of the world rather than on Christ.*”

- v13-15- Lists 3 things GOD DID FOR YOU to “*make you alive with (in) Christ*”:
 - 1 – “*having forgiven all our sins*”
 - 2 – “*having canceled the written code*”
 - 3 – “*having disarmed the powers and authorities*”
- vs 16-23- Don’t be controlled by externals

B. Legalism causes us to make texts say something they do not say

- Example: Phil.2:12- “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...*”
 - Look at the next verse- “*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*”

C. They are obligated to “defend the traditions of their fathers”

- That is the basis of their faith

III- LEGALISM IS A POWERFUL FORM OF CONTROLLING OTHERS

A. Must keep making laws for every situation

- Can’t leave it with a principle
- Can’t allow people freedom

B. Use intimidation and veiled threats to control everyone they can

- Jn. 9:18-23 – blind man’s parents – intimidation

C. They want to MAKE others conform – They are the ENFORCERS

- Man who was angry at my sermon- “You didn’t say they were going to Hell!!!”

IV- LEGALISM CAUSES ONE TO CONSIDER HIMSELF (HIS CONVICTIONS, HIS ACTIONS) AS THE STANDARD

A. What version of Bible is acceptable

What song book

B. When they talk of others it is always to criticize

- Mt. 7:1-6 “*Do not judge, or you will be judged. 2 For with the same judgment you pronounce, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while there is still a beam in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. 6 Do not give dogs what is holy; do not throw your pearls before swine. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.*”

C. Leads to hypocrisy – Impose standards on others you cannot keep

- Mt. 23:1-6 – Jesus gave 2 characteristics of legalists:
 - 1- “*They do not practice what they preach*”
 - 2- “*Everything they do is done for men to see*”

D. Pick a few “pet topics” and major in those

- Mt. 23:23-24- *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices- mint dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You ought to have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”*

V- LEGALISTS ARE CONSTANTLY TRYING TO “TRAP” OTHERS – TO DISCREDIT THEM

A. “Do we have to pay taxes to Caesar?”

B. “Seven brothers married a woman... whose wife will she be in the heaven?”

VI- A LEGALIST BECOMES UNABLE TO PERCEIVE PLAIN TEACHING AND TRUTH

A. They even denied that Jesus’ miracles were from God – Mt. 12

VII- LEGALISM ROBS US OF JOY:

- Paul, to Galatian Christians who were returning to legalism – “*What has happened to all your joy?*” – Gal. 4:15

- IT ROBS US OF PEACE & SECURITY

- You can’t keep law “good enough” to be righteous

CONCLUSION

A. Why? ... Why does legalism result in all these attitudes?

1- Because, under a legal system of salvation, you must put yourself in the top [10] percent.

– You have to “put everyone else down”

2- Because you forget (or are unaware) that you have “been forgiven much”.

– If you understand that you have been saved by grace – you can give others grace

- If you are trying to deserve your salvation by law keeping– so must others

B The older son (in the story of the prodigal son) felt no kindness or mercy or joy toward his sinful brother

- He would have been happier had he never come home

- Because he felt like “his brother didn’t deserve mercy”... and he had “worked for everything he was going to get”.

C. I’m glad the father didn’t feel that way, aren’t you?

THE TRUE GOSPEL – IV
CHRISTIAN’S RELATIONSHIP TO LAW – PT. 1

INTRO.

A. When “justification by grace through faith apart from deeds of law” is properly taught to those who are aware of being under law, you get this natural response:

First- Ro. 6:1- *“What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?”*

- “Then we are free from all obligations”

- “We can do whatever we want”

And- Ro. 6:15- *“...Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?”*

B. After all... The Bible says:

- Ro. 3:28- *“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing law.”*

- Ro. 4:14- *“If those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless.”*

- Ro. 6:14- *“...you are not under law, but under grace”*

- Gal. 2:16- *“Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law but by faith in Christ Jesus...not by works of law, because by works of law no one will be justified.”*

- Gal. 3:11-12- *“Clearly no one is justified before God by law, because, ‘The just will live by faith.’ The law is not based on faith.”*

I. So... WHAT DO WE DO WITH LAW? IS THERE A LAW FOR CHRISTIANS? ARE WE WITHOUT LAW?

A. Remember the purposes of law:

1. Law teaches us how God feels about sin

- Ro. 1:32- God’s judgment [on sinners is] *they are worthy of death!*

- Ro. 7:7- *“...I would not have known what sin was except through the law...”*

2. Law teaches us about righteousness

- Ro. 3:21 – Law teaches us about righteousness

- Ro. 7:12 – *“...the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”*

3. Law brings us to Christ

- Gal. 3:24 - *“So the law was put in charge [KJV- schoolmaster] to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.”*

Law still does those things.

B. But law cannot justify us!

- Gal. 2:21- *“I do not declare God’s grace worthless, {HOW CAN I DO THAT?} for if righteousness could be gained through law, Christ died for nothing!”*

- Gal. 3:21 – *“...For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.”*

NOTE: To those who believe “Those people in O.T. were saved by Law of Moses and today we’re saved by ‘The Law of Christ’?” ... NO. THAT’S NOT TRUE!

- No one has ever been saved by law! (Gal. 3:11-12 – above)

- God ALWAYS intended for his people to live by faith and NOT look to the law for justification.

- Jesus himself said, (Jn.5:39-40) - *You diligently study the scriptures because you think that **by them** you possess eternal life. These are they which testify about me. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”*

POINT- Don’t use N.T. scriptures like Jews used O.T. scriptures!

- Don’t try to make it a “law system” that you keep for eternal life!

- You declare God’s grace worthless – Gal. 2:21

-Gal. 5:3:

- You put yourself under the curse – requiring perfection for salvation
- Alienate yourself from Christ
- Fall away from grace

C. So We, as Christians, allow law to do what it is suppose to do:

- Teach us how God feels about sin
- Teach us about righteousness
- Lead us to Christ

And we **do not** look to any law (or its works) for justification!

- We are not lawless people! In fact, we are the most law-abiding people you will ever know!

II- THE DIFFERENCE IS **WHY** WE KEEP LAW.

A. We do not keep law *IN ORDER TO BE SAVED*; we keep law *BECAUSE WE ARE SAVED*!

B. The N.T. speaks of:

- “Law of God” – Ro. 7:22,25
- “Law of Christ” – Gal. 6:2
- “Law of the Spirit of Life” – Ro. 8:2
- “Law of Faith” – Ro. 3:27
- “Perfect Law of Liberty” – Jas. 1:25; 2:12
- “Royal Law” – Jas. 2:8
- Paul says (I Cor. 9:19-21) – that he was “...not free from God’s law but [was] under Christ’s law.”

C. **Christ has saved us! – We don’t need to try to save ourselves!**

(Don’t try to make the passages that say,

- “save yourselves from this untoward generation”

and – “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” say that we must earn our salvation!

WE ARE, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, “...WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION”!)

- We stand saved because of HIS IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Christ has made us perfect! – We don’t need to try to make ourselves perfect!

- II Cor. 5:21- “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God..”

III- Now, because we have God’s righteousness as a gift, we understand that our **JUSTIFICATION** is not a matter of our ability to keep law! ...BUT WHAT ABOUT **KEEPING US SAVED** (SANCTIFICATION)?

A. Now we get back to law, right? Now we’ve got THE LAW OF GOD ... THE LAW OF CHRIST... THE LAW OF FAITH... To save us, right? WRONG!

B. I know I’m tearing your shack down... but you can’t believe what God has built for you!

- God not only has saved you “...apart from works of law”, but he **keeps you saved** “...apart from works of law.”

ILLUS: I’m driving 80 mph in 55 mph speed zone

Trooper catches me – gives me ticket that demands \$200 fine

I don’t have the money. _____ pays it for me.

HAS THAT PAID MY DEBT TO LAW? YES!

But what if I'm caught next week doing the same thing? Do I owe the law again? - YES!
And if I still don't have the money, I'm no better off than before, am I?

If Christ only took care of my PAST debt, I'm soon going to be right back in the same shape, aren't I?

- Listen carefully: *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law (perfect obedience required) by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that **by faith** we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” - Gal. 3:13-14*
- Keep listening: *“...to the man who **does not work** but **trusts God** who justifies the wicked, **his faith is credited as righteousness**. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness **apart from works**: ‘Blessed are they whose offenses have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord **will never count against him**.” - Rom. 4:5-8*

C. BUT WHAT ABOUT LAW?!!!!

- Thank you for asking...

- Ro. 8: 1-4- especially v4 *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man, as an offering for sin. He thus condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the righteous standard of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*

CONCL.

A. We've got to talk about faith, haven't we?

B. God is so good!

C. I know so many people who have become discouraged because “they just can't live it!”

- If we have taught that someone has to be good enough to be saved, May God give us the understanding, wisdom and courage to do what we've been asking people for years to do- Put your belief to the test of the scriptures!

D. If it's not in the scriptures, brethren- Don't believe it! But if it is, surrender your pride and your will to God... and him alone!

THE TRUE GOSPEL – V
CHRISTIAN’S RELATIONSHIP TO LAW – PT. 2

INTRODUCTION

- A. In our last lesson we began considering a Christian’s relationship to law
- We said, “Let Law do what Law is suppose to do”:
 1. Teach us how God feels about sin
 2. Teach us about righteousness
 3. Lead us to Christ
 4. Not try to use it for justification... or sanctification
 - Because our righteousness is **imputed** – It is given to us as a gift.
- Remember Paul’s assessment of Israel’s efforts to gain righteousness through law:
- Ro. 10:1-4 – We don’t want to be guilty of what Israel was guilty of! – Trying to gain our righteousness through law.
 - In Phil. 3 – Paul uses the terminology “Legalistic righteousness” and “righteousness of my own that comes from the law.”

B. Therefore, We do not earn our salvation (in part or whole) by works of law!

I- LET’S GO ONE STEP FURTHER- WE DO NOT EARN OUR SALVATION (in part or whole) BY FAITH!

- A. Remember a couple of lessons back, we went to Jas. 2 to show that **works** belongs IN Faith.
- We make a fatal mistake to take works out of faith
 - whether we “throw it away” or whether we “put it beside it and make it equal to it”.
 - So we illustrated James’ teaching with formula “GRACE + FAITH = SALVATION
- B. As hard as it may be for you and me to “reduce our formula”... it only took us half-way home!
- It is essential that we go the rest of the way home.
 - You’ll never understand the riches of “grace” or “faith” until you take it!
- C. GRACE = SALVATION
- Ro. 3:23- “... *the gift of God (GRACE) is (EQUALS) eternal life (SALVATION).*”
 - Salvation is God’s gift to you! - THAT, my friends is the TRUE GOSPEL!

- D. Jesus Christ did it all!
- God alone is righteous
 - He satisfied the righteous demands of the law
 - Having demonstrated that righteousness, as a man, he “*became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” – I Cor. 5:21
 - That enabled him to “*demonstrate his justice... so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.*”
 - He is able now to share with you HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS! ... ONLY as a gift!

II- YOU SAY, “WELL WHAT ABOUT FAITH? DOESN’T IT PLAY A PART?”

- A. What is faith?
- (DOCTRINAL DEFINITION)- Heb.11:1- “*Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.*”

- (FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION): Ro. 5:2- "...through [Christ] we have gained access **by faith** into this grace in which we now stand."

B. Faith enters this equation as "man's access to God's righteousness".

- Faith enables God to bestow his righteousness on you.
- It is the "avenue" or "vehicle" through which God bestows His gift of righteousness on man.

ILLUS:

Heard sermons that teach various "things that save us"

...church...baptism...preaching...word...hope...ark (saved Noah and family)

-With passages that say that these (and other things) "save us".

- Let me illustrate the relationship that these things have to salvation:

QUESTION: What quenches thirst? - WATER!

- You can **drill a well, put down a point filter, add pipe and a pump** to bring it into your house and **install a faucet** to make it available inside your house.

QUESTION: What quenches your thirst? - The faucet? The pipe? The pump? The hole you dug?

- These things only **MADE THE WATER AVAILABLE TO YOU!**

- The water in the ground would not do YOU any good without some way to access it, would it?

- What value are those things if they did not access the water?

THAT'S WHAT FAITH DOES – IT ACCESSES GOD'S GRACE!

C. Now, back to our formula:

- Just as we do not put WORKS on equality with FAITH... Let's not put FAITH on equality with GOD'S GRACE!

- The formula is NOT GRACE + FAITH... it is GRACE THROUGH FAITH!

- There is no merit in faith!

CONCLUSION

A. Have I ever said, "Works are not necessary for salvation?" **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

- I did say that WORKS must be a part of FAITH- or they are legalism!

Have I ever said, "You can be saved without FAITH?" **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

- I did say that Jesus Christ alone accomplished everything necessary for salvation and makes it available to man.

And the ONLY way YOU CAN ACCESS IT IS THROUGH FAITH!

B. What did we say in this lesson?

- 1- We cannot earn any salvation by works of law!
2. We cannot earn any salvation by faith!

THE TRUE GOSPEL – VI
CHRISTIAN’S RELATIONSHIP TO LAW – Pt. 3

INTRODUCTION

“The good news that God’s righteousness is available by grace through faith apart from works of law.”

I - TWO WAYS TO BE RIGHTEOUS:

A. BY LAW

1. Come under curse – keep it all
2. Fall away from grace
3. Kill our faith

- RESULTS IN:

- self-righteousness and arrogance
- controlled by externals and traditions
- manipulation and control of others
- robs us of Joy and Security

B. BY IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. Delivered from “Law of Sin and Death”
2. Live under new “Faith System”
3. Security is NOT in ourselves; but in Christ’s righteousness
4. Have a new freedom
5. Don’t control and criticize others

II- WHAT IS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO LAW?

A. Died to that old system as means of justification

- Ro. 7:1-6 “Do you not know, brothers (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? 2For instance, a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3So then, if she is joined to another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law and is not an adulteress, even if she marries another man. 4Therefore, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5For when we lived according to the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, bearing fruit for death. 6But now, having died to what bound us, we have been released from the law, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”

B. Let it do what it was always intended to do:

- Teach us what sin is
- Teach us what righteousness is
- Bring us to Christ

C. Here is our present relationship to law:

- Mt. 22-34-40 “And when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they themselves gathered together. 35One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with a question: 36“Teacher, which commandment is the greatest in the Law?” 37Jesus declared, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- Ro. 13:8-10 *“Be indebted to no one, except to one another in love, for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9The commandments “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and any other commandments, are summed up in this one decree: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10Love does no wrong to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

- Gal. 5:14 *“The entire law is fulfilled in a single decree: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

- Gal. 6:2 *“Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*

- Jas. 2:8 *“If you really fulfill the royal law stated in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.”*

- Ro. 8:1-4 *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man, as an offering for sin. He thus condemned sin in the flesh, 4so that the righteous standard of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*

- Jas. 4:11 – How we violate “Law of Christ”-- *“Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the Law and judges it. And if you judge the Law, you are not a practitioner of the Law, but a judge of it.”*

CONCLUSION

Illus: Woman married to abusive husband who put list up every morning. Checked it every night.

He died. She felt remorse, but also relief. Determined to never marry again.

Years later, met man who loved her and treated her with kindness and tenderness. Married him.

They decided to move. She found “old list” in trunk and realized that she was presently “doing everything on the list, but now she **did it because she wanted to.**”

- We love him because he first loved us!