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THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

BY: AL GORMLEY

"What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 3:9-28.

This message has been preached over and over again. I want to make the way of salvation clear. Not too many people today are thinking about what happens after death. When a person dies he shall give an account of himself unto God. Not too many people understand that sin has to be punished. It

will either be punished in the person of Jesus Christ or God will punish every man for his own sins. We have to face God in the judgment.

There is a heaven and there is a hell. I hear the word hell used a lot of times by the world, and it is not used in the proper sense. But even that very word one day will condemn them, because there is a hell. Only those who have been made righteous will enter into heaven. This righteousness of course has been provided by our God through the person of Jesus Christ. The only possible way to enter into his presence and to escape the wrath to come is by repentance toward God and a personal faith in Jesus Christ. We must have the righteousness that I am talking about or we will be cast out from the presence of God. It is not just a matter of being away from God's presence. The Bible teaches us that it is an eternal everlasting fire from the presence of the Lord-- body and soul.

Let's look in our text, Romans 3:9. The Apostle Paul condemns both the Jew and Gentile. *"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: [Jew and Gentile]." The Jews were lost and the Gentiles are lost. Let's turn to Romans 10. The Apostle Paul knew that the Jewish people were lost because they did not believe and trust the righteousness that I am preaching about today. "Are we better than they, no in no wise." Paul says both Jew and Gentiles are all under sin. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Romans 10:1. Paul knew that the Jewish people were lost and they were God's earthly chosen people who God dealt with for 1500 years or more. "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Romans 10:2. Now they were religious and they had a zeal for God; but, that will not save us if we do not have the true knowledge of God's righteousness. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness." People are ignorant of God's righteousness. "And going about to establish their own righteousness."*

When people are ignorant of the righteousness that I am talking about they will go about in their personal lives trying to be righteous before God. They are ignorant of the righteousness that God requires to be saved. They *"have not submitted themselves unto [notice this] the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* Romans 10:3-4.

Now I want us to think about this. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness meaning that we don't have to keep God's law in order to be righteous; because if we did, none of us would be righteous. In Romans, chapter 3, Paul came to that conclusion and proved that we are all under sin. *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."* Romans 3:10. Whatever we claim to be today, the Lord is telling us that we are not righteous and that we need a righteousness in order to be saved. *"There is none that understandeth."* Lost people do not understand that they have to have God's righteousness which he has provided. *"There is none that seeketh after God."*

Most people are content to live their own righteous life believing that God will accept them in their own righteousness. The Jews had a problem with that. They had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. *"They are all gone out of the way."*

In other words they have turned to their own way. Christ said, *"I am the way."* If we want to go to heaven we have to go by the way of Jesus Christ. People have turned out of the way. They think they can get there some other way. *"There is a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof are the ways of death."* *"They are together become unprofitable."* People do not want to live their lives for Jesus Christ. *"There is none that doeth good, no, not one."* That ought to cause us to think, to realize that there is nothing good in us at all before we were saved. Paul said in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

"There is no fear of God before their eyes," verse 18. So we see the condition

of all men, this is called depravity. People are depraved. In order to be saved, our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees which went about to establish a righteous life. God will not accept us in our own righteousness.

Let's look at God's way in convicting the lost of their sin. Did you know that the law of God was put here to show us that we are not righteous? In order to be righteous we have to keep the laws of God perfectly. The very minute we break one of God's laws we cease to be righteous. James said if we break one then we are guilty of breaking the system of God's law and we will be punished.

Look in Romans 3:19 to see how God convicts people that they are lost--that they are not righteous. *"Now we know that what things soever the law saith,"* and it's as if the law was speaking to us today. When we talk about the law, we are talking about the moral laws of God, the ten commandments as such. *"It saith to them who are under the law."*

Every person that is born into this world is under God's law. When we break God's law, that is the transgression of God's law and that is sin. When we break the law of the land, that is a crime. But when we break the law of God, that is sin. We don't have to face the judge downtown with sin, but we do have to face the judge of all of this earth which is God. We have to face God with that sin.

I thank the Lord that God has made a way where we don't have to face God with our sin. It says *"who are under the law,"* let me say that all of us who are saved by the grace of God are not under the law. We are not going to deal with that. But without Jesus Christ, without being born again, we are lost and we are under God's law. When we break God's law, we sin. What does the law say to us in verse 19. *"That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."* No wonder Paul said that he had proven both Jew and Gentile are all under sin.

There is not a person in this whole world that hasn't broken God's law. Paul proved that, *"The scripture concluded all under sin."* That puts people in a very serious condition. To be in our sin is to be alienated from God and headed for the wrath to come. So what I am preaching is very important. The law was given to show us our guilt. Satan has twisted that around and caused people to think that as long as they do the best that they can, as long as they don't kill, they don't murder, or they don't cheat, they will be alright.

But friend, not only is the law demanding that we not do some things, but the law demands that we do some

things. To love thy neighbor as thyself, to honour thy father and thy mother. All of us are guilty of breaking God's law. Therefore he puts that next statement in verse 20. *"For by the law is the knowledge of sin."* Until we come to the place in our lives to realize that we have broken God's law, that we are a sinner, that we are headed for an eternal punishment in hell--we will never come to the person of Jesus Christ. God forbid that we try to keep the law in order to be saved, because God gave the law to show us our guilt. He says over and over again that we are not justified by the law in any sense because the law was placed here for the purpose of showing us that we are guilty of breaking God's law.

The Apostle Paul was dealing with that subject in Romans 7:7-9. *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."* You know what the Apostle Paul is saying: I was doing real good, I thought I was going to be saved, I was a Jew, I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, I thought I was a good person until the law came, I found out that I had broken the law. Verse 10, *"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death."*

So the very law that people are trying to keep in order to be saved was ordained to life. Certainly if we could keep it we could live, but we haven't kept it. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. So when we find ourselves a transgressor or a breaker of God's law, that law kills us. What does that mean? It puts us under the condemnation of God--puts us under His judgment. There is nothing to look forward to except to be judged and cast away into the lake of fire. That's the condition the law puts every man under.

We also see the kind of righteousness that is needed in Romans 3:21. *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested."* This teaches us then that there is a righteousness that God has provided for the lost sinner. We don't have to keep the law in order to be righteous. In fact, God tells us over and over again that we cannot keep the law. Verse 23, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."*

What in the world is the use of trying to keep the commandments of God to be righteous when God says we have already broken them. We are a transgressor, we are under the condemnation and the wrath of God. What we

need to do is turn to God and accept the righteousness that God has provided in the person of Jesus Christ. In Romans, chapter 10, he told those Jews that *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* That's the kind of righteousness I want to tell you about. A righteousness that God has provided. The only righteousness that God will accept. We must have that righteousness to be saved. Verse 4, *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* I'm glad that God has provided a righteousness so that we don't have to keep the law. Once we have this righteousness that God provided in Jesus Christ, that's the end of the law for righteousness. We don't have to keep the law to be righteous because he kept it in our place as our substitute.

Galatians 3:10, *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."* Now what does that mean? Under the works of the law. That simply means that if we are trying to keep the law to be saved, the law is a curse to us. It cannot save and will not save us, it will destroy us, it will kill us. If we could keep it perfectly, it would be fine and well but Jesus Christ is the only one that did that. *"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."* When we put ourselves under the law and try to keep the law to be saved, then we are responsible to keep every law that God has ever commanded. We cannot do it. So the law, instead of being life to us, it is a curse to us. We cannot keep the laws of God, that puts us under the condemnation of God. Verse 11, *"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God."* That teaches us something that we need to take serious account of. We will never stand before God, we will never be justified, we will never be saved, by trying to keep the law of God. If we could do that, there would be no reason for Jesus Christ to die for our sins.

In Romans 3:28 we see the same thing again. *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."* The Lord teaches us that there is a way that we can be justified or declared not guilty before God and stand before God as if we had never sinned. There is a way and that way is in the person of Jesus Christ. John 14:6, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

The need of our righteousness that we have to have in order to be saved was met by God. God has provided for us a righteousness that we must have in order to be saved. Romans 3:21, *"But*

now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." God is telling us about a righteousness that we can have. We can be made righteous without keeping the law of God. If we say, we believe we have to keep it. Well, if we try to do that my friend, we are under the curse because we can't keep it. God knew we couldn't keep it. I can't keep it. You haven't kept it. I thank God that I have a righteousness that I can declare to you that God has provided in the person of Jesus Christ. Verse 21, *"Being witnessed by the law and the prophets."* The law witnesses the same thing that you cannot be righteous without the righteousness that God has provided.

Verse 22, *"Even the righteousness of God."* Our righteousness is not the righteousness God. We have come short of the glory of God, but now we are talking about the righteousness of God *"which is by faith of Jesus Christ."* Friend, Jesus Christ revealed what God is. When he came, the word was made flesh and we beheld his glory. He is the righteousness of God. Jesus Christ did everything perfectly that God demanded of us. He did that as a substitute for a lost sinner and went to the cross and died for the transgressions which we have committed so that we might be made righteous in him. The only possible way for us to be made righteous is for God to impute or charge to our account the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to be saved. How is that done? It is done by faith. The Bible says, *"this righteousness that God has provided in Christ Jesus is unto all and upon all that believe."* He offers it to you. You need to be made righteous. He says it's unto all. And it will be upon all. He will cover you with it. He will clothe you with it. He will impute to you. It will be yours but it comes by faith. *"And upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,"* Romans 3:22-23.

Earlier I stated that all men who are born into this world are under the law of God. In order for God to save sinners, Jesus was born. Galatians 4:4, *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."* God the son became the son of God, born of a woman. *"By one man sin entered into the world, death by sin, death was passed upon all men."* So Jesus Christ had to be born, not of a man. But he was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a woman--because sin did not come through the woman but through the man. God the son became the son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit and then he was the son of man in that he was born of a woman. He was made flesh and blood so that he,

as our substitute, could provide for us a righteousness which we had to have in order to be saved.

So he was made under the law. What does that mean? That means that when Jesus was born he was under the law and had he sinned he could not have been our Saviour. The Bible says he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. Every jot and every tittle. Jesus was born without sin and he lived his life for 33½ years without sin. Remember God is providing for us a righteousness. He never sinned. He never came short of the glory of God. He never did anything that was wrong. He always did that which was right--things pleasing in God's sight.

When Jesus was born, God was providing for the sinner a righteousness. In order for us to have righteousness (it was impossible for us to be righteous), God gave His Son and he became a man. His son was perfectly righteous in every way. His son went to the cross of Calvary and took our unrighteousness, took our sins and bore them in his own body on the tree. Jesus Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. Don't you understand that God has provided a righteousness which is perfect? This life is in His son.

If there had been a law given which could have given life, righteousness would have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin. There is none righteous, no not one. But I thank God that I have the message of Jesus Christ who came into this world to save sinners. The Bible teaches us that he came to save sinners. When we preach Christ Jesus and him crucified, we are revealing to you the way that God makes a sinner righteous.

Romans 1:16, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* or gentile. The Lord is telling us in the gospel of Jesus Christ--he is showing us--how he can make a man righteous. He can give you and impute to you righteousness. Notice in verse 17, *"For therein"* in the gospel. Now the gospel is how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. Was buried and was raised again all according to the scriptures. *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed."* Now we are talking about the righteousness of God. The Bible says when we preach the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. When we preach the gospel, we have to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ because he was righteous. Jesus is the only one who ever lived a righteous life.

So we preach Jesus and him crucified. The righteousness of God is re-

vealed when we preach how that Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised again. The only way that you can stand before God righteously and in a righteous way is to receive His son and his righteous life. He lived in your place, he died and suffered for your sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring you to God. God has provided the very thing we are trying to do--that we have failed in. The thing that we failed in, Christ did perfectly. What we would have had to suffer, hell for our sins, Christ went to the cross and suffered and died for. The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

So in this gospel then we see that God punishes sin. The gospel is how that Christ died for our sins.

Romans, chapter 8, tells us that if he did not spare his own son, he won't spare us. The righteousness of God is revealed in this gospel of Jesus Christ. The Jewish people, Paul said in Romans 10, were going about to establish their own righteousness. Thinking that God would accept them in what they did but God will not accept what we do, but he will accept us in what God has done in His son Jesus Christ. We can only be accepted in Jesus Christ. L u k e

teaches us that if our army has 10,000 and we go against an army with 20,000, we had better find the conditions of peace. My friend we are enemies of God. Don't think we can battle with God. He will win the victory every time. We can't battle with God. But when we talk about God providing His son and we receive His son, thanks be to God which gives us the victory in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going against God in thinking that God is going to accept us, he will not. He will cut us off, but he will accept us in His son Jesus Christ.

A good definition of repentance is to take sides with God against ourselves. Here we are fighting against God trying to do something God won't accept. We had better get on His side. That is exactly what repentance does, isn't it? We repent toward God, we change over, quit trying to do it ourselves, quit trying to keep the laws of God ourselves and accept God's conditions of peace. That is repentance toward God and a personal faith in Jesus Christ. *"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

When we preach the gospel, we are preaching the way that God makes people righteous. The righteousness of God is revealed--but we also preach that the wrath of God is revealed. Romans 1:18, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven [now I want you to notice this] against all ungodliness and unrighteousness."* And every last one of us are ungodly. There is none righteous, no not

one. When we preach the gospel, the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness. Jesus Christ died for all our sins. What does the scripture teach us? II Corinthians 5:21, *"For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] who knew no sin: [to be sin for us] that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* We could be made righteous in him. There is none righteous in themselves. Isaiah 66 says our righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight. We are all unclean. But God has provided a righteousness in His son. He died and suffered for our sins. God actually made him to be sin for us. Treated him like he would have treated us, punished his own son in our place. The Lord placed on him our iniquities. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. But thank God he is alive today. He is raised for our justification. This means simply that this is proof that when he came out of the grave, those sins were put away, they will never be brought up again. Your sins have already been punished. It's all done. Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:4, *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* Verse 8, *"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."* We are not saved by works, we are not saved by keeping the law. We are saved by grace through faith. Faith claims God's promises. Faith accepts the person of Jesus Christ, accepts his righteousness and never trusts in our own. Faith accepts his death. We know we would have died had it not been for him. Verse 9, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* This same one who died is Lord. He is King of Kings. God hath made him both Lord and Christ. We must believe that when he died, he died for our sins. That is the purpose for which he died. Not for everybody else's sin, but for mine. *"And shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead."* Do you know what that says? Christ died for my sins and his resurrection was proof that my sins were paid for. If he would not have done that, if my sins would have still been on him, he could have never been raised from the dead. But he came out of the grave; he was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. That means that the righteousness that God has provided is outside ourselves. It's in the person of Jesus Christ. With the heart we reach out and accept the righteousness that God has provided in Jesus Christ His

son. *"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* That simply means, when we really trust it in our hearts and believe that Jesus Christ the son of God, died and suffered for our sins, then we need to confess it. Whatever is on the inside needs to come out. God does not save us to be a secret disciple. He saves us that we might praise him and give him glory.

Verse 11-13, *"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man Jesus Christ. Our righteousness comes far short of that righteousness. But we can be made righteous in His dear son. The only way that we can be made righteous is for God to declare us righteous when we receive His son. That is exactly what God does. When we repent of our sins and come to God and receive His son. God imputes to our account, charges to our account, reckons it to our account. It is ours. God gave him to us when we receive him. We will never come into condemnation. But the very minute we trust, we pass from death unto life. That life is in his son. We have forgiveness of sin, been justified from all things because he has already died for us. It is complete, it is all wrapped up in one package--Jesus Christ--and it is ours. Repentance toward God and a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Once we receive him, we will love him for doing it. We love him because he first loved us. The rest of our lives will not be, "I have to do this and I have to do that," but, "Lord, what will you have me to do. I want to do this."

Is there someone lost today, as I lift up Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. He is lifted up between heaven and earth--the son of God who came into this world to save sinners and took our sins upon him. You must see this as a personal thing. He took your sins upon him and was suffering for your sins. He was just, you are unjust. God made him sin for you so that you might not have to suffer for your sins. God did not have to send his son. Wouldn't it be a terrible thing, if a lost sinner would repent and turn to God and beg for mercy and there would not be any person of Jesus Christ. Thank God there is. We need to thank God for the gospel, it's the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and it is offered to you. You can stand before God one day, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You can stand before God one day and never have to fear because you have been justified, declared not guilty of your sins only because Christ

died for those sins. He only died once, he will never die again, therefore you have to accept him one time and believe that he died for all of them--past, present and future. *"He died unto sin once, likewise reckon ye dead to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*