

FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD

(83)

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[Romans 3:21-5:21](#)

(Continuation from 11/12/17)

A. Righteousness: The Way to be Right With God, [Romans 3:21-26](#)

[Romans 3:21-26 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ “But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;*
²⁶ for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

[\(Romans 3:21-26\)](#) Introduction— Righteousness: the “righteousness of God” is used in three ways in Scripture.

1. Righteousness means God’s character. It means the righteousness, justice, and perfection which God Himself possesses and shows.
2. Righteousness refers to man’s lack of godly character. It means the sinful, depraved, unrighteous, unjust, and imperfect nature and behavior of man.
3. Righteousness means the righteousness, that is, the perfection which God provides for man in Christ Jesus. When a man allows the Lord Jesus Christ to take his sins, he is given the righteousness of God. Christ robes the man in the righteousness of God Himself—by faith ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Philippians 3:9](#)).

[2 Corinthians 5:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

[Philippians 3:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ “And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith.”

1. Righteousness is now revealed (v.21-22).
2. Righteousness is for everyone (v.22-23).
3. Righteousness is only possible through justification (v.24).
4. Righteousness is by an act of God alone: by propitiation (v.25).
5. Righteousness has one purpose: to proclaim God's personal righteousness (v.25-26).

11-19-17

Series: The Book of Romans

The context is usually clear as to which meaning is meant. (See below [Deeper Study # 1, Righteousness—Matthew 5:6](#) for more discussion.)

DEEPER STUDY # 1

Matthew 5:6 (NASB)

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

([Matthew 5:6](#)) **Righteousness**: What is righteousness? and [Deeper Study # 4—Romans 4:22](#); [Deeper Study # 5—Galatians 2:15-16](#); cp. [Galatians 3:10](#).)

Galatians 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

In the Bible “**righteousness**” means two simple but profound things; it has a double meaning. It means *to be* right and *to do* right. It may be said another way: to *be good* and to *do good*. This is critically important in the Bible.

“There is none righteous, no, not one” ([Romans 3:10](#)).

“There is none good but one, that is, God” ([Matthew 19:17](#)).

“All...come short of the glory of God” ([Romans 3:23](#)).

What is being said is that God alone is righteous; He alone is perfectly good. Man is not perfectly righteous; he comes short. How then can a man become perfectly righteous? What is the answer? The answer is what Christ says: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” ([Matthew 5:6 \(NASB\)](#))

What happens is this. God takes a person’s “**hunger and thirst after righteousness**” and *counts* it as righteousness. The person is not righteous, but God counts him righteous. This is the great love of God. A man hungers and thirsts after righteousness; therefore, God fills him.

Several things need to be said about righteousness.

1. Righteousness is explained throughout Scripture in the word *faith*. Faith is believing God and trusting the goodness of God to take our faith and count it as righteousness (see below [Deeper Study # 2—Romans 4:22](#); [Deeper Study # 3—Romans 6:11](#); cp. [Romans 4:1-3](#)). [Hebrews 11:6](#) says it clearly: “And 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 seek Him.” ([Hebrews 11:6 \(NASB\)](#))

It is the person who *diligently seeks God* who really believes God. The man who so *hungers and thirsts after God and His righteousness* shall be counted righteous and shall be filled.

2. The righteousness of God has been shown to man. Just what God wants man *to be* and *to do* has been demonstrated perfectly in Jesus Christ. This is the love of God. God has not given man just the written Word describing His righteousness; He has given man a life—the life of His own Son—to show what He means by righteousness. Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness; He did nothing but good. This is what the Bible means when it talks about Christ being “**the righteousness of God.**” Christ is the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of righteousness—of *being right* and of *doing right*.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NASB)

³⁰ “**But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.**”

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NASB)

²¹ “**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

Philippians 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ “**And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.**”

3. Righteousness involves the mind. Scripture says it involves being “renewed in the spirit of your mind” ([Ephes. 4:23](#)), and being “renewed in knowledge” ([Col. 3:10](#)).

Ephesians 4:23 (NASB)

²³ “**And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.**”

Colossians 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “**And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.**”

What does this mean? Very simply, the man who seeks “**after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**” He “**puts on the new man**” and is “renewed in the spirit of [his] mind” ([Ephesians 4:23](#)).

Another way to say the same thing is this: the man who seeks after God has “.....laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.” ([Colossians 3:9-10 \(NASB\)](#))

DEEPER STUDY # 2

Romans 4:22 (NASB)

²² “**Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

(Romans 4:22) Imputed (*elogisthē*): means “to reckon, to credit, to count, to compute, to ascribe, to deposit, to put to one’s account.”

Abraham’s faith was counted for righteousness. (See below [Deeper Study # 3, Reckon—Romans 6:11](#) for a fuller discussion.) Abraham deposited his faith with God, and God credited Abraham's faith as righteousness.

DEEPER STUDY # 3

Romans 6:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

(Romans 6:11) Reckon— Impute (*logizesthe*): “to reckon; to credit; to set to one's account; to lay to one’s charge; to impute; to judge; to consider; to treat; to count; to compute; to ascribe.” It is an accounting word; it implies something put to a man’s credit. It is used many times throughout Romans, about eleven times in [Romans 4](#) alone. It is an extremely important idea in Scripture.

1. Scripture says that righteousness is imputed or reckoned to the genuine believer by God.

Romans 4:22-25 (NASB)

²²“Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

²³Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,

²⁴but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

²⁵*He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”

2. Scripture says that the genuine believer is immersed, imputed, reckoned, or counted as dead in Christ’s death; that is, his “old man” is imputed or reckoned as crucified in Christ’s death.

Romans 6:3-4 (NASB)

³“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

Romans 6:6 (NASB)

⁶“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

3. Scripture says that a new life, a resurrected life is imputed, reckoned, or put to the account of the believer through Christ's resurrection.

Romans 6:5 (NASB)

⁵“For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.”

Romans 6:8-10 (NASB)

⁸“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”

Very simply stated, God counts the believer righteous because of what Christ has done. Christ is seen to be “**the Lord our righteousness**,” and His righteousness is said to be put to a man's account through faith (cp. [Philemon 18](#)).

Philemon 1:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account.”

DEEPER STUDY # 4

Romans 4:22 (NASB)

²²“Therefore **IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

(Romans 4:22) Justification— Faith— Righteousness: in simple terms justification means that God takes the believer's faith and counts it as righteousness ([Romans 4:3](#); cp. [Genesis 15:6](#).)

Romans 4:3 (NASB)

³“For what does the Scripture say? “**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

Genesis 15:6 (NASB)

⁶“Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Savior*, God takes that person's faith and counts it for righteousness ([Romans 4:5](#), [9](#), [11](#), [22](#), [24](#)).

Romans 4:5 (NASB)

⁵“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

Romans 4:9 (NASB)

⁹“Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “**FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

Romans 4:11 (NASB)

¹¹“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them.”

Romans 4:22 (NASB)

²²“Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Romans 4:24 (NASB)

²⁴“But for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”

The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still corruptible, still short of God's glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ *is his Savior*. Such belief honors God's Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honors God's Son, God accepts that person's faith for righteousness. God counts that person's faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God.

Genesis 15:6 (NASB)

⁶“Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

Romans 5:1 (NASB)

¹“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 3:6 (NASB)

⁶“Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

Philippians 3:9 (NASB)

⁹“And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith.”