

The Gift of Righteousness

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[0:00] Well, as David has already alluded to, this is not a typical stage for a normal Sunday morning.

! Standing center in this stage is a ziggurat, which has been used in many different ways. But this coming week, it's to help call attention or reminder to Genesis chapter 11 and the ziggurat that stood there in Genesis chapter 11 where the people who were in existence at the time, descendants of Noah, came to build.

Now, there are two things that stand as observations for me, and maybe perhaps stand as an observation for you as well, when you see this behind me.

First is there was a time when all the nations were combined and collected together. All descendants of Noah, there as one massive group speaking one language, part of one assembly, having one purpose, and there they were in this plane building this ziggurat.

In one manner of speaking, they were fulfilling the command of God to be fruitful and multiply, and certainly they were numerous.

[1:39] Many, many people had come as one body collected to orchestrate this one purpose of building this monument to themselves.

And this coming week, kind of playing off of the one nation, the incredible race that is one people all connected through not only Adam, but connected together because of Noah and his sons.

Everyone represented in this room have a common ancestry in that we all go back to Noah. And here, as a signpost of that, is this ziggurat behind me.

But it's also a remembrance or observation of the absolute rebellion of people. Because although they had been faithful in fulfilling one mandate to be fruitful and multiply, they had not been faithful to carry out the remaining mandate, and that was, and fill the earth.

Instead, they decided to congregate together. Their goal was not to celebrate the glory of God as much as it was to celebrate the glory of their own personal accomplishments.

[2:59] As a matter of fact, we find in Genesis chapter 11, verse 4, it says, Mankind was bent on self-sufficiency, building a monument.

Come and see. Look what we've done. Let's congregate together. Let's have a reason for staying put. So God, as God will do, helped to intervene and carry out his purposes because man was bent on doing his own thing.

So God came and confused their language and, in a sense, also dispersed them across the face of the earth. God did for men what man would not do for himself.

Well, that is exactly what we've been looking at in Romans chapter 8. And if you are as encouraged as I am to understand the continuity of the scripture, that the same that happens in Genesis is the same pattern that we see of a faithful God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and continues to do for man what man cannot do for himself.

We've been looking at Romans chapter 8, beginning in verse 1. It says, Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[4 : 45] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For God did, and here it is, For God did what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.

By sending his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. In order that, the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the law or according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

You see, Jesus accomplished victory when man could not accomplish it for himself. And since the beginning of time, mankind has been bent on sin.

And even though he provided a perfect and good standard, a righteous standard in the law, man, because of being weakened by his sinful flesh, rather than rising to the occasion, found himself consistently, and to man, woman, and child, every single individual who has ever walked the planet, unable to measure up to the standard.

Because the law, instead of helping to encourage mankind to do what was right, actually was a fuse to lead him to greater sin.

[6 : 22] It was a fuse that led him to want the very things that were prohibited from him or her. Or on the flip side, to do what the law required, but then to rejoice in his own ability or her own ability to perform the standard that God had set, and thus to then turn it all around and make it about me, instead of making it about representing and glorifying God.

So whether you were a law keeper or a law breaker, you were a sinner. Because, as we find in Isaiah, all our righteousnesses were as filthy rags before Jesus came to intervene.

Jesus came to do what the law could not do. Not because the law was not good, but because we were unable to do what the law required.

So as a matter of recap, I want to just bring us back to some of those same points we discussed last week. And then that will help as a segue to then get to our second point.

I want us to talk about the significance of righteousness. The righteousness that comes, first of all, because of Jesus. And that is our first point this morning. We are righteous because of Jesus.

[7 : 46] And if you haven't already, please turn with me to Romans chapter 8. It's on the page...
...of Jesus.

And there were two things that Jesus did in order to be the righteous fulfillment of what all that God expected. First, Jesus fulfilled the law.

Jesus fulfilled the law first through His humanity.

Fulfilled the law through His humanity. He sent Jesus as the incarnate Word of God. The Word of God made flesh for us. Jesus was able to accomplish in His flesh what no man, woman, or child was ever able to accomplish.

But He must do that as a man, as weakened by sinful flesh. We find from Hebrews chapter 4, verse 15, that He was tempted in all points, just as we are, yet without sin.

[9 : 20] If you're here this morning and you are saying, there is no way that anyone can really understand what I'm going through. No one can really appreciate the struggle that I'm facing.

No one can really understand the burdens that I carry. And we find from this verse that Jesus can. He is the great high priest who can sympathize with your weaknesses.

Because He was tempted in every way, just like you are, yet without sin. There is nothing that you can experience in life, no pressure, no injustice, no burden, no crisis, no conflict, no accusation, that you can endure or experience, that Jesus has not experienced Himself.

And in His experience, He shows you and points you to the better way. Jesus was able to fulfill the law by being the sum total of all that the law expected.

And He did that in His flesh. He did that in His humanity. But He also did that through His holiness. Fulfilled the law in His humanity.

[10:37] He fulfilled the law in His holiness. Because of His perfection, Jesus fulfilled all the righteous demands of the law. Not only fulfilling the demands of the law in an external and outward way, but fulfilling the demands of the law internally.

His motivations, His purposes, His attitudes. I'm sure you've heard the story of that little boy who is told by his mother at the breakfast table to sit down.

And she continued to say, Well, son, sit down. And He demanded to stand up. And finally, He sat down, and she thanked Him for His obedience.

And He said to her, this little five-year-old, Well, I might be sitting down on the outside, but I am standing up on the inside. Jesus had perfect alignment, not only with His external attitudes, and actions, but His internal motivation, His internal purposes, His internal heart.

He measured up to all that the law demanded. As we find in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says, Well, you have heard it said, but I say to you, and raises the bar to the next level.

[11:59] You have said that you should not commit adultery, but I say to you, if you even look at a woman to lust after her, you have committed adultery in your heart. I say to you, you should not murder.

Or the Bible says you should not murder. But I say to you, if you hate your brother, you have committed murder in your heart. Jesus, in His life and actions, but also in His internal motivation, demonstrated consistency in meeting and measuring up to all that the law demanded.

Of course, the religious Jews were very good at meeting external expectations. They were very good at the piety that was required of those who were in their position.

But Jesus identified the true corruption of their hearts when He says in Luke 11, 39, Now you Pharisees, you make the outside.

...to go and anoint a new king. King Saul had messed things up in Israel and God was searching for a new king. And Samuel goes to the family of Jesse and he begins to look at each of the sons and each one that he goes to, it is clear that they are head and shoulders above the rest and they're handsome and they're strong, but they're not the ones that God selected.

[13:34] The criteria that was important to God was as what we find in 1 Samuel 16, 7. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

Jesus honored the law to the letter both internally and externally and as a result of fulfilling the law, Jesus positions Himself to condemn sin in the flesh.

... ...

... And we looked at this a bit last week. He condemns sin in His ministry as He heals individuals and says, Go and sin no more. The mandate that He gave to them was to live in the purity of life that the law demanded.

Of course, they could not do that because of the corruption of the flesh, but that was still the overriding command that God had given to His people.

[14:41] He condemned sin in the flesh by calling people to righteousness, but He also condemned sin in the flesh through His ministry by reversing the effects that sin had on sin-ravaged bodies.

Lazarus, who had died, Jairus' daughter who had died, and Jesus raised to show that He had power over the grave, power over sin and death.

Jesus, in healing those who had blindness or lameness or leprosy, able to demonstrate that He alone had the ability to reverse the effects of sin and that to stand as an illustration of what He would do not on a temporary basis but on an eternal basis, a picture in a physical way of what He had hoped to do for them spiritually through His death.

Through His ministry, He condemned sin by reversing the effects of sin, but finally and fully satisfying the righteous demands of God for sin by dying for sinners.

He condemned sin in the flesh. Jesus agreed with the Father that sin was worthy of eternal judgment. 1 Peter 3:18 says, For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit.

- [16:14] Romans 5:6-9 says this, For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Since therefore we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.

It is because of the work of Jesus' death that Paul concludes there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It is because of the final and full work of Christ on Calvary to purchase for us redemption.

Well, what does this righteousness mean for us? There are so many things that we could say. First, this righteousness means our salvation is secure.

If you are in Christ today, the righteousness of Christ rests on you and your salvation is secure because there is nothing more that is required.

- [17:26] The debt has been fully paid. So there is nothing that you need to do to work your way to God. There is nothing else that is demanded because Jesus paid it all.

All to Him I owe. And if you are in Christ, all to Him you owe as well because Jesus paid it all. And if He is the full and complete righteousness that is demanded by God, there is nothing left to do so your salvation in Christ is secure.

It should provide for you not only peace of mind but also motivation for worship, urgency in the Christian life, cause for devotion because Jesus provided a way that is secure.

It also means that righteousness is obtained through faith and not through law keeping. And that's important. Righteousness is obtained through faith and not through law keeping.

We touched on this a couple of weeks ago when we were looking through no condemnation and we saw in Romans chapter 4, we saw that Abraham was righteous because of faith.

- [18:52] Faith was counted to him as righteousness, not the things that he had done in terms of circumcision or an offering Isaac as he was commanded to do.

It wasn't his works that merited any kind of favor in God's eyes. It was faith alone that stood as the standing precedent for us, for those who seek to be blessed like Abraham and being called children of God.

We can be children of God in Christ through faith. And righteousness is obtained through faith and not through your law keeping.

You cannot add and you cannot subtract to perfection. There is nothing more to be done that Christ has not already accomplished.

It is his righteousness, not yours, that stands in God the Father's eyes as being acceptable and pleasing. It is credited to your account but is unaffected by anything that you could do.

- [20:00] It rests on him fulfilling the law's demands. It rests on his sacrifice, paying the full price of sin's penalty, obtaining for us what we could never pay.

Hallelujah. Jesus' sacrifice was not about temporary benefits, though, of just removing sin's effects.

And that's where we begin to move next. It was not just about declaring you righteous. It was about making you righteous through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that's where we go next. Not only the righteousness of Jesus, but now we are righteous because of the Spirit. Righteous because of the Spirit.

Notice, picking up in verse 4, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- [21 : 08] God is after complete transformation. God is interested in the gospel having power to save you from everything that is corrupt in this world.

We're going to see that more in verses 5 to verse 11. Verses 5 to 8 speak of the transformation of God in transforming our mind. In verses 9 to 11 speak of God transforming our bodies.

Mind and body all align to the purposes of God transformed by the Holy Spirit in helping us to be a sanctified people. But tucked between verse 3 and verse 5 is verse 4.

And you say, oh, you're a rocket scientist. You must be really smart. Good job there, Andrew. What's difficult about verse 4 is the way it starts. It says, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

Well, whose righteousness is that? Is that Christ's righteousness applied to our account? Or is that the Spirit's righteousness working itself out through a transformed life?

- [22 : 25] Well, I want to make a case for the fact that it is personal righteousness. It is Spirit-transformed righteousness. And I want to give you three reasons, I think, why that is the case.

Now, I want to be really careful because theologians that are much smarter than me differ on this point. But I think there's a really good case for seeing it as personal righteousness.

It really boils down to two words. The first word is the word fulfilled, which is completed. And as we would evaluate the text, we would begin this thing to ourselves, now, time out.

The only one who has fulfilled or completed or met the perfect standard of righteousness is Jesus himself. Obviously, this is infused righteousness of Christ on us.

righteousness. The difficulty with that is that it also uses the words in us, which would indicate it is not for us. It is actually righteousness that's being worked out from within.

- [23 : 37] It's personal. I want you to notice, first of all, verses 1 and 2 and then verses 3 and 4.

I want you to notice, first of all, the parallel nature of these verses. Notice the similar words that are used. In verse 1, notice, no condemnation.

In verse 3, notice, he condemned sin in the flesh. Obviously, verse 1 and verse 3 are synonymous. Speaking and describing the same thing.

Notice in verse 2 that the law of the spirit of life has set you free. And notice in verse 4, who walk according to the spirit.

The parallel nature. It seems to indicate that what is ever happening in verse 2 is also happening in verse 4. Notice reason number 2.

- [24 : 44] Notice the cause and effect relationship that is reinforced in 1 and 2 and also repeated then in verse 3 and 4. As we spoke in previous weeks, we saw that the reason for no condemnation, the cause for no condemnation is met by the evidence, the result that we see in verse 2, that the law of the spirit of life is the one who is working out sanctification, a renewed life that is happening in us.

Justification precedes sanctification in verses 1 and 2. Notice a similar thing that is going on in verses 3 and 4. The cause and effect relationship.

We see in verse 3 that the cause for what happened is God sent his son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh.

That is the reason for what we find now in verse 4. the cause or the result is in order that that we might, the righteous requirement might be fulfilled in us.

The final reason, reason number 3, is notice the inseparable link between the phrases. Verse 1 begins with therefore. Verse 2 begins with for.

[26 : 14] Verse 3 begins with for. Verse 4 begins with in order that. Notice the prepositions and the purpose clauses that are used throughout but then now in the middle of verse 4 there is no transitional word which means that it is connected to the first phrase.

Who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit then describes what's happening at the beginning of verse 4. Now you might be saying Andrew, you are so technical.

what is the point of all of this? The point of all of this is to help you see that you can do this for yourself. Okay? As you begin to take notice of what is happening in the text you can begin to pray that God helps you lead you by the spirit to arrive at certain conclusions and I believe the right conclusion the best the best conclusion that we can draw from verse 4 is that verse 4 is actually talking about personal righteousness that the Holy Spirit intends to give to us because he wants not only to declare us righteous he wants to make you righteous.

God is not interested in so much the positional righteousness although that is important obviously. He is not interested in distant righteousness that is somebody else's righteousness although that is important to lead us to the next step.

God is interested in practical real tangible true sincere righteousness that you have because of the work of the gospel in your life.

[28 : 02] Because God is living in you just like the spirit was living in Jesus. the same resources that were given to Christ to live the righteous life are given to you so you would expect the same results.

And certainly that is what we see. We see this cause and effect that God has stated and declared righteousness for his people so they have right and perfect standing before God but he is also in doing that given his Holy Spirit to work real and practical and true righteousness out in you so that when people see you they don't see you they see God so that God gets the glory.

That's the point. And up until this point no man woman or child has ever been able to work righteousness on their own because all their righteousnesses were as filthy rags but now because of Christ and because of justification and now the work of the Spirit in our life we can actually work out some righteousness in our life.

We have a choice to make as we find in Romans chapter 6. We are not slaves to sin anymore we are slaves to God. Our members belong to him and as we saw in verse 2 the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

the power of the Spirit is working to overcome all of the sin and corruption of your life to help lead you to real and true righteousness so that when people see you they see the gospel and when they hear you there is consistency between what you say and what they see.

[29 : 57] There is evidence just like with Jesus in performing miracles that they confirmed the work of God in his life they confirmed the message of God on him.

The same is true for you and for me when we talk about the power of the gospel we talk about Jesus' ability to save us from sin and then they see it show up in our relationships they see it show up in the way we treat our spouses they see it show up in the way we treat our children they see it show up in the way that we work they say God must be living in them the gospel must be true and that is the point of righteousness being fulfilled in you and in me.

God desires for us not to be enslaved by sin but to be given and enslaved to righteousness the spirit working and directing and guiding our lives helping us be the kinds of people that God has created us to be no longer tainted no longer polluted no longer self-oriented but oriented to the glory of our savior it's not only a personal righteousness it is also a progressive righteousness a progressive righteousness righteousness notice it says that the second part of verse 4 who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit this word walk is peripeteo which is a present active participle and the the benefit of that is it talks about and speaks of a life that continues it is a life that is not static but a life that is dynamic it is moving it is active it is progressing it's not satisfied with how things are today it's not always looking back at what you accomplished for God in the years gone by it's not what Paul says looking to the things behind me but looking forward to the things that Christ wants to continue to accomplish not being satisfied with what God has already done in your life but looking for ways for God for God to make you more like him and I love this word walk because if it was run it would not be a word for me walking helps us see the consistency of life that God is calling us to live we see this all over Romans and we don't have time to look at them but I just want to call your attention to a few

Romans chapter 6 verse 4 says this we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father we too might walk in newness of life that's what Jesus' death and resurrection accomplished for you not just a declaration of righteousness but real righteousness through the power of the Holy Spirit we see it in Romans chapter 14 verse 15 we see it in Romans chapter 13 verses 13 and 14 okay I just want to just take notes read them later we don't have time for them this morning Galatians chapter 5 verse 16 says but I say walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh there is a way of life that must mark every believer not because you muster in yourself some ability to carry out some supposed righteousness but because there is a yielding of your life to the power of God allowing his power his spirit to work through you to create in you what you cannot create for yourself so much to say and the greatest fulfillment of the law is love the culmination of the entire

Old Testament and law is encapsulated in two commands love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind love your neighbor as yourself you cannot do this on your own we are called to a standard that totally blows us up who has ever imagined that we could love our enemies but that's what Jesus calls us to who could ever imagine that you could love your unjust employer but that's what Jesus calls us to in 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 18 through 23 who could ever imagine that you could love somebody who is not like you and that's exactly what God calls us to in James chapter 2 love that is impartial love that is not prejudiced and that is so in us isn't it but who could ever imagine that we could love our brothers especially those who offend us and hurt us and take advantage of us but in 1 John chapter 4 verses 19 and 21 it says we love because he first loved us if anyone says I love God and hates his brother he is a liar for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love

[35:48] God whom he has not seen and this commandment we have from him whoever loves God must also love his brother if you don't love your spouse if you don't love your parents if you don't love a brother or sister in this room John calls into question if you really love God at all and if you are loved by God you will demonstrate the character of one who is filled by God and the fruit of the spirit is first love well what does this righteousness mean to us that brings us to our time of communion first this righteousness means for us a reminder of the body and blood of Jesus and the costliness of sin it reminds us of how gruesome and how disgusting sin is to God it caused him to bring his son and to crucify him on the cross he was bruised for our iniquity he was crushed for our transgressions he did that because of the costliness of sin

I would like to invite the deacons to come forward as I read Hebrews chapter 9 verses 15 to 22 this is perhaps another way to look at our communion passage and as they come I'm going to read it says this verse 18 Hebrews 9 therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood for when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people he took the blood of the calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and the people saying this is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded for you that sound familiar and in the same way he sprinkled with blood both the tent and the vessels used in worship indeed under the law almost everything is purified with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins but as it is he appeared once and for all speaking of

Jesus at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself Jesus did it through his body through his blood let me pray miracle miracle Thank you.