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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Called to Righteousness Romans 3:21-31

Lesson Background and Introduction

Paul wrote to the church in Rome in about AD 58, during his third missionary journey. He had not planted that church, but expressed a desire to visit. He envisioned Rome to be a future stop on his way to Spain for missionary work (Romans 15:24, 28). The church in Rome had a mixed membership of Jews and Gentiles. We can only guess at the church's size. Paul's greetings in Romans 16 list more than two dozen people by name, implying many more. It's reasonable to think of a church of several hundred—still a tiny fraction of the city's total population. Paul wrote to prepare the church in Rome for his intended future visit. Paul was aware of issues between the Jews and Gentiles in the church and had words for both groups. In the process, Paul gave a thorough presentation of the gospel that he had been preaching. It was a message that had already influenced the Roman church through people such as Aquila and Priscilla (Romans 16:3; see Acts 18:2). A central doctrinal concern for Paul was to demonstrate the universal sinfulness of humanity and the magnificent scope of God's plan for redemption of men and women from the consequences of this sin. Paul based his conclusions on both the historical facts of Jesus' life and proper interpretation of Jewish Scriptures. Today's lesson assumes the case for universal sinfulness has been made in Romans 1:18–3:20. With that foundation in place, the question that arises is how the sinless, holy God can rescue sinners from the wrath that divine justice requires. This weighty matter is the subject of this week's lesson.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Plan of Salvation - The apostle Paul established man's need for God's righteousness in the early chapters of Romans. Our right standing with God only comes from the heavenly Father Himself. Man is so deep in sin only God can deliver him—through Jesus, God's plan of salvation. Putting one's faith in Christ, and in Him alone, equips a human being to stand innocent and pure in the presence of a sovereign, holy God.

Man Is Sinful - Scripture is clear: everyone is in the same situation when standing before God. It doesn't matter if the list of personal sins is long or short—no man is able to measure up to God's perfect standard. He expects and can only accept perfection. Who's faultless: the hard worker? The do-gooder? The kindest person one can think of? Every human being has a stain of sin in their lives. God wants us to be everything great He created us to be. That's why He daily begs to walk alongside us, surrounding His people with protection, offering His divine wisdom, and ideal companionship. The enemy constantly tells lies and keeps humans from knowing and understanding His compassion.

God Is Holy - How does a Holy God remedy this problem? The Father sent His Son Jesus to die on the Cross, tearing down the dividing wall and the misunderstandings. Christ's sacrifice allowed God to deal with the believer's sin problem while at the same time extending mercy. He played both roles, a fair judge who doesn't let the guilty go free, but a loving Father who comes down from behind the bench and sits with the offender, giving Himself, through Jesus, as payment for the offence.

Salvation by Faith Alone - Does this mean people can just do whatever they please, then still think they are on their way to heaven and pleasing God? No! Paul said. Absolutely not. When a believer truly understands the love and favor given them by God and Jesus's sacrifice on the Cross, it motivates the genuine Christian to want to express love back to the Father. He and His child can enter into a precious relationship based on kindness, compassion, and joy.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Delight in the Lord and in His Word, and you'll find true happiness. He alone offers a righteousness that endures for all eternity

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
I love Your truth, O Lord, The Word which You have given; Its precepts shall my soul delight On earth as well as heaven. - Bosch

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
*He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever;
His horn will be exalted with honor*
(Ps 112:9 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Dec 05, 2006)

Series: Discipleship & Mission

UNIT: Call To Life in Christ

NEXT WEEK

Called to Life in the Spirit
(Romans 8:1-14)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Revelation of Righteousness (Rom 3:21-22)

Righteousness apart from the Law (21)

- A righteousness that brings eternal life (Rom 5:21)
- A righteousness that we have in Jesus (1 Cor 1:30)
- A righteousness that God made through Jesus (2 Cor 5:21)
- A righteousness that we have faith and hope in (Gal 5:5)

Righteousness of God (22)

- Righteousness from God that allows knowledge of Jesus (Phil 3:7-9)
- Righteousness from being a part of the Kingdom of God (Rom 14:17)
- Righteousness from God through the gospel (Rom 1:17)
- Righteousness from God through Jesus taking our sins (2 Cor 5:21)

Grace and Righteousness (Rom 3:23-24)

Grace and righteousness because all have sinned (23)

- All sinned because there are none who are righteous on earth (Eccl 7:20)
- All sinned because all are under sin (Rom 3:9)
- All sinned because the whole world is a prisoner of sin (Gal 3:22)
- All sinned because no one can claim to be without sin (1 John 1:8)
- All sinned because sin entered the world through one man (Rom 5:12-13)
- All sinned because all are slaves to sin (Rom 6:20)

Need for justification (24)

- Justification to fulfill God's promise (Rom 4:16)
- Justification through faith in Jesus (Gal 2:16)
- Justification through faith that is accompanied by works (James 2:24)
- Justification for those who believe in Jesus (Acts 13:39)

Need for grace (24)

- Need for grace because grace reigns over the law (Rom 5:20-21)
- Need for grace because we are under grace not the law (Rom 6:13-18)
- Need for grace because God has chosen His remnant by grace (Rom 11:5-6)
- Need for grace because God makes grace abound in us (2 Cor 9:8)
- Need for grace because God's grace is sufficient in all things (2 Cor 12:9)
- Need for grace because we are saved by grace (Eph 2:8-9)

Declaration of God's Righteousness (Rom 3:25-26)

Righteousness through Jesus' blood (25)

- God defined the blood as the atonement vehicle for sins (Lev 17:11)
- Jesus' blood justifies (Rom 5:9)
- Jesus' blood reconciles man to God (Col 1:19-20)
- Blood of the new covenant (Matt 26:28)
- Blood that brings redemption (Eph 1:7)

Righteousness through God's patience (25)

- God's patience is manifested through grace (Ps 103:8)
- Patience that should lead to our repentance (Rom 2:4)
- Patience because God wants all to repent (2 Peter 3:9)

Righteousness in judgment (26)

- Because God's judgment is based on truth (Rom 2:2)
- Because God judges in righteousness and justice (Ps 9:7-8)
- Because God is righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)
- Because God will judge the world through Jesus (Acts 17:31)
- Because God's judgment is right (2 Thess 1:5)

Faith and Righteousness (Rom 3:27-31)

Righteousness not by works (27)

- Because if God kept a record of works and sins, no one would be saved (Ps 130:3-4)
- Because no one can be justified by works (Acts 13:38-39)
- Because if by works, there would be no value in faith (Rom 4:13-14)
- Because it is only through God's mercy anyone is justified (Titus 3:4-7)

Righteousness is by faith (28)

- Righteousness by faith because God's faithfulness cannot be nullified (Rom 3:3)
- Righteousness by faith because it is through faith that God is pleased (Heb 11:6)
- Righteousness by faith because it provides hope (Heb 11:1-2)
- Righteousness that is lived by faith (Rom 1:17)

Righteousness for all by faith (29-31)

- For all because God wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)
- For all because God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:1-4)
- For all because Jesus was sacrificed to justify all men (Rom 5:18)
- For all because God's grace brings salvation before all men (Titus 2:11)