

W323-AN_INTRODUCTION_TO_ROMANS_1.mp3

[00:00:01] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book. Under the covering title Truth for Young Believers, Short Studies for Young Believers. And we are going to read a portion of Scripture, Acts 13, verses 26 to 39. And I would like you, if you will, to switch off now and read that to by yourselves so that we may come along together. Acts 13, verse 26, down to verse 39. Thank you. Now, in these short studies for young people, I feel that there is a need that we should at least attempt to give some guiding lines with regard to that mighty epistle, the Epistle to the Romans. I know we're not living in the Days of Miracles just now, and it's almost asking for a miracle in little meetings of 20 minutes each to do very much with an epistle like Romans. But I feel that unless we do, we shall have a gap in our understanding of God's purpose, which will be very serious. Now, I hope that you have already read the passage in Acts 13. And so you see, the Apostle has made a statement in this first part of his great public ministry to emphasise this fact. And by him, that is to say, the risen Christ, all that believe are justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. He's packed into that a good deal of that which he now enlarges and develops in the epistle to the Romans.

[00:01:36] So without more ado, I want you to turn to the epistle, to the Romans, and just get a few guiding lines. We can't do much more. A few guiding lines as to the study of this very wonderful book. And on the blackboard that we have at this chapel, I have put two capital letter R's rather elongated with a space in between so that if you care to do the same on a sheet of paper to capital letter R's, then the first letter R will be the word righteousness. And the second letter R will stand for the word revealed. That's the first group righteousness revealed. Now, that is the covering thought that I want to give you to guide you in reading Romans the first chapter and you'll find that I've got my warrant for it in verse 17. Romans one, verse 17. Righteousness revealed. So we'll read it. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. Righteousness revealed. Now we go back to the beginning and we notice that Paul has declared in verse one that he was separated unto the Gospel of God, verse three, which is concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Gospel of God is concerning His Son. When next he speaks about this gospel, he goes straight away at it in verse nine, For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his son.

[00:03:15] And then for the third time in verse 16, for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. The good news of God comes from God as the author, but focuses our attention upon Christ, the Son as the one in whom all is vested and without whom no gospel is possible. I think we see that. Well, now notice again, when you're reading an epistle like Romans, remember that the writer of it is packing the truth and he's a very logical writer. In this. Romans And one of the little signs that an argument is in progress is the use of the word for. You could hardly go up to a person in the street and straight off say, for there must be some reason why you use the word for. So would you look now at verse 16. It starts with a word for what that means to say. He said something already. And what he has said is this. Summing up in verse 11 onwards, he said, You know, I've long to see you. I've made many plans to come to you, but I've been hindered many times. But he said, I want you to understand that I'm not holding back. He says I'm a debtor, verse 14, To preach to Greeks or barbarians, it doesn't matter to me.

[00:04:34] It's the same gospel. They all need it. And I'm going to prove that to you presently, he says. So verse 15, as much as in me is I'm ready to preach the gospel to you. That at Rome also for See. Oh, yes. He said, Don't misinterpret me because you happen to live in Rome or New York or Philadelphia or London. It doesn't mean to say you don't need the same gospel as anybody else. For now, he says, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Well, that may be a tame way of putting it. The Apostle sometimes uses a figure of speech, meaning to belittle in order to emphasize. And there's a possibility he really said this. I should think not. I am not ashamed of this gospel. I glory in it, you see? Like that. And then he says, for why are you in this attitude to it, Paul? He said, It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe it. That's the reason why he said, I'm not ashamed of it. And do you remember this, that the word power in this verse is the word that you meet in the gospel, according to Matthew over and over again. And it is translated miracle, so that although we may not live in a day of evidential miracles where we raise the dead and cleanse the sick and give sight to the blind and all that, yet he is a miracle that must go on every time a person is saved, That's a miracle.

[00:06:01] It's not brought about by argument. It's not brought about by any effort of our own. If you're a believer in Christ, a miracle has been wrought on your account. It's the miracle of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Then there is slipped in the

words to the Jew first and also to the Greek, which will leave alone for the time being. There's another for waiting for us in verse 17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. And then finally, there's a last for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. So two revelations are given here. Either you will be associated with the one and be saved, or you must be associated with the other and be condemned. I don't see any way of avoiding those two. Now, we are anxious that everyone who listens to these recordings and comes under the Ministry of the Word shall be numbered among those who are believers. That's the only way in which you can receive it. You stretch out the hand of faith. The hand of faith is empty. You don't bring any gifts in it. You cannot buy this salvation. But it is faith.

[00:07:18] There's a little problem in our version when it says it's from faith to faith, and it's most likely that there is one of those little omissions which very often come in quick writing. And it reads like this. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed a righteousness from faith addressed to faith. The repetition mentally of the righteousness which is originating in faith is addressed not to works, not to law keeping, not to being a circumcision, not to being a Jew. It doesn't matter whether you're a gentile, it's just to faith. And there are some who make a little objection to this and say, well, why should God emphasize faith? Why not something else? Well, it's about the lowest minimum that you can demand of anybody. If you are going to have any dealings with somebody else, you're going to sell them a house or you're going to sell them a car or you're going to sell them. I won't go any further over that. There must be either a true or a false faith. Otherwise, you never listen to anybody. You'd never do anything. If you write a letter, it may be most important, but you put a stamp on it. You drop it in the post box. You don't see the man who comes to collect it. And if you did, it wouldn't make any difference. You don't know what they're going to do with it, but if you just have to go on for ordinary, everyday life would not move.

[00:08:40] We should all be stuck if we didn't have just that elementary faith. Well, God says that's the minimum. And so there's no doubt about that. So here we have this righteousness revealed now to be revealed, suggests a riveter. And it's not a matter of discovery. It's not a matter of searching. It must come either from God or it will never come at all. He is the revealer of this. What? It looks as though that righteousness is most important in the mind of God. He doesn't say now I'm a God of almighty power. I'll

just say, like I said at the beginning, let there be light and there was light and all men will believe and be saved. He doesn't say that. He says, Oh, no. I'm dealing with moral creatures. I'm dealing with those who have a conscience. I'm dealing with those who know right and wrong up to a measure. And he said the one thing that must never be tinkered with is the righteousness of God. Now this righteousness of God can have two meanings. If this means the righteousness of God as a judge, well, that's going to condemn us. But this means a righteousness which God himself provides because we haven't got one. That's the power in the gospel. You see, we mustn't merely think of God's love and God's mercy and God's grace and God's kindness.

[00:10:07] We've got to think that all that love and mercy and kindness has provided the one thing that heaven demands, that you and I should be right. And you know that we are by nature wrong. And there are some things, some who think that we can say, Oh, well, we can't do all that God wants us to do, but if we just believe he reckons that a good work, he doesn't, it's no work at all. If you look a bit further in Romans to see this emphasis upon the difference between grace and faith and works, you'll see in the ninth chapter. Of the 11th chapter. I'm sorry, he says in verse six. And if it's by grace, then is it no more works. Otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace? Otherwise, work is no more work. He will not allow you to mix up working for salvation and receiving it as a free gift. Now, there's no doubt about it. In the teaching of the Apostle Paul, salvation is a free gift. It's never earned. It's never merited, never can be. And I rather wonder whether he would turn to Luke, who was one of his right hand men. You know, Luke stood with him right away through to the very end. And Luke had written a gospel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. And in Luke's Gospel we have 1 or 2 passages, especially the parables, that would make a good background for Paul's teaching.

[00:11:42] Supposing he wanted to have a picture of this way of getting righteousness. Wouldn't he turn around and look and say, look, you tell them that parable. What parable, Paul? You tell them that parable of the publican and the Pharisee. Oh, yes, he said, men and brethren. Two men went up to the temple once to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a publican and a Pharisee. He said, I give tithes of all I possess. I keep the fasts and feasts do it so many times a week. And then he looked at this public and he said, I'm not like this publican. Then the other man, the publican, he didn't even bother about comparing himself with anybody. He simply stood in the presence of God

and said, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. Now here is where we get justified comes in. The only time it does come in the Gospels in this sense. He says, Our savior said that man, not the Pharisee, not the one who kept the law, not the one who tithed things, not the one who fasted. This is that band went down to his house justified rather than the other. So you see, it's my faith. You stretch out the hand by faith and you receive this gift and you must have it because there's no possibility of standing in the presence of a holy God, in the filthy rags of your own righteousness.

[00:13:09] You must be cleansed. You must be clothed. You must be crowned to take the three figures. And so we have it here. Well, now, this emphasis upon the fact that this righteousness is revealed is stopped by the apostle for a moment. He's going on to something else, which we should look at in the next 20 minute study. So will you turn the page in Romans three and see how he picks this up again? Verse 21. This is where he picks up where he left off. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. Now the word manifested is not the same as the word revealed, but it has much the same meaning, hasn't it? Something which is revealed or something which is manifested is something which is now made clear. A veil is taken away. A light is shining upon it. But now is a change. This is what God is doing now. The righteousness of God without the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Now, in chapter one, he quoted from one of the prophets at the end of verse 17, it says, As it is written, the just shall live by faith. And that that is a quotation from a very obscure prophet in the Old Testament named Habakkuk. And he stresses this expression The just shall live by faith.

[00:14:37] And it's a passage which has seized upon the Apostle Paul's mind because in Galatians he writes, The just shall live by faith. In Romans, he says, the just putting a stress on the word just shall live by faith. And in Hebrews he quotes it for the third time, the just shall live by faith. He gives you three sermons, one on just one on faith, one on live. And the Galatians is the sermon on faith. Romans Is the sermon on just Hebrews? Is the Sermon on Live. So you see, he says, I can appeal to the Old Testament scriptures. And once we've seen the perfect work of Christ, we can see that they were anticipating it and pointing to it. So he says. Verse 22, What is it that these Old Testament prophets witness, even the righteousness of God? Now he's back again. You see, he says the power in the gospel is because it reveals the righteousness of God, but it doesn't reveal the righteousness of God Himself, but the righteousness

which comes from God as His gift making us accepted in the beloved, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ. That's how we receive it. As He's already said that it is addressed to faith and it's unto all. Now he is two statements. It's unto all and upon all them that believe. I think you've got a pause a little bit.

[00:16:06] It's unto all. Now, you can never tell when you're preaching this gospel whether the person listening to you is going to believe it or not. And you don't say, I don't like the color of your eyes, or I don't like the look of your face or I don't believe you're going to accept it and turn away. You say, no, it's unto all all sorts and conditions of men. But it's upon all them the belief. It might be addressed to all, but it doesn't follow that every single person will receive it. So it's unto all and upon all them that believe. And then he says there's no difference, for all have sinned. And this brings us to the basis of it all. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God being justified freely. He is our word righteousness expressed in another term. That's another thing to remember when you're studying. Romans that the word righteousness and the word justify both originate from the same word. You see, in our English language, we can say glory and glorify, but we can't say righteous and righteous if I. So we have to say righteous and justify. So here's the thing. Which means you are now accredited with righteousness. You are accounted righteous in the sight of God, and it's freely. That's without a cost. It's by grace. It's through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

[00:17:29] And then one more word before we finish this first approach. It says in verse 25, at the end of verse 25, to declare his righteousness. And in verse 26 to declare, I say at this time his righteousness whose righteousness God's all. Never forget that if God is concerned about you being made righteous in His presence, he is very, very much concerned that he should be righteous when he saves a poor sinner. Now, how is he going to do it? Well, he can't do it by merely saying, Well, I'll forgive you this time. No, he must be just at the moment that he justifies the ungodly fancy. God can justify the ungodly. And there's only one way he can do it. He can point to someone who became, for our sakes, was made sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Well, now, what an awful thing it is to have to stop, isn't it? And we'll have to stop for a moment, because these are short studies. I've asked myself. I wonder if I've given myself too big a task. But if I can only pinpoint a few approaches to this great epistle to the Romans, I feel that those of you younger people

who are approaching the truth of God, you will value them at what they are worth, and you will make this wonderful book your own.