

W428_Righteousness.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number 33 of the series entitled A Form of Sound Words. Today we are considering the domination. The dominant note that is struck in the Epistle to the Romans and the title of righteousness. We realize that God is love and God is kind and God is merciful. But the emphasis in this part of the Scripture is God is righteous. God is just. And we read in Acts 13 the justifying by faith and in Romans we read. Of the justifying of God. That he might be just. You see, you mustn't treat the gospel as the kindly pat on the head of a father telling us, Well, I'll let you off this time. Don't do it any more. God is infinitely more than that. And he is not the father of anybody. He is the creator of everybody and he's the father of those who trust in him and are born again or made partakers of the new life by creation. So it's very important that we shall see. That it was absolutely necessary that sin should be dealt with righteously, not merely pardoned and let off. But there was never the possibility of anyone saying there had been favoritism or that there had been compromise. So how is it going to be done? Well, God solved that problem by doing it himself. He spared not his son. He died the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God.

[00:01:58] So here we have a very basic subject. Now I'm taking it in an artificial manner. We are taking these these sound words alphabetically, and we've got this letter R and the letter R stands for righteousness. And through the epistle to the Romans, it seems to skip in such a way that we can do it, as we've suggested on this chart. Will you notice? We have righteousness revealed as the first statement. Will you look at these just in passing Romans one? This is the explanation given as to why the apostle was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Chapter 116 He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. And he tells you why? Because or for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth to the Jew first and also to the Greek. But he doesn't leave it there. Mere power is not enough. A wicked person may wield power, but God is righteous. So the power that he wields must always respect righteousness and see sin in its dark character. So he says, I'll tell you why The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. The reason is this for therein is the righteousness of God revealed. When are you going to be careful not the righteousness of God who is a judge? For if he contain the righteousness of the God who is a judge, it would be condemning us. But the righteousness which is here revealed.

[00:03:46] Is according as it was written. It is revealed from faith to faith. That's a difficult passage to interpret or write until you come across right through this epistle.

Justification is out of faith. Asbestos and this rather cramped statement can be expanded like this. For therein is a righteousness of God revealed a righteousness out of faith. Presented to faith. You see, the whole thing is in the atmosphere of faith. You don't start earning salvation and then do a little bit by believing, or you don't start just believing. And you make it up by doing something. No, no. This is a righteousness bestows a righteousness out of faith. Address to faith according as it is written. The just shall live by faith. This text, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, has apparently seized the mind of the Apostle Paul. It isn't. Every company could immediately turn to the Prophet Habakkuk. So some people look at you and say, who? Habakkuk, a small prophet. Three chapters toward the end of the Old Testament and the Prophet Habakkuk was living in a world of violence. And wickedness. And he was disturbed because he couldn't see any intervention on the part of God to stop it. And there is apparently no answer to his prayer. And then apparently he made up his mind. He would watch and wait. And then the silence was broken. And God said, the vision is yet for an appointed time.

[00:05:40] Though it carry weight for it, for it's not really carrying when God seems a long time to us, it's because he can't upset the whole of his program. Because it would be nicer for you if something happened now, can he? I mean, that's foolish. So he said, the essence of faith is it waits God's time and he's never saying God's forgotten or God is late. It says, Wait for it. It shall speak and not lie. And meanwhile, the just shall live by faith. Oh, you see, that's got a very practical bearing, isn't it? While you're waiting for that intervention, which seems never to come. The just shall live by faith. And then if you look at the end of the last chapter, it's only three chapters. He says, though the oil failed and there's no meat in the fields and everything seems to go in wise yet, will I rejoice? He got to the point. So justification by faith is not merely a doctrine. It's also living, isn't it? It enables you to wait, whereas you become impatient and you say God's forgotten to be gracious. So he says that is the reason why I'm so glad that I have glory in this gospel. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it claims the very thing you need. You need a righteousness to stand before God and the righteousness that will be accepted. There is not a righteousness that man himself can make. Now, it's very good to know Paul knew what he was talking about.

[00:07:16] Because he was a Pharisee. That by upbringing. And he's written in the scriptures under the direction of God that so far as he, as a Hebrew was concerned, touching the righteous requirements of the law, he was blameless. Philippians Chapter three. I don't think any one of us would stand up and say that. Just me to a turn. Think of the claims of the law of God to be able to put down in black and white that you were blameless. Well, that man said, even though I could not think of anything that I'd committed or anything that could be said against me, he said, I took it and I threw it on the rubbish heap that I may be found in Christ. Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. Well, that's where we all come in. We've got this righteousness in the gospel to give us a perfect standing in the presence of God. Well, now, of course, I ought to go on a long time with this. But we've got a number, and I want you to go through this this to the Romans with me with these other features. So let's remember that the gospel. Contains its power because therein righteousness is revealed. Well, now he seems to depart for a moment and he accuses the Gentile world in verses 21 onwards because that when they knew God, they glorified not in God and they were given up, as you will see at the closing verses of this chapter.

[00:09:01] And then he turns away from the Gentile world and he says in chapter two, therefore, thou art inexcusable, o man. Whosoever thou art that judgest. And he's talking to the Jew. And the Jew says in chapter three, verse one, Well, talking to us like that, putting us on the same level as a Gentile, what advantage then, hath a Jew or what profit is there of circumcision? Who is as much every way? But he said, you can't get away with it and say because you happen to be a Jew, you are not responsible before God, you'll be treated just the same there. So after Edwin quoted from the scriptures, when it says there is none righteous. No, not one. Verse ten, he brings it to a conclusion in verse 19. Now we know that whatsoever things the law says, it says to them, who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God. That if you can go through the whole of chapter one, chapter two down here to chapter three. I think you would agree that we can say that righteousness is required as a crying need for something because both Jew and Gentile, those who had creation as their witness, those who had the added law of God as their witness had all failed.

[00:10:29] Or that it's moved to the next movement. What's the third item? A word.

Remission. Associated with remission. So we must read on now for it's waiting for us. I'll start a guide in verse 19. Now we know that what things soever the law says it saith to them that are under the law that every mouth not only Jew, not only Gentile, but every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be brought in guilty before God.

Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. For strangely enough, when you try to keep the law, it only reveals more sin than ever stirs it up, as the apostle said. Now we get one of those precious little breaks that the Apostle uses so many times in his epistles. But now. That. Now in the Old Testament, you read in the Psalms, particularly the word Selah, and possibly it was a pause in connection with the singing in the temple service. But it has this meaning. Selah. You hear what I've said. Now, listen to this. You see that picture? Now look at that. And so here, a whole world guilty before God. Selah. Now, look at this picture. But now here's a change. But now the righteousness of God is He is back again where we were in chapter one. He's back again. The righteousness of God without the law, quite apart from the law, is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets were.

[00:12:09] He was witnessed by Habakkuk. Even the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ. So it cannot be the righteousness of God who is a judge condemning you. It's a righteousness provided by God through Jesus Christ. Yours by faith. That's why he came. That's why he lived. That's why he died. To make it possible unto all and upon all them that believe. What's the idea of those two? All's. Well, it's unto all no restriction. Not reserved. Now to the June Sea. God allowed the Gentile world to go on its way without a gospel. But not now. Until all. Like John's gospel whosoever. But because it's untoward, it doesn't follow. Everybody believes it, does it? Unless so, it's unto all. And it's upon all them that believe. Don't read it like this unto all and upon all in the belief. That isn't quite the word. It's a wider circle when he says it unto all. And then it includes everyone, Jew or Gentile within it. In the next statement upon all, then be believe, for there is no difference. No difference. He had been saying there had been a great difference between the Jew and the Gentile, chiefly because to them had been committed the Oracles of God. Chapter three, one and two. Now, he says, although they do have that advantage, not here, no difference. Why is there no difference? What he says is that all again unto all upon all.

[00:13:53] For all have sinned. Strictly speaking, this could be translated for all sinned in the past as an act and are coming short of the glory of God at the present moment. The tenses of the verb are different, and if we go ploughing on in Romans long enough, we find that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men. All sinned. And not only say they are still at it, they are still coming short of the glory of God. But at the same time, the word being justified must leaked onto it. Look at these past and present. All sinned in the past are coming short of the glory of God at the present moment, and are the very self-same moment they may be justified freely. No waiting, No promising anything? No doing something. No paying anything. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So that's what we've got. The word remission. You see whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness. You see it again. Our concern, God, is that He's never compromising himself when he saves a sinner. All this great provision of Calvary and the resurrection. To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God. How is it that God could forgive David the sin of murder and adultery? There was no provision in the law of Moses for justifying a murderer.

[00:15:40] There has been no provision yet. David, who knew that law? He said, Deliver me from Bloodguiltiness O God thou God of my salvation and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy mercy. No, sing aloud of thy righteousness. He was looking forward, as he did in many other cases, to the one savior that we must all have. To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins of the past through the forbearance of God and now for the present to declare. I say at this time, isn't that fine? It includes you and me right up to the present moment. At this time, his righteousness that he see, if we're not careful, we are thinking about our justification, aren't we? Well, think about God's first. Because if he is not just in our salvation, it's only a name. It will crumble. It won't stand. But if he is just at the same time that he justifies you. Glory. Hallelujah. We are saved. In a sense, that can never be questioned. I better go back now. That he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He asked a question, Where is boasting then? And you could answer it, can't you? It is excluded. The Greek word means you've turned the key in the lock. It's locked out. No possibility of boasting here, except you stand with the apostle Paul and say, God forbid that I should boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[00:17:12] So there we have these three. Righteousness revealed in the Gospel. Righteousness required whether you are a Jew or a Gentile and righteousness associated with remission because it's a redemptive thing. I couldn't put more than one word down, but there's no reason why you shouldn't also add in your mind this remission is by redemption. Well, now one of the questions that comes up into our mind possibly is how does this righteousness become mine? It's all very well to tell me this, but how does it become mine, this righteousness? Well, that's the next word, Righteousness. And. Reckoned. And that is the theme of Chapter four. Shall we step through? Chapter four And notice the word Legsby. That is the Greek word. Translated three different ways to count, to reckon and to impute. He says, What shall we say then? That Abraham, our father, as pertaining the flesh of found it. He says nothing. He's found nothing. Not before. God. But what is the Scripture? Abraham believed God and notice the time when that was said. God had said to this man. Ibm, you're going to have a son. And the scripture says that both that man and his wife were beyond the natural age to expect to have a child. But he stood there in the presence of God. And I believe God. God said, You see these stars? So shall thy seed be.

[00:19:07] One man looking at the heavens and believing it, he couldn't do a thing because it says he himself was as good as dead. So that's faith without any additional work of your own. He believed God and it was counted. This is the word we're looking for. Counted unto him for righteousness. Believing God isn't righteousness. It's a right thing to do, but that's what you ought to do. It was counted or reckoned or imputed. So we'll go on now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned. Now that's the word counted. The reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt. And that applies to this very day. If you do a solid day's work. Although you may thank you when you're paid for it. It's not something that is a reward in the sense that it could be held back. The law could enforce it. It's not reckoned of grace. Oh, no. It's a debt that your master owes you. But to him, that work is not But believeth on him that justifies the ungodly. His faith is counted for righteousness. He hasn't earned it. He only has that symbol which God has given him to count for it. I used the pound note as an illustration of this. I'll use it again. It's quick. We all know the power note, I hope and possibly you read on the pound note. That. This is a promise. I promise. To turn this piece of paper into £1 on application at the Bank of England.

[00:21:00] Now people don't go marching up to the Bank of England. They'd never be done with it, would they? Will you go to the shop and you buy groceries and whatnot and it comes to a pound and you put down that piece of paper. He said, Yeah, that won't do. I want 20 shillings. Oh, they're doing it all day long. Promise. That's all it is. But it isn't 20 shillings veins. Not really. Are you going to prove it? You take if you've got if you possess such a thing, a golden sovereign in one hand and a pound note in the other, paper and gold and throw them both on the fire. The goal will be just the same value when it comes out. And a piece of paper is going up in smoke. Now your faith is like a piece of paper. It isn't righteousness at all. It's God going to honor his promise. That's all he's given you. But it's all right. It gets everything we want in this life. Because there's gold in the Bank of England behind that piece of paper. And there's the righteousness of Christ at the right hand behind that bit of faith. You see? So it's counted for even, as David also described it, the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputed righteousness without works, saying Blessed are they, whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

[00:22:22] So here we have in this chapter reckoned, counted, imputed. How to go right through it again. I know that we'll come to the end at the moment, but this is the word that you find in Isaiah 53, which our savior lifted out. Our savior lifted the doubter and quoted it. He was numbered. With the transgressors that were numbered is this word counted? Christ, was there a perfectly righteous one numbered with the transgressors and treated as though he were a transgressor? And you are there numbered with the righteous ones, although you haven't done anything to earn it because of the counting or reckoning of God. So at the conclusion it says verse 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him. That raised up Jesus, our Lord from the dead. Who was delivered not merely for who was delivered because of our offenses and was raised again because of our justification. It's finished not to get it, but because it was finished. Well, there we have now righteousness revealed. Righteousness required righteousness, ours through redemption or remission and righteousness. Ours by reckoning. Chapter five. I can't do justice to these, but I can only indicate now the way you can go on in your studies. Chapter five Therefore being justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom? Also we have access, by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

[00:24:12] And the word that's coming out is what we find presently in verse ten. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled. We shall be saved by his life. Now that's the verb reconcile. Now the noun. Reconciliation is translated atonement in verse 11. But if you're reading the revised version, you'll find it's put back again. So verse 11 and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. So righteousness produces reconciliation. Well, now after that, we begin to get other aspects. Chapter six. Verse 13. Oh, it says in verse 12, Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead. What? How can that be? How can that be? Oh, look at verse 11. Likewise. Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If God can reckon it, can't you? If He reckons you righteous when you're not because of the work of his son, can't you say, Well, I reckon what he has done true, and I'll stand on that and I'll reckon that I died unto sin and am alive unto God.

[00:26:00] And I know no longer under the dominion of this awful master that's gripped me. And so you can puzzle that out if you'd like to go through that chapter. Well, then we have the next one. I have to put these spectacles on for a moment to see this because I'm rather fogged for the moment. We have three more. And the one is the recrimination, which is in chapter eight and resurrection and realization. Well, let's look at chapter eight, shall we? I think that comes. Can you give me the verse that I've got there without me? 33. Thank you. See, I'm going back to front. I'll take spectacles off to read. Put them on when I don't. I don't. Can't account for it. But there it is. Chapter 833. Who shall lay anything? To the charge of God's elect. You see, we're now standing before God in that day. What an awful thought it would be if when you're there, some angel or some person should bring something up in that day in that spotless, cloudless glory. You needn't be afraid. The work of Christ is absolutely complete. Who shall lay anything? The word lay anything is a legal term. It comes in the acts of the apostles that that you likely to be called in question over what's happening because of the law side of it.

[00:27:33] But there's nothing here who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? And what's the answer? It doesn't say I never did anything wrong. Well, that would be wicked, wouldn't it? Because we have it. Is this It's God that justified? As long as God is the God that justifies the ungodly because they believe His Son, the cleansing of their sin and their standing before him can never be challenged. Who is he? That Condemneth. England's demolishes. It's crushed. That doesn't say it's Christ that condemns. He puts this in condemn why Christ died. Yea rather that is risen again. Who has even the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of God? From the love of Christ? Then he gives a long list. Then he says, I'm persuaded. Verse 38. And some people today use that term. They see you coming along with your Bible under your arm, or they see you speaking in the open air or they whatnot. They said, Well, what persuasion are you? And they expect you're going to say you're a Baptist or a Presbyterian or you're a Church of England or something. What persuasion are you? Is a good persuasion to belong to. Friends, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[00:29:06] And all this flows out of this great justification. Now there's only two more. And that is the word, I think, Resurrection. Is it? What number is that? Thank you. Ten, nine and ten. You see, this is where the poor help the poor, isn't it? Chapter ten, nine and ten. He says if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus. But do notice this. And shalt believe in thine heart. The mere confession of the mouth. That's all it amounts to. But if the mouth is expressing what the heart believes in, it is that God hath raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, man, believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth. Confession is made unto salvation. And then finally, I think that's chapter 14, is it? Isn't that good? I guessed it. Chapter 14. We have the practical side being worked out. It starts him that is weak in the faith. Receive ye but not to doubtful disputations. And so it goes on and deals with questions of whether you should eat this or whether you should eat that or whether you should abstain from this. And he says. Verse 40. I know, I know, he said, and persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself but to him that esteem is anything to be unclean. To him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with I meat now walkest thou not charitably destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.

[00:30:54] Let not then your good be evil spoken of. For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he for he that in these things serve it. Christ is acceptable to God and approved unto men. You see, in this chapter, if you look back a bit earlier, one man, it says in verse five, esteems one day above another. Another looks upon every day as alike. Well, you'll find that to these day, that is a society, the Lord's Day observance Society. They are always at it with regard to what they call the Sabbath or the Lord's Day. But the apostle says, you see, days don't come into it now if you belong to this calling. But on the other hand, because you are now not under a law with regard to keeping this day or that day or the other. Don't ride roughshod over your brother's conscience if you're upsetting him for whom Christ died. You keep that day, you see, because he's looking at you in. He's a bit perplexed. So you'll help him so we don't please ourselves. Well, that's as far as I think our time and my abilities will permit for the moment this question of righteousness. But doesn't it step through this epistle to the Romans from the revelation there until it comes right out into the practical issue?