

When Mankind Meets Its Maker

Study 2—God Gets It Right (part two)

In the first part of this study, we asked what God does about sin.

- ▣ If there is no God is right and does right, the world is meaningless and hopeless.
- ▣ God does come to the world in Jesus Christ to destroy sin and create a kingdom in which there is only right.

Jesus reveals the danger we are in if he does not act.

- ▣ He shows that we are enslaved and need to be redeemed.
- ▣ He bears the griefs of others, and says he will be counted among wrongdoers (Is. 53).
- ▣ He tells us to weep for ourselves if we do not receive his gift.

Then, he drinks the cup appointed for him.

- ▣ He asks why he is forsaken.
- ▣ He announces that what he has come to do is finished.

Now, Paul shows that what God does is right, and that it puts things right, through Jesus and what he achieves on the cross.

- ▣ The following are five ways Paul uses ‘righteousness’ in Romans.
- ▣ All these uses can be summed up as God acting according to his own nature for the sake of his name (John Piper).

First, God is angry and judges what is wrong (1:18-32; 2:2-11).

- ▣ He wouldn’t be God if he didn’t! And he certainly wouldn’t be right. His righteousness is *against* us. But this is just the beginning.

Second, God loves his world, has plans for it (3:3-9), and is keeping them.

- ▣ He’s not a legalist who’s only interested in him being right.
- ▣ He reveals his rightness by promising what he will do *about* us.

Third, he reveals his righteousness (1:17; 3:21-26).

- ▣ ‘Righteousness of God’ can mean God’s action, or what he gives—or both.
- ▣ Don’t miss this meaning. God is doing something right in a sinful world (3:21)!
- ▣ Christ is doing something *for* us.
- ▣ Jesus bears the rightful distain and condemnation and wrath of God on sin (3:25; 8:3).
- ▣ Until this happens, it appears that sin gets excused—but not now (3: 25-26).
- ▣ This is one man’s act of righteousness (5:18).
- ▣ Jesus is raised, and so, declared to be what he is—righteous (1 Tim. 3:16). This passage is describing the mystery of godliness—the way we may now relate to God.

Fourth, we are declared righteous (1:17; 3:22, 24; 4:5, 20-25; 5:1, 17; 10:4).

- ▣ In God being righteous (3:21), and in Christ’s act of righteousness, we are now declared righteous (v. 22)—as a gift *to* us.
- ▣ This is by faith, and, for emphasis, by believing. Our justification is here, in Christ, trusting in him alone, not as an idea or an experience but as a relationship of trust.

- ▣ This includes turning away from any false trust in ourselves (4:4-5).
- ▣ We are credited with the righteousness Jesus showed in his life and in his death (2 Cor. 5:21). All of it.
- ▣ Because Jesus is declared to be righteous in his resurrection, so are we (4:25).

There's nothing as exhilarating as this (Romans 5:1-5). It's then we realise how unconvincing our self-justification has been.

- ▣ We readily agree with Paul: 'Let God be true, and every human being a liar' (Rom. 3:4). (Cf. 1 John 1:5—2:2).

Fifth, God's righteousness is now being revealed *in* us.

- ▣ We who are grateful recipients of God's gift in Christ, are made eager, by the Spirit, to do what is right because we have been made right with God (6:16-18; 8:4).

People who don't have this gift of righteousness are hobbled and can't live truly. They remain self-focused and self-justifying. They call 'right' whatever life-style they have chosen.

But God shows he can get things right by pointing us to what his Son does on the cross. Here's something that's true, and works. It comes straight from God. It takes us to God. And it sends us out into life with delight, and with an eye for what others need from us.