

Preached at GBC on 7/10/22
"Declaring God's RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Rom.10:1-4

With each passing day, I really do see the end of the journey of my life as a justified saint. I know people think I am just being facetious when I make that kind of statement, but I am not – **I CAN ASSURE YOU OF THAT!** By God's grace I have a greater awareness of my remaining sinfulness, and thankfully by that same grace I have been brought to be fully comforted that God has through Christ's accomplished work "*set me free from the law of sin and death*". I also understand and will forever dogmatically stand on the absolute necessity of God's elect hearing "**HIS VOICE**" through the preaching of His Gospel of salvation full and free in **CHRIST ALONE**. It is through the realization of these truths, and the great awareness that our time remaining is so short as **JUSTIFIED SAINTS**, of our responsibility to "*preach the Word, be instant in season, and out of season*." I refuse to be sidetracked by those issues and straw men that others foolishly waste what precious time they have remaining defending themselves, seeking to "win the day" or "gain a following". Christ has promised us – "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me*." (**Jn.12:42**) I know that the next verse says – "*This he said, signifying what death he should die*." But I also know the Greek word translated by the English phrase "*if I be lifted up*" means much more than simply His being raised between heaven and earth on a cross. That phrase means 'to lift up on high, to exalt', or metaphorically 'to raise to the very summit of opulence and prosperity'. Peter used the same word before the Jews – "*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God EXALTED with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and [so is] also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him*." (**Acts 5:30-32**) Like Peter, Paul, and all the saints that have gone before me, I have a desire to see God's elect, His chosen people brought to true faith and true repentance by His Holy Spirit under the preaching of His Gospel. I so desperately want to see my friends and family saved, as well as yours. Heck, by God's grace, I would rejoice to see those who are my enemies set free "*from the law of sin and death*", embracing Christ as "*the Lord their righteousness*", joined with all the redeemed in the family of God. That being the case, my focus on what God leaves myself and all His redeemed in this world **TO DO** is very clear and very singular – "*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for IT is the power of God unto salvation to every man that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For THEREIN (IN THE GOSPEL, the GLAD TIDINGS OR GOOD NEWS) is the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD revealed, FROM faith to faith: As it is written, the JUST shall live by faith*." (**Rom.1:16,17**); "*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*." (**I Cor.2:2**); "*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*" (**I Cor.9:16**) These weren't just Paul's musings, but the Holy Spirit inspired reality of His life and ours. There are a lot of things we can debate about, and give our opinions or thoughts upon, but none of it, **OR ALL OF IT COMBINED**, is a **DECLARATION** of **HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS** which He has promised sets His people free. I don't know about you, but my prayer is that our Lord will be pleased to give me a true passion for the salvation of His people.

Let's begin looking at Paul's words – "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*" In the previous chapter Paul had taught Esaias also crieth concerning Israel – "*Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*"; "*And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.*"(Rom.9:27,29) In spite of this certain knowledge that only a small remnant of his physical lineage would be saved, His heart's desire was that they might be saved. **Look back at Paul's words in Rom.9:1-3.** These **JEW**s had the "oracles of God", they had the tabernacle and then the temple; they had the ceremonies and the rituals; they were moral, sincere, dedicated, and **RELIGIOUS**, but Paul testifies against all their efforts and declares of these **JEW**s that they are **LOST**! How do we know that? **Simple reasoning:** If he desired their salvation, the implication is that whatever state they were currently in religiously and morally, **THEY WERE LOST**! But even in this lost condition, Paul's desire and His prayer to God was that they might be saved! For the most part, these Jews hated and despised Paul and the Gospel he set forth – **ELABORATE**. Shouldn't we have the same desire and often pray to our God for the salvation of our friends, family, and foes?

It's so important that we understand the **BASIS** or **GROUND** of Paul's judgment concerning the lost condition of his natural brethren – "*For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*" The word translated "*bear*" and "*record*" are the same word and it means 'to bear witness, to be a witness, or to bear testimony' or 'to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration'. Paul's testimony concerning his lost brethren was "*that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*" The word translated "*zeal*" means 'excitement of mind or fervour of spirit'. The original word translated "*to knowledge*" means 'precise and correct knowledge, and as used in the NT of the knowledge of things ethical and divine'. There is no questioning these Jews zeal for their god, their believe in a deity, their disgust and hatred for the polytheism and idolatry of the Gentiles, their zeal for the word of God. According to our Lord: "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*"(Matt.23:15) In other words, they **THOUGHT** they were right, and zealously defended what they **THOUGHT** was right. **But here's the thing:** **RELIGIOUS ZEAL** not guided by precise and correct, God-given knowledge is more sinful, more vile, more idolatrous than everything they fought against and resisted. Let me state this **PLAINLY** and **DEFINITELY** – **IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS!** **Matter of fact**, what Paul stated in this verse, as well as the verse that follows gives us the **SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION** of what it is to be **LOST**. And I might add, it has absolutely nothing to do with outward character and conduct, and has **EVERYTHING TO DO** with God-given knowledge – "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*"(Jn.17:3); "*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*"(Jer.31:34); "*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an*

understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”(I Jn.5:20) If you don’t **KNOW GOD** as Him who forgives iniquity and does not remember His people’s sin as both “*a just God and a Savior*”, **YOU DO NOT KNOW GOD**, no matter how new and improved you might appear to yourself and others!

But that brings up a question that demands an answer: Is there any clear indication or evidence by which we can determine one to be **LOST**? The Holy Spirit doesn’t leave us in the dark – “*For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*” If a sinner is “*ignorant of God’s righteousness*”, **THEY ARE LOST!** I find it interesting that a sinner’s state is directly related to **KNOWLEDGE, DIVINE KNOWLEDGE, GOD-GIVEN KNOWLEDGE**. What are they “*ignorant of*”? Personal obedience, morality, sincerity, religious zeal? **THEY HAD ALL THIS IN SPADES!** They were ignorant of but **ONE THING**, the **ONLY THING** of eternal value and worth, they were “*ignorant of God’s righteousness.*” The phrase – “*they being ignorant*” means ‘not to understand or unknown’. **What is not understood or unknown to those who are LOST: “God’s righteousness”?** **Think back to Rom.1:16,17.** God’s righteousness is only found **ONE PLACE**, in the God appointed Substitute, Surety, and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. **Listen to David** – “*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed* [each other].”(Ps.85:10); “*The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.*”(Ps.98:2); “*Thy righteousness [is] an everlasting righteousness, and thy law [is] the truth.*”(Ps.119:142) Isaiah stated it this way: “*The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make [it] honourable.*”(Isa.42:21); “*Surely, shall [one] say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: [even] to him shall [men] come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*”(Isa.45:24) “*I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.*”(Isa.46:13) “*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue [that] shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This [is] the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness [is] of me, saith the LORD.*”(Isa.54:17) There’s not enough time for me to give you all the references concerning Christ as God’s righteousness! **Maybe you’re thinking:** “Well, that’s OT!”. Well, let’s consider it in the NT – **II Cor.5:17-21**. Or how about this one: “*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world.*”(I Jn.2:1,2) Every **LOST SINNER** is ignorant of God’s righteousness, the **ONLY RIGHTEOUSNESS** enables God to be both “*Just and Justifier*” of the **UNGODLY!** **John Bunyan stated it about as clearly as you can** – “There is no other way for sinners to be justified from the curse of the law in the sight of God, than by the imputation of that righteousness long ago performed by, and still residing with, the person of Jesus Christ.”

Notice the **evidence or proof** one is “*ignorant of God’s righteousness*” – “*and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*” The word translated “*submitted themselves*” means ‘to arrange under, to subordinate, put in subjection, to subject one’s self, obey’. It is a Greek military term that means ‘to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader’. Those who are **LOST** will not **SUBMIT** or **BE SUBJECT** to “*the Lord OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*”. Ignorance of God’s righteousness always results in men seeking to establish one of their own! Look back at the end of **Romans 9 – ELABORATE.**

But notice how Paul’s concludes these his thoughts concerning his desire and prayer that his brethren after the flesh might be saved – “*For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*” The way Paul begins Vs.4 shows that God’s righteousness can only be found **IN CHRIST**. The original word translated “*the end*” is the same word Christ spoke on the cross – “*IT IS FINISHED*”. It means ‘termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be’. Everything the **LAW** required of God’s chosen people found it’s perfect, complete, eternal satisfaction in Christ Jesus the Lord. This truth brings to my mind Paul’s words back in Rom.8:1-4 – “[There is] *therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” Do you by God-given faith believe this to be true, that the very “*righteousness of God*” is imputed or charged to you, and that Christ bore all your sins in His body on the tree, and by His stripes you are healed? **Listen to John Bunyan’s words** - “It was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, my **righteousness was Jesus Christ himself.**” The declaration of **THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS** is what Paul saw as essential if his brethren were to be saved, and those “*born of God*” in every generation believe the same to be true – **SOMEBODY** has to tell my friends, my family, and even my enemies about **THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

This should be the focus and passion of our remaining time in this “present, evil world”!