

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

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Reminder: Back to School sales are great places to stock up on stuff for shoe boxes.

Reminder Summer Schedule

**Wednesday August 18, no afternoon Bible Study,
6:30pm Gordon Wright speaking**

**Wednesday August 25, no afternoon Bible study
Church outing and Baptism starts at 4pm, come when you can.**

**Church will provide drinks, hot dogs and hamburgers. Bring chips,
salads, desserts. More details to follow.**

Wednesday September 1, rain date for Church outing, if needed

August memory verse, Romans 3:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ As it is written: *"There is none righteous, no, not one;*

¹¹ *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

Paul has just told the Jews that having the law does not justify a person. It is the keeping of the law that justifies one. That uncircumcision really has no value in just the ritual itself. Circumcision has no value; it is the circumcision of the heart, spiritual circumcision that God really counts.

Therefore, if a person is really walking after the Spirit, though he may not have had the physical rite of circumcision, still God counts what is in his heart. If circumcision doesn't really do anything for me, if having the law doesn't do anything for me as far as giving me a righteous standing before God, then the question would naturally arise, and Paul brings it up in chapter 3, verse 1.

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

What advantage then doth the Jew have? ([Rom 3:1](#))

Being a Jew, what advantage is it? If circumcision doesn't make me righteous, if the law doesn't make me righteous, then what advantage is there in being a Jew? Paul said,

Much and in every way ([Rom 3:2](#)):

Though Paul said, "Much and in every way," he only gives us one advantage here in the text. This one advantage that Paul names, firstly, or the most important advantage. The word *first* is there used as often in the New Testament to express the first or most important way. That a Jew has an advantage is unto them were committed the oracles of God. For the Word of God was committed unto them. Now that is a tremendous advantage, the advantage of having the Word of God, and never underestimate the value and the advantage of having the Word of God.

God committed unto them His word, and in so doing, they kept the Word of God with great care and with great accuracy, thus, we owe a tremendous debt to them for the way they have preserved so carefully the Word of God and brought it to us as God gave it to them, as pure from error as is any human document or as any human document could be.

When a person was hired as a scribe to copy the scriptures, this, of course, was considered a great honor. It was a sacred trust. They held the Word of God very sacred, and rather than copying the text by words or by sentences, they would copy letter by letter and one would copy, and the other one would check his copy.

In the copying of the scriptures they would not allow any erasers, any strike overs, or any changes. If a mistake was made they had to begin all over again. Now that is not talking about a page, that is talking about a scroll. The entire book of Isaiah was written on a scroll. And if on the end, on the last chapter of Isaiah, if on the last words they made a mistake, they would rip up the scroll and months of labor tossed out for they would not allow for any mistakes at all.

That is why when the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered it was such an exciting thing to Bible scholars, because among the scrolls that were found in the Qumran cave was the scroll of Isaiah, which was 600 years older than any complete copy of Isaiah we have. There was an intense interest in comparing those copies of Isaiah with the Dead Sea scroll, because now you are making a leap of 600 years earlier, closer to the time of Isaiah.

Of course, the fascinating thing was that there was not one significant change in the text.

unto them were committed the oracles of God ([Rom 3:2](#)).

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

They kept those oracles faithfully, recorded them faithfully and passed them on to us. They had such a high reverence for the name of God, that whenever they wrote the word *God*, the *Elohim*, or the *El*, they would wash their pens, wash their hands, and then dip the pen in fresh ink to write the word *Elohim*, so did they reverence the title of God. But when they wrote the consonants that represented the name of God in writing, the consonants, before they would write them, they would go in and take a bath, change their clothes, and then take a pen, dip it in fresh ink, and write the consonants, YHVH, those consonants that represented the name of God.

There was no vowels written on these consonants because they did not feel that a man even in his mind was worthy of pronouncing the holy name of God. So they took the copying of scripture as a sacred trust. They realized the advantage that was theirs in having the Word of God given to them. Unto them was given the oracles of God. They were committed to them.

Now, what if some of them do not believe? ([Rom 3:3](#))

For they did not all believe. They were apostate, many of them.

shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? ([Rom 3:3](#))

If man is unfaithful, does that mean that God is then unfaithful or the faithfulness of God without effect?

God forbid ([Rom 3:4](#)):

Though some of them did not believe, God will still be faithful to them as a people.

let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, That you might be justified when you speak, and might overcome when you are judged ([Rom 3:4](#)).

He is quoting the fifty-first Psalm, where David is confessing his sin with Bathsheba before the Lord. He is crying out for mercy, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions, for against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this great iniquity in thy sight, that thy might be justified when you speak. And righteous when you judge." So he is quoting here that fifty-first Psalm of David, declaring that God when He speaks is right, He is justified in speaking. He is righteous in His judgment.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who takes vengeance? [He said,] (I am speaking as a man) ([Rom 3:5](#))

Now he is using some of the super silliest kind of arguments that man sometimes takes a truth of God, and then they began to postulate on that truth, they begin to give hypothetical cases or they begin to try to reason out with the human intellect. This is the particular argument that Paul is saying. Here I am. God declares that all men are

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

sinners and that the grace of God abounds to sinners, and God loves to show His grace in the forgiveness of sinful man. Therefore, by my going out and sinning, I am giving God an opportunity to show His righteousness through faith and His glorious grace. So my unrighteousness really is magnifying the righteousness of God, therefore, why would God judge me for being unrighteous? I am just showing how good He is when He forgives. And Paul says,

God forbid: how then can God judge the world? [And then another person says,] Well, the truth of God has really abounded more through my lie ([Rom 3:6-7](#))

If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why does God judge me as a sinner? ([Rom 3:7](#))

I was lying, but it was for God's glory that I was lying. Some people were saying about Paul, they said Paul is saying,

(I was slanderously reported, as saying,) Let us do evil, that good might come out of it. [Paul said,] whose damnation is just ([Rom 3:8](#)).

If I were God I would have put them away a long time ago. He is patient, so patient to my consternation.

How the world can be thankful I am not God. Man, a person cuts in front of me on the freeway, zap. I appreciate God's patience towards me. I appreciate that He is long-suffering towards me. I don't necessarily appreciate His patience towards you. I need it, I want it, oh God, help me. God help me.

But this rationale that people can get caught up in, like we are sort of a special class. God has special toleration for us, because look what we are doing for God. Look at all of this glorious fruit for the kingdom of God, but therefore, God has special toleration for me. Wrong. God will judge.

Paul then asked the question,

are we then better than they? ([Rom 3:9](#))

That is, the Jew better than the Gentile?

No, in no wise: for we have already proved that both the Jews and Gentiles are all under sin ([Rom 3:9](#));

So it doesn't make any difference, we all are under sin. So you are no better off being a Jew or Gentile as far as this is concerned; we are all sinners.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there are none that understands, there is none that seeks after God ([Rom 3:10-11](#)).

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

Now this is an amazing statement Paul is quoting from the Psalms, but this is an amazing statement that God has declared. He said, "There is none who are seeking after God." So often we hear people say, "Well, all religions lead to God. After all, if a person is sincere won't God accept his sincerity? Look at the ways these people are seeking after God. You know, they cut themselves they afflict themselves. They spend these hours in meditation, surely God will accept them, because they are seeking after God." The scripture says they are not seeking after God. If they are not seeking after God, then what are they seeking after?

The motivation behind most of this, as they will tell you, is that they are seeking after a peace of mind. Those who get into that meditation bit, they testify of that peace of mind, that tranquility that they come to, and that is what they are seeking is a tranquility of mind. They are not really seeking God, but seeking their own tranquility seeking their own peace.

They are all of them gone out of the way ([Rom 3:12](#)),

That is, the way of God.

they are together become unprofitable; there is none that is doing good, no, not one ([Rom 3:12](#)).

Now he goes on to quote many more scriptures. From the Psalms,

Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes ([Rom 3:13-18](#)).

Now this is God's indictment, God is speaking through the psalmist and declaring the condition of man apart from God.

Now we know that what things soever 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. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin ([Rom 3:19-20](#)).

Here is one basic mistake that man has made concerning the law of God. God never gave the law to make a person righteous by obeying the law, that was never the intention of the law. For the law cannot make a person righteous. Even if you kept the law, which you haven't, by the law is the knowledge of sin. That was the purpose of the law: to make the whole world guilty before God, or make the whole world cognizant of their guilt before God. That is why God gave the law.

There are so many who seek to sort of promote and exalt their own righteous works, their own goodness, and there are many people who are daring to come before God on

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

the basis I am a good person or I am a moral person. It is interesting to me today that the Jewish people, for the most part, are seeking an acceptance by God on the basis of their good works.

The law was not given to make one righteous, for if righteousness could come by the law, any law, if God could give us rules tonight to make us righteous, then Christ did not need to die. In fact, His death was in vain. So the law spoke to those who were under the law to stop every mouth. That is, to stop every mouth from boasting in their own righteousness. By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in God's sight, for by the law is only the knowledge of sin. It just shows me where I have failed. Now this is to have a proper understanding of the law, which the Pharisees did not have in the days of Jesus.

They were so misinterpreting the law and using it for the wrong purposes entirely. They were using the law to sort of fortify their feeling of self-righteousness, and Paul talks about his experience as a Pharisee and that righteousness that he had through the law. He said, "Concerning the law, I was blameless. I had it made as a Pharisee," as far as the righteousness that they sought to achieve through the keeping of the law. But he said, "Those things that were for gain for me I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffer the loss of all things, that I may know Him and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness now which is of Christ through faith" ([Philippians 3:7-9](#)).

Jesus said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you are not going to enter the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 5:20](#)). Now, for any of you who want to be righteous on your own work, by your own efforts, that ought to discourage you once and forever, because no one was more diligent in their endeavor to keep the law than were the scribes and Pharisees. Unless your righteousness exceeds them you are not going to make it in.

Then Jesus gave the five illustrations that showed the fallacy of their understanding of the law. For in each of the illustrations He was showing that they were interpreting the law in a physical sense, but the law was intended in a spiritual sense. "You have heard that it was said in the law, 'Thou shall not kill;' and whosoever kills is in danger of the judgment, but I say unto you, whosoever hates his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment" ([Matthew 5:21-22](#).) "You have heard that it hath been said, 'Thy shall not commit adultery,' but I say unto you, whosoever looks on a woman and lust after her in his heart has violated that command" ([Matthew 5:27-28](#).)

So realizing that the law is spiritual then I realize, though I may have kept the law outwardly, I have violated the law spiritually, thus I am guilty before God and that is the purpose of the law--to make you know that you are guilty before God so that you will seek now a new righteousness.

For the law was a schoolmaster to teach us and to drive us to Jesus Christ. To make us despair of our own selves, to make us try to make us quit trying in our own flesh. To

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

attain a righteous standing before God. That was the purpose of the law, just to make you despair of your own flesh once and forever, so that you would seek the righteousness that God has provided through faith in Jesus Christ. Now if you twist the law, and you use it as an instrument to make you feel very righteous, and you have this sense, "Well, I have kept the law. I am living an honest life. I do my best. I try to be good and all, and I don't live like those heathens out there," then you have misunderstood the intent of the law completely and you are missing the righteousness of God.

As Paul was pointing out that the Jew, because he didn't follow God's righteousness, did not attain righteousness. However, the poor Gentile who just knew how desperately lost he was discovered the righteousness of God. So by the law no flesh is going to be justified, by the law is the knowledge of sin. But because the law has brought me the knowledge of sin,

Now the righteousness of God without the law is made manifest, it is witnessed to both in the law and in the prophets ([Rom 3:21](#));

This righteousness which is by faith, God said to the prophet of Hosea, "The just shall live by faith." God said to Abraham, "He believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." This righteousness that God has now given to us apart from the law is revealed.

Even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all of them that believe; for there is no difference: for all of us have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; But all of us can be justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ([Rom 3:22-24](#)):

Tonight if you are aware of your inability to live a righteous life, you have struggled, you have cried out, you have done everything to live the righteous life, but you realize you can't, you are in good shape. You are a good candidate now for that righteousness that God has revealed through the faith of Jesus Christ. Having come to a despairing in myself and of myself, I am brought to Jesus Christ and now this relationship with God through Him.

Through the redemption that God has provided in Christ Jesus,

For God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through the faith in his blood, to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, when he justifies him who believe in Jesus Christ ([Rom 3:25-26](#)).

God is faced with a problem. God created man that He might have fellowship with man, that was God's intent. Creating a creature with God-like capacities. A creature in His image that would be a self-governing creature as God is self-governing. The capacity to love as God loves, the capacity to know that infinity exists. That he might come into fellowship a loving relationship with that infinite God.

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

One thing was necessary and that was that this creation use that choice to express his love for God through obedience through faith. Therefore, there had to be an alternate choice, which in this case was the tree in the midst of the garden acknowledging good and evil, so that man could exercise choice. Then God declared, "Of all of the trees that are in the garden you may freely eat except the tree in the middle. For in the day that you eat of that tree you will die. You will lose your relationship with God. For the effect of sin in a person's life is always broken relationship with God. "God's hand is not short that He can not save, His ear is not heavy that He can not hear, your sins have separated you from God" ([Isaiah 59:1-2](#)). So when man sinned, he put himself out of fellowship with God. That relationship with God was broken, thus the purposes of God were thwarted.

Now God still desired fellowship with man, but as long as sin was there man could not fellowship with God. Something had to be done with man's sin, or else there is no fellowship. Therefore, in order that God might renew fellowship with man, during the old covenant with the Jewish nation, He established a method by which you could take the guilt of your sin and transfer it onto an animal by faith. Bring your ox to the priest, lay your hands on its head and confess on the head of that ox all of your sins. Then the priest would kill the ox and offer it unto God as a sin offering, whereby your sins could be covered by faith, because the ox had died in your place. The death that you deserved because of your sins, because the soul that sins shall surely die. So that was the righteous basis by which God could restore fellowship with man in the Old Testament. As a man would bring the substitute and let it die in his place and then fellowship with God could be restored until man sinned again. If that were still true today and we had sacrifices here and you had to come and bring your animal for a sacrifice and your sins could be forgiven and you could sit here for a little while just fellowshiping with God and enjoy the blessing of God's presence and all in your life, it probably wouldn't last too long. Just driving from here to the freeway, just getting out of the parking lot you might blow it. Thus, you would have to, before you could fellowship with God again, bring another sacrifice and get things all cleaned up once more. These sacrifices were all done in faith, because they were looking forward to the sacrifice that God was going to provide for man's sins.

There is that beautiful story of Abraham when God said unto him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain that I will show you" ([Genesis 22:2](#)). Put that alongside of [John 3:16](#), "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac and offer as a sacrifice on the mountain in which I will show you." So Abraham took his servants and his son Isaac, and they began to journey toward this mount from Hebron. "And after three days they came to the mount and Abraham said to his servant, 'You stay here and I and the lad will go and worship and will come again.'" As Isaac and his father were walking towards Mount Moriah Isaac said, "Dad, here is the wood for the sacrifice and the fire, but where is the sacrifice?" Abraham said, "Son, the Lord will provide *Himself* a sacrifice."

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

So they came to the mount and Abraham began to put Isaac upon the altar, raised the knife, and God said, "Abraham, that is far enough. We've got the picture. Behold, the ram is caught by its horns there in the thicket, take it and offer it as a sacrifice." Abraham called the place Jehovah-Jirah, the Lord will provide or the Lord sees, and then he said, "For in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Mount Moriah, where Abraham said God will provide Himself a sacrifice so that all of those sacrifices that later were instituted in the law of Moses all looked forward to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Abraham when God would provide Himself a sacrifice. And 2000 years later on Mount Moriah God provided Himself a sacrifice, for it was on the top of Mount Moriah that Jesus was crucified.

God declared His righteousness toward us, and God is righteous when He justifies us, for Jesus took our sins upon Himself. And thus, the judgment of God, righteous judgment of God for sin and death, spiritual death has been fulfilled. So that God is now righteous when He justifies me. There is a righteous basis, for if someone else has stepped in and died in my place. That's the whole gospel that deals with God being just when He justifies the ungodly.

God has justified me; He has declared me righteous before Him through my faith in the blood of Jesus Christ through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Thus, I have received the remission of my sins which are past. So God has shown His righteousness as He is just when He justifies those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Where does that put boasting then? It is excluded ([Rom 3:27](#)).

You see, I can't boast tonight of all of the good that I have done. Of all of the sacrifices that I have made, of the great difficulties of getting those seven golden apples guarded by the multi headed dragon that I bravely faced and killed with my sword after a terrible struggle.

Boasting is excluded, because I am declared righteous by my faith in Jesus Christ, and if there is any boasting to be done it has to be done in Jesus. As Paul said, "God forbid that I should boast save in the cross of Jesus Christ." All my boasting has to be in what Jesus has done for me, not what I have done for Him. Now it is unfortunate that so often in church the emphasis is on what man should be doing for God. And God help me, He has forgiven me for years I was placing the church under deep guilt trips as I was telling them their failure because they ought to be doing more for God. You ought to be sacrificing more, or you ought to be giving more, you ought to be doing more, you ought to be praying more, you ought to be anything more. And I was emphasizing the work that man should be doing for God. Even helping them, outlining works, giving them little charts to put their stars on, do be a do be and don't be a... you know, the do be's. God help us. Because the New Testament points us not to what we have done or can do for God, but it points us to what God has done for us.

Therefore, I cannot boast in my works or in my goodness. And when you get to heaven, it isn't going to be a big bragging session and we all get around and tell of all the

Commentary on Romans Chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 8.1.21

marvelous things we did for God on the earth. Though, when we get to heaven we will just be that glorious, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. Sin hath left its crimson stain, but He washed me white as snow." And through the ages to come we will be rejoicing in the grace of God through Jesus Christ, whereby I have access to the Father--fellowship with God. Where is boasting then? It is excluded.

By what law? By the law of works? No ([Rom 3:27](#));

No, no. If I can be righteous by works then boasting would be in vogue. But it is excluded,

because of the law of faith ([Rom 3:27](#)).

How can I boast in the faith that God has given to me?

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds [or the works] of the law ([Rom 3:28](#)).

That is the conclusion.

For is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of the heathen? Yes, of the heathen also: Now seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? No, God forbid: we are establishing the law ([Rom 3:29-31](#)).

In other words, we are establishing the law for the purpose that the law was given. It forces me to take God's alternate. The law shows me that I can't be having a standing before Him through my own efforts, and so I've established the law for the purpose which God gave the law by declaring that the law cannot justify me or make me righteous, but the law can only bring me to despair of myself so that I take God's alternate plan of faith in Jesus Christ.