



Then and Now – Righteousness
Sermon Discussion Questions – May 8, 2022

Scripture Passages:

Genesis 3:21 (NLT) ²¹ And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

Romans 3:10–12 (NIV84) ¹⁰ As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Romans 3:21–24 (NIV84) ²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference. ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Luke 15:11–24 (NIV84) ¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

Romans 3:25–26 (NLT) ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT) ⁹ “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?

Ezekiel 36:25–26 (NLT) ²⁵ “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.

Warm Up

This week is Mother’s Day. In honor of moms, what are some of your favorite funny memories of your mom or a mother figure in your life?

Discussion

- 1) This week’s message deals with the righteousness of God.
What comes to mind when you think about righteousness? How might you explain the definition of righteousness to a child?
- 2) Excerpt from Pastor Tom’s message: Righteousness means God’s motives and actions are always pure.
How might knowing this definition impact the way you see and relate to God? How might this impact the way you think about sin?
- 3) Read Romans 3:10-12.
What can we learn about people from this passage?
- 4) Now read Romans 3:21-24.
How does this passage build on the verses we just read? What do we learn about righteousness from these verses? How might someone become righteous?
- 5) Excerpt from Tom’s message:

Nobody makes the grade, everybody gets cut. In any comparison to God, we are all less than. The reason you feel guilty is because you are guilty!

What are some of your reactions to this statement? How does it impact your view of your own righteousness when you consider God as the standard?

6) Read Romans 3:25-26.

According to these verses, how are we made righteous? How might understanding the truth of these verses change the way you live week in and week out? How might it impact the way you relate to people who may be viewed as unrighteous?

7) Excerpt from Tom's message:

He also makes it possible for us to live in his righteousness. God did this at the cross. He is just and justifier. Jesus paid the price and he took on our filthy robe and gave us his pure as the driven snow, robe of righteousness.

Take a few minutes to think about these statements. How does it impact you to consider Jesus' actions? How have you seen God trade your "filthy robe" for a "robe of righteousness?" How did that experience impact your life?

8) Toward the end of his message, Pastor Tom shared the story of GK Chesterton's answer to the question what is wrong with the world. Here is Chesterton's response:

You ask what is wrong with the world.

I am.

Yours sincerely,

G.K. Chesterton.

Why do you think this response had so much of an impact? What are some of your reactions to this statement?

Next Steps:

If you haven't taken Jesus up on this, I don't know what you are waiting on. If you insist on your own merit, proving your own worthiness, your own self-righteousness, that is a bad plan. We all stand before our creator one day. All your unrighteousness will be paid for with the blood of Jesus or with yours. Your self-righteousness will not save you but the righteousness of Jesus can save you.

Something had to die. And he did. So we can make white as snow. Jesus died so that you could be clothed in his righteousness alone.

If you have already decided to follow Jesus, take some time to share what it was like for you to choose to trust in him to save you. If you have never decided to trust Christ to make you righteous, take some time to talk with someone in your group on what that might look like.