

How Men May Become Right with God 2 of 2

Sermon #1015

Study by W.D. Frazee—February 4, 1967

God loves to hear that prayer and to speak with us through His word. Let us turn to Romans the 3rd chapter, where we shall read beginning with the 19th verse. As we continue this study from last vesper service, of how men may become right with God. Accepted, justified, counted as if we had always been good. That is the good news, isn't it friends? The wonderful good news. So we hear God's word.

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" Romans 3:19.

How many in the world are guilty? All the world. Are you and I guilty? Yes, all the world is guilty. And what is it that tells us we are guilty? The law tells us we are guilty, because sin is the transgression of the law. And looking at those holy precepts, we see how far our feet have wandered from the path of right. So we are all guilty.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" Romans 3:20.

What does "therefore" mean? Because of what has just been said, for this reason. What is it that He has just told us? We are all what? Guilty before God. And for this reason, we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law. Certainly a man who has broken a law has no way of looking the law in the face and saying, "I am all right." The only honest thing he can say is, "I am guilty, I deserve the penalty", is that right? So we cannot be justified, we cannot be made righteous, we cannot be accounted right by what we have done, for what we have done is wrong, it is law breaking. But now, I am glad for those two words.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" Romans 3:21.

We will stop on that a minute, before we go any further. Here is a righteousness that is apart from law, and yet it is witnessed by what? By the law. Therefore it must be in agreement with what? The law. That's right. The law, shall I say, is very impersonal. The law simply measures men, weighs them, if they measure up, the law says "ok." If they don't, then the law cannot pass them. There is no favoritism, there is no partiality. And so here is a righteousness that is

witnessed to by the law, as being in harmony with the law. And yet this says, it is apart from the law. That is, apart from the deeds of the law, done by human beings. What is this? The next verse.

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” Romans 3:22-24.

Now let us look at this. What is this righteousness that can come apart from any deeds of ours? Why, this is what the thief on the cross got. There at the 11th hour, when he was about to die. Did he deserve to die? Oh yes, he did. He said, “we” talking to the other thief that was suffering with him, “we indeed received the due reward of our deeds. We are getting what is coming to us, we have been thieves and murders, and here we hang suffering for our crimes. But here, this man hath done nothing amiss.” Who was that man? Jesus. And so he threw himself for mercy on that Savior hanging there on the cross. The dying sinner, cast himself upon the dying Savior. Did he get help? Yes. Jesus forgave him, He pardoned him, He saved him, he will be in heaven, Jesus said he would. What kind of righteousness did he get, my friends? A righteousness that was done by his hands? Why no, they were nailed. The things they had done were not righteous, he had stolen, he had murdered. His hands, his feet, had been used on errands of crime. But he is going to be in heaven, what happened? Ah a wonderful change took place. His sins were laid on Christ and the righteousness of Christ was imputed to him. He was counted as righteous, while Jesus suffered for his sins. Isn’t that a wonderful transfer friends?

You and I, if we are ever saved, will be saved in exactly the same way. For there is no other way, and that is what Paul is arguing here. That the whole world is guilty before God and that the only way any man Jew or Gentile can be saved, is to lay down his attempt by human works to appease God, and accept by faith the free gift of righteousness through Jesus.

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” Romans 3:22.

What was it that the thief did that enabled him to share in that righteousness? Ah friends, he believed. He believed enough to cry from that cross, “Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” And Jesus heard him, and Jesus responded, thank God, to that appeal. He always does, friends, He says.

“...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” John 6:37.

Nobody ever sought Him in vain, nobody ever appealed to Him and was turned away. He is always listening. And think of it, there in His agony there on the cross, with the sins of the world pressing down upon Him, and with all those cries of ridicule and scorn and blasphemy, coming up from the multitude around the cross.

Yet the ear of Jesus was tuned to that cry of that needy soul. Oh friends, does your heart cry out to God tonight? Would you like to get what that thief got? Forgiveness, deliverance, pardon, salvation, listen. Right now, where you are, say to God, what that thief said, "Lord, remember me." Say what that poor publican in the temple said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Ah you see friends, this righteousness is a gift, it is a gift. And we don't work to get a gift, it is wages when we work for it. We ask to get a gift, that is what the thief did and he got it. That is what the publican did and he got it.

A number of years ago we were in New Orleans holding meetings, giving this message. One evening I got a call, asking me to come down to the great charity hospital there in New Orleans, to see a sick man. And as I went up to that great building, it has several thousand patients, as I remember. The thought came to me, as I passed through those great doors. "How rich does a man have to be to get inside this hospital"? Why the truth of the matter is friends, the richer a man is, the less chance he has of getting in there. There are other hospitals for the people with money. And if a man should go up to the administrator of that hospital and say, "see here, I want to come in here, I can pay my way, I have got what it takes." Do you know what they would say to him? They would say, "friend, you will have to go someplace else. This is the charity hospital." "Oh, but I don't want to take charity." "Very well then, you go somewhere else."

And my dear friends, when people come to this dear Savior, that hangs there upon the cross dying, and seek to pay their way, to buy their way, to work their way, they don't understand the Gospel at all. This is the charity hospital, and the poorer you are, the better chance you have to get in. The weaker you are, the more help Jesus has for you.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight..." Romans 3:20.

Because the law points out sin, and shows that we have broken it. But now the righteousness of God, without the law, has been manifested in Christ. Jesus kept the law and now He offers that righteousness to us, if we will accept it.

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" Romans 3:22-23.

This was a hard saying for the Jews back there, they thought they had an inside track on the favor of God, because they were Abraham's children. Paul is telling them, there is no difference. Jesus said the same thing to Nicodemus, that great religious leader, when he looked into his face and said, "Nicodemus, unless you are born again you won't see the kingdom of God." Oh friends, there is just one way to heaven. The best man in this world and the worst man will get in the same gate, and go through the same way. We get in through the merits of Jesus, through the precious blood that was shed, because as this says, "there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Let me illustrate it this way. Suppose that thief on one side of Jesus, had killed one man, suppose the thief on the other side, had killed ten men. Are they both guilty? Do they both deserve to die? And how foolish it would be for the man who had only killed one, to say, "well really, you ought to let me off without any punishment, because look what he did." "Look what he did." This says there is no difference, for all have sinned. And when we come to the cross, and see that for even one sin, Jesus would have had to die, to pay the debt, there is no sin that looks small, friends. There is no sin that looks little, there is no sin that looks trivial, there is no sin that looks excusable. Sin is sin, deadly sin. Guilty sins. Oh let's thank God, that there is a way to get rid of it all, what do you say? And so instead of spending our time, whitewashing ourselves, we need to press to the fountain, where all our sins can be washed away. We can receive this free gift of righteousness, what the thief got, what the publican got, what Nicodemus finally got, that same day.

You know, I like to think about it, that Friday afternoon as Jesus died, He had His twin trophies, one of the best men in Israel, and one of the worst. Nicodemus was probably a good a man as far as human beings go, that ever lived in Jerusalem, but he had to come that day and kneel at Calvary's cross, he had to come to that dying Lamb lifted up on the tree, as Moses had lifted the serpent in the wilderness. And there, Nicodemus found salvation, one of the best men in Jerusalem. But that same day, this thief of which we have just spoken, one of the worst, he found salvation in the same way. And where are you and I? Probably somewhere in between. We may not feel that we have done all that the thief did, I doubt if very many of us would claim to be as good as Nicodemus was, if we knew his record. The point is friends, Paul says, there is no difference. There is no difference. Let us not then seek to commend ourselves or recommend ourselves, by showing how good we are or how good our deeds have been. All our righteousness are as what? Filthy rags. That is what the Bible says in Isaiah 65:6. There is no difference, we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption
that is in Christ Jesus" Romans 3:24

You know that word "redemption" means "bought back." Every now and then we hear of somebody that is kidnaped and held for ransom. Usually some wealthy man child's, they don't bother us poor folks with that, do they? No. But here is a wealthy man's son, held for a hundred thousand dollars ransom. That father and mother, believe me dear friends, they get that money together, don't they? They do, and they seek through any avenue, legal or illegal, straight or around, they seek to get that money to the men who are holding their child and get that child back, is that right? That is redemption money. Now you and I have been captured by the great kidnapper. Did you ever try to get loose? Have you ever wished you could get loose from some enslaving habit? From some load of guilt, from your own nature, which holds you down and holds you back. The kidnapper scoffed at you and laughed at you. And he says, "you are not going to get loose, you are not going to get loose." But oh friends, the good news is, the ransom price has been paid. Don't misunderstand me, I don't mean it has been paid to the enemy. Our human illustration falls far short of the reality. All I am getting at friends, is that we have been held captive, and there is a way to be free. Not by our human works or human

effort, but by accepting the ransom that has been paid through Jesus our Lord. Why not accept it and go free, what do you say?

The good news is, it is done, it is accomplished. That is what Jesus meant when He hung there on the cross, that Friday afternoon, and said just before He died, "It is finished." Thank God, the plan of salvation was made eternally sure and secure and certain. Your salvation and mine was made possible, beyond any possibility of doubt or uncertainty. If we choose to remain in our chains, if we choose to abide in our slavery, even God cannot change that. That is why He is sending His messengers to the world with the good news of liberty. To proclaim deliverance to the captives, to announce this righteousness which is freely offered to men. A free pardon for all the deeds of the past in rebellion against God, and acceptance that guarantees you a place with God, just as if you had never sinned. This is this righteousness freely offered through Jesus Christ. And so in the 28th verse he says.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" Romans 3:28.

Isn't that wonderful? You know, some people when they read that one verse, lift it out of its setting. They conclude that, that means that a man can be saved and keep on breaking the law, all of his life. Now before we look at what Paul says on that, just stop and think about it a minute, friends. Wouldn't that be a strange thing? What kind of salvation would that be anyway? Take that thief there on the cross. Suppose, instead of dying that day, Jesus had made it possible for him to get down off the cross. And suppose he got home and said, "now look here." I hate almost to say this, for it sounds so blasphemous but friends, you will get my point I am sure. Suppose he had gone home and said, "look here, Jesus has saved me, He said He gave me His word, that I would be with Him in paradise. And He saved me, without any good works of mine at all, so what I do, doesn't make any difference, I am just going to go on stealing like I have done all my life." You say, "that is awful." It would be friends. But it is no worse than thousands of people are doing today and saying they are saved. They will sing it, "I am saved, saved, saved" and go right on breaking God's law. Saved from what, may I ask? Why the angel told Joseph, "call his name Jesus for he shall save his people" from what? Their sins. Matthew 1:21.

O friends, I don't want to be saved just from death, I want to be saved from sin, what do you say? The thief got some salvation that day, and while he never had the chance to go back home and prove, demonstrate, manifest, his salvation by a life of holiness. He died, friends, with that life not only upon him but in his heart and don't forget it. And if he had lived on, his life would have been different from what it was before, don't you think so? Ah you know it, that is what salvation is. And so back now to Romans 3, and Paul says in the 28th verse.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" Romans 3:28.

Never think for a minute that he is talking about, that a man is justified and then never does the deeds of the law. Because notice the 31st verse, just three verses down the page.

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” Romans 3:31.

What does it mean to establish something? Oh it means to make it certain, forever, and that is exactly what faith and grace do to the law, my friends. When Jesus died upon the cross, He gave the greatest testimony to God’s law that could ever be given. Because He was dying to save men, rather than set aside the law. If the law could have been set aside, man could have been pardoned without any sacrifice of Jesus. But because it was impossible to change the law, set aside the law, Jesus offered His life as the ransom price. He died in our place, and now to the thief, and to you and me, He offers that righteousness. But now notice as Paul says, that is not to annul the law, that is not to make void the law, that is not to set aside the law”, turn over to the eighth chapter of this same book and notice how clear he makes it in verse 3 and 4 of Romans 8. What could the law not do? It couldn’t make me righteous, it couldn’t give me power to obey it.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh...” Romans 8:3.

Ah yes, the law is not weak of itself, but it is weak through the flesh. That is, my flesh is so weak, that the law cannot make me do right. Even the law of God cannot make your weak human flesh do right. Did your flesh ever make trouble for you friends? Did you ever have some appetite, some craving in your body or your mind, that drove you to sin? That is what Paul is talking about. And listen, men and women, you and I know what Paul is talking about. We can read the law, we can memorize the ten commandments, and if that is all we have, we may say, “yes, that law is good, but look at me. I just have to do this, my impulses drive me here, my passions there, my appetite there.”

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh...” Romans 8:3

But now notice, he doesn’t stop there. That very thing which the law could not accomplish in this for human 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...” Romans 8:3.

Thank God. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Good news, brother, the same righteousness that was fulfilled in the life of Jesus, He fulfilled in you. Those feet that went on errands of love, those hands that ministered to the needy. That voice that spoke the love of God, that was a perfect life. But oh friends, that was given not merely as an example, it was given as demonstration of what could be accomplished in your flesh and mine. In your body and mine. How? By accepting Jesus into the life. This is righteousness by faith. In other words, Jesus says, Do you want to be like Me or do you want to be like the Devil? Ah we say, “Lord I would like to be like you, but you know I act like the Devil all too many times.” Jesus says, “Do you really want to be like Me”? “Yes.” “Well, will you give

up that old sinful life of yours”? “Yes, Lord I would like to give it up and be rid of it, but my, it just follows me around like my shadow.” Ah, Jesus says, “if you will consent to surrender, I will take that wicked sinful life of yours, that what I died for, and I will give you My life. I will give you My life and it will be lived in you, so that your hands will do now what My hands did in Nazareth. Your feet will go on the errands that Mine did in Jerusalem and by Galilee. Your voice will speak the words of love that My voice used to speak there 2,000 years ago.” Oh friends, can that be possible? If it isn’t, there is no hope for us, because our flesh is sinful and leads downward. Oh if there is hope like this for us, then we need not make excuses for sin. We can cry to God as the publican did. We can plead with Jesus as the thief did, and He will accept us and save us, as He did those men.

Come friends, let’s let Jesus carry out His promise, what do you say? But now, let me make something very plain. You know I am afraid some people would like to come to the altar and get this thing over with in about five minutes, and then go on back with the things they are really interested in. And suppose that coming to the altar has somehow fixed things with the judge, and they are free to do as they please. Listen, to make possible this righteous life given to us, cost Jesus all He had. He put into it toil, sweat, tears, blood, He gave all He had. Am I right? That is how much it was worth to Him, to make salvation available to you and me. Now He says in that wonderful message to the Laodicians,

“I stand at the door and knock and I want you to buy something. I counsel thee to buy of Me gold and white raiment and eye salve.” I thought it was a gift? Yes, it is, but I want you to buy it. Well how is that? Ah friends, it is this, while we cannot buy it with money or with our human works apart from Him, it is a transfer. And I must lay down all I have, in order to accept all He has. It is the greatest bargain of eternity. And I will tell you why He speaks of it as buying. Our poor human hearts sometimes are so deceived that when Jesus asks us to give up what we have, it looks like a great price, a terrible price. It looks like, friends, that we are just having to give up everything, and we don’t see how we can do it.

That is what Christ was speaking about when He told about that man that was hunting for pearls. He finally found one pearl of great price and he wanted that pearl so much, but when he saw how much it cost, he found out he would have to, “what” to get it? Sell everything he had, but he finally decided he must have that one pearl, so he sold everything.

Now turn over to Luke 14, and I want you to read what Jesus says here. It is just as plain as can be:

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” Luke 14:33.

Oh you say, that looks like pretty stiff terms. Well friends, it is the only way to get it. It isn’t any arbitrary thing on the part of God, there is no place in the same heart for sin and righteousness. Why? Because they are antagonistic. You can’t enjoy both. How in this world are we going to have this room full of light and full of darkness at the same time, will you tell me? Would you turn out those lights for me? Let’s just see it here in a minute, just as simple as can be. There it is. Turn it on

again. Alright. Well, would you like to have light? Somebody says, "well I would like to have light if I could still have the darkness." There are some people that would like to have Jesus, if they could still keep the world. There are some people that would like to have peace, if they could still keep the things that are disturbing their peace. There are people that would like to get rid of lung cancer, if they could still keep the cigarette. There are people that would like to get rid of a coronary attack, if they could go on with the habits of life that have brought on that coronary. Do you see what I mean friends? There are some things that even God can't do. There is no way that God can fill this room with light, and at the same time leave the darkness. And God is so courteous. The Bible says that men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Oh friends do you want to live in the dark or in the light? Do you want the selfishness and the sin, or do you want the love and the light? Let us have the light, turn it on. Thank you. What happened to the dark? Oh it went. And listen, if you ask Jesus for light, be sure you are willing to let the darkness go. And that is what He is talking about when He says, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold and white raiment and eye salve." He is saying to you, "Are you willing to give up sin and take righteousness?" Are you willing to give up your way and take My way? Are you willing to give up death and take life? Are you willing to give up your selfish human ways, and take My loving divine way? Oh I say again, it is the greatest bargain of eternity. Why shouldn't everyone accept it? And remember, don't miss it, it isn't that you "earn" salvation by turning over your sins. It isn't that you deserve pardon because you give up your bad ways. Not a bid of it. The precious blood of Jesus alone can wash away the stain, but that blood avails only for those who are willing to accept the salvation He offers.

Ah friends, I pray that God tonight may do it for every one of us. What do you say? Oh that He may do it for everyone of us. Is there somebody here tonight that needs just what we are studying about tonight and you want it? I would like to see your hands right now. Do you need it, do you want it friends? Oh, God grant it. Well, these next few minutes, lets enter into the experience, lets simply do what we have studied about here tonight. The first thing is to come to Jesus just as we are, and ask Him to take away these sins. Shall we do that friends? Why not do that, right here tonight. You know, I was thinking about it. This is the last vesper service in this room. Next Friday night we will be down in the new chapel. You know Brother Felt, I was thinking about that time the disciples spent in the upper room before Pentecost. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could carry down to this new place and this new meeting in these new opportunities, an experience with God, such as those men got? But do you know where they got it? They got it in that upper room. And it was the same room, precisely the same room where they had gone through some things that weren't so pretty. It was the room where they had refused to wash anybody's feet. Jesus had to finally do it for them. Remember that? Yes. But thank God friends, there were some things that they left at last in that upper room. They left that spirit of criticism and fault finding, and striving for the highest place. They left a lot of things and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all of one accord in one place.

Many a time we have met in this place where we worship God tonight. Many a time He has met with us. Friends, I long for one last great blessing here tonight,

that shall flood our souls with the Spirit of God. And I know that if we are willing to give up the darkness, He will give the light. If we are willing to give up our sins He will give us the righteousness. If we are willing to give up ourselves He will give us Himself. There is no question about it, there is no question about it.

May we stand? [Elder Frazee starts singing "Wholly Thine"]

When we close this meeting in just a little while, and I want to say this now, to be sure everyone gets this message. When we close this meeting in just a little while, if you know that your sins are pardoned, not because of any good you have done but because you have accepted Jesus as your Savior. And you know He has forgiven you because He says so and He keeps His word. Then you can go down these steps in peace and joy tonight, for your hand is in His and your hope is anchored in heaven. If that isn't your experience, if you are not sure it is your experience, then I invite you to tarry here. Oh friends, I would be glad to stay with someone here till midnight, if it took that long, to find the way through for that soul. Don't misunderstand me, I don't mean that it needs to take that long, but I have seen some people that would take that long. It isn't a matter of how long it takes, it is a matter of how long you take. But my point is, how ever much time is taken up in the matter, get the help. Oh don't leave this place tonight without knowing that your sins are pardoned, and that you are under the precious blood of Jesus. I could speak about the uncertainty of life, I could speak about the dangers on the highway, I could speak about a good many things in that connection. But my friends, there is something far more weighty than that and that is this. Do you know what it is? Jesus loves you, and every day you stay away from Him or every day you walk at a long distance from Him, it grieves His heart. Why prolong that misery? Why continue that separation? Why miss bringing joy to His heart by being fully in gear with Him? And listen, if you have a problem, don't try to get the problem solved and then come to Jesus. That would be like a man promising himself that as soon as he got over his sickness he was going to go see the doctor. Wouldn't that be foolish? Come my friend just as you are. The weaker you are the more problems you have, the more you need Jesus and need Him tonight.

So I beseech you, do not go through that door unless you go knowing that your hand is in the hand of Jesus. But He will not force you and I won't. I cannot take you and hold you by force, it wouldn't do any good if I could. Jesus Himself although He has all power, He will not stop you in your tracks and make you give up the thing that holds back the blessing. Oh no. He pleads, He invites, He wants you, He loves you. But what is this message? "Behold I stand at the door and knock if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in"

Who opens the door? You do. Who comes in? He does. When does He come in? When you open the door.

[Elder Frazee sings "you must open the door"]

In this closing moment, I would like to invite those who have tonight, made a decision, either for the first time or the hundredth time, as God has spoken to your soul, and you know you came in this room tonight, without your hand fully in the hand of Jesus. But tonight you are making that full surrender. I invite you right now,

just step up here, we want to pray for you as we close this service. Somebody that tonight is settling this thing. Somebody that God has spoken to, that there is something needs to come out of your life, some full surrender to Jesus. Ah friend, is there another, that says "yes." Jesus is knocking at my door. Jesus is knocking at my door. I am opening the door. But I can open the door and I'll do that, I can say, "Jesus, come in." I can, I will. I can, I will. I do, I surrender. I give up. Just press right up folks.

Heavenly Father. We feel very thankful tonight that the way of salvation is so simple so clear and so plain. We are glad Lord that there is a way for the worst sinner to get in. And like Paul, Lord, we feel that we have been in need among the chief. But oh we thank Thee that Jesus died for us, just like He did for that thief that hung there with Him on Calvary. And so tonight we have come to give up ourselves and take Jesus. To give up our sins and take His beautiful life. Just now, work a miracle in each heart. O Lord, here at Thine altar, are those who have come to seal their decision with Thee. And we pray in a special way just now, look down in love upon them and fill their hearts with the Holy Spirit. Take away every hindering thing as they yield it to Thee. Let the darkness flee away, as Jesus the Light takes His place on the Throne of the heart. And Lord, all through this congregation as we rededicate, reconsecrate our lives to Thee, we thank Thee Thou dost accept us. Now Father, dismiss us with Thy blessing, and when we gather next vesper service in the new chapel. We pray that we shall come with the glory of a new anointing upon us, ready to join with Thee in helping others and still others and still others to find this beautiful way. For Jesus sake. Amen.

God bless you one and all. Remember if there is another one that needs help, tarry with us.

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