

January 23, 2012

Romans 1:16

We looked at this verse last week but I would like to take it up again for further examination. This word salvation in the original language covers the entire work of God on behalf of the human soul. Who can comprehend this?

Let's do a little digging; the word for salvation has 3 tenses; past, the believer has been saved from the penalty of sin; in the present, he is being saved from the power of sin; and in the future, he shall be saved from the presence of sin.

Salvation from past sin must result in the present work of salvation in your life, changing sinful thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Salvation in the future should result in the complete triumph of righteousness and eternal life with God. So will you repeat and remember this; I have been saved from the penalty of sin, I am being saved from the power of sin and I will be saved from the presence of sin, I am a work in progress.

So the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation in the past tense. I deserve Hell; Jesus took my hell; there is nothing left but His heaven. Christ paid the penalty for my sin. Since I have been born again, I know that this salvation is my present possession and is something that has been finished forever; I am eternally secure, He said, "No one can pluck me out of His hand". John 10:27-29

What does it mean to be saved from sins power, the present tense of sin? I am being saved from the reign of sin, it does not mean that I will never sin again but it means that there is a provision for me now to say no to sin, I am no longer a slave to sin. There is a difference between "sin" and "sins". Remember the angel said to Joseph "You shall call His Name Jesus because He shall save His people from their sins". Sin is like a fatal blood poison, sins are like a cold, and both must be faced and dealt with. When we are saved the sin is forgiven, the fatal blood poisoning is cured once and for all. Following this there is a day-to-day warfare in connection with our salvation from the power of sin, or the cold, which is not fatal. I hope this is clear, please email me if you want more discussion. It should be obvious by now that the sin, the fatal disease must be cured once and for all before you try to deal with sins or the cold according to our illustration. Any attempt at moral reform is useless until the heart is changed, just like it would be useless to take aspirin for your cold when you are dying of blood poison. A little later in his letter in Romans 6:23 Paul said "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace". Do you see that Jesus is just as able to save you daily from the power of sin and indeed He will keep you from sinning daily as you trust Him, just as He is able to save you from the penalty of sin. As long as we are in our body, we still have the old sin nature, sinless perfection is not possible but we can by God's grace learn daily to say no to our flesh, the world the devil and say yes to Jesus.

You have been given the power to say no to sin by the LORD Jesus Christ and as we go along you will find out more about how to do that. Remember what John told us in Revelation 12:11 "they overcame the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony" Testimony could be translated acknowledgement or declaration.

The gospel is the power of God for our future salvation. If you don't have a hope and a future it would not be very good news would it? Our bodies are degenerating, at least mine is, our powers

decline. I am not depressed about growing old, I have hope and future. Grandchildren are a wonderful reward for the trials of old age.

Now back to our faith lesson, friends it is impossible to be saved without faith. Faith is belief, acting on the word of another, and you do this every day. Spiritually speaking, faith is action on the word of God. God said you are a sinner. You can believe that because you know your own heart and life, but above all because God said it. He also said He came to die for you because He loves you. He told you that He put your sin on Christ and crucified Him in your place. He said that He raised the LORD JESUS from the dead as a sign that by Him all who believe are justified from all things. I have believed that, along with millions of others and at that moment, new life was created in me. Friends, have you believed what God said? I acted on the information God gave me and He produced a supernatural result when I rested completely on His Word. What can I say to these things: Praise His Name forever.

Romans 1:17

We learn here that God's righteousness is something different from man's righteousness; human righteousness is not a lower form of God's righteousness. Perhaps you have thought that if you get a little righteousness you will be OK with God and on your way to heaven. Paul wrote in Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

God demands a righteousness we cannot come up with. And this is fair. If He demanded intelligence, or wealth or a handsome face, many of us would not be able to qualify and that would be unfair. God demands the impossible from us, righteousness, and after He has demonstrated that we cannot meet it, when He gave the 10 Commandments, then He Himself intervened and provided righteousness as a free gift.

When God made the first promise of a Savior it was made by His grace.

Now friends, notice the righteousness of God is not revealed to your 5 senses, it's revealed faith to faith. What does that mean? The righteousness of God comes out of the faith of one heart into the faith of another heart. If you think about that you will realize each man is saved when another communicates his faith. Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit which the world cannot receive John 14:17, so when a man is saved the Holy Spirit comes to live in him and from that one the Holy Spirit works in the life of another. A famous Christian writer said, "God uses the Christian as an advanced outpost against the enemy".

Have you received the righteousness of God through faith in the Savior? If you will admit your hopeless condition God will show you that He is satisfied with the death of Jesus rather than your death. One minute you stand before Him in the nakedness of your sin, on your way to hell, the next you are clothed by Him in a garment of His righteousness and you pass from death into life. The moment I pass out of death into life God looks at me through His beloved Son and sees me in all the holiness of the LORD Jesus Christ. That is the revelation of the righteousness of God in the gospel.

By the way, the word revealed comes from a word meaning "take off a veil". Before Jesus came God's grace was hidden. Now it is unveiled. I thank God He revealed His righteousness to me and I pray if you have not seen it yet you will look at the cross so that the righteousness of God may come upon you and be revealed in you forever.

And so the "just or righteous shall live by faith", not live by works, good deeds, not live by rituals or fear, but by faith, which we have discussed already.

My question is this have you been justified?

Do you have real faith? Are you living by faith?

Now we are all through the introduction, we have heard how the righteousness of God has been revealed and now and we will begin with the hard word, the revelation of the wrath of God. I would prefer to not talk about this but when going through the bible verse by verse it is necessary to attend to what is written.

Romans 1:18-19

This begins the statement of why we need the gospel. We need it because people everywhere are suffering with the wrath of God.

What do you think of when you hear this statement "the wrath of God"? Most of us probably think of something coming in the future, perhaps following death. It's true that judgment and hell are an expression of the wrath of God, but we are talking about something else. The wrath of God is coming but it is also here now. Did you notice it said "being revealed from heaven" so present tense, its here.

Does it disturb you to think about the wrath of God? Remember, God is perfect; He is perfect in His love, perfect in His Holiness and Justice. He loves the sinner, He hates the sin.

There are a number of words in the Greek, which mean wrath one is a hot, vehement surge of anger, the other is slowly rising indignation. The dictionary says it is "that part of God that stands opposed to man's disobedience, especially in resisting the gospel and sin and manifests itself in punishing same".

The wrath is being revealed. It is not news that God hates sin but the coming of Christ to die is the revelation of God's wrath to the ninth degree. Before Christ we see evidences of God's wrath bursting forth in the Old Testament. Men still thought they could do what they wanted; the coming of Christ and His death put away that belief forever. The gospel of Jesus Christ contains the terrible warning that God hates sin and He is going to deal with it in those who refuse the gift of His Son Who He sent to be the propitiation for the sin of mankind. Jesus took the wrath of God for your sin so you do not have to.

Coming from heaven means it is present everywhere, it is coming from forces at work in our lives. Even when we are having times of joy and peace there can be an underlying sense of fear of loss.

The shortness of life, sorrow, sickness, suffering, as well as wickedness of men who suppress the truth, its all part of the wrath of God being revealed from heaven.

The truth about God is all around us and men are busy covering it up, hiding it suppressing it. The bible and the truth about God is not allow to be taught in public school, it's not allow to be mentioned in government building. The laws about the separation of church and state are lies they do not appear in the Constitution and are taken out of context from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson. Yes friends, everywhere men are laboring, especially our government officials, to suppress the existence of God, His greatness and His power. May God have mercy on them.

Now there are times when its obvious God exists; when there are powerful storms, beautiful sunsets, newborn babies, but we call it "nature or Mother Nature", that's a favorite on the Weather Channel.

Romans 1:20

How has God made the truth about Him plain? We have learned that truth is seen in what He has made creation. From the creation it is visible, everywhere. No one is left out, all can see this revelation of God in what He has made. And so men are without excuse. If you want to find God all you have to do is look. Hebrews 11:6 says He that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Ray Stedman said, "Everything is shrieking God's presence you have to work very hard to believe He is not there; only the very intelligent are able to do it. The rest of us, who simply see facts and believe them, will accept the fact that God is there." If men don't find God it is because they do not seek Him.

Psalm 19:1 the heavens are telling the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His Hands".

So the truth is that when you walk out in the woods on a June morning and you see the amazing beauty, color, complexity, the sounds of all the birds singing, you should then ask how did this come to be, who made it. Following up on that question it becomes your responsibility to seek the one who made it and in doing that you will certainly find Him, because He has promised that those who diligently seek Him will find Him.

This will lead to revelation of the gospel and salvation. Just as when you look at a painting you will conclude there was an artist, when you see the creation you should know there is a Creator. Of course, now this truth is being suppressed by the teaching of evolution.

The bible reveals that as we seek God He reveals Himself and eventually that will lead us to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I can testify that this is true because that is exactly how I came to faith in Jesus Christ.

Also we see here that the truth about God is evident in the very people who suppress the truth about Him. In other words, everyone instinctively knows there is a God and this is why people are so religious, I did not say believers, I said religious. People just want to worship something and so instead of seeking God they make idols. Are there any idols in your life? What about success, property, wealth. What about people; spouse, children, grandchildren, entertainment or sports figures. Do you put your hobbies, leisure or career above God?

Another idol can be replacing the truth about God with your own opinions or feelings about Him. That is as much idol worship as any little statue or omen.

Romans 1:20

Notice the bible said His Creation, attributes and eternal power are clearly seen, or they are obvious and unmistakable. This is called general revelation; the clues God gave us to prove His existence, that is all we have just been talking about, creation, the human conscious. All people are accountable for the light they have been given and what they did with it.

Romans 1:21

People denying their own awareness of God is why they are without excuse. People who deny God is Creator will not have a grateful heart for all they have been given, food, shelter or even the gift of life.

Notice what happens when people deny God, say there is no Creator and/ or actively suppress this truth, they are not grateful to God, they believe all they have comes from their own efforts so why thank anyone. Pride takes over from there doesn't it? It's dangerous to forget to thank God because

self-centeredness is the result. That is futile, useless thinking. And what could be more foolish than to believe that you gave yourself all you have and never thank God?

When you forget this, then the foolish heart is darkened. When you forget to go good, you open the door to evil. It may seem like a small thing, to forget to thank God but it's big and it gets bigger as it spirals down in darkness, pride and blindness.

Futile thinking, clever ideas and government programs come to nothing. In my lifetime, and now you know how old I am; there was the NEW DEAL, the Fair Deal, and the New Society, Peace with Honor and Hope and Change. All have failed dismally. After starting with promises and expectation not to mention millions of resources there is nothing.

When hearts get darkened human needs are unnoticed or used for self aggrandizement, there is no pity, there is no compassion and suffering is ignored when hearts are darkened. Just turn on the TV you can see endless examples.

Romans 1:22

This is the inevitable result. It may seem to be the height of sophistication and education to deny God but God has a name for this person, he is a fool. Does this offend you? A person who is a fool is a person who is deceived. If you want to do an interesting bible study sometime look up the word "fool" in the bible and read all that God says about that person. It's easy to do with the Blue Letter Bible link on my website. By biblical definition people who refuse to believe in God and the bible are fools.

Have you heard anyone say "we are all on the road to heaven but we take different ways, it doesn't matter what you believe, just so you believe". You see this makes man the center of it all as if believing was the same as worshiping and thanking God. The one true God has to be the center. Remember Paul was talking to people living in a culture where there were multiple Gods. He was not saying it's nice you have some religion; He is showing the way to the God and Creator of the Universe.