

THE SECRET OF ROMANS 7

Message 2

Words: 3153

INTRO: We are preparing to look at Romans 7. In the first message we introduced our subject by looking at chapters 1-3. It is not new to us, of course, that the Bible teaches that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In the first messages we said that of all of mankind, by far the majority are religious. By religious I mean those who believe there is a Higher Power, some god, small g, or some gods, small g, or God capital G.

Of those who claim to believe the God of the Bible is the one true God, by far the majority base their belief that they will go to heaven on good works, just like all other religions. Of those who teach that salvation is not by works, but by grace through faith, a large number do not understand what salvation by grace through faith is, and many of those in some way base their salvation on good works.

There is no doubt that many Arminians base their salvation on good works. Many believe if they are baptized and a church member that means they are saved. This is true among both liberals and conservative. Many think if they dress a certain way they have strong evidence that they are saved.

I also believe that many Calvinists base their salvation on good works. You see, if they do not live up to their profession that means they were never saved, so they have to continue to live right. Now it is absolutely important that true Christians should live right, but that does not save anyone.

When we get back to the book of Ephesians we will get to where Paul says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Our real battle is demonic. And all false teachings, even among professing Christians, are demonic.

I think the book of Romans could rightly be considered an extended tract on the way of salvation and one of the key issues is the law. And one of the major reasons for the stress on the

law is that one is not saved by keeping the law. And when people learn that one is not saved by keeping the law, from that all kinds of false teachings take off.

When I was first saved that was a big issue in the church and I got caught up with some of that myself. I did not realize back then that though one is not saved by keeping the law, obedience to the moral law is still important. I don't know how I would have answered a question like this: "So, you say we are not saved by keeping the law. "You say one is not saved by keeping the law. Does that mean then that we can now steal and cheat and lie and forget about God and still be saved?"

Well, in the last message we saw that Romans 1-3 shows conclusively that all people, Jews and Gentiles, all are lost. And we saw that to be saved, one must first have all one's past sins taken care of. That is what the doctrine of justification is about. Justification is a legal term. When one is biblically justified, the law says, "You are cleared of all wrongdoing." That is Paul's subject in Romans 4-6. That is what we want to consider now.

B. Romans 4-6

We begin with 4:1-3:

1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Now look at the word "righteousness" at the end of verse 3. The original word is *dikaioounai*.

"Righteousness" is doing that which is right, and the word for right in the original NT is *dikaion*. Now look at the word "justified" in verse 2. The original word here is *dikaion*. So the word for right is *dikaion*. The word for righteousness is *dikaioounai*. The word meaning to justify is *dikaion*. So they all have the same root word. And in verses 1-3 we learn that

Abraham was declared to be righteous by faith, not by actually having done right.

There are two kinds of righteousness. Let us say I am sued for one million dollars. I don't have that much money, so I will be doing time. Then somebody takes pity on me and pays my fine. When my fine is paid, though I didn't pay for it myself, still the law has to declare me to be in right standing with the law. I must be set free because my fine is paid. But I did not pay for it myself.

So it is in the case of a justified sinner. Christ paid his sin. The requirement to put that payment into effect is repentance and faith. Neither of those are meritorious works, so I did not earn anything. But when I do those, I am now declared righteous before God.

There is another kind of righteousness. Let us say I am accused of robbing a bank. My vehicle was seen parked there at about the time the robbery took place. A picture someone took shows someone who looks like me. And enough evidence is given that I am taken in by the police.

But the robbery took place when I was actually preaching. And now a number of witnesses come forward and say that I was preaching at the time the robbery happened. Now the law has to declare me "not guilty" or declare me to be in right standing with the law because I did not rob the bank. I am actually righteous with regard to robbing banks.

Let me just say something briefly now as this relates to Romans 7. God saves us by declaring us righteous because we were unrighteous but we repented of our sins and placed our faith in Jesus Christ. That takes care of our past.

But for all of mankind, the problem is that we have all failed to be totally righteous. If we had never failed, we would be declared righteous on our own

merit. But now we have sinned. And it is because of this that God sent His Son. But God did not only want to declare us righteous. He wants to make us actually righteous! But how could God achieve that? Well, the first step is justification. After this, to make us righteous, comes the doctrine of sanctification, or being made holy, or being separated from sin.

Romans 1-3 has shown that all have sinned and need to be saved. So in Romans 4 now, Abraham is declared to be righteous, not because he was actually righteous, but because he believed God.

Verse 4:

4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

If Abraham could have earned his righteousness, God would have to declare him righteous because He owed it to Abraham.

Verse 5:

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

But Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith, and now God declared him righteous on the ground of his faith. Now his righteousness is of grace, which here means it is bestowed freely.

Well, throughout the rest of the chapter, Paul shows that justification is not by works. So to get our

young people to the same level of understanding, I want to show how justification takes place for the lost sinner in Christianity.

CHART: Justification by faith

So in chapter 4 we have justification. Now look at 5:1-11. Here we have a justified sinner:

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

So summarizing chapters 1-5:11, all have sinned and are lost. Christ died for the lost and all those who place their faith in Christ are justified by grace through faith. Then in 5:12-21 Paul shows that as sin entered the human race through one man, Adam; so salvation came through one man, Jesus Christ.

That brings us then to chapter 6, a most crucial chapter. Now, before we look at chapter 6, in justification with Christ it is very helpful to understand several important things. First, before I was justified I was lost in sin. Every unsaved person is lost. Then, having been justified from past sins, it is important to understand the present. Here it is important to understand my standing in Christ and my actual state in life. One may call it one's standing or one's position in Christ. Then it is very important to understand one's position in light of one's state or how it is in actual practice in life.

We have looked at the past and that we were lost in sin. Now in chapters 4-6 we look at the Christian's standing and our state. So we'll read 6:1-9:

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Now here is the question: It says we were buried with Christ, through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead, even so we should walk in newness of life. But the facts are we did not actually die, nor were we actually or literally buried and raised with Him. So how can this say we did? Well, the Lord Jesus took the sinner's place and died in his place, and was raised in his place.

Let me illustrate that for you with L.E. Maxwell's illustration. He writes:

"During the Civil War a man by the name of George Wyatt was drawn by lot to go to the front. He had a wife and six children. A young man named Richard Pratt offered to go in his stead. He was accepted and joined the ranks, bearing the name and number of George Wyatt. Before long Pratt was killed in action.

"The authorities later sought again to draft George Wyatt into service. He protested, entering the plea that he had died in the person of Pratt. He insisted that the authorities consult their own records as to the fact of his having died in identification with Pratt, his substitute. Wyatt was therefore exempted as beyond the claims of law and further service. He had died in the person of his representative" (Rom. 6:11, pg. 223).

Now look at verse 6 in Romans 6:

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

CHART on Standing & State: