

Alien Righteousness  
Phil. 3:9

Finally, my brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God<sup>[b]</sup> and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;<sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law,<sup>[c]</sup> blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, **in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—** <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Sermon Plan:

Sermon Sentence:

It is only the imputation of an alien right's's that can enable a sinful human be acceptable to a holy God.

To impute: “: to credit or ascribe (something) to a person or a cause

Intro: give historical background

Teaching of RC Church  
Luther's use of this term.

1. Show that God is absolutely righteous
2. Show that man lacks this righteousness; he does not have it, he cannot obtain it. He is, in fact, totally unrighteous.
3. Show that man must have perfect righteousness in order to enter the presence of God.
4. God must provide us with this righteousness

In the early 1,500's some 500 years ago, there was a great theological upheaval that occurred in Europe. It totally shook up the Christianity of that day. And it was a shake up that needed to happen because vital gospel truth that you and I need to know was recovered, after being hidden and obscured for centuries by the Roman Catholic Church.

You and I who are Christians today, we who are born-again believers and dependent on Jesus Christ alone to save us from our sins are debtors to this great Reformation. Without that Reformation, or something similar to it, we would not be together in this church building today. We would not have the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, nor the certain hope of eternal life in the presence of God. We would have remained lost and without hope and without God in this world.

To understand the importance of the Reformation let's step back into history some 500 years and let's go to a town square in one of the many villages of Germany. We see a crowd gathered around a man who seems to be selling something that the people want to buy. We hear him cry out with a loud voice,

"As soon as the coin in the cup rings, the soul from purgatory springs!"

This is John Tetzel calling out. What he is doing is selling indulgences to the people. For a certain price, they can have their loved one's time in purgatory reduced. This was a method that Roman Catholic church was using to raise money so the pope could build St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. By selling indulgences the church was raising this money for the pope's building project.

This practice was an example of how far down the Roman Catholic church had sunk, how far it had departed from the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ, of the proclamation of his life, death, and resurrection as the Son of God and the call to repent and believe in him to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

This practice of selling indulgences was just one of the many abuses that the Church of that day was doing.

But if we think about this practice of selling indulgences, that is buying release time from purgatory for departed relatives, we discern some great theological error right off the bat.

First of all, there is no such thing as purgatory taught in the bible, that is, a place where Christians go when they die where they suffer punishment for their sins for a certain number of years or centuries until they suffer enough and then qualify to go to heaven.

The very concept of humans having to go through this kind of experience is totally contrary to the whole concept of salvation as taught in the Bible.

The Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to die and be resurrected to pay the debt of sin that God's people owe to him for their sins.

If Christ's sacrifice on the cross is sufficient to pay for my sins, why would I need to go to purgatory and suffer punishment for my sins? The whole concept of purgatory is an affront to Jesus Christ. It is saying that his suffering on the cross for our sins is not sufficient payment for our sins, his suffering is ineffective to rescue us from the wrath of God against our sins. The whole concept of purgatory is blasphemous to the Son of God, because what it's saying is, "Jesus, your sacrifice on Calvary's cross was not good enough to pay for my sins. I need to go to purgatory for a few decades or centuries and suffer punishment in order to earn my right to get into heaven."

We see, I think, that this idea of purgatory is contrary to the Christian message of Good News, of salvation from sin, and there were people in the early 1,500's who also realized that this practice of selling indulgences was a practice and doctrine foreign to the Bible.

One of the people who realized this was a Roman Catholic monk named Martin Luther. Luther, and others like him, had been beneficiaries of a most important intellectual and academic movement called the Renaissance. For one thing, this movement included a renewal in the study of ancient documents that had lain unread for centuries. Some of these ancient documents were the Holy Scriptures themselves, especially the Greek New Testament. Through studying these original source documents, that is, the documents on which the church of Jesus Christ is formed, certain scholars began to see that the way the Roman Catholic church had evolved over the centuries was a serious wandering away from the teachings of the Bible.

This was movement that grew over a couple hundred years or so but it began to gain momentum and people like Martin Luther who had been studying the scriptures and who knew intimately the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, since he was one of their priests, began to cry out for reform. They began to point out the ways the Church had obscured and corrupted the pure Word of God.

This was actually dangerous business – to protest against the Church that had become a powerful economic and political force and religious force. One such protestor was John Hus, a Bohemian reformer who was burned at the stake a century before Luther

came on the scene. You've heard the expression, "my goose is cooked?" It is based on the incident of John Hus's burning at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church. The word "Hus" in the Bohemian language means "goose."

Later Martin Luther was put on trial by the RC church in which he had to defend his views at the risk of his own life. His friends protected him and hid him from the Roman Catholic authorities. For a year he was hidden away in a castle but he did not waste his time. While there he translated the NT into the German language – into the language of the people so they could read the Word of God for themselves. Eventually the Pope excommunicated him, saying, "a wild boar has been let loose in the Lord's vineyard" – referring to Luther.

Luther was a wild boar of a theologian. He was known for his blunt, forthright language, and for his courage to stand up and criticize the RC church for its departures from the pure teaching of the Word of God. He started a firestorm which swept through Europe and the force of the Reformation still reverberates through the church today, especially the conservative, bible believing churches like ours.

The rallying cries of the Reformation can be summarized in what we call the 5 solas of the Reformation (these are Latin words):

Sola Scripture – Scriptures alone  
Sola fide – by faith alone  
Sola gratia – by grace alone  
Solus Christus – through Christ alone  
Soli Deo Gloria – glory to God alone

The Reformation was a return to the bible as the supreme authority in Christ's church for all that we believe and practice. The Roman Catholic Church was teaching and still teaches that the teaching traditions of the church actually govern what the church teaches and practices more than the bible itself.

The Reformers cried out that man is saved by faith alone, that is, we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The RC church taught and still teaches that it is our earning of religious merit by attending to Mass, going to confession, doing acts of penance etc., that gradually earns us merit with God. Jesus died to pay for our sins, yes, but then we have to help Jesus out by our performance of religious deeds. And it is the Church that gradually dispenses to us saving merit, saving grace with God as we conform to the rules of the church.

The Reformers cried out "By Grace Alone." Salvation is a gracious gift. We cannot earn it, we cannot work for it. God saves us based on the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.

Luther at one point as a young priest had gone to Rome and see the people crawling up the steps going up to the Cathedral in Rome, their knees bleeding, thinking they were

doing something to please God and help pay for their sins. Luther say the fallacy of all this. By his study of the Scripture he had come to realize that “the just shall live by faith.” Thus as the scripture says in Eph. 2:8-9:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Crawling up the steps at the basilica in Rome could not remove any human sins, time in purgatory could not remove any human sins, only Jesus can remove human sins and there is nothing we can do to remove our own sins. The forgiveness of sins is a solely a work of the almighty and sovereign God, but when he works to do this, it is done. Sins are removed, guilt is canceled, eternal life is bestowed, salvation is certain. Punishment in hell is no longer an option, but fellowship in the presence of the living Christ is certain. All these blessings are given to us by the grace of God, it is not any merit of our own that can earn these great benefits. God must bestow them and when God bestows them, based on the work of his Son, they are bestowed permanently, once and for all. The salvation that v

comes from believing in Jesus Christ is sure and certain, it is powerful to the utmost, and it never fades away. Are you a believer in Jesus Christ today? If so, rejoice – for your sins not longer condemn you but God has set his love on you and you are the apple of his eye, his beloved child, and he will stand by you through thick and thin and at last bring you safe and secure to his eternal kingdom. This is the Good News. This is the Gospel that Luther and John Calvin and John Knox and the other reformers were proclaiming. Europe was shaken up to its core by this fresh and biblical message and it needed to be shaken up. Reform was needed. Repentance was needed. The false teachings of the RC church needed to be exposed and confronted and rejected and a return to the bible as the supreme and sole authority for all we believe and practice in the church needed to be reestablished.

Martin Luther was an extremely sensitive man religiously. He was brilliant and a hard and determined worker. He was a student of the Scriptures and he understood the nature of God. He read the Bible and he understood that God is holy and righteous and no compromiser with human sin. He also understood that he was a sinner and had fallen far short of the glory of God and was under the judgment hand of God for his sins. He agonized over this. At one point he hated God because he was so righteous and Luther, by contrast, was so sinful.

Luther was a RC priest and he had been through all their system and he knew it well but he could get no relief from his sin. But the more he studied and taught the Scriptures, the more the light began to dawn on him and he realized that he could never attain the righteousness that God required. For God said,

“Be perfect as I am perfect.”

Luther was in despair of mind and soul, because he knew he could never attain that.

But then as he studied the Psalms and the Book of Romans he began to understand to be saved from his sin he had to rest on the work of Christ alone. The Church couldn't save him, his religious works couldn't save him, but only Christ could save him.

What the righteous God requires from sinful men and women is perfect righteousness in order to be acceptable to God, in order to enter into relationship and fellowship with God. But in this case the whole human race was condemned, for every person has sinned and fallen far short of the glory of God.

Luther began to see that he had to have a righteousness outside of himself, he called it “an alien right's's.” You know what an alien is, right? Someone who is a foreigner. We have something called ‘an alien registration card.’ It's commonly known as a green card. Immigrants who come here from other countries greatly treasure this card because it gives them the legal right to live and work in this country.

“Alien” can also refer a creature from outer space, as in science fiction, who may come in their flying saucers to visit us earthlings here. These would be strange creatures indeed to us.

So it was that “alien right's's “ (AR) is a strange kind of righteousness to us humans. It's almost incomprehensible to us because we are so beset with a lack of righteousness.

We can have a human right's's.....before others.

But it is corrupted and tainted and permeated with sin. It cannot not measure up to God's perfect standard. Who is this God who is the creator of the universe and who sustains every moment of our lives and gives us every good gift that we have? The bible teaches us what he is really like. He came one day and revealed much of his nature to Moses as he hid Moses in the cleft of a rock so Moses could at least get a glimpse of his glory:

<sup>6</sup> The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for thousands,<sup>[a]</sup> forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” <sup>8</sup> And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. Exo. 34:6-8

**The Lord is righteous in all his ways** and kind **in all his** works. Psa. 145:7

God is holy, he is high and above us. In him is no sin whatsoever. He is perfect purity and light and life and wholesomeness and goodness.

But our human righteousness is as filthy rags in his sight because we have this corrupting disease of sin in our souls that constantly moves us to think about ourselves, our desires, what can get us ahead of others, what can make us look good in the eyes of others. And we are ignorant of God and disobedient to him. We rebel against the revelation of himself that he gives us. We just want to go our own way and do our own thing.

But this is unacceptable to God. His anger with our sin rests upon each of our heads and he will pour out his righteous anger, his wrath, on every sinner at the Great Judgment when all the thoughts of our hearts and words and actions will be measured up against God's perfect character.

Luther understood all of this and it led to him being extremely depressed until as he continued to study the Word of God he began to understand the truths stated here:

<sup>6</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,<sup>[a]</sup> as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith. Rom. 1:16-17

Rom. 3: 21-26:

<sup>21</sup> **But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

**Gal. 2:16 — <sup>16</sup> yet we know that (A)a person is not justified<sup>[a]</sup> by works of the law (B)but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, (C)because by works of the law no one will be justified.**

What Luther experienced and began to understand was similar to the experience of the Apostle Paul. In Phil. 3:1-9 Paul tells how if ever a man could be justified by law keeping and human works of righteousness it was him. But then he says:

**<sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a**

**righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith**

What Paul was talking about is what Luther called an AR – a righteousness outside....

Here are a few quotes of Luther from his own writings that focus on this AR:

- 1) "through faith we receive a different, new, clean heart and that, for the sake of Christ our mediator, God will and does regard us as completely righteous and holy. Although sin is not completely gone or dead, God will nevertheless not count it or consider it" (SA 111,13,1).<sup>2</sup>
  
- 2) "Therefore we are righteous extrinsically when we are righteous solely by the reckoning [*reputatione*] of God and not of ourselves or of our own works. For his reckoning [*reputatio*] is not ours by reason of anything that is in us or in our own power. Therefore our righteousness is neither in us or in our power (LW25:257)
  
- 3) Where faith was fundamentally an infused virtue, now it is that thing through which "the heart and the name of the Lord cling together."<sup>23</sup> It is those who "trust in the name of the Lord" whose "sins are forgiven, and righteousness is imputed to them." LW 27:221
  
- 4) Because by nature the will is in bondage, justification by works is impossible. The righteousness of faith is the antithesis to justification by works. LW33:270
  
- 5) .... "Because you believe in Me," God says, "and your faith takes hold of Christ, whom I have freely given to you as your Justifier and Savior, therefore be righteous." Thus God accepts you or accounts you righteous only on account of Christ, in whom you believe. LW 26:132
  
- 6) We are not purely righteous, that is, we are not intrinsically righteous.<sup>140</sup> Sin still adheres to our flesh in this life.<sup>141</sup> Our sins, however, are hidden from God on account of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. They are "hidden in the sight of God, because Christ the mediator stands between; because we take hold of him by faith ...."<sup>142</sup>

- 7) Christ's righteousness imputed acts like an umbrella (umbraculum) against the heat of God's wrath toward our inchoate actual righteousness. (p. 299)

Alien Right's's ....

#### APPLICATIONS:

1. Phil Johnson: There are two kind of right's – one you earn and other is given. One is tainted with my sin and the resides in Christ. an "alien right's" -it's Christ's right's not mine. Never far from Paul's thought – is everywhere – 1st half of Romans – alien right's imputed to those who believe. Also Galatians.  
Two at temple praying: = Examples. "This man went justified..." How possible? He received credit for a right's not his own – external source. Only ground to stand before God. If Saul couldn't nor can we.
2. If we are not saved, we must cry out to God to have mercy and save us.
3. If we are saved, we must worship and thank God that he placed his love upon us, gave his Son for our redemption, and provided us with that righteousness that we could not attain to in our own strength or holiness or piety.
4. Live in the joy of AR being imputed to you.
5. Share with others how they can receive AR.

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