

Romans 10 3-4 b

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness,

have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Last week we spoke about the options we have when we find out that a **righteousness is required** of us. We can either seek to come up with a righteousness **of our own**, or we can submit to the terms of a third party and get the righteousness from them.

Well the Jews for the most part picked plan A. This morning we will talk about the alternative. And to do that we will talk about the value of submission.

We see here that the Jews did not submit to the righteousness of God.

In our text you could almost exchange the word Christ any time it talks about righteousness and you would get a pretty good picture of the problem.

3 For they being ignorant of Christ, and seeking to establish their own Christ or savior,

have not submitted to the Christ.

Remember that Christ **IS** the righteousness of God. And the Jews could have gotten a million things wrong, but if they had received Christ as their savior, even with their misconceptions, they would have been saved. But they rejected Christ, for the most part, outright and intentionally.

Now look at this verse: The Jews **have not submitted to the righteousness of God**

What do the Jews have to do, and what does anyone have to do to receive the righteousness of God?

They must submit.

What is this word submit?

It means to subordinate; to obey : put under, subdue unto, be subject to, submit self unto.

We are going to spend some time with this concept this morning.

In our text this morning we are dealing with the Jews who, scripture tells us, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. We see that they were confronted with a choice. They could either try very hard to come up with a righteousness whereby God would have to accept them based on their superior performance, or they could submit to God's terms and receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

By submitting they would be saved. But we see from scripture that they refused

to submit. They then tried to come up with their own righteousness and they were lost.

One of the points that I wanted to make this morning is that salvation requires submission of the human will to the will of God. I suggest to you this morning that the Christian life cannot be lived successfully without submission to the will of God at many points. And I also suggest that much of our trouble in our Christian lives is due to our unwillingness to submit.

Our submission starts by submitting to Christ in salvation. We must be saved the way He commands, as there are no other ways. We must accept the fact that we are sinners who deserve God's wrath. We must submit to the fact that there was a sacrifice made for us that we could not make for ourselves. We must submit to Christ's way of salvation and receive it humbly as a gift. We must, in our humility admit that we had nothing to do with saving ourselves. It was all of God. That is where submission starts in our Christian life. But it is impossible that it would end there.

Let me ask you right now. When is the last time you refused to submit to an authority that God has placed over you? How do you think of that event? How do you explain it? Is it funny? Are you really secretly proud of it? Do you have an excuse readily prepared for why it was the proper thing to do or that rebellion was required? Does the fact that you were asked to submit makes you angry? How do you respond when you are told you must submit? Do you have a strategy whereby it isn't your fault for how you respond when asked to submit? Maybe you think your emotions run away with you and you simply can't help it? Maybe you have a strategy that undermines any attempt of your authority to exert authority over you. You wouldn't **call it** a strategy, but it comes out every time authority is expressed. Maybe it is a fit of anger. Maybe it is an emotional breakdown. Maybe it is the use of a technicality. Oh we are **ever so good** and **ever so crafty** at having our own way. And we are very good at hiding it from ourselves.

Now let me ask you, how are things functioning in your family or at our church or in your workplace as a result of your responses? Do you find chaos and rebellion in the ranks? Do you see a general lack of respect shown to the one you rebel against?

If submission to Christ, in order to receive His righteousness, is critical in order for us to receive our salvation, might not submission be a significant requirement of living the Christian life? Is it possible that many of the problems we experience are nothing but consequences of our own resistance to submitting to those who

God has put in authority over us? And maybe we should be a little harder on ourselves. Instead of trying to blame our failure to submit on everything but ourselves, maybe we should start taking full responsibility for our resistance to the known will of God. When we fail to submit, we rob ourselves of the security that submission provides. We rob our lives of peace. And we invite the devil into our homes and workplaces and church because he just loves rebellion.

Now you might say, oh I can submit to Christ easy enough. Because Christ is perfect and He always loves me and He always does the right thing for the right reason. But I cannot submit to my boss or my husband or my parent or my elder because I suspect that they may have an angle, or they don't make sense, or they're stupid. And we can go on and on. Well I would suggest to you this morning that you are lying to yourself. You see it **isn't at all easy** submitting to Christ because it is **He** that tells you that **you must** submit to the other authorities. So you are rebelling against Christ when you disregard your boss or your husband or your parents when they command you something that is appropriate for them to command you.

Now I want to clarify before we go on that I am not talking about obeying those commands that are sinful in nature. If your walk with Christ forbids you to do what you are commanded to do, you must obey God rather than man. But if the command is neutral we should submit. If your authority invites discussion, then discuss what you feel you should. But discuss it with an attitude that is willing to do what they tell you to do.

I would also add that if we are in the position of being submitted to, we should treat those we serve the same way we want to be treated. If we don't like orders barked at us, if we want a say in the decision making, if we want to feel significant in the process, then that is how we should treat those we serve.

But with all that said, let's take a look at what scripture says.

The first verse describes what happened after Joseph and Mary left Christ at Jerusalem and then had to turn around and come back and get Him.

Luke 2:51 Then Christ went down with them (Mom Dad & Family) and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

Have you ever considered that there was no one ever born who had more natural reasons to rebel against his parents than Christ? Christ never sinned. He was wise beyond His years. He knew the thoughts of men. He would have known all the inconsistencies of His parents. He could probably read them like a book. And

everything He would have said would have been true. But look what this says. Christ was subject to His mom and dad.

This is good to remember for all of us. Christ obeyed the things that he asks us to obey. He was morally and spiritually superior to every authority he ever had. Yet we never see that he rebelled against those things that were in the right of the authority to ask. He obeyed His parents. He obeyed the tax man. He showed submission to all of the structures that God had designed. So when we start feeling uppity, we should consider Christ.

Next let's look at God's order for the family.

Colossians 3:18-24 (NKJV)

18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

You know, as difficult it is to run a family, there really isn't a lot of scripture that specifically addresses **how** to do it. A modern paperback has way more ink dedicated to the topic than scripture does.

So is the family not important? Absolutely not, it is **very** important. A man that does not fulfill his responsibilities to his family is considered in a very bad light. Well then, why isn't more said? I believe it is because the core issue of how a family functions is dealt with in terms of **authority**. The rest of scripture tells fathers, mothers and children how to live for Christ. But there are specific directions needed for knowing how a family ought to function. And this text holds the general framework that is most repeated.

Ephesians starts a passage similar to this one by addressing the church and telling them to submit to **one another**. So basically we are to submit to every brother or sister in Christ as they bring the word to us. When people represent the Lord and His word we listen to the word with respect and listen and consider what it is they have to say, submissively. Keep in mind we are submitting to the Lordship of Christ in these relationships. And that Lordship may be represented by a 6 year old in our family if they are bringing a scripture to us. The authority of the Word

of God trumps everything. We must submit to Christ expressing Himself through a body member, even if that body member happens to be a child. First we submit to Christ through submitting to one another.

That sets the scene for the relationships in the family. While there are roles of authority in the family, if someone is in Christ they could, at any time, minister to us in the authority of Christ as a brother or sister in Christ. We have got to always be open to that.

In the passage in Colossians Paul starts with wives.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

If I were a wife I would really **want this to say**, submit to your own husband if what he says makes sense to you. Or submit to your husband if it is convenient and fits well into your schedule. Or submit only if you believe he has your best interest in mind. But that isn't what it says. What Paul assumes here is that if something is important enough for the husband to command it, it is important enough for the wife to do it.

Now a smart woman here is going to pay attention to this before saying yes to a marriage proposal. You should only say yes to a man that, by submitting to him, your life will be better used for Christ. So if you are looking at a man who only cares about his selfish benefit, you can bet that his commands for you will be selfish in nature. And you are instructed by God to submit to that man if you marry him. So evaluate any marriage decision based on what that man lives for. Because that is ultimately what you will be submitting to.

Notice too that Paul does not say submit to your husband because of any values your husband possesses. You submit because you are in the Lord and it is His will for your life to submit in that relationship. So the score that your husband may have in your **approval rating** at the moment has no bearing on this command.

Another point is that Paul doesn't leave any negotiation room here. There are no caveats to allow behavior that will make it miserable for your husband if he were to happen to command you to do something. If you resort to any of those tactics, you are sinning. If you will just call it that, you will be doing yourself and your husband and your family a big favor. Confess your sin, ask for forgiveness, and give it another whirl. In fact if you chose any behavior that is designed to avoid obeying a known legitimate command, it is sin, no matter how subtle the behavior is. When it comes to obeying, if you wouldn't want your child to treat you that way, you should not treat your husband that way. It is pretty simple.

And also, if you disobey, it doesn't matter what style. It doesn't matter what excuse. If you disobey a clear command by your husband, don't play with that. It is sin, not just against your husband but primarily against the Lord. Call it that and take care of it.

And one more thing. There is nothing here that appoints women as the evaluators of their husbands. God did not give you to your husband so you could evaluate how he carries out his responsibilities. He gave you to him as his helper to help him carry out items for which he is ultimately responsible for. The more you evaluate him, the more you will find reasons to be less than happy. But if you will do those assignments that the Lord gave you, you will find joy in your service.

Now Paul moves to husbands. And he actually has more to say to us. Because we have on our shoulders more responsibility for what happens in our families. Ultimately if it happens in our family it is our responsibility.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Here is our job in regard to our wives. Our job is to love our wives like Christ loved us. That looks really good on a greeting card and it sounds good in a song, but it is extremely difficult to do. Because we men know what we are made of. We see everything through the sieve of what we want. But this command to us from God through Paul is clear. It is one of His assignments for our lives. We are to resemble Christ to our wives. And we are to continually think about what it is that will best help our wives to grow spiritually and as people. Any need they have must be met at our expense if necessary. That is how Christ loved us. What this means is that, while our wives have ministries of service to our families, we have a ministry of service to her. She is not ultimately for our pleasure but for Christ's pleasure. And **her** good is to be more important to us than **our** good. I don't know about you, but I rarely have become as upset **with myself** for my failure **to serve her** as I have been upset about **her failure to serve me**. I suspect that if we as men would keep the proper perspective we would see our wives prosper more under our care. And that is what we are here for.

Another point, as I mentioned earlier, is that we should treat our wives the way we want to be treated. Most of us have had all kinds of bosses. We have had some that like to bark orders and enjoy the power they have over our lives. I doubt there is a man here who liked that. So that is not the way we should treat our wives either. Arbitrary authority can be a real difficult thing to deal with. We should treat our wives with the same kind of exercise of authority that we respect.

And Paul tells us not to become bitter. In the world of men, we know that if we verbally attack another man, we are likely to need nose surgery. In the world of women the results are rarely so immediate or physical. So our wives may be accustomed to saying things we would never say. I think that possibly Paul is talking about that kind of thing. It is easy for us as men to be bitter and to sulk and to refuse to talk about it when we feel that we have been treated with disrespect. But we can be sure that if we don't talk about it, things won't get better. Women tend to live in the world of communication. And sometimes that is hard for us to get used to. But we need to remain engaged in our relationships if we hope to obey this command. If we can't change how we feel with thinking and praying, we had better start talking.

Now for you young men, consider this as you determine who you want to marry. Will the woman you are considering submit to you, or will she buck everything you try to lead in? Look at the relationships she is in. If she will not submit to her parents, if she will not submit to the Word of God, don't think that she will submit to you. And the children will have a tendency to follow her lead in submission. Proverbs has a lot to say about a contentious woman, and none of it is pleasant for the man. It is going to be your job to lay your life down for her welfare. Pick someone who will be a good investment, giving your family a good return for your investment.

Now for children

20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

I tend to think that obedience to authority is one of the truest tests of spirituality. Because the truth is, the old self does not **want** to submit, and will only do so when it stands to benefit something. But the new self, the person in Christ will have **the power to say yes** to mom and dad and **to overcome the evil** that arises when we are confronted with authority.

Young people have a tendency to think that if they feel rebellious when their parents give them a command that the commands must be the thing that is so distasteful. It must be that the parents are being unreasonable if I feel so angry about being told what to do.

One of the first thing a young Christian must do is face the ugly truth. The source of your rebellion is your sinful nature. It is the residue of Adam in your life. It isn't mom's fault. It isn't dad's fault. It is your fault. Until you grapple with that truth you will never be free of it. It isn't your mom that said you must obey. It isn't your dad who said you must obey. It is Jesus Christ your savior who said you must obey. So that pretty well makes the issue between you and Christ. Your

parents job is to **see to it** that you obey. You can honor Christ by doing that willingly and joyfully, or you can bite at the bit and make all lives concerned miserable by resisting the authority of Christ. But realize that it is **you** that must answer to God for your attitude. Your mom and dad won't. It is only you and Him.

The other side of this is, young person, do you want to please the Lord? Now it is an incredible thing that anything we do could actually have a positive effect on the Lord of this Universe. But we are told here that most assuredly **it gives the Lord pleasure** when you willingly and joyfully obey your parents. This is one thing as a young person that you can be sure is God's will. So if you want to know what God's will for your life is, here you go!

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Now we go back to the man in the family. Here again the man is responsible for his use of his authority. We cannot be arbitrary in our use of authority. We again, need to treat our kids the way we would want to be treated. If we run the family in a way that makes no sense and has no order, our children aren't going to know what to do. They will become exasperated. We as fathers need to provide order and direction to the household. A child must have the sense that good behavior is rewarded. Bad behavior is punished. They must have a clear understanding of what each of them is. And they have to have a way of winning the favor of the parents by what they do. If everything they receive is random, if they get yelled at for something one day and rewarded for it the next, if they don't know what is expected of them and it changes every day, they would respond the way we respond. They would get discouraged. They would be frustrated. We are in a sense **encouraging** them to rebel and **making it hard** for them to obey.

Our job is work. When there are failures in our household, they are **our** failures. If our children aren't being treated in a rational manner, it is our job to analyze the situation and fix it. It is our job to intervene. It is our job to see to it that our kids are handled in a way that encourages their sanity and their walk with the Lord. It is our job to do everything we can to overcome rebellion in our children. It is our job to create security and maintain order.

Now let's move on to the last order

22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

While bondservants are different than employees of a company, I think we can apply the concepts to employees.

We men aren't at all free from submission to authority. We are responsible to submit to God and submit to anyone in authority over us. And we do well to watch carefully how we submit to authority. Because it is quite likely our wife and children will model us based on what they see. Do we obey our employer the way we want our wife and children to obey us? Do we treat our supervisors with the respect we hope for? Are we as conscientious with our obedience as we would like our family to be? If not we need to ask, who do we think we are to grant one level of behavior and expect another. We too must be models of submission. And we need to do it based on the fact that God is watching and we want to please Him. It shouldn't matter who is watching or if no one is watching. Our performance should be consistent.

Let's take a quick look at another submission passage.

1 Peter 5:1-5 (NKJV)

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Brad and I have a greater responsibility for the well being of the church members than anyone else. We will be held to a higher standard because we accepted this position. And as we attempt to carry out that responsibility look what the Word tells us. It is very similar to how the family should function. We are not to act like lords. We are not to bark arbitrary commands and make it hard for you to submit to our leadership. We aren't to use you to make our lives easier or more financially prosperous. Our submission to Christ must be evident. We must be examples of submission to the flock. We must be the quickest people to submit to the authority of the Word. We must be the quickest to receive a rebuke that has truth at its base. We must be the quickest to say YES LORD at any point in our lives. So Brad, this is God's will for us this week. How are we doing at submitting

to the known word of God? Would the church improve or get worse if everyone submitted to Christ the way we do?

Now notice that it goes on. It says, you younger people, submit to your elders. You may have noticed by now that we, as elders, aren't big into barking commands. We rarely tell anyone to do anything except those things that are commanded in scripture. So the first application is that you should submit to the Word of God as it is accurately presented by us. But there is more to submission than the technicality of doing what you are told. There is also an element of never allowing the relationship to become **us vs. them**. That means that we are all in this together and we should act that way. If you disagree with us, it is easy to form parties of dissension. I can guaranty you that the devil will look for every opportunity to cause this. He will exploit every prideful impulse we have to accomplish those ends. And instead of coming to us to talk about improvement or solutions, he will steer you to talk to others to gain support. He wants there to be divisions. And he wants that discontentment to remain secret as long as it can be kept secret. He wants it to fester and grow. Because he knows that the fruit it will bear is rebellion. And it will eventually lead to division. That is the devils will for our church this morning. So there it is in a nutshell. The Lord's will for us is to submit to the authorities He has placed over us, with submission to His Word always being first. The devils will for our lives is rebellion which will lead to division and chaos. The million dollar question is, whose will are we doing? What would the church look like if everyone submitted to Christ's Lordship the way that we do?

I would like to end by reading a quote from Mr Barnhouse here.

"God's motives are always for the best of all His creatures; and if those creatures would submit to Him they would always have that which is best for them. Unfortunately they do not recognize this fact and, therefore, they are in the state of great frustration. Men want what they think is good and run around madly trying to get it. They never attain that for which they are reaching and they never arrive at the goals which they set for themselves."

I challenge you to prayerfully examine your life this week. Ask God to show you how you are truly submitting to authority. And then willfully submit to his will in this matter.