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Righteousness to Make Righteous

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

153rd General Assembly

- **TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM** in 403 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 12 NOON** in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held Tuesday mornings at 7:30am *and again* at 12 Noon. The *weekly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The remaining studies for the 2015 General Assembly will be in the book of Romans.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to be serving you. — Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

are
Tuesday, 24 March 2015

Romans 1 – “Righteousness to Make Righteous”

Swiss evangelist and hymn writer César Malan always enjoyed sharing his faith in God with others. Malan asked a young woman, who was seated at his table, whether she was a Christian. The woman, Charlotte Elliott, became rigid with irritation, responding that she would rather not answer that question. Malan apologized if he had given offense. Nevertheless, the witness of Malan became a decisive moment in her life for Charlotte could not remove the inquiry from her mind. Three weeks later, she met Malan and told him that ever since he had spoken to her, she was wrestling with the thought of receiving God’s acceptance.

She wondered how she could gain God’s favor. Malan replied, “You have nothing of merit to bring to God. You must come just as you are.” Charlotte rejoiced at those words, and placed her faith and truth in Christ. Although she was feeble and weak in body, Charlotte possessed a wonderful imagination, in addition to being cultured and thoughtful. She loved music and poetry, which is evident in her writing approximately 150 hymns. One of the finest and most commonly known of her hymns recalls the Christian witness of Malan; the hymn is entitled, “Just As I Am.”

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd’st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

The classic hymn says, “just as I am,” which means that the new believer has years of sinful habits and patterns to overcome. The subheading for the hymn was “him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). How wonderful to know that God receives all those who come to Him by grace through faith, and thereafter “He always lives to make intercession” for his people (Heb 7:25). The one who trusts in God has the promise of God’s favor and peace, and with those blessings is God’s enablement to live by his grace and for his glory. The book of Romans reveals many of these magnificent truths, and how to appropriate God’s division provisions so we can heed his holy and inspired Word.

THE REALITY OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

Chapters 1—11 of Romans reveal the truth that God’s righteousness becomes one’s own when — by God’s grace — one has faith/trust in the work of Jesus Christ upon Calvary’s cross. When one is reconciled to God, it is both certain and eternal because the believer is in union with Christ and has the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All those whom God “justified, He also glorified” (8:30).

Justification is a legal (forensic) term with regard to acquittal; it refers to God’s action whereby He makes human beings, who are sinners and worthy of condemnation, to be made acceptable before a God who is holy and righteous. *Sanctification* is a twofold experience, whereby those who have faith (i.e. believers) have been made holy in Christ, and continue to mature and desire holiness by the empowering of the indwelling Holy Spirit until believers enjoy complete conformity to Christ (which is *glorification*). The great, eternal truths that the Bible reveals to be true for the one who believes/trust in Jesus Christ is not something to be merely intellectual; rather, biblical truths are to profoundly affect the manner in which we live.

THE POWER OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

The introduction to Romans is contained in the first 17 verses of chapter one. Romans 1:18—3:20 demonstrate how humanity universally is in need of God’s righteousness. The pagan needs God’s righteousness (1:18-32), as does the moral person (2:1-16) and the religious person (2:17—3:8). The reason for this universal need is because the character and conduct of humanity is sinful (unrighteous). As a consequence of sin, all humanity begins life as estranged from God because we are all sinners by nature and practice (1:18—3:20).



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Tuesday (24 March) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 403 CAP

Tuesday (24 March) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

lunch provided from sponsorship by State Representative Bruce Williamson



Enhancing Trust

The Roman lyricist Horace (65-8 BC) believed that a *deus ex machina* (“God from the machine”) should never be introduced on the stage unless some disorder resulted among the characters that only a god could resolve. The universal need of humanity described in 1:18—3:20 is such an entanglement. The “but now” of 3:21 is indeed profound and begins a tremendous transition. One who is justified by faith can be certain that God will never forsake him or her. God will complete the good work that He has begun; therefore, all believers can expect an ultimate glorification. Even now, believers are able to “exult in hope of the glory of God” (5:2).

THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Rom 1:1-17) The opening verses of Romans provide good news, based upon God’s promise in the Old Testament and focused in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is received from God through the holy prophets who were inspired by Him to write the holy Scriptures. The gospel that believers proclaim is not a human invention; it is the revelation of God that was communicated through his human agents, the Old Testament prophets. The salvation that God provides in Christ Jesus is not an afterthought; rather, God devised his plan of salvation from eternity. The gospel is *good* news, yet it is not a *new* concept.

The subject matter of the gospel is focused upon the person of Christ Jesus. He came to earth as “a descendant of David” (i.e. a Jew), thus revealing his human nature (v. 3), in addition to proving that He fulfills the messianic promises of the Old Testament. God’s declaration of Jesus as his Son, which was accomplished through the resurrection, proves his divine nature (v. 4). Jesus is the one and only God-man.

Jesus died and rose again, which is a vital component in the gospel message (cf. 1 Cor 15:1-4), and now saves all those who trust in Him. Christian missionary and theologian E. Stanley Jones once noted, “Religions are man’s search for God; the gospel is God’s search for man. There are many religions, but one gospel.” Christ alone secures the salvation of one’s soul, and this message is to be proclaimed to the entire world (esp. nations). Why do Christians proclaim this message? The reason is “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16).

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The Apostle Paul confessed that he was enthralled by the gospel, which meant his entire life was controlled by it. He was “called *as* an apostle” (v. 1), and regarded himself as “under obligation” (i.e. a debtor) to the entire world (v. 14). Through his

people, God is calling lost sinners by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ (vv. 5-7). God’s people are freed from the debt of sin, yet we are debtors (“under obligation”) to witness to a lost world (v. 14). Moreover, we are obliged to obey the Holy Spirit (8:13), love all people (13:8), be an encourager to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (15:1), and to assist the people of Israel (15:25-27). *Have you contemplated this day how you are indebted to God?*

THE NECESSITY OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Rom 1:18-32) The primary theme of the book of Romans is the righteousness of God. Verse 18 presents God’s holiness against the ominous circumstances of “the wrath of God,” which even now is being manifested. All human beings know the existence of God as “evident” because the individual conscience and created order make Him known to all humanity (vv. 19-20).

Sadly, there are many who know that God exists, yet refuse to “honor Him as God or give thanks” (v. 21). They live to serve and worship “the creature rather than the Creator” (v. 25); through such practices, they regard themselves as gods (cf. Gen 3:4-5). Therefore, the Lord God “gave them over” and let them “dishonor” themselves, and to suffer the consequences for their decisions. The greatest judgment that God can inflict upon fallen humanity in this life is to permit us to do things in a manner that seems right to us.

The same God who delivered sinners to judgment also gave his own Son for those who love Him, “to those who are called according to *His* purpose” (Rom 8:28-32). The gospel of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ is truly good news! How can one not believe it? How can those who believe it, not also share the good news of God’s free grace in Christ?

First John 3:7 instructs as follows: “the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He [God] is righteous.” What would it mean to you personally if you committed your cause to God, who alone judges righteously, and know that He will (in his own time) clearly make it appear that it is a righteous task, both to Himself and others. By God’s grace and for his glory, heed his Word and you can be assured that He will turn “his countenance upon you,” and make your righteousness to shine forth like the sun in its noonday splendor (cf. Numb 6:26; Ps 37:6).

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission’s mission, in partnership with the church, is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and promote the biblical mandate to pray for those in authority in the Capitol communities throughout the United States and around the world. Every election cycle brings us hundreds of newly elected legislators into the twenty-four state capitols where we presently have a State Minister. We intend to be there to provide pastoral care for these men and women. *Please join us in this ministry!*