

119

MINISTRIES

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What is the Gospel? Understanding All of the Gospel: Part 2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

Paul’s teaching of the gospel—the “death, burial, and resurrection of Christ”—includes the message of obtaining righteousness by faith.

In Romans 1, Paul describes the gospel:

Romans 1:16-17

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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

So, the gospel that Paul preached was the one that reveals and explains the principle of "righteousness by faith."

How does the gospel reveal the righteousness of God?

In short, the gospel reveals the way God makes a sinner righteous. Based on the Messiah’s work on the cross, God imputes righteousness upon the sinner.

The gospel reveals how God is both just and the justifier. Since Messiah paid the penalty for our sins, “everyone who believes” can be acquitted of guilt—that is, declared righteous.

This is a glorious truth. Yet, because of this, some have assumed that being declared righteous means one does not have to then live righteously. Nothing could be further from the truth.

John makes it very clear that those whom God declares righteous are then transformed into those who practice righteousness:

1 John 3:7

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

It doesn't get any easier to understand than that.

To practice righteousness simply means to walk the right way. The right way, according to the Bible, is to follow the instructions of God. The instructions of God are the commandments of God. The commandments of God are found in the law of God—in Hebrew, the Torah.

We will expound on that further later, but for now, it should be understood that this declaration of truth is simple and clear: Those who are declared righteous on the basis of the gospel are transformed into those who practice righteousness. Practicing righteousness means walking in obedience to the instructions of Scripture.

Again, those who are “declared righteous” by God are then to live righteously. True saving faith inevitably produces faithfulness.

Using the analogy of marriage, we remain faithful through fidelity, which means, "not fooling around with someone else."

Faithfulness to God means walking in obedience to the commandments, just like spouses are faithful to keep their wedding vows to each other.

What does it mean to live faithful to God? What does it mean to live unfaithful to God?

Paul compares the righteousness of God as taught in the Torah (the books of Moses) with the righteousness of God as he (Paul) is teaching it:

Listen to what Paul says about righteousness.

Romans 10:5-8 (*by the way, this is quoting Deuteronomy 30:11-13*)

For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law [Torah], that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim).

The righteousness of God as taught by Torah, is the same as the righteousness that Paul preached! It is nothing new.

How do we know this? Paul was quoting the Torah as written by Moses.

So, let's take a look at what Moses teaches about righteousness.

While we read Deuteronomy 30, note that he talks about the commandments of the covenant.

He does not describe them as "hard or impossible to keep" as some teach today.

Deuteronomy 30:11-16

“For this commandment that I command you today **is not too hard for you**, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD [YHWH] your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD [YHWH] your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD [YHWH] your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

The commandments under the "Old Covenant" (as it is often called) are NOT too hard or difficult to keep.

In fact, it is described as "But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you CAN do it."

Paul writes about righteousness by faith.

Romans 10:6-8

But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

Keep in mind that Paul is here describing "righteousness by faith." Paul is describing the righteousness by faith as "near you" and "in your heart" by quoting that portion of Scripture that is describing the righteousness of God as revealed through the law, the Torah!

This righteousness that was revealed through the law is the same righteousness that is by faith.

Paul then asks concerning "righteousness by faith":

Romans 10:8-10

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus [Yeshua] is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be

saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Listen and pay attention, because this is important.

Paul's message of "righteousness by faith" is one and the same as the message given by Moses to the children of Israel!

He quotes Deuteronomy 30:14 where he notes that "it is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart"

He is talking about the righteousness that was revealed at Sinai!

The righteousness that was revealed through the law at Sinai is the righteousness by faith that Paul is speaking of! Paul is not preaching anything different from what Moses preached.

1 John 3:7

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

This is the message that brings us life!

As Paul said: "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus [Yeshua] is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Why?

Because the sign of Jonah that Messiah Yeshua gave us, the fact that he was resurrected after three days and three nights, is the proof from God that everything Yeshua taught and practiced is the truth.

Thus Yeshua is the perfect example of how we are to also walk out the faith, to practice righteousness.

1 John 2:1-6

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua] the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

(Thus, we are saved by grace, BUT, we are to still keep the commandments as Yeshua kept the commandments. We are to walk the same in which he walked.)

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By

this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

We do not keep the commandments for salvation. We keep the commandments because we believe them to be truth. They are the right way to walk. They are the way to practice righteousness. Let's revisit Deuteronomy 30.

Deuteronomy 30:15-16 (NASB 1995)

"Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. What I am commanding you today is to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to obey his commandments, his rules, and his right-rulings. Then you will live and become numerous and the LORD [YHWH] your God will bless you in the land which you are about to possess.

The message of the covenant given at Sinai, and the message given by Paul in the book of Romans, are one and the same.

The law of God is our marriage vows to our Creator.

Again, we need grace. We have sinned, and we will sin again. Grace covers those instances, and praise God for his love despite our shortcomings.

But, if we have true, grace-given salvation afforded through faith, that faith will be evidenced by a desire to keep the commandments of God.

Romans 2:13

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

Romans 3:31

Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Think about it for just a moment. Understand the logic of what Paul is teaching. Our belief in what Messiah Yeshua taught and practiced as the Word of God being true, and evidenced as truth by his death and resurrection, should reflect in our walking out lives as though we believe the Word of God to be true.

In other words, how could you say that you believe the Word of God to be true, and yet not have any desire to practice what you believe to be true?

If you believe that it is wrong to steal, not caring about stealing from others wouldn't make sense.

That is Paul's point. As John said, "those who are righteous will practice righteousness." And as Paul and Deuteronomy teach, practicing righteousness is to keep the law of God, the Torah.

Also note that not obeying God is the same as turning aside to other gods.

Deuteronomy 30:17-20

But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD [YHWH] your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD [YHWH] swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

The call to all who will hear his voice is to "choose life" by "obeying him and being loyal to him" because "he gives you life and enables you to live...."

Thus, Paul's gospel of "righteousness by faith" is the eternal, unchanging message. Faith produces faithfulness, which is expressed through obedience to God's commandments.

So our lives should be lives of faithfulness, which is expressed inwardly as a desire to keep the commandments, and outwardly as the keeping of his commandments.

Remember, the keeping of his commandments is the same as not sinning (1 John 3:4).

Does that mean that we will do this perfectly? No, of course not. When we fail in sin, there is grace.

John summarizes well what we are attempting to teach, so if we have confused you we apologize.

1 John 2:1-6

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. (which means to keep the commandments). But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua] the righteous. (meaning keep the commandments, but when we fail, we have grace). He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, (which means that living a life of intentional sin and abandoning His commandments is living outside of his faith and grace). but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Yes, living a life of intentional sin and abandoning his commandments is living outside of his faith and grace

Hebrews 10:26-31

For if we go on **sinning deliberately** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. **Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.** How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, **and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?** For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The Gospel is a Message of Obedience

This gospel message, which calls all people into obedience to the commandments of the Covenant, is alluded to in Paul's writings in other places.

For example, Paul opens his letter to the Romans by connecting his gospel to the message of calling the nations to obedience:

Romans 1:1-3, 5

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua], called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh... through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations,

Again, Paul points out that his gospel is the same gospel that is proclaimed by the prophets in the Scriptures.

We saw that Moses taught the gospel of the righteousness of God in Deuteronomy 30.

The goal of the gospel is to bring about "**the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.**"

This is in agreement with Paul's description of the gospel in Romans 10 where he ties the gospel as preached in the Torah with the message of righteousness through faithfulness as defined in Deuteronomy 30.

In Deuteronomy 30, the goal of the gospel is to bring about the obedience of all who join God in covenant relationship:

Deuteronomy 30:18-20

I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord [YHWH] your God,

obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord [YHWH] swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

In the gospel, "righteousness of God" is obtained through faith (meaning inward belief in the truth of the Word resulting in a desire to keep the commandments).

Going back to Romans 10, we see Paul describing the source of "faith":

Romans 10:16-17

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Here, Paul notes, that the "good news" is not always obeyed. The relationship between "obeying" and "believing" is here established.

If one truly "believes" the good news, then they will "obey" it.

There is no such thing as believing the Word of God, and at the same time refusing to do the Word of God.

Think about that for a minute.

There is no such thing as believing the Word of God, and at the same time refusing to do the Word of God.

We do what we believe, and believe what we do.

Paul later closes his letter to the Romans with a similar declaration:

Romans 16:25-27

Now to him who is able to strengthen you **according to my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua], according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring **about the obedience of faith**— to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua]! Amen.

Paul's gospel is a proclamation about Christ which was disclosed through the Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets) and results in the nations coming to the obedience of faith.

What is this obedience?

And what is to be obeyed?

Clearly, "faith" comes from what is heard; that is, the commandments which proceed from the mouth of God, and the same word of our Messiah.

Romans 10:16-17

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Our Messiah did not teach or practice a new Word of God.

John 12:49

For I [Yeshua] have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

Therefore, our faith is evidenced by obeying the commandments.

The one who is doing the commandments is the one who is righteous, just as John says:

1 John 3:7

Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Yeshua is righteous.

Consider Zechariah and Elizabeth...

Luke 1:6

And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

So what was the evidence of righteousness before God?

Answer: they practiced righteousness by "walking blamelessly in all of the commandments and statutes of YHWH."

ALL of the commandments blamelessly.

ALL of the commandments.

Those who are in Christ are righteous, not because Christ is righteous, but because those who are "in Christ" are following Christ, the Word of God, by obeying the commandments, in the Word of God.

Not just some of the commandments...but ALL of the commandments.

As Paul also said:

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for **training in righteousness**,

ALL Scripture contains ALL commandments, which means that ALL Scripture and ALL commandments are for training in righteousness.

Therefore, "*righteousness by faith*" is fulfilled when we walk out our faith by doing the commandments.

James 2:21-24

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Did James not teach that just as Abraham was righteous and demonstrated his faith through his obedience and was thus justified?

From a Hebraic point of view, there is no difference between faith and works.

If one has faith, it will be evident in their works.

James 2:18

But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Likewise, one cannot perform good works in God's eyes without having faith.

James 2:17

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:26

For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Paul claims as "my gospel" the message which calls all nations to obedience to the commandments:

Romans 16:25-26

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua], according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring

about the obedience of faith.

Paul's gospel is the one that is revealed "through the prophetic Scriptures," which is to say the Law and the Prophets present this righteousness.

Deuteronomy 30:20

“loving the Lord [YHWH] your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days...”

Is this not the same that is proclaimed in 2 Timothy 3:15-17?

2 Timothy 3:15-17

and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua]. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Through God's Word (all of it, not just some of it) we receive the instructions for righteousness and through that and that alone we are fully equipped or furnished for any and all good works!

Be cautioned against those who teach that some of God's Word is no longer profitable for doctrine and no longer relevant for instructions in righteousness. You don't want to miss out on part of what it means to walk out our faith in the gospel.

The whole Bible is Truth!

This concludes this part of the series. Please continue on to part 3, as we further reveal insights into the whole gospel of God.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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