

Cornerstone Bible Church

Law & Gospel

(Romans 3:25-31)

Survey of Romans part 11

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July 29, 2017

Introduction: Maintaining Balance



A good martial arts instructor, will be more interested in how well you maintain balance, than in how high you can kick.

Understanding the theological balance and relationship that exists between Law and Gospel is not as simple at it seems.

Text: Romans 3:21-31

²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
²²even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Text: Romans 3:21-31

²⁷Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

³⁰since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

³¹Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.”

This ends the reading of the word of God

REVIEW

- Paul wanted to visit Rome where he had never been.
- He desired to communicate the gospel to them.
- He indicates why he is not ashamed of the Gospel.
- He writes about the reasons for the Gospel.
 - God's wrath revealed from heaven (Chapter 1:16-32)
 - God's Irrevocable Judgment (Chapter 2:1-16)
 - Jews and Gentiles Culpability (Chapter 2:17-29)
 - Universal Guilt (Chapter 3:1-20)

- Paul explains how the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the other way to God's Righteousness.

REVIEW

- This is the other way in which God's Righteousness is shown:

"²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested...

²²even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; ...

²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Today: The Connection Between the Law and the Gospel
(Chapter 3:25-31)

Review: Three technical terms related to the gospel:

²⁴**being justified** as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the **forbearance of God** He **passed over** the sins previously committed

a) **Justified / Justification:**

- This is a **forensic** term. It means to be **declared** righteous.
- In our text **dikaiou,menoi** (dikaiousmenoi) is a PRESENT PARTICIPLE, PASSIVE voice.
- The subject is “ALL” who sinned. The action of justification is ongoing (it never stops) and it is done by another.
- “As a gift by His grace” and the “His” is a pronoun replacing God (from verse 23).

Review: Three technical terms related to the gospel:

b) Redemption is qualified by a preposition: “through”.

- The method by which God justifies sinners is “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”
- Redemption is another “technical term” that Paul’s audience connected with. It was “purchasing a slave” from the “Agora” (the market).
- Paul is saying that the way God justifies sinners by grace, is through the payment Jesus issued for them.

Review: Three technical terms related to the gospel:

c) Expiation/Atonement/Propitiation/Reconciliation: *ilasth, rion* (*ilasterion*) implies all of these concepts.

- God publicly presented Jesus as the atoning sacrifice, and as the “Propitiation” (the mercy seat in the tabernacle where the blood of the lamb was sprinkled). (Wrath bearing)
- God put forward Jesus, as the one who through His blood, would bring reconciliation with God (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17).
- The Roman gentiles would relate to the concept of being reconciled, after the court declared the person acquitted and without guilt.

I – THE REASON BEHIND – STOPPED HERE -

The second part of verse 25 explains the reason for this new way to display God's righteousness.

“This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the *forbearance of God* He passed over the sins previously committed ²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

The NAS adds “in the forbearance of God” is an interpretation. This phrase, is not in the text, though it can be assumed.

a) To demonstrate God's righteousness while bypassing sin.

God is a righteous judge, who will render wrath and indignation to the evil doer Romans 2:8 , and will not declare the guilty as innocent Genesis 18:25, however...

=> God passed over the sins previously committed! (?) <=

I – THE REASON BEHIND

b) God has mercy on sinners without violating His perfect righteousness.

This is the dilemma of that old theological question:

- “How can God’s mercy act, without violating His justice?”
Or,
- How can a righteous God forgive sinners without ceasing to be righteous?
- Because the demands of His righteousness were satisfied in Christ’s perfect obedience. (ACTIVE OBEDIENCE)
- Because the punishment required by His righteousness was satisfied in Christ’s atoning death. (PASSIVE OBEDIENCE)

I – THE REASON BEHIND

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- “How can God’s mercy act, without violating His justice?”
Or,
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The “Bribing” of Authorities

The “Bribing” of “Indulgences

The “Bribing” of “good works”

I – THE REASON BEHIND

b) God has mercy on sinners without violating His perfect righteousness.

The Only Payment that could satisfy God's Justice, had to come from someone as worthy of God as He is, and as human as we are.

Because Jesus paid, God remains Just and the Justifier of those who believe.

II - THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LAW & GOSPEL: (v. 27-31)

Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.** ²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. **³¹Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.**

The **connection** between faith and law.

1. Faith and Law are mutually exclusive to save.
2. Since nobody can attain righteousness by keeping the Law, no one can boast
3. **Note: this is true before and after our conversion.**
*** This is what I understood after turning 50 and after having preached the Gospel since I was 19!**
4. Faith intersects equally with Jews and Gentiles, because both are sinners alike.
5. Faith establishes and vindicates the Law. Because it was kept by Jesus, the only One who satisfied the righteousness of God.

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The **connection** between faith and law.

6. Faith and Law are concomitant displaying God's righteousness.
7. The Law leads to the Gospel Galatians 3:24 *"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."*
8. The Gospel gains traction in the inability of the sinner to be saved by the Law. (vs 28 above)
9. ** The Christian sees in the Law, a guide to do what is pleasing to God, but NOT as the means to please God! **
- 10. We are already accepted in Christ!**
11. Therefore, you do not "try harder" but you look to Christ!

II - THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LAW & GOSPEL: 27-31

³¹Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

(In this section I give credit to Arturo Perez' help)

Orthodox Evangelicalism agrees regarding the **connection** between faith and law, but there is a very subtle line.

Who uses the Law?

1st Use: God uses the Law to Crush our pride, define Sin & Kill our self righteousness.

2nd Use: God uses the Law to Protect and Restrain Evil. Not only the Civil Law which restrains evil, but even the Law in the heart which conduces to civility.

3rd Use: God uses the Law to show us what is pleasing to Him.

II - THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LAW & GOSPEL: (v. 27-31)

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- We must distinguish between:
 Righteousness according to the Law
 versus
 Righteousness according to Faith
- In Philippians 3 Paul said that he was “blameless” in the righteousness according to the Law, but in the same paragraph he stated that he held that righteousness as “rubbish”.
- **Why?**
- For the sake of having a righteousness which is according to Faith in Christ.

CONCLUSION: 31

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The Law:

1. **Reveals** – (Theological use). It reveals God’s holy character.
(Theological use)
2. **Restrains** – (Civil use). It restrains of evil, protecting the righteous from the unjust.
3. **Reforms** - (Practical use). It shows what is pleasing to God. The law enlighten us as to what is pleasing to our Father, whom we seek to serve. The Christian delights in the law as God Himself delights in it. Jesus said, “if you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). This is the highest function of the law, to serve as an instrument for the people of God to give Him honor and glory.”

CONCLUSION: 31

³¹Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

1 Timothy 1:8 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

The real DANGER is, as soon as you start to talk about the third use of the law, the Old Adam will take advantage of it to pretend it is possible for the old man to “improve.”

The old man cannot improve, the old man must be killed.

We are not in control on how God uses His Law, we just need to preach it in the name of Jesus.

And we must always preach it, in connection to Jesus!

END