

The Righteousness of God- Sermon Study Romans 3:21-31

The problem this sermon addresses is idolatry-

Idolatry takes on many shapes. It is anything that you put your security or significance in that isn't God. This can be both yourself and your own righteousness (karma for example) or something outside yourself (stopping short of the Giver to focus on the gift). Read Romans 1:18-25. Notice idolatry is an exchange.

Read this article <http://www.christianpost.com/news/you-believe-in-karma-79037/> . How do we allow the philosophy of karma to undermine our view of God? Do we understand that as we make the idol exchange (Romans 1:23) that the great crime is not accepting the idol but missing out on God?

Read this quote by John Piper,

“Millions of nominal Christians have never experienced a fundamental alteration of that foundation of happiness. Instead, they have absorbed the notion that becoming Christian means turning to Jesus to get what you always wanted before you were born again. So, if you wanted wealth, you stop depending on yourself for it, and by prayer and faith and obedience you depend on Jesus for wealth. If you wanted to be healthy, you turn from mere human cures to Jesus as the source of your health. If you wanted to escape the pain of hell, you turn to Jesus for the escape. If you wanted to have a happy marriage, you come to Jesus for help. If you wanted peace of conscience and freedom from guilt feelings, you turn to Jesus for these things. In other words, to become a Christian, in this way of seeing things, is to have all the same desires you had as an unregenerate person— only you get them from a new source, Jesus. And He feels so loving when you do. But there's no change at the bottom of your heart and your cravings. No change at the bottom of what makes you happy. There's no change in the decisive foundation of your joy. You just shop at a new store. The dinner is still the same, you just have a new butler. The bags in the hotel room are still the same; just a new bellhop. That's not what the new birth is. It's not having all the same desires you had as an unregenerate person and just getting them from a new source. The new birth changes the bottom, the root, the foundation of what makes us happy. Self at the bottom is replaced by Jesus. God Himself. What makes born-again people glad is not at bottom that they have God's gifts but that they have God.”

In what ways have you stopped short of worshipping God and worshipped the gift instead?

Main Idea- The true gospel rests upon and displays God's righteousness. And to gaze upon this gospel is our life's work.

The gospel reveals God's righteousness (Romans 1:15-17).

Read Romans 3:21-31. This is the gospel! How does this solve the problem of idolatry?

God's Saving Righteousness- Romans 3:21-25a

1. God's Righteousness is revealed in the measure of our unworthiness.

-Look at Romans 3:23. How does the fact that "all have sinned" actually comfort us?

-Read this quote from Matt Chandler, "Someone who says hell cannot be real, or we can't all deserve it even if it is real, because God is love is saying that the name and the renown and the glory of Christ aren't that big of a deal. Is this the approach we want to take, that hell for eternity is the wrong punishment for our belittlement of the glory of God? If so, in essence we say, "The punishment doesn't fit the crime because the crime isn't that big of a deal." Is this justifiable logic? No, it's just a slight case of refusal to be satisfied with the all-sufficiency of the God of the universe."

What does the punishment tell us about the crime?

-Bishop Handley Moule stated, "The harlot, the liar, the murderer are short of God's glory, but so are you. Perhaps they stand at the bottom of a mine, and you on the crest of an Alp; but you are as little able to touch the stars as they."

How do we fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to the people around us? Does it make a difference if we see others as better as or worse than ourselves? How can this line of thinking perhaps lead to the various forms of idolatry?

2. God's Righteousness is revealed in the manner of the sacrifice.

- Read Revelation 2:1-7. This church lost their first love. They had been exhorted in this (Ephesians 3:14-21), and yet they still fell victim to this. Are there ways that you have forgotten your first love? Are there practical ways to prevent this?

- Read Matthew 27.

God's Justice- Romans 3:25b-26

-Paul is not answering the question, "Why doesn't God save everyone?" Instead, he asking, "How can God save anyone and remain just?" Read Mark 2:1-13. Only God can forgive sins, because every sin is a belittling of His glory. When He declares us righteous, it is not only the act of a good judge, but it is also the mercy of the victim.

Does this help you to desire God more than any corruptible idol? How does this recognition of God's sacrifice and justice change our worship? How does it help us to take our eyes off of the gift of salvation and put it onto the Giver?

- Matt Chandler writes, "Worship... is larger and more encompassing than singing some songs at a church service a couple of times a week. It is the way of life for those entranced by and passionate for the glory of God. We worship God when, while we partake of his good gifts, something occurs in the deepest parts of our soul that forbids glory terminating on the gift itself or on our enjoyment of it but that runs deeper into and extends out to the Giver."

What does worship like this look like? How can we make this a pattern in our lives? Does this also change the level of importance we place on Sunday morning worship? What is the greatest gift God has given you? 2nd greatest? 3rd greatest? What was your response? What are the little things that God does daily? How do place not let our focus settle on the gift? Notice it is good to enjoy the gifts, but that enjoyment should move us to worshipping God.

Dependence- Romans 27-31

- Read Romans 11:33-35. Salvation is a debt that we can never repay. Every truly good work we can do is prepared beforehand by God (Eph. 2:8-10) with the glory of God as its aim (1 Peter 4:11). Have you been trying to earn God's favor with your work? Is the aim of your service to glorify God?
- Read Philippians 2:12-13. If every truly good work that we do is by the grace of God, how might this change the way we pray?

Application

- Idolatry is a subversive thing. It can creep in without our awareness. By gazing at the gospel, we see the righteousness of God, and everything else should become dimmer in comparison. Don't graduate past the gospel. How are you going to keep this in front of you? Read Psalm 46:10. Watch this video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4e87vIRpds>.
- Take an inventory of your family, job, friends... how you spend your time, talents, and money. Have any of these become idols? Do you see any idols in your checkbook, in the way you spend your time? Voddie Baucham wrote, "There seems to be an increasing emphasis on our children achieving the 'American Dream' at the expense of any sort of costly Christian commitment. It is as though we have forgotten that this is not our home, that the best this world has to offer pales in comparison to what God has in store for us." Is there any area where the American Dream has supplanted God?