

The Righteousness of God is Revealed to The One Who Has Faith

Romans (Message #3)

Romans 1: 17

Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Last time we studied Romans 1:7-16, in which Paul says that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. When we listen to the gospel, the power of God goes into our heart and changes us! Today we continue to look at the next verse:

^{NASB} **Romans 1:17** ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” (Rom 1:17 NASB)

Here the word “it” refers to the gospel, so we can read the passage like this: “For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.”

What does “from faith to faith” mean? From whose faith is the righteousness revealed and unto whose faith?

Here I am not playing with words. These are important questions, and through the centuries many articles have been written on this verse, Romans 1:17. Many people have expounded this verse and debated on its meaning. You can go to read all those articles in different commentaries if you want, but I will not follow those commentaries. I will try to explain this verse in very simple language so that even young Christians and non-believers can understand it. My aim is to preach the gospel to all people to the ends of the earth, that’s the command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness of God is based on faith

We can look at the context of this verse, Romans 1:17, to try to find the meaning of this phrase “from faith to faith”. But we won’t find any obvious hints from the context, so we need to turn to the original Greek language of the New Testament.

Romans 1:17 For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith “ἐκ πίστεως” (ék pisteōs) to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

The original Greek words of “from faith” are “ἐκ πίστεως” (ék pisteōs); this phrase is also used in Romans 10:6.

^{NASB} **Romans 10:6** But the righteousness based on faith (ék pisteōs dikaiosúne) speaks thus, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down)

Here we have the same Greek construction “ék pisteōs” (*from faith*, or based on faith) as in Romans 1:17. These two passages, Romans 1:17 and Romans 10:6, show us that the righteousness of God is based on faith (or from faith), which means if you have faith, you have righteousness from God.

Righteousness of men is based on the Law

Having looked at the righteousness of God, we now look at the righteousness of men.

^{NASB} **Romans 4:14** For if those who are of the Law (ék nómu) are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

Here we have the construction (ék nó mou) (out of the Law, based on the Law). But according to Romans 1:17 and Romans 10:6, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith and based on faith (“ék písteōs”), therefore those of the Law are not heirs.

^{NASB} **Romans 10:3** For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

In this passage there are two kinds of righteousness: God's righteousness and their own righteousness, that is, the righteousness of men. The word “they” refers to the Jews who, not knowing the righteousness of God, tried to establish their own righteousness by works of the Law.

Righteousness of God based upon faith is revealed to the one who has faith

Now we look at Romans 1:17 again. From the syntax of the Greek text, the verse should be read in this order: “For the righteousness of God which is based upon faith is revealed in it (in the gospel) to the one who has faith.” This is precisely a whole summary of the book of Romans. And that's why the righteous man shall live by faith.

I identify totally with this verse, Romans 1:17, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”. Many years ago when I was still a non-believer, I was very proud of myself, being a self-made moral person. I despised Christians, and even blasphemed Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then someone gave me a Bible. At first I didn't want to read it, and I just put it aside. But in my nature I loved to read books. One day I was bored and had nothing to do, so I just opened the Bible to do some reading. I read the gospel of Matthew, and the words of the Lord Jesus hit me. It is exactly like what is says in Romans 1:17, “The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel to the one who has faith.” The Bible became like a mirror, and through the Bible I saw how ugly I was. But the Bible was so interesting that I didn't want to stop, so I kept

on reading. And the more I read the Bible, the more I saw the righteousness of God and my own sins. Now when I look back, I know it was at that moment that Yahweh God revealed His righteousness to me through His word.

If you want to understand more about the teaching on “Faith” and “Righteousness”, I recommend you to visit my website www.GospelandSalvation.com to read my sermon “Righteousness in the Holy Spirit” which is the 4th sermon in the series “The Kingdom of God and Eternal Life”.