

1. **Introduction**: More detail on some key points from Rm 1 through 7. Text from NIV Bible.
 - Paul's theme deals with the righteousness required to be able to live in God's presence (must be holy as God is holy). No human can earn that righteousness for themselves. But God graciously provides the righteousness needed as a gift to those who believe.
 - Faith (trust in God) is the key.
2. **NIV Romans 1:16-17**: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*
 - Paul has confidence the gospel will not disappoint. As God's Word, the gospel has inherent power to bring salvation to everyone who believes. Righteousness by faith from first to last.
 - The Roman Empire had enormous power. Despite that great power, the Romans, to whom Paul was writing, like everyone else, were powerless in themselves to become righteous before God.
 - Greek and Roman philosophers had realized their people were morally sick and needed help. Epictetus (Greek philosopher living in Rome) called his lecture room “the hospital for the sick soul.” Epicurus called his teaching “the medicine of salvation.”
 - The Roman philosopher Seneca (who was tutor to Nero) said Rome was “a cesspool of inequity.” Juvenal, a Roman poet, said Rome was a “filthy sewer into which the dregs of the empire flood.”
 - Seneca said, because people were so conscious of “their weakness and their inefficiency in necessary things,” all men were looking “towards salvation.”
 - Epictetus said, people were looking for peace “not of Caesar's proclamation, but of God's.” The people of the Empire were aware its moral shortcomings.
3. **God's Gift**: The gospel reveals a righteousness that is God's **gift** to all who will believe. The gift of righteousness from God opens the door to salvation for all who will trust in His power to save. How can this be? What is the source of the righteousness God will give to believers?
 - God's gift of righteousness is made possible by Jesus who vicariously (for all all believers) earned righteousness under the Law by living His incarnate life in perfect obedience to that Law.
 - When the first human sin was committed, all Adam's future descendants were physically “in Adam.” Likewise, when Jesus earned righteousness by His perfect obedience to the Law, all who believe were spiritually “in Christ.”
 - Jesus' earned righteousness is sufficient for all who believe. When through faith (trust) a person believes in Jesus and the salvation He earned, the Father, based on Jesus' earned righteousness, **justifies** the person, that is, declares them legally righteous before Him.

- God's gift of justification provides legal righteousness before God but does not make a person experientially righteous. Experiential righteousness is added to justification through the transformation process of sanctification and glorification (being made holy).
 - Romans 8:30 assures believers that if they have been justified, they will be glorified. Justification is the key that opens the door to sanctification and glorification.
4. ^{NIV} **Romans 8:30:** *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*
- In general, God promises to complete the good work He begins in us. Our part is faith and obedience. We understand "obedience." But do we understand "faith" which is so important that Hebrews 11:6A says, *"And without faith it is impossible to please God."*
5. **Faith:** There are different kinds of faith, but every kind of faith involves trust in one or more objects. Believers encounter 4 kinds of faith – Natural Faith, Saving Faith, Sustaining Faith, and the Spiritual Gift of Faith. These are all different, but each one involves trust.
- Faith is not an "end" in itself. It is a "means" by which "ends" are achieved.
6. **Natural Faith:** Natural faith is confident trust in things, people, events, ideas, etc. That confident trust believes that people, ideas, etc. will function the way you think they will. Natural faith enables willful action in the face of unknowns.
- Commitment to action without knowing the outcome is what we call "risk taking."
 - If I board a plane scheduled for New York, I trust that I will arrive safely in New York.
7. **Faith's Object:** The confident trust that is the basis of faith is always focused on an object. Faith is always "faith in" something or someone. The validity of faith (confident trust) is determined by the trustworthiness of the object. It is not determined by the strength with which faith is held.
- If I choose to walk out on the ice of a frozen lake, the strength of my faith in the ability of the ice to support me is of no consequence. The only thing that matters is the actual strength of the ice.
 - Natural faith's objects are things of the world – people, companies, means of transportation and communication, governments, ideas, etc. Faith in God involves supernatural faith discussed later.
8. **Acquiring Natural Faith:** As a part of God's common grace to all people, the ability for natural faith is given at birth to everyone and further developed through doing. This is easily seen by watching a baby learn to walk.
- Without natural faith, a normal life would be impossible. Everyone is obliged to be a risk-taker, i.e., one who acts without prior knowledge of the consequences of the action. Risk should be evaluated to the best of your ability within the time available.
9. **Purpose of Natural Faith:** It is essential to enable living a normal human life.
- We must choose courses of action even though outcome of a choice cannot be known with certainty in advance of the action. Natural faith enables the normal "risk-taking" necessary to act as a person.

- Faith, as confident belief in the truth, value, and trustworthiness of a person, idea, event, or thing, enabling action, implies commitment to faith's object and a willingness for corresponding actions.
 - Today's world is not lacking in natural faith. Everyone exercises natural faith based on both good and bad reasons. People differ primarily in the objects toward which their faith is directed. Faith in wrong objects often leads to disastrous, ruinous consequences.
 - Natural faith, in its power to organize our faculties and give them definite set and drive, is a master force for good or for evil.
10. **Supernatural Faith:** Also called Biblical faith, supernatural faith is a gift of God when He chooses to give it. Biblical faith does not depend on the recipient's ability to believe but on God's ability to impart that faith. Biblical faith is the link between the Divine and people.
- The object of supernatural faith is God. The validity of the faith God gives doesn't depend on us in any way; it depends entirely on the trustworthiness of God.
11. **How Does a Person Acquire Supernatural Faith:** When a person is "born again," given new spiritual life, and a place in God's family, God gives them supernatural faith. God is in total control of that process. The person is passive under God's divine actions.
12. **Types of Supernatural Faith:** There are 3 types of supernatural faith. Saving faith, sustaining faith, and the Spiritual Gift of Faith. Each is somewhat different, but all involve trust in God.
13. **Saving Faith:** Saving faith is the God-given instrument through which by grace we receive salvation – setting us on the path of righteousness. It is the only means of salvation (Eph 2:8)
- Faith (trust) in Jesus Christ and His vicarious salvation work becomes the saving basis of life for all who through belief are declared righteous (justified).
14. **Sustaining Faith:** God gives sustaining faith to all who receive "saving faith." "Sustaining faith" is God's gift to carry believers through mortal life from time of first belief to the end.
15. **The Spiritual Gift of Faith:** This special faith (1 Cor 12) is not given to all believers. It is a gift by the Holy Spirit to provide particular believers with extraordinary confidence in God's promises, power, and presence, enabling them to do heroic things in support of God's work.
- People in the Bible who possessed the "spiritual gift of faith" demonstrated strong, unshakeable confidence in God, His Word, and His promises include Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, and Moses. Others are cited in the Hebrews 11 "hall of faith."
 - The extraordinary faith of these people energized by the Holy Spirit enabled them to do extraordinary, superhuman things.
16. **The Righteous Shall Live by Faith:** The "righteous" shall live by faith is true in two senses. First, before believing in Jesus, those who are now righteous before God were "**dead in sins.**" By faith in Jesus and His saving work, they became **alive "in Christ."**
- Next, from the time they are regenerated, believers are to live their life by faith. From beginning of "life in Christ" to the end of mortal life, faith is their lynch pin. Saving faith enabling justification begins the Christian life. Sustaining faith carries to the end.

- In 1:16, Paul speaks of salvation. What do we need to be *saved from*? The greatest peril humans face is God's holy wrath against all that is inconsistent with His holy character. The next verses address God's wrath and the depraved Gentile world.

17.^{NIV} **Romans 1:18-20:** *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

- Faith when misplaced leads to sin. God's wrath against sin is certain. Paul describes unrighteous humanity's downward progression beginning with suppressing the truth about God that should be seen by what He has made.
- Sinful humans do not want to see, and do not want others to recognize, God's eternal power or divine nature determinable from what He has created.

18.^{NIV} **Romans 1:21-23:** *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.*

- Sinful humanity rejected recognizing God as creator, and refused to give thanks to Him as their provider. Congratulating themselves for their wisdom in eliminating God from their world view, they became fools, unable to understand basic truths of the universe.
- Though claiming to be wise, their hearts became dark. They keep following the path to destruction. They worshiped things God created rather than worshipping Him.

19.^{NIV} **Romans 1:24-27:** *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

- Having ignored the thumb-print of God in the world He created, they neither glorified Him or gave thanks, thinking how wise they were, but they became fools, turned away from worshipping God to the worship of images of created beings – men and women, birds, animals, and reptiles. These evils caused God to give them over to the sinful desires of their hearts – permitting anything they desired.

- God gave them over to shameful lusts and with God’s restraints removed, men and women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones, there seemed to be nothing so degrading that someone wouldn’t do it.
20. ^{NIV} **Romans 1:28:** *Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.*
- After God “gave them over,” they saw no value in knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind releasing them to do whatever they chose to do.
21. ^{NIV} **Romans 1:29-31:** *They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.*
- With God’s restraints gone, they become filled with every kind of wickedness, greed, and depravity. Not satisfied with known evils, they invent new ways of doing evil.
 - They have no understanding of right and wrong, are faithful to nothing, trust nothing, love nothing, and show mercy to no one.
22. ^{NIV} **Romans 1:32:** *Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*
- Even if they know or become aware of God’s righteous decrees that what they are doing will lead to eternal punishment, they continue to do what they want and approve of others who do the same.
 - Not all are in this depraved category, but all have sinned and come short of what God expects of them. Everyone has sinned, fallen short, and needs God’s salvation to save them from the wrath of God in judgment.
 - The first few verses of Chapter 2 complete the picture showing that all people are accountable to God, and all are guilty of sin.
23. ^{NIV} **Romans 2:1-3:** *You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ² Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³ So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment?*