

1. **Introduction:** Paul's major points in Chapter 1 then review of Chapters 2-4.
  - (1.) There were and are people ashamed of the gospel, but because Paul knows it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, he is not ashamed.
  - (2.) Righteousness before God is necessary for people to obtain salvation from consequences of their sins. No human can earn righteousness for themselves. God graciously provides the necessary righteousness to those who believe so that they may be "justified" before Him.
  - (3.) Being declared legally righteous before God is a key step in the process of salvation.
  - (4.) God revealed His glory (His eternal power and divine nature) in what He created.
  - (5.) Therefore, because God's invisible qualities can be clearly seen in what He has created, the truth about God should be plain to all people.
  - (6.) Sin entered the world of people by Adam and Eve disobeying God's command.
  - (7.) Sin degrades the perfect world God created. Sin is disobedience. God is morally offended by sin. Sin prohibits people from dwelling with God.
  - (8.) Since Adam and Eve's first sin, all people have willfully rebelled against God, wickedly denying and suppressing truth about God made available in what He created
  - (9.) God's wrath is directed against willful disobedience of His moral Law. It is directed against evil that distorts relationships and destroys the good things God made possible.
  - (10.) If a sinner is settled in their sin and unwilling to change, God's wrath toward their wicked behavior takes the form of giving the sinners over to themselves, abandoning them to their willful self-centeredness to do as they please. The moral and spiritual degeneration that results is the consequence of God's judicial act. That form of God's wrath is revealed all around us.
  - (11.) In Romans 1:18-31, Paul addresses the wickedness of depraved people in the Gentile world. In Chapter 2, He turns his attention to people (Gentiles and Jews) who know right from wrong (are morally educated).
2. **Chapter 2:** Both morally educated Gentiles and Jews look down on and condemningly judge people they believe to be offenders of common morality.
  - Jesus gave an example of this mindset in His story of a Pharisee and Publican at prayer (Luke 18:10-14). The Pharisee brags to God about his piety and condemns the Publican who humbly prostrates himself as unworthy before God.
  - Using Jesus' illustration, we could say Paul in chapter 1 speaks to people like the morally uneducated Publican. In chapter 2 he speaks to people like the morally educated Pharisee.
  - The morally educated people Paul refers to include both Jews and Gentiles. Pharisees and Sadducees were typical of morally educated Jews. Seneca and Epictetus (philosophers) of Rome and those who followed their philosophy were morally educated Gentiles.

- People who believe they have superior moral knowledge tend to be judgmental about people who aren't "one of them." Paul says in 2:1 to such people, ***"Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things."***
  - Paul's point is that, when moralists who believe they are morally above poor sinners, do the same kinds of things they condemn in others, they will be subject to God's judgment.
  - God judges both Jew and Gentile impartially. His chosen people, Israel, face the same principles of obedience to God's moral law as everyone else.
  - Both morally educated and morally uneducated are judged based on their obedience or disobedience of God's moral law. Actions consistent with God's character are obedient.
3. **Romans 2: 14-15a**: ***For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts.***
4. **Chapter 3**: If a Jew faces the same impartial judgment from God that Gentiles face, is there any advantage in being a Jew, one of God's chosen people?
- Paul says, "much in every way." One huge benefit is God entrusted His oracles to them.
  - These oracles of God are His written revelation given before the time of Jesus (OT). God gave His chosen people the indescribable gift of His Word for them to obey and to faithfully and accurately preserve it for future generations.
  - Later in the letter (9:4), Paul will expand the thought about Jewish advantage explaining that Israel was given the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises.
  - Many Jews did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, but Jewish unbelief did not make God wrong or cause the gospel to fail.
  - From the OT, Paul shows Jews and Gentiles are alike universally guilty before God. ***"There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable."*** (3:10-11)
5. **Romans 3:20**: ***By works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.***
- The Law enables us to see our sin, but by works of the Law, no one can be saved. It cannot save us from sin's penalty. If we break the Law, it can only condemn not save.
6. **Romans 3:21-24**: ***But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.***
- The requirement for salvation changes abruptly from verse 20 to 21. The Law saves no one because no one can obey it fully.

- God, knowing our inability to earn righteousness, through obedience of the Law, graciously makes available through Jesus a righteousness apart from the Law.
  - This righteousness God provides is “apart from the Law” in that it bypasses the Law’s requirement for full-time, perfect obedience to the Law to earn righteousness. It does so through the benefits to believers of Jesus’ vicarious, perfect life under the Law and sacrificial death on the cross.
7. **Romans 3:29-30**: *Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup> since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.*
- God’s justification of a person is by His “grace” through the recipients “faith.” Because a person believes (has faith in Jesus Christ), God will justify them, the circumcised and the uncircumcised.
  - In other words, everyone who believes in Jesus and His salvation work will be justified.
8. **Romans Chapter 4**: Abraham and David received righteousness apart from works.
9. **Romans 4:1-3**: *What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”*
- Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 showing that Abraham believed God and God accounted it to him as righteousness. Thus, Abraham was not justified by works but was declared righteous because he believed (had faith in) God.
  - Righteousness is more than the absence of evil and guilt. It is a positive good. When He justifies us, God declares us both legally innocent and legally righteous before Him. This gracious blessing is for both Jew and Gentile, for all who believe.
10. **Romans 4:4-5**: *Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift (grace) but as his due. <sup>5</sup> And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.*
- The way of salvation (OT and NT eras) has always been “saved by grace through faith.”
11. **Romans 4:13-14**: *For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.*
- God’s promise to Abraham was based on the principle of faith, not Law or works.
  - Since all God’s dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob happened before the Mosaic Law was given, those dealings cannot be said to be based on the Law or obedience to it. God’s dealings with them were based on His declaration of Abraham’s righteousness through faith.
  - If only those who could be obedient to God’s righteous commands can be heirs, there will be no heirs because no one can be perfectly obedient. If obedience (works) is the determining factor, there is no need for faith, and there will be no fulfilled promise. But

since God based His promise to Abraham on the righteousness of faith, it is a promise that will be fulfilled for the faithful.

12. **Romans 4:15-16:** *For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.*

- The Law brings wrath because our inability to keep the Law (we transgress it) means that it acts as a vehicle of God's wrath towards us. The law cannot bring us into the blessings of God's promises, not because the Law is bad, but because we cannot keep it.

13. **Romans 4:16:** *That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.*

- Faith is related to grace as works is related to Law. Grace and Law are principles. Faith is the means by which we receive God's grace. "Works" is the means by which we attempt to satisfy the Law.
- Salvation is by God's grace, and we receive that salvation through the means of faith. God's promise is to Abraham and all his offspring (physical and spiritual). He is the father of all, who like Abraham, believe God.

14. **Romans 4:20-25:** *No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." <sup>23</sup> But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

- Abraham had God's promise. He believed God could and would do what He promised.
- We too have God's promise in the form of the gospel which is the power of God for salvation to all who believe. Abraham looked forward to what God said He would do. We look back to what God in Christ has already accomplished.
- In Acts 13:27-28, Paul says, in condemning and executing Jesus the people of Jerusalem and their rulers fulfilled the words of the prophets which they had failed to understand.

15. **Raised for our justification:** Question #33 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

*Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.*

- Jesus our Lord was delivered up for our trespasses. His death paid the penalty due us for our sins.
- His perfect life under the Law earned righteousness that is credited to believers.

16. **Next:** Highlights of Chapters 5-7.