

The Just Shall Live By Faith
(Romans 1-3; Hebrews 10:11-11:6)

Introduction:

- I. We studied in the last hour the book of Habakkuk. We studied that Habakkuk was distressed because it seemed that injustice was all around, and the enemies of Judah and God were threatening them. Habakkuk's cry that it does not seem fair for God to allow the wicked to "devour a man more righteous than he." God's answer to Habakkuk's complaint was simple: "The just shall live by faith."
- II. This statement was not only mentioned once in the Bible, however. We studied that Paul used the same phrase twice, and the writer of Hebrews used it as well. This morning's lesson is aimed at the New Testament use of this phrase with a view toward outlining the entire scheme of redemption as authored by Jesus Christ our Lord. All three passages we will study today contain the statement, "The just shall live by faith."
 - a. First of all, we will discuss the problem and condition we were in before Christ.
 - i. Romans 1-3
 - b. Second, we will discuss the results of Christ's intervention among man.
 - i. Hebrews 10:1-18
 - c. Third, we will discuss what is required of us, so that we may be saved.
 - i. Hebrews 10:19-11:6; Galatians 3.
- III. This lesson has the potential to aid each one of us, because we are in one of three conditions before God: sinners who need to hear the gospel, novices in the gospel who need grounding in faith, or skilled workers of the gospel who need to teach the gospel. Therefore, let us begin.

Discussion:

- I. Open your Bibles to the book of Romans. I like Paul's writing style. It is almost like a theatrical production, where the characters and plot are mentioned briefly at the beginning, and developed throughout the production. Paul does this in his letters. He gives a brief introduction to what he will address later in the letter. The whole book of Romans can almost be summed up into verses 16 and 17.
 - a. ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'***
 - i. What does it mean that Paul was not ashamed? It means that he was bold and ready to preach the gospel (cf. the previous verses).
 - ii. The rest of this verse is jam-packed with information, which we will gather as we follow Paul's development of the topic.
 - b. Paul's next statement seems to be a bit of a jump: ***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.***
 - i. This is Paul giving a background to what he has just said. Salvation and Godly righteousness are given because men are neither righteous nor Godly. Not only are they in the wrong, they prevent others from seeing God as well, for they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness."
 - ii. Paul then develops this thought, beginning with the Gentiles (Anyone not a Jew):
 1. They knew God, but did not glorify him (1:21)
 2. They exchanged God's glory, by picturing God as resembling created things (23).
 - a. They ultimately raised man up to be God.
 3. They did not retain God, so God gave them up to uncleanness, vile passions, and a debased mind (24, 26, 28)
 - a. We see evidence of this in verses 27, 29-32.
 - b. Not only did they do these things, they condoned them (cf. the Message.)

- iii. Paul then moves over to the Jews.
 - 1. They judged those who did evil things, but did the same things (cf. 1:32).
 - 2. The name of God was blasphemed among unbelievers because of their hypocrisy.
 - a. They boasted that they had the law, but they did not keep it.
 - 3. Paul concludes that a true Jew is a Jew through and through.
 - a. We can be the same way. We have forgiveness of sins, but do we leave our sins? Do we share the gospel? Or is baptism only an outward sign?
- iv. Then Paul rains down the fire and brimstone, quotations from the Old Testament:
 - 1. ***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; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is on their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.***
 - 2. Then he says that the law speaks only to those who are under the law, and that it does not bring forgiveness, but realization of sin.
- v. Then Paul gives the solution:
 - 1. The righteousness of God is revealed, or manifested, apart from the law.
 - a. It is righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - i. There is no distinction as to whom the righteousness of God is given, because all need it (3:23). The only requirement is faith.
 - ii. This righteousness is given freely by God's grace.
 - iii. This righteousness is given through the redemption that is in Christ, for that was his purpose.
 - 1. Atonement by his blood.
 - 2. Atonement through faith.
 - 3. Atonement in order to demonstrate his righteousness because he has overlooked past sins.
 - a. This demonstration is for two purposes:
 - i. That he may be just.
 - ii. That he may be the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ.
- vi. Conclusions from this development:
 - 1. All men are sinful and deserve the wrath of God, for none is righteous.
 - 2. God is righteous, and he makes men righteous by faith, leading to a faithful relationship between man and God (cf. 2:14). <REPEAT>
 - 3. The **righteousness of God** is revealed **by faith, leading to a faithful relationship.**
 - 4. **for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith.**

II. Now turn to the book of Hebrews, chapter ten.

- a. We just discussed that man is sinful, and we briefly mentioned God's solution to our problem.
- b. Now we will discuss the old covenant with God and man, and how it was insufficient to bring man to perfection.
- c. Hebrews 10:2 – ***The Law...can never with these...sacrifices...make those who approach perfect.***
 - i. The law of our land does not prevent crime, does it? It just lets us know what is legal and what is not. That is the same as the law of the Old Testament.
 - ii. Also, sacrifices do not bring forgiveness. They bring appeasement. God looked at those sacrifices as if to say, "I know you sinned, but because of your sacrifice and change of heart, I am not going to pour out my wrath on you. Now, our sins are divorced!

- iii. Neither the law nor sacrifice can make us perfect. These have to do with dealing with our past sins. Perfection comes in Christ, because he is the sacrifice once for all (10-17).
- iv. Verse 18 – Where there is aphasis of sins, there is no longer an offering for sin.
 - 1. Aphasis is the word used for forgiveness and divorce in the New Testament. This shows us how God expects us to separate from our sins when we become Christians. You would not expect a couple to divorce and live together as if they were not divorced, would you? But since our sins are gone from us, we do not need sacrifice for our sins.
- d. What we are to do in response
 - i. Draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith
 - 1. We must have our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience
 - 2. We must have our bodies washed in pure water.
 - a. Cf. Romans 2:28-29
 - ii. Hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.
 - 1. God is faithful.
 - iii. Stir one another up to love and good works, making it a priority to be together for encouragement.
 - 1. If we do not do good works, we will fall into the hands of an angry God.
 - 2. Therefore the Hebrew writer reinforces the need for encouragement:
 - a. ***Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.***
 - b. Here is the mention of “The just shall live by faith” as written in Habakkuk 2:4.
 - iv. Conclusions:
 - 1. Because of our sins, Christ came to be a sacrifice that would make us perfect, totally divorcing our sins from us.
 - 2. Since we have become pure, we must draw near to God with a full assurance of faith.
 - 3. We must stick to our confession of our hope without wavering.
 - 4. We must encourage one another and stir up good works (to replace our sinful works).
 - 5. We must be loyal to God and be faithful, and we will be fine. “The just shall live by faith.”

III. Now we will visit our final passage, Galatians 3.

- a. Like we discussed with Romans earlier, Paul often opens his letter with an introduction which he later develops. In the first chapter (6-9), Paul says “I marvel that you are so quickly removed from the gospel.”
 - i. In chapters two and three, Paul shows that he is talking about those who would try to enforce the Old Testament Law on top of the commandments from the New Testament.
 - ii. As we discussed in our exposition of Hebrews 10, the law was unable to bring forgiveness. Verse 11 says that we are not justified by the law, but that “The just shall live by faith.”
 - iii. Furthermore, Paul says that the law was annulled, so if justification comes by the law, then justification is annulled as well. But the law was a tutor, to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.
 - iv. That is how we are heirs of Abraham’s promise. As many of us as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, and thus we are heirs according to the promise.

Conclusion:

- I. We discussed and learned from Romans that all of us deserve the wrath of God. We are in no way deserving of God's love, much less a justification before him. However, God's process of justifying us also serves to show his own righteousness. Therefore we are justified by faith.
- II. We discussed and learned from Hebrews that Christ came and died to be a perfect sacrifice for us, totally divorcing us from our sins, so that we may draw near to God by our faith, never ceasing to confess our hope boldly before men. We must encourage one another and replace our sinful actions with good works, and let this be our new lifestyle: "The just shall live by faith."
- III. We discussed and learned from Galatians that the gospel is based on justification, and that we are brought to God by our faith, which leads us to be baptized. This baptism puts us into Christ, so that we are considered Abraham's seed, and therefore we are heirs of Abraham's promise.
- IV. I mentioned before that this is a lesson for all of us.
 - a. If you are an experienced Christian, take these things into consideration, and remember Romans 1-3, Hebrews 10, and Galatians 3 for your own teaching of the lost.
 - b. If you are a novice in Christ, hopefully this lesson has emphasized what you already know, and hopefully this has encouraged you to keep going and continue to improve your walk with God.
 - c. If you have not become a Christian, or if you have thrown away your hope in Christ, I pray that you will sincerely meditate on these things.
 - i. You are not too guilty – All of us deserve the wrath of God. The only thing required before receiving righteousness of God is your willingness to be faithful to him.
 1. What does it mean to be faithful to God?
 - a. When someone is married, they make the decision to forsake all others to the pleasing of their spouse. If they never turn away from their spouse, but rather place their spouse before themselves, we consider them faithful.
 - i. Likewise, when we are faithful to God, we leave our sins. We divorce them from our lives, never to live with them again.
 - b. When someone is faithful to their spouse, they wear a ring to show others that they are married. Their spouse remains part of their communication.
 - i. When we are faithful to God, we never cease to talk about him, and we never cease to profess the hope and joy we have in Christ.
 - c. When someone is faithful to their spouse, they submit to one another.
 - i. When we are faithful to God, we obey his commandments. Our reconciliation is on his terms, not ours. He tells us that we become heirs of the promise through baptism into Christ.
 - ii. This baptism also serves to show our death to our sins, burial in baptism, and resurrection to walk a new life.
 1. Baptism is how our sins are "washed away" and we are put into Christ, in whom we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3). In Christ there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1).
 - ii. If you are willing to divorce your sins and submit yourself completely to Christ,
 - iii. If you are willing to have a joy that you can not keep from showing,
 - iv. If you are willing to have a close relationship with God,
 - v. If you are willing to be baptized, washing away your sins, rising up to a new lifestyle,
 1. Why not decide to do so today?
 2. If you want to study more about the Bible before making your decision, or if you want to make that blessed decision, or if you want prayers for you from this congregation, why not come to us now as we stand and sing?