

〔The Good News is About Jesus〕

Romans 1:1-17

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The Good News is About Jesus

Romans 1:1-17

1 This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. 2 God promised this Good News long ago through His prophets in the holy Scriptures. 3 The Good News is about His Son. In His earthly life He was born into King David's family line.

ROMANS 1:1-3

Take time to pray before you begin.

Let's begin our exciting journey through Romans by asking the most important question concerning the Gospel: Who is this Gospel of Good News about?

In Romans 1:3 the Apostle Paul reveals this central truth: The Good News message is *always* about Jesus.

Galatians 1:6-7: 6 I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News 7 but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.

Paul is warning the Galatians about a “different” message being taught to them during his day, and we hear this same message being taught in churches today. It is a message that is all about *self*: self-improvement, self-effort, and self-righteousness. Its focus is not on Jesus, but rather on what “self” needs to do to earn God’s blessing and favor. Although it pretends to be the Gospel, it’s not the Gospel at all. The true Gospel is always about Jesus. If the message you are hearing is not about (a) who Jesus is, (b) what He has done for you on the cross, and (c) who you are in Him, it’s not the Good News at all. The true Good News is always and only about Jesus.

The Pretend Gospel

This “pretend” gospel Paul is speaking about always focuses on man’s performance. Its message to you is that you have to pray more, have more faith, quote more Scriptures, give more, be faithful to church and serve others more if you want to please God and receive

His blessing. Its focus is on what you lack, rather than on the completeness you have in Christ. While this other message tells you what you need to do in order to be righteous and holy, the true Good News Gospel tells you everything that Jesus did to make you righteous and holy. As you learn to recognize that the true Good News is all about Jesus, you'll be able to spot this counterfeit gospel very easily. Each time you hear a message preached ask yourself this question: "Is this message about Jesus? Is it about what He did for me and who I am in Him, or is it about what I need to do or what I am doing wrong?" If the focus is on you, then it's not the Good News. As we saw earlier in Romans 1:3, the true Good News is always about Jesus!

With that in mind, how can you distinguish the true Good News from the counterfeit?

Let's continue with Paul's thought, looking at another chapter in Galatians:

Galatians 3:8-9: 8 What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would declare the Gentiles to be righteous because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." 9 So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

What was the Good News that God proclaimed to Abraham?

The True Good News

The true Good News that God proclaimed and promised to Abraham was about being made righteous through faith in Jesus. This Good News is revealed in every book of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, its earliest mention beginning in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve failed, the Father spoke this promise to them, "I will send a Redeemer to redeem you," (Genesis 3:15). God talked to them about a seed (Jesus) who would come through a woman to redeem them and all of mankind. From the very beginning of the Bible, the Good News proclaimed that anyone who put their faith in the coming Redeemer would be declared righteous — not by their good works or performance — but through their faith in Jesus. Like the Apostle Paul warned, if you don't see Jesus in the Scriptures, you are not seeing the Truth. When you do see Jesus, you are seeing the Truth, and the Truth will always set you free!

In Luke 24:44 Jesus said, *"I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled."*

In John 5:39 Jesus said, *"You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to Me!"*

What is the most important truth about the Gospel that Jesus shares in these two scriptures?

In these two verses, Jesus is sharing that the Scriptures are all about Him. Every passage of Scripture points to Jesus. When we read Scriptures and take the focus off of Jesus and what He's done for us, and instead focus on ourselves and what we need to do for Him, we become confused. When all you can see is what you have or have not done, you are not seeing the true Gospel, and it will bring condemnation to your heart. 2 Corinthians 3:6 says that the law kills and condemns, but the Spirit gives life.

I used to view the Scriptures as a list of dos and don'ts that I needed to live up to. By thinking this way it brought condemnation to my heart because the focus wasn't on what Jesus had done for me, but rather on what I needed to do for Him. No matter how hard I tried, it seemed like I could never do enough.

My journey to freedom began when I turned to Jesus with a simple prayer, "Lord, show me the Truth that will set me free." The Holy Spirit was faithful to me as He removed the veil of the law from my eyes and I began to see that the Good News is always about Jesus: what He has done for me and my new identity in Him.

My journey to freedom began when I finally turned to Jesus with a simple prayer, "Lord, show me the Truth that will set me free." The Holy Spirit faithfully removed the veil of the law from my eyes and I began to see that the Good News is always about Jesus: what He had done for me and my new identity in Him. I now ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to me each time I look at the Scripture. I know that when I see Jesus, I am seeing the Truth and it always brings freedom and liberty to my heart and life. As you study the scriptures, be encouraged that the very same passages which used to condemn your heart will now bring you life as you focus on Jesus!

Let's look at an example of what happens when we change the focus of our scripture reading from the law, to Jesus. Deuteronomy 28:1-66 is a passage that is familiar to most of us, all about the blessings and curses under the law. If you read it without understanding that the Good News is all about Jesus, you'll think that your blessing is totally dependent on you and your ability to obey the law. "If you obey, you'll be blessed, but if you disobey, you'll be cursed". Since you know that you can't keep the law perfectly, your heart will condemn you and you'll believe that you have to suffer the curse! But if you read it knowing what Jesus has done for you under the New Covenant, you'll see that Jesus has redeemed you from the curse of the law, and qualified you for every one of His blessings by making you righteous in Him! (Galatians 3:13-14) Relief will flood your soul as you realize that it's not your obedience that makes you righteous, but His (Romans 5:19). Remember, the Good News always points you to Jesus. It tells you (a) who Jesus is, (b) what He has done for you, and (c) who you are in Him! Knowing that Jesus has made you righteous as a free gift of His grace always brings joy and peace to your heart!

The true Gospel of Jesus Christ puts us all on the same level and in the same high

place of honor as we place our faith in Him. It points us to Jesus and who we are in Him: righteous, wonderful, beloved children of God! We are all favored, qualified, innocent, and blameless in our Heavenly Father's eyes because of what Jesus has done for us. We are all very, very good in Christ: perfect and righteous in God's sight. Our righteousness is not based on anything we've done for Him, but based on everything Jesus has done for us. As we realize who we are in Jesus, we are empowered to love one another just like Jesus loves us. This is the power of the true Gospel: It is all about Jesus!

Now let's read Romans 1:4-7:

Romans 1:4-5 4 *[And] he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. NLT* 5 *It is through Him that we have received grace (God's unmerited favor) and [our] apostleship to promote obedience to the faith and make disciples for His name's sake among all the nations. AMP*

Romans 1:6-7 6 *And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. 7 I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be His own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. NLT*

The first seven verses of Romans chapter 1 told us that the true Gospel is all about Jesus. In verses 8-15 Paul goes on to explain his desire to come in person to the people of Rome to share this Good News about Jesus with them, so that they can encourage each other in the faith.

Romans 1:8-15: 8 *Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in Him is being talked about all over the world. 9 God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about His Son. 10 One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you. 11 For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. 12 When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours. 13 I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. 14 For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. 15 So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News.*

In Romans 1:16-17: Paul again emphasizes that the Good News is about Jesus.

Romans 1:16-17: 17 *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God's power working unto salvation, to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the*

Greek. 17 For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith... As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright shall live by faith. AMP

Romans 1:17: This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." NLT

What does the Good News tell us? How is this accomplished?

The true Good News is about how God makes us righteous in His sight through our faith in what Jesus has done for us, not through our good works or performance.

* * *

Over the next two days, we will define four foundational words repeated by Paul in Romans 1:1-17, which will help us in our study of the Good News of Jesus Christ. They are: GRACE; FAITH; SALVATION; and RIGHTEOUSNESS. Our study of these words will free us from any misconceptions we may have regarding what Jesus really accomplished for us on the cross. As we learn to continually turn our focus from ourselves to Jesus, we will find ourselves awakening to righteousness and experiencing the abundant life He came to give us. Just like the Apostle Paul, our hearts will become convinced that the true Good News really is all about Jesus!

Grace and Faith

Romans 1:1-17

It is through Jesus that we have received grace.

ROMANS 1:5

Take time to pray before you begin.

Romans 1:5 tells us that we have received grace through Jesus. But what exactly is grace? How would you describe *grace* to someone in your own words?

The New Covenant is described as the “Covenant of Grace”, but for most believers grace is just a “Christianese” word that they don’t really understand. Grasping its full meaning is essential to understanding the true Gospel and what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross.

The word *grace* (G5485) comes from the Greek word *charis*. According to Strong’s, it is translated in the following ways: “acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, gracious, joy, liberality, pleasure, thanks,” and “especially the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life.”

Grace is a Gift

When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit gave you a brand new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27) This was a gift of God’s love. You didn’t earn it by your good works; you simply received it by faith in Jesus. You and I once were sinners, dead in our sin; but the Holy Spirit of grace made us alive in Christ, giving us a brand new identity by making us righteous in Jesus.

Colossians 1:22 says: *Yet now He has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.*

Describe the new nature you were given by His grace.

Isn't it incredible that even though we have all sinned and still at times fail, Jesus has made you and me righteous, which means we are "blameless, holy and without fault" in our Heavenly Father's eyes? He has given us His very nature — a brand new identity — as a gift of grace. The transforming power of His grace is truly amazing. And it doesn't stop there!

Grace: The Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit Upon Your Heart

Grace is also the ongoing power of the Holy Spirit upon your mind, upon your thoughts, and upon your will, which brings what happened on the inside of you out for everyone to see. Grace is the power of the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of righteousness in your life.

2 Corinthians 1:12 defines grace as:

The grace of God (the unmerited favor and merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, and keeps, strengthens and increases them in Christian virtues). AMP

In James 4:6 the Amplified Bible describes grace this way: *But He gives us more and more grace (power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully).*

According to these two verses, what is *grace* and how does it affect your life?

Grace strengthens you when you feel weak (2 Corinthians 12:9). It empowers you to overcome temptation (Hebrews 4:14-16). Grace influences your heart, turns you toward Jesus, and produces the fruit of the Spirit in your life (Galatians 5:22-23).

In 1 Corinthians 15:10, the Apostle Paul clearly describes the power of God's grace and what it produces in a person's life:

But by the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not [found to be] for nothing (fruitless and without effect). In fact, I worked harder than all of them [the apostles], though it was not really I, but the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God which was with me. AMP

Grace not only made you the righteous person you are in Jesus but it also empowers you to produce good fruit. As God's grace transforms your heart, it is also reflected in your life.

Have you ever been really discouraged about a circumstance in your life and called out to Jesus to help you? As new creations, we already have joy, peace, and love inside of us as part of our new nature in Jesus, but sometimes we don't feel like it. Grace is the "feel like it." It's the Holy Spirit influencing our emotions so that we feel like the person we truly are on the inside.

I can't count how many times I have felt negative emotions in my heart as I was tempted to be fearful, discouraged, or angry about a situation in my life. In each of these circumstances, as I've called upon Jesus, I have found my thoughts changing as a new

perspective came to my heart which brought peace. There was no effort on my part to change myself, just a simple call to the One Who loves me and empowers me to think and act just like He does. This transformation was not in my own strength, but through His strength; not through my works, but through the work of His Holy Spirit in me.

Have you ever felt your heart change from discouragement to joy or from fear to peace after you prayed to Jesus for help? That's grace at work in your heart. Jesus *is* Grace!

The Misconception About Grace

While *grace* is a word we hear often in Christian circles, many people have a very wrong idea about what it is and actually does. They believe the lie that, "If you teach too much grace it gives people a license to sin." They actually think teaching too much grace will promote sin! But the truth is revealed in 1 Corinthians 15:56 which says that "*the law gives sin its power.*" NLT What they don't understand is that when people are taught the law — what they need to do or not do in order to be righteous and approved by God — it actually strengthens sin's power in their lives. On the other hand, when you teach people grace — who they already are because of what Jesus has done — it actually empowers them to live holy and godly lives.

Titus 2:11-12: 11 For the grace of God (His unmerited favor and blessing) has come forward (appeared) for the deliverance from sin and the eternal salvation for all mankind. AMP 12 It teaches us to say, "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. NIV

What has the *grace* of God come to do? (verse 11)

What does *grace* teach us and empower us to do? (verse 12)

The Truth About Grace

The truth is that Jesus brought us grace to deliver us from the power of sin, and to teach us to say, "No!" to sin because it is not who we are anymore. When we receive God's grace by relying on Jesus, we have the power of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts. The fruit of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit's power working in you to bring forth love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faith, and self-control. It is all a work of the Spirit!

When people don't know about the grace that is available to them through Jesus, the only thing left for them is self-reliance and self-effort. They live their entire lives trying to be good enough, yet feeling like failures, instead of relying upon Jesus and His strength

within them. If we don't teach them grace, God's people will never live free! The true Good News is about relying upon Jesus.

Understanding the Spirit of Grace is what began my personal journey into freedom. For twenty years of my Christian life, I had tried hard in my own strength to be good enough to earn God's blessing and approval. But each attempt only made me more aware of my failure. When I finally called out to Jesus to "show me the truth that would set me free," the Holy Spirit began to reveal Jesus to me. He showed me that I already was approved, righteous, and good in my Father's eyes because of Jesus. I came to realize that I didn't have to try to earn it anymore; my new nature was a gift of His grace.

As I continued in this new understanding of grace, the Holy Spirit taught me to rely upon Jesus and His strength within me every single day. I could quit relying on myself and my own human effort to be good. Whenever I was tempted, all I needed to do was look to Jesus, and the Spirit of grace would bring out the fruit in my life. As I learned to exchange my self-reliance for the power of the Holy Spirit working in me, my life began to be transformed. I realized I could do nothing in my own strength, and in order to receive His grace, all I had to do was continually rely upon Jesus!

Faith Means to Rely Upon Jesus

Romans 1:17: *This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."*

Verse 17 in the Amplified Bible says: *As it is written, The man who through faith is righteous shall live by faith.*

Faith comes from the Greek word "*pistis*" (G4102 Strong's) and it means "reliance upon Christ for salvation; constancy in such profession."

Romans 1:5 says, "*It is through Him that we have received grace (God's unmerited favor) and [our] apostleship to promote obedience to the faith. AMP*

The words "obedience to the faith" in this verse mean "an attentive hearkening to relying upon Jesus for salvation" (G5218 Strong's). Obedience in the New Covenant actually means "to rely upon Jesus". Disobedience in the New Covenant is to rely upon yourself!

True Obedience in the New Covenant is Relying Upon Jesus

1 John 3:22-23: *22 And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him. NLT 23 And this is His order (His command...that we should believe in (put our faith and trust in and adhere to and rely on) the name of His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah), and that we should love one another, just as He has commanded us. AMP*

What is the command of the New Covenant?

How can you obey God and do what pleases Him?

The command of the New Covenant is really simple and clear. *Disobedience* in the New Covenant is relying upon yourself for your righteousness, provision, approval, favor, blessing, and strength. *Obedience* in the New Covenant is relying upon Jesus for your righteousness, provision, approval, blessing, favor, and strength to love others the way He loves us. It's relying upon Jesus every moment of every day. You never stop relying on Jesus and what He's done for you. That, my friend, is what it means to live by faith!

In addition, faith also means "constancy in such profession." It means you are in constant agreement with the Father's view of you in Christ. When you live by faith, you are constantly relying upon Jesus for everything you need, and speaking in agreement with who you are in Him. For instance, "I'm blessed because of Jesus;" "I'm righteous because of Jesus;" "I'm innocent and blameless and healed and whole and complete because of Jesus." That's faith because you are relying upon Jesus and not yourself.

So let's read Romans 1:16 with this in mind:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is God's power (His grace) working unto salvation . . . to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender of their own ability to save themselves and firmly relies upon Jesus." [Author's Paraphrase]

That "confident surrender" is a confident surrender of your self-reliance. Have you ever heard somebody say, "It's not working for me"? If it's not working, if you're not experiencing peace, joy, confidence and security, it's because instead of continuing to rely upon Jesus and His gift of righteousness, you begin to rely upon yourself.

The Misconception of Faith

You may have been wrongly taught that it was your responsibility to have enough faith and that it depended upon your ability to believe. Thinking this way places all the focus on you and takes all the focus off of Jesus. For me faith had become something I had to "do" to earn God's blessing. Words like, "I just don't have enough faith;" "I need more faith," "I'll never have as much faith as she has," constantly kept the focus on me. I would often think, "If I just had enough faith, then I'd qualify for God's blessings." I had completely lost sight of Jesus, thinking it was all about me and what I had to do. But true faith is "relying upon Jesus," and a constant profession of who He is, and who He says we are, in Him.

The Truth About Faith

Hebrews 12:2: *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. NKJV*

True faith is a simple child-like call upon Jesus for salvation in every situation and circumstance of our lives. It is acknowledging what Jesus has done for us, and who we are in Him. Many of us have thought that it's up to us to muster up this faith, but the truth is that He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Our part is just to fix our eyes on Him realizing that we can't do it on our own, and that He is our Savior.

The Good News tells us that being made right in God's sight starts by faith (relying upon Jesus), and it finishes by faith (relying upon Jesus). "For the righteous shall live by faith (relying upon Jesus)." Whenever you see the word "faith" in the Bible, remember that it means "reliance upon Jesus for salvation." As you do this, you will find your focus turning away from your ability to believe, to His ability in you, and you'll experience His grace empowering you to trust Him with all of your heart!

Humbly come to Him and receive His grace to believe, "Lord, I confidently surrender my ability to have enough faith. I can't do it in my own strength and self-effort. I am helpless without You, Lord. I need Your grace to trust You."

Matthew 6:6: *"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace. MSG"*

Salvation and Righteousness

Romans 1:1-17

Take time to pray before you begin.

Today as we finish up Week 1 of our study of Romans, we'll be looking at two of the most foundational words in the Bible. Without understanding these words we can never truly comprehend why the Gospel is such Good News. These words are *salvation* and *righteousness*.

Salvation

The word *salvation* comes from the Greek work *soteria* (G4991 Strong's; Thayer's) and it denotes "deliverance; preservation; wholeness." It is "the present experience of God's power to deliver from the bondage of sin, inclusively, to sum up all the blessings bestowed by God on men in Christ through the Holy Spirit." (Vine's New Testament)

With this definition in mind, how would you explain salvation?

Let's read two scriptures for further clarity:

Romans 1:16: *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God's power working unto salvation...to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. AMP*

Ephesians 2:8: *For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God. AMP*

What is the power of the Gospel? And how does salvation come into a person's life? (Romans 1:16)

How does Ephesians 2:8 define the word “saved”?

The Misconception and Truth About Salvation

Many Christians have a very limited idea of what salvation actually is. They think it is merely deliverance from hell, and a ticket into heaven. While that is certainly true, salvation is so much more! It is our deliverance from the bondage and judgment of sin, and an invitation to partake of every blessing bestowed upon us in Christ while we live here on earth. When you were saved you were delivered from every curse of the law that you would have deserved as a result of your disobedience, and now you have been made a partaker of every promised blessing of God. This salvation is a gift of God that has come to you as a result of Jesus’ obedience on your behalf.

From now on when you see the word *salvation* in the Bible, remember that it includes every blessing and promise that you have in Christ. Forgiveness, deliverance, peace, joy, healing, prosperity, favor, wisdom, and guidance are all part of your salvation package in Christ.

Righteousness

Romans 1:17: *This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”*

Romans 1:17: *For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith.... As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright shall live and shall live by faith. AMP*

What does the Good News tell you?

Righteousness means: “innocent; free from guilt or blame; justified” (Strong’s 1342, 1343, 1344)

So what does it mean that we are justified?

It is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law.... In addition to the pardon of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied.... The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages

and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law (Romans 5:1-10). It proceeds on the ... crediting to the believer by God himself of the perfect righteousness ... of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:3-9). Justification is not the forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness which perfectly and forever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:6-8). www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/justification.html: Bible Encyclopedia

According to this definition, what does it mean to be declared righteous in Jesus?

The Misconception About Righteousness

One of the biggest misunderstandings about righteousness that many people believe is that the righteous are supposed to live and be blessed by their obedience to the law. They believe that even though Jesus made you righteous, you have to keep yourself righteous by your good works. But any effort on your part to earn God's blessing through your obedience is simply self-reliance. It's an attempt to make yourself righteous instead of relying upon Jesus for His righteousness, and resting in the truth that you are blessed because of Him. Any time a person depends on their own obedience to the law to make them approved and blessed by God, they are depending on their own self-righteousness. The power of the Gospel will never work in the life of a person who is relying upon himself. The power of the Gospel only works salvation (peace, joy, wisdom, healing, provision, etc.) in the lives of those who rely on the truth that they are righteous because of Jesus.

In spite of the fact that I had been saved by grace, for many years of my Christian life I believed the lie that I had to earn every other blessing and favor of God by my own good works. So I depended on my giving, my faithful church attendance, my faith, my tithing, and my attempts to obey God's word to qualify myself for His blessing. But doing this only led to me being disappointed and frustrated because it became apparent to me that the power of the Gospel was not working in my life. I was not experiencing the peace, joy and financial provision that God had promised.

Thank goodness, Jesus didn't leave me in that frustrating place. As I turned to Him for the truth, I began to understand that righteousness is a gift of God's grace. As I began relying upon Jesus instead of myself, the power of the Gospel began working in my life. After it finally dawned on me that I could never earn His blessing by my good works, I surrendered my self-reliance and embraced the truth that it is Jesus who qualifies me for every blessing of God.

Righteousness was given to me by faith (trusting and relying upon Jesus) and now I daily experience the benefits of salvation. You and I can rest in Jesus' obedience, knowing the Holy Spirit will do the work in us and bring forth the fruit of righteousness in our lives.

As I turned to Him for the truth, I began to understand that righteousness is a gift of God's grace.

The Truth about Righteousness

When you were made righteous through your faith in Jesus, your Heavenly Father declared you innocent and free from all guilt and blame in His sight forever! He pardoned all your sins and justified you in the eye of the law. He did this by giving you the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, which qualifies you for all the rewards and advantages of perfectly obeying the law. But, think about it, did you obey the law perfectly? No, of course not! That's why righteousness is a gift.

You have been declared righteous by God Himself. You don't have to try to earn His blessing or qualify yourself anymore. You've been given — as a gift — the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, which has been imputed to your account. When the Father looks at you, He does not see a sinner. He sees His beloved child who is qualified, holy, blameless and without fault in His sight because of your faith in Jesus! You are blessed not because of what you do, but because of what Jesus did for you! That's what it means to be declared righteous in Jesus!

So, let's read Romans 1:16-17 with our new understanding of these four wonderful words: GRACE; FAITH; SALVATION; and RIGHTEOUSNESS:

Romans 1:16-17: 16 *I am not ashamed of the Gospel ... of Jesus Christ for it is God's power (the transforming power of Grace) working unto salvation (deliverance from sin, forgiveness, peace, provision, healing, approval, wisdom, guidance, joy, love, self-control) to everyone who believes with a personal trust and confident surrender of his own ability to save himself and relies completely on Jesus.* 17 *This Good News tells us that God makes us righteous (innocent, free from all blame and guilt, and qualified for every blessing) in His sight by relying upon Jesus. This begins by relying upon Jesus and ends by relying upon Jesus. The righteous shall live by relying upon Jesus for everything they need. [Author's Paraphrase of AMP and NLT]*

This then, is the Good News about Jesus and is the foundation for our study of the Book of Romans.

So Awake to Righteousness!

Jesus, I surrender my self-reliance and self-effort and completely rely upon You as my righteousness! I can't earn Your approval and blessing by my good works. They are a gift of grace to me because You love me! I can't change myself, but the transforming power of Your grace is at work in me as I live by continually relying upon You, Jesus, for salvation in every area of my life!

What is the main truth you learned from today's study?
