

Crossroads Baptist Church
June 4, 2006 10:00
Romans 3: 21
Romans #13

“The Purpose of the Law”

Question: What will take to go to Heaven?

Answer:

- A. Live a perfect life according to the Law.
- B. Have your sins forgiven.
- C. Have the righteousness of Jesus.
- D. “A” only
- E. “B” and “C”

Martin Luther said of verses 21-31: “...the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible.”

Righteousness of God is mentioned here four times (verses 21,22,25,26) and justify is mentioned twice (verses 24, 26) and just in verse 26. In light of that, let’s look at the answer to this question:

1. You must live a perfect life according to the Law.

The law reveals the righteousness of God. In the Ten Commandments and the other 600 laws that followed, God was revealing His righteousness. The moral law and the ceremonial law (circumcision, etc) were revealed.

Then when Jesus came, He taught us in the Sermon of the Mount that one’s behavior toward the law was not enough. The heart and spirit of the law had to be kept. If you look at a woman in lust, you have committed adultery; if you get angry at someone you are guilty of murder.

Can anyone live totally according to the law? Jesus did.

Rich young ruler almost did. “All of these have I kept from my youth up.” Jesus did not challenge his statement, Jesus just said, “One thing you lack. Go and sell your possessions and give to the poor.” He refused because money was his god.

Let’s look at some numbers.

If you lived to be 70 years old and committed one sin a day; starting at age eight – you would commit 22,630 sins.

If you are really a great person and only committed one sin a week, at the same ages, you would commit 3, 224 sins.

If I got a ticket and went before the judge tomorrow and asked him to have mercy on me and promise it wouldn’t happen again. Then he looks at my record and says, “Mr. Cofield, you have 3, 223 other tickets. If this was the only one it might be different, but you are a habitual offender.”

God looks at the same to us.

Thus, Paul concludes in verse 23 “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

So, we need another way to get to Heaven.

We need both the forgiveness of sin and the righteousness of Jesus.

- Forgiveness of sin

When the Judge reveals the 3, 223 other tickets, all I can do is plead the mercy of the court. That is the same with Jesus. We’ll talk about it in two weeks, but we need a mercy seat.

But forgiveness alone will not get us into Heaven. We must have the righteousness of Jesus.

- Righteousness of Jesus

The requirement of Heaven and a relationship with God is righteousness. In order for me to have a relationship with you fully then I must be as you are. Not like you in outward form only, but like you in body, soul and spirit.

The word *righteousness* is highly misunderstood in our day. Often it is associated with behavior. If people are behaving in a right way, we say that they are behaving righteously. But in the book of Romans *righteousness* does not directly touch on behavior. It is not what you *do*; it is what you *are!* That is even more important, because your behavior stems from what you are. The gift Paul is talking about, the gift from God, is that of a righteous standing.

God is righteous and requires righteousness to enter Heaven. We’ll look at that in three weeks, but to say now – it’s the righteousness of Jesus through faith – verse 22.