

The Faith-Righteousness Connection
Romans 1:14-17

Romans 1:14-17 (ESV)

14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians,^[a] both to the wise and to the foolish.

15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

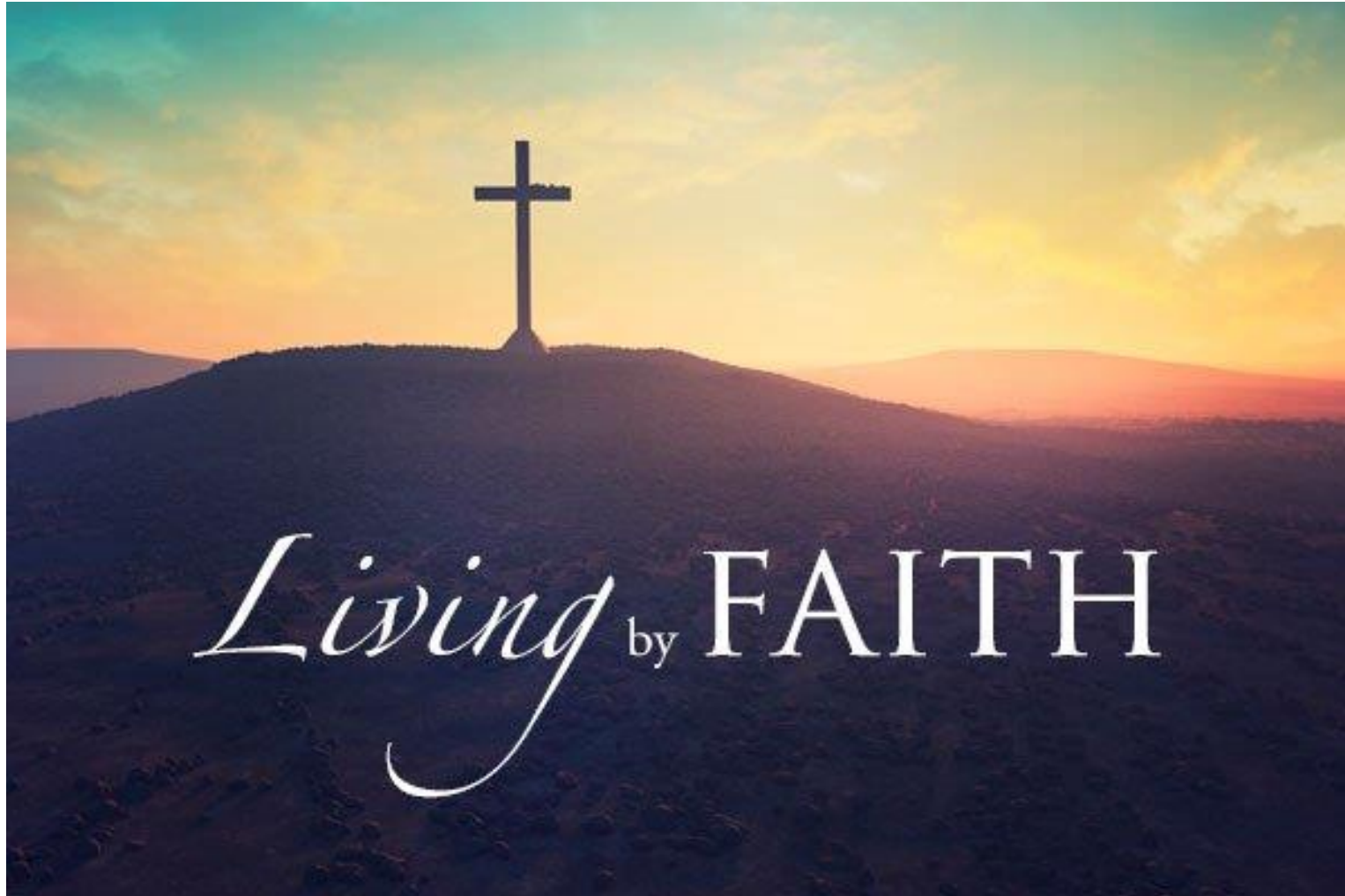
17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,^[b] as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."^[c]

a. [Romans 1:14](#) That is, non-Greeks

b. [Romans 1:17](#) Or *beginning and ending in faith*

c. [Romans 1:17](#) Or *The one who by faith is righteous shall live*

I. Living by Faith



Definition: “Faith”

- **Faith:** “Steadfastness” or “fidelity” (“faithfulness to obligations, duties, or observances, e.g. *semper fidelis*—always faithful)
- Hebrew: *emuna*
- Greek: *pistis* (“faith” or “faithfulness”)
- The firm belief in God and his word

A. Continuity between the Old and New Testaments

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "**The righteous shall live by faith.**" (Romans 1:17)

⁴ "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but **the righteous shall live by his faith.**" (Habakkuk 2:4)

B. Those who are saved shall live by faith

- “We walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)
[Effective living requires using more than just what the senses perceive]
- “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6)
[Believe wholeheartedly in the Lord, even when it may not seem logical]
- “Know to know no more” (God to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*)
[There are some things that we will never know this side of eternity]

O.K., but . . .

- Can someone be “righteous” without being religious?
- For example, can someone qualify as “righteous” by being ethical but not trusting in Jesus as Savior and Lord?
- They can be “ethical” but not “righteous” in the Biblical sense since their virtue is dependent upon their own efforts and good works.

II. The Role of Righteousness



A. God's Righteousness

- *Dikaiosyne Theou* (Greek): “Righteousness of—or from—God”
“ ‘The righteousness of God’ can be thought of as a **divine attribute** (our God is a righteous God)” (John W. Stott, *The Message of Romans*, p. 63)
- Your righteousness, O God,
 reaches the high heavens.
You who have done great things,
 O God, who is like you? (Psalm 71:19)
- “God is righteous in himself [and] he demands righteousness [from us]” (Fred Zaspel, “The Righteousness of God” from *The Gospel Coalition*)

B. Human Unrighteousness

- “All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6)
- “And you, being dead in your trespasses and sins”
(Ephesians 2:1, Berean Literal Bible)
- “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)

C. God's response to human unrighteousness

- Definition of “Wrath” vs. “Anger”

*Wrath—the personal manifestation of God's holy, moral character in exacting just judgment against sin. Wrath is not impersonal nor is it irrational and fitful like anger. It is in no way vindictive or malicious. It is **holy indignation**—God's [wrath] is directed against sin because of its destructive power and the havoc it wreaks in ruining His benevolent intent for man” (David P. Seemuth, *Romans*, p. 24).*

We are in a quandary

- It is impossible for unrighteous human beings to achieve God's standard of righteousness
- So, what is a sinner to do?

Martin Luther





MARTIN LUTHER

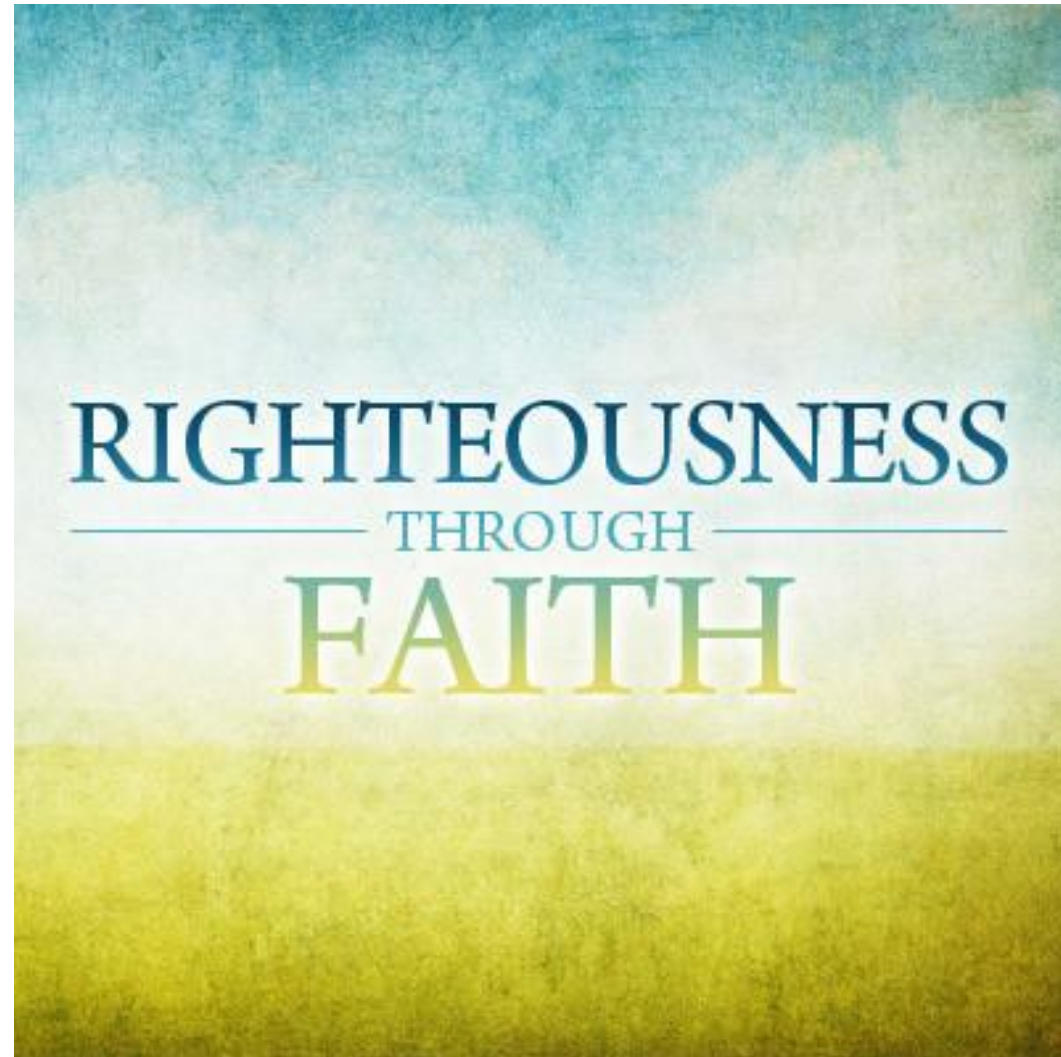
1483-1546

D. Martin Luther on God's Righteousness

- “In August 1513, Martin Luther, Augustinian monk and Professor of biblical Theology in the University of Wittenberg, began to deliver a course of lectures on the Psalms. His mind at the time was preoccupied with the agonizing endeavour to ‘find a gracious God’.
- He was struck by the prayer of Psalm 31:1, ‘in thy righteousness deliver me!’ But how could God’s *righteousness* deliver him? Was it not calculated to condemn the sinner and not to save him?
- As he pondered this question, his attention was more and more attracted to Paul’s statement in Romans 1:17 that in the gospel ‘the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, **‘He who through faith is righteous shall live’ (Hab. 2:4b).**”

--F.F. Bruce, *Romans*, p. 66

III. The Faith-Righteousness Connection



*The one who by faith is righteous shall live

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,^[b] as it is written, "**The righteous shall live by faith.**"^[c]

b. Romans 1:17 Or *beginning and ending in faith*

c. Romans 1:17 Or ***The one who by faith is righteous shall live***

A. Martin Luther on “Imputed” Righteousness

- “I had greatly longed to understand Paul’s letter to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, ‘the righteousness of God’, because I **took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and acts righteously in punishing the unrighteous, . . .**
- Night and day I pondered until . . . I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, **through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith.**
- Thereupon **I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.**
- The whole of scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before ‘the righteousness of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven.”
- *--Luther’s Works, American edition, 34 (1960), pp. 336f.*

B. “Justification” and “Righteousness”

- “Protestant doctrine maintains that **justification is God’s declaration that sinful people are not guilty but righteous instead.** This legal pronouncement is not based on their meriting righteousness by doing good works but is due to the righteousness of Christ being imputed, or credited, to them. This doctrine of justification is one of the foundational Protestant principles.”

--The Gospel Coalition, Gregg R. Allison

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

(Christian orthodoxy)

C. Salvation by grace through faith

“For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that **no one is justified before God by the law**” (Galatians 3:10-11a)

“So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶ But **if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.**” (Romans 11:5-6)

- **“Sola Fide”** (Salvation by grace alone)
- ⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith.** And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

D. Beginning and ending in faith

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith for faith**,^[a] as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

[a. Romans 1:17](#) Or ***beginning and ending in faith***

or

“It is based on faith and addressed to faith”

or

Trusting in “faith” is itself an example of “faith”

--Our imputed righteousness is from our faith in God (“Justification”) and his plan for salvation through Jesus Christ. We are then to continue walking in faith throughout our lives, deepening and “maturing” our faith (“Sanctification”).

E. God's Righteous Plan for Us

- ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.** For there is no distinction: ²³ **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,** ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, **to be received by faith.** This was **to show God's righteousness,** (Romans 3:21-25).

E. God's Righteous Plan for Us

- *Dikaiosyne Theou* (Greek): “Righteousness of—or from—God”
- “ ‘The righteousness of God’ can be thought of as a **divine attribute** (our God is a righteous God), or **activity** (he comes to our rescue), or **achievement** (he bestows on us a righteous status.” (John W. Stott, *The Message of Romans*, p. 63)

F. Who is “Righteous”?

- The “righteous” are those who are saved by grace through faith in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ who died for us on the cross to pay the price for our sins
- ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)



Let Us Pray

A person's hands are shown in silhouette, raised in prayer. The hands are positioned to hold a glowing white cross. The background is a sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and lens flare. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and some clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and spiritual.