

“How to Enjoy the Bible”

Week #6, January 10, 2016

**“Justification: A TRUTH We Simply
Cannot Live Without! -- Part 2”**

Review from last time:

- ***I remember so well (though it is now only a little short of 50 years ago, when the Lord intersected with my path and brought me into the scriptures in a way that I had not known before . . .***
- ***Regarding Inspiration & Interpretation of God’s word (SOLA SCRIPTURA)***
- ***Regarding a proper study of the word of truth***
- ***Coverdale’s list of questions regarding the taking of God’s Word literally unless there is a very good reason not to do so***
- ***The scriptures we have considered so far in applying Coverdale’s Principles have included:***
 - ***What is written? Of whom, to whom, using what words, at what time, etc.***
 - ***Literal and contextual interpretation is key then, not some kind of allegorical or so-called “spiritualizing” of the text as has been so common over the years.***

My comments before proceeding:

- ***The Lord is communicating to us sinners through his word the TRUTH, using human language***
- ***Therefore the word must be interpreted carefully and literally.***
 - ***God’s goals are:***
 - ***To draw the lost to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ***
 - ***To bring knowledge and understanding to believers***
- ***God is NOT PRIMARILY communicating FEELINGS! He DOES desire to communicate TRUTH, however. AND WITHOUT THAT WITHOUT THE TRUTH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE FEELINGS***

THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO WHO GOD IS AND WHAT HE IS DOING.

We have looked at eight scriptures to illustrate this great principle of interpreting, understanding, and ENJOYING the Bible:

- **Luke 18 - the rich young ruler seek**
- **Num. 15 - a man violates the Sabbath Law**
- **Lev. 24 - a man takes the name of the Lord in vain**
- **Rom. 3 - no works of law for our justification**
- **Rom. 6 - law enables sin to dominate us**
- **Gal. 2 - faith, not works of law, brings justification**
- **Gal. 3 - no justification by law before God**
- **Gal. 5 - legal works short-circuit grace!! Gal. 5:4** “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” By the way, this does not mean we can “lose our salvation”. No. Never.

As we considered carefully these scriptures we were forced to conclude that there is a very great contrast in God’s mind between law and grace, between works and faith, and that if we mix them together we will surely get into much confusion and into a great deal of trouble. We must not mix law and grace together and yet we must take the scripture literally and interpret it contextually. RIGHTLY DIVIDING IS THE ANSWER TO THE APPARENT DIFFICULTY IN DOING BOTH OF THESE.

2 TIM. 2:15

Our key verse last time was:

[READ] Rom. 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?
[It is] God that justifieth.

TODAY OUR GOAL IS to look at the Pauline revelation leading up to verse 33 of Romans chapter 8. We will look specifically at chapters 3, 4 and 5. These are most precious indeed, **AND MOST CRITICAL FOR OUR UNDERSTANDING AND OUR ENJOYMENT OF THE BIBLE!**

SO OUR SUBJECT TODAY IS: SOLA FIDES, Part 2. Or, “Justification: A TRUTH We Simply Cannot Live Without! -- Part 2”

NEXT TIME, SOLA GRATIA.

OUR SEVEN KEY SCRIPTURES TODAY:

[READ] Rom 3:20 “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.”

- **Note well here that Paul DOES NOT SAY that salvation is through the Law -- just the contrary.**
- **He does say clearly that the Law condemns.**
- **He says more as well as we see in our further study in the Romans. A major theme is the law in relation to the sin nature and how legal principles, when taken to heart, even encourage the sin nature rather than suppress it. Chapter 7 is the culminating teaching on this subject.**
- **Indeed, “by the law is the full experiential knowledge of the sin nature”. Thus it is revealed the the power of the sin nature dwelling in each of us is overwhelming apart from the pure teaching of the grace of God.**
- **Therefore, those who place themselves under a legal principle are bound by that principle, not freed, and enjoyment of the scripture is not really a possibility, since the scripture has in that case become a yoke on one’s neck that cannot be escaped.**
- **This is made clear in verse 24:**

[READ] Rom 3:24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

- ***THIS JUSTIFICATION is accomplished freely by grace***
- ***That grace is based on the redemption that was purchased by our Lord Jesus with his shed blood***
- ***That work on Calvary is COMPLETE ALREADY and no work of ours can possibly add to it.***

[READ] Rom 3:26 “To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

- ***There is much very valuable truth here. BUT FOR NOW, this teaching on justification is NOT INCONSISTENT with Christ’s own perfect righteousness.***
- ***Believing in Jesus according to the good news of the grace of God takes the place of personal works of righteousness and replaces that legal standard with the free gift of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness***
- ***In these verses, Paul is establishing a different concept of righteousness, not one based on works, but one based on a substitute who alone accomplished the saving work. Christ’s work, his righteous work in paying for our sins through the shedding of his blood, that unique righteousness is credited or imputed to our accounts as if we ourselves had accomplished the work! Amen and amen!***
- ***TO REPEAT: The apostle writes here, 3:26 “To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”***
- ***SOLA FIDES!!***

[READ] Rom 3:28 “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

- ***This verse restates this critical doctrine, that faith “without works” provides the only access to salvation today.***

- ***This is SOLA FIDES indeed!***
- ***The clear consequence of this is that adding works to faith short-circuits God’s grace, so many who consider themselves “followers” of Christ are treading on very thin ice, to say the least. They think they have come to Christ and belong to him due to their works plus their faith. But Paul here says that that is impossible. The works cancel out the faith, unless they are seen as the fruit of our salvation and NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR OUR SALVATION.***

[YOUR COMMENTS?]

[READ] Rom 4:5 “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

- ***Again, SOLA FIDES***
- ***Paul is so bold and so transparent here. How can this be misunderstood. Note carefully the wording here: “worketh not, but believeth”.***
- ***Remember Romans 3:28: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”***
- ***The boldness here, the clarity, is astounding. Paul knew that the false teachers were always watching, the Judiazers would surely charge that he was a heretic indeed. Interestingly, Luther (and all protestants) were condemned to eternal hell fire by the Council of Trent in 1563 and this condemnation was reasserted as continuing in the 2nd Vatican Council initiated by Pope John 23rd 400 years later. So the comdemnation still stands WHATEVER many Catholics or Protestants today may be affirming.***
- ***Let us repeat together with the apostle: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”***

[READ] Rom 5:8-11

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

- ***The point in this section here is clearly that the death of Christ 2000 years ago set aright the plan of God regarding mankind by providing a salvation that is consistent with and which highlights the glory of the Son of God, our Savior, and HIS PERFECT AND COMPLETED RIGHTEOUSNESS!***
- ***And this salvation brings future blessings BUT ALSO current blessings for those who have such a hope***
 - ***Rom 5:8-11*** 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:
 - 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
 - *10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*
 - *11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*
- ***This all leads up to verse 17, of course, concerning which we have had so much to say over the last two years as we were dwelling here in this Romans epistle:***
 - ***Rom 5:17*** *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

- ***[Comment . . . Rom 5:2] By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.?] - WHAT SCRIPTURES FOR ANOTHER TIME HERE IN OUR SUNDAY MORNING MEETING? WE SHALL SAVE FURTHER COMMENTS FOR THEN.***

Oh joy, joy, joy!!! Talk about enjoying the Bible? Through it and its power of truth we enjoy what God is doing in the here and now, which is to enjoy what God is focused so clearly on today, the full manifestation of his grace!

[FINAL READING] Rom 8:33 “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth.”

CONCLUSION

Now we see our enjoyment of the Bible coming into its full bloom. When we learn what God is doing today through the literal and contextual interpretation of the word rightly divided, we enter into the full blessing of taking God at his word -- his word for today.

Does this mean that the scriptures other than Paul's are of no value? No indeed. They are of great value. All scripture is God breathed and is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16). But not all is for our obedience. Moses Law and Kingdom Law is not for our obedience, but the word of grace is indeed.

The key question is always, “what is God doing today and how can I live in harmony with that?”

Taking God at his word is such a blessed experience indeed.

NEXT WEEK: WE MOVE AHEAD: SOLA GRATIA!! Amen.