

Radio Show Lesson 16 9-13-2015

God Cares For You - TODAY'S STUDY - Your Works or God's Grace?

ANNOUNCER INTRODUCTION (0:30)

Welcome to "God Cares For You," a series of radio broadcasts featuring Pastor Rory Clark of Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church in Mesa, AZ...Pastor Rory teaches the truth of the Word of God in a simple way that is easy to apply to your everyday life...here's Pastor Rory Clark.

SHOW TEASER (0:50)

I love the way Charles Dickens begins his great novel, *The Tale of Two Cities*...

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...
It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...
It was the age of belief, it was the age of incredulity...
It was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness...
It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...
We had everything before us, we had nothing before us...
We were all going direct to Heaven...
We were all going direct the other way-

...so it is with the spiritual life...The Tale of Two Choices...the law or righteousness? In today's lesson, take your pick!

TODAY'S STUDY (25:00 with the song)

Your Works or God's Grace?

I have a question for you to open this lesson. Are you righteous? If so, on what basis are you righteous? The bible is clear on the matter...Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 10 says...

Romans 3:10 *...as it is written, "There is NO CREATURE who is righteous, not even one..."*

If righteousness is a requirement for you to live with God forever, and you are not righteous, that poses quite a predicament! Most people in this world think they can work for righteousness. You've heard them say it..."I'm basically a good person. I haven't killed anyone."

Then comes Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 10...

Romans 3:10 *...as it is written, "There is NO CREATURE who is righteous, not even one..."*

Not even the "basically good person." No one on earth can work for righteousness. In fact, no one is acceptable to God through his own works. For some, that may cause a great deal of angst...but it's really a freeing thought when you think about it. We can actually heed God's advice in Psalm 46, Verse 10...

Psalm 46:10 *"Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*

God is the only one who is righteous. So what will you depend on for your righteousness...your hard work or God's grace?

If you reject your own works and turn to God's grace you have to accept that the Lord has done everything for us in the past. We do nothing on our own. We do nothing by means of our own merit.

We now turn our attention from The Consequences of Sin to righteousness, as we begin our study of the third section of the book of Romans, which extends from Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 21 to Romans, Chapter 4, Verse 25. Let's listen to the first portion of this passage...Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 21 to Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 31...

Romans 3:21 *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets...*

Romans 3:22 *...even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction...*

Romans 3:23 *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

Romans 3:24 *...being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus...*

Romans 3:25 *...whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed...*

Romans 3:26 *...for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Romans 3:27 *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.*

Romans 3:28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

Romans 3:29 *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also...*

Romans 3:30 *...since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.*

Romans 3:31 *Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.*

Now let's get into the details...Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 21...

Romans 3:21 *But now apart from the Mosaic Law the righteousness from God has been manifested (made known), being witnessed to by the Mosaic Law and the Old Testament Prophets...*

It is clear in the Torah...the first five books of the bible which the Jews use as their bible...which includes these books...Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy...and it is clear in the writings of all the Old Testament Prophets from Joshua to Malachi...because the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign God of the Universe, makes it clear through them...that righteousness DOES NOT come from our works of human righteousness... and righteousness does not come from keeping the law because none of us have been able to keep the law...righteousness comes ONLY from faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone...we've already seen this in Romans, Chapter 1, Verse 17...

Romans 1:17 *For in the gospel message the righteousness from God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

We see it in Genesis, Chapter 15, Verse 6...

Genesis 15:6 *Then Abraham believed in the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.*

What does it mean to reckon? It means to compute...to calculate...to count...to consider...to credit...to regard as true. So said another way, Genesis, Chapter 15, Verse 6...

Genesis 15:6 *Then Abraham believed in the Lord; and the Lord **credited it to him** as righteousness.*

Abraham placed His faith in the Lord...Abraham did not work for the Lord's approval...but Abraham accepted the Lord as The Way...and it was counted...computed...calculated...credited...regarded as righteousness... on the basis of Abraham's faith alone...and this happened BEFORE the Mosaic Law existed. The Father of the Jewish race was credited with righteousness without the works of a Mosaic Law.

No matter how many times some people hear this... **no one is acceptable to God through his own works**...it does not reckon...it does not compute in their minds. Righteousness as a free gift? Bah humbug! Grace? Bah humbug! Works! Oh Yeah! I'd rather work for my salvation than get it free!

God in His grace has provided us with a "so great" salvation free of charge. Yet we still insist on paying for our own salvation by still trying to generate our own form of righteousness...human self-righteousness...through our own works...and no matter how many times we fail to generate our own righteousness, we still think we can do it, and that God will credit us with an accomplishment that makes us worthy. We ignore, Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verses 8 and 9...

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith (alone); and that (faith is) not of the source of yourselves (nor is the grace or the salvation from the source of yourselves), it is the gift of God (the Father);//not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

How does this working, this striving, manifest itself in your life? Back to Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 21...

Romans 3:21 But now apart from the Mosaic Law the righteousness from God has been made known, being witnessed to by the Mosaic Law and by the Old Testament Prophets...

Romans 3:22 ...a righteousness that comes as a gift from God the Father through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for all those who believe (for whosoever); for there is no distinction...

The Lord Jesus Christ's righteousness is available to everyone. Why?

Romans 3:23 ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

The Lord has made it clear in The Consequences of Sin passage in Romans, Chapter 1, Verse 18 to Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 20, that all of us are law breakers, all of us are guilty, all of us are sinful who come before the Lord... isn't it refreshing to know that you don't have to "run your act" with an omniscient Lord who knows all that is knowable, including you? Isn't it great to know that when you meet the Lord face to face, you won't have to go into self-justification about your self-betrayal of breaking the law? What is your self-betrayal? You betrayed yourself by not heeding the advice of your Sovereign in First John, Chapter 2, Verse 1a...

First John 2:1a My little children (believers in Christ), I (John) am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

The Lord does not want us to sin. It's damaging to us. What did the Lord say to the woman caught in the act of adultery? John, Chapter 8, Verse 11...

John 8:11 She said, "No one (has condemned me), Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."

He said, "Don't sin anymore." But He also says, "I don't condemn you." Does that thought from the Lord even compute to you? We do something to ourselves that God doesn't do...we condemn ourselves when we sin...God doesn't.

Are you righteous? On what basis are you righteous? Look...sin has to be paid for. When you consider working to impress God, you do it because you KNOW sin has to be paid for. Unfortunately, you can't pay for your own sins. Back to the passage...Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 24...

Romans 3:24 ...yet all who believe keep on being justified (declared righteous) as a (free) gift by means of His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus...

The Lord redeems you. You can't redeem yourself. Galatians, Chapter 3, Verse 13...

Galatians 3:13 *The Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Mosaic Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written in Old Testament Scripture, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE (cursed is everyone who is crucified)...”*

First Peter, Chapter 2, Verse 24...

First Peter 2:24 *...and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the Cross, so that we might die to the sovereignty of sin and so that we might live to divine righteousness; for by the Lord's wounds you were healed.*

No one is acceptable to God through his own works. But everyone can enjoy the righteousness of God through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation. No one is justified, no one is declared righteous, no one can earn righteousness, by observing the Mosaic Law...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...no one will stand before the Lord and boast of his own righteousness. That was the sobering conclusion of our last passage of study in Romans, The Consequences of Sin passage. Then that glorious word to begin Verse 21...BUT...the transition from thinking that justification is available through following the rules of the Mosaic Law to the realization that we are all part of the Age of Grace, and we get righteousness through God's grace, not through our works. The apostle Paul put it this way in Ephesians, Chapter 3, Verses 8 to 10...

Ephesians 3:8 *To me (Paul), the very least of all saints (believers in Christ), this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...*

Ephesians 3:9 *...and to bring to light what is the dispensation of the mystery (The Church Age...the Age of Grace) which for ages has been hidden in the God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God who created all things...*

Ephesians 3:10 *...so that the manifold wisdom of God the Father might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.*

BUT! Before God the Father even took the first step in allowing the creation of creatures, GRACE was part of His thinking toward creatures whom He knew would reject both His Person and His plan. Yet in unconditional love toward His creatures, God the Father extended His grace. “Unfathomable” is a great way to describe these riches and this grace.

We go from being helpless and hopeless and nakedly vulnerable because of sin, to the possibility of righteousness through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Romans Chapter 3, Verse 21 is the beginning of God's statement that justification is not by the law, but by faith...

Romans 3:21 *BUT NOW APART FROM THE MOSAIC LAW the righteousness from God has been made known, being witnessed to by the Mosaic Law and by the Old Testament Prophets...*

This verse highlights that the law and righteousness are separate. It's Law or Righteousness, but not a mixture of the two. Notice the expression? “But now APART FROM THE MOSAIC LAW”

“Apart from the law” what? Righteousness! The Lord is telling us that righteousness is divine...that it can be obtained ONLY as a gift...that righteousness cannot be worked for by keeping the Mosaic Law. What the Lord is telling us is that we need to stop doing one thing and start doing another...we need to stop working the law and start accepting the free gift of righteousness.

Have you ever tried to teach someone a new skill? Have you ever tried to teach someone a new thought? I have. My whole life has been filled with such teaching.

Recently I have been working to help a basketball player change the way he shoots. I've seen a remarkable change in form...a remarkable change in result...a smooth shot...a ball whistling through the nets...tickling the twine...on a consistent basis. Then comes the game. Under the pressure of being defended...in the pressure of competition...the player reverts back to the previous way of shooting with a predictable result. Bad results.

Romans Chapter 3, Verse 21...

Romans 3:21 *But now apart from the Mosaic Law the righteousness from God has been made known, being witnessed to by the Mosaic Law and by the Old Testament Prophets...*

When God tells you there is no righteousness in keeping the law...do you abandon the law and move to righteousness? You know the answer to the question is no. The Lord is telling us in Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 21 that the law and righteousness are mutually exclusive. It's Law or Righteousness, but not a mixture of the two. Hebrews, Chapter 7, Verses 18 and 19 say it this way...

Hebrews 7:18 *For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment (the Mosaic Law) because of its weakness and uselessness (in obtaining righteousness)...*

Hebrews 7:19 *...(for the Mosaic Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope (righteousness through faith), through which we draw near to God the Father.*

The Mosaic Law served a purpose...Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 20...

Romans 5:20 *The Mosaic Law came in so that the transgression would increase...*

The Mosaic Law was designed to let us all know we are sinners who could not keep the law. But apart from the law, righteousness! The Lord allows us to find Him through the legalism of the law. Then He teaches us that legalism is inadequate, and He directs us to move to the truth of righteousness. We are reluctant to give up the old to embrace the new. We cling tenaciously to old thoughts even when we know them to be wrong. If we give up the law, where will we go? If we give up legalism, where will we go? John, Chapter 8, Verse 32 tells us where to go...

John 8:32 *"...you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

The place to go from the law is to the truth. What is your choice...self-righteous obedience to the law or the gift of God's righteousness through grace? In First Timothy, Chapter 1, Verses 2 to 11...Paul exhorts his beloved and faithful student Timothy...

First Timothy 1:2 *To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

First Timothy 1:3 *As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines...*

There are strange doctrines, and there are biblical doctrines. Do you know the difference? Are they the same? If they aren't the doctrines that are biblical, they are wrong. Look...every religion has doctrines! But are they the SAME as biblical doctrines? Mostly, no!

First Timothy 1:4 *... that you may instruct certain men not to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the dispensation of God which is by faith.*

We are in the dispensation of grace through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. If you want to hear a description of SELFLESS love, you couldn't hear a better one than First Timothy, Chapter 1, Verse 5...

First Timothy 1:5 *But the goal of our instruction is unconditional love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

God's grace in providing anyone with righteousness is unconditional love.

First Timothy 1:6 *For some men, straying from these things (unconditional love, a pure heart, a good conscience, sincere faith), have turned aside to fruitless discussion (arguments)...*

First Timothy 1:7 *...wanting to be teachers of the Mosaic Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.*

We are never so sure of ourselves as the time when we are dead wrong.

First Timothy 1:8 *But we know that the Mosaic Law is good...IF one uses it lawfully...*

Of course we don't keep the law...we aren't even able to...

First Timothy 1:9 *...realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person (a non-lawbreaker), but (the law is made) for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers...*

Now if you reflect on that last verse...and you think about all we learned from The Consequences of Sin passage, you know that the ungodly and sinners, the unholy and profane, is not a reference to believers in Christ...but to unbelievers...the description of unbelievers continues...

First Timothy 1:10-11 *...and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching//according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.*

Here's Barah Ministries Song Worship Leader June Murphy, singing a song she wrote and produced, that calls us to righteousness...the song is WALK IN THE LIGHT.

SONG (3:14)

WALK IN THE LIGHT

June Murphy

It's Law or Righteousness, but not a mixture of the two. It's time for us as Christians to shed the shackles of sin and to come to righteousness. It's time for us as Christians to shed the shackles of the Law and to come to righteousness. It is not only a challenge of today, but as we can see from Scripture, it has always been a challenge.

We conclude today's lesson with this exhortation...

Acts 16:31 *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes."*

John 14:6 *Jesus said to doubting Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through believing in Me.*

John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has eternal life (the ZOE life); but he who does not obey the (command to believe in the) Son will not see (the Zoe) life, but instead the wrath of God the Father abides on him."*

Come on over to the free gift of righteousness of a gracious God and be saved.

ANNOUNCER OUTRO (0:40)

You've been listening to Pastor Rory Clark of Barah Ministries, a worldwide Christian Church in Mesa, AZ. Pastor Rory teaches face-to-face lessons twice a week. For more information, especially on meeting locations, go to the Barah Ministries website at www.barahministries.com. That's www.B-A-R-A-H-ministries.com.

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