

Righteousness, Self-Control, and the Judgment

Acts 24:24-26

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- “And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you. 26 Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.”

The Apostle Paul's Prospects

- Marcus Antonius Felix (10 AD)
- Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I (38 AD)

Righteousness

- God's righteousness conferred to humankind
 - Rom. 3:21-26 - “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Righteousness

- Paul reasoned about God's plan of righteousness in saving us:
 - Through faith in Jesus Christ
 - Offered to all sinners who believe, from a Paul to a Felix
 - Because all are sinners, justification will be by grace
 - It will be in and through Christ alone that redemption will come
- Manifests God's own righteousness as the One Who is Just within Himself, and the One Who makes others just

Righteousness

- Our righteousness is given by God. We are made righteous in Christ, according to God's righteousness. How does this take place?

Righteousness

- In baptism, we die to sin that we might rise from dying to sin to walk in a new life without sin
 - Rom. 6:1-4 - “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Righteousness

- In dying to sin, we are made free from sin and its consequences to live with Christ and as Christ
 - Rom. 6:5-11 - “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Righteousness

- Since this is the case, we must rule over sin and choose to live as instruments of righteousness
 - Rom. 6:12-14 - “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

Righteousness

- As Paul spoke of righteousness to them, perhaps their consciences were uneasy over their own disregard of God's law on marriage
 - Mal. 2:14-16 - “Yet you say, For what reason? Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. 15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 16 For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence, Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.”

Self-Control

- Before conversion, we had no reason, purpose, nor strength to live righteously, because we were sold under sin
 - John 8:34 - “Jesus answered them, Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”

Self-Control

- Rom. 7:14-20 - “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.”

Self-Control

- The law of sin wages war against the law of one's mind, resulting in slavery to sin
 - Rom. 7:21-24 - “I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

Self-Control

- Outside of Christ, there is not only no hope, there is no help
- Self-control is beyond the reach of sinners outside of Christ

Self-Control

- After conversion, there is no condemnation, and there is now freedom from sin
 - Rom. 8:1-4 - “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Self-Control

- But only for those who live according to the Spirit, with minds set on the Spirit
 - Rom. 8:5-8 - “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Self-Control

- By the Spirit, they put to death the deeds of the flesh. They have the purpose and power, the hope and the help to overcome sin.
 - Rom. 8:11-14 - “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Self-Control

- Eph. 3:16, 20-21 - “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Self-Control

- Thus walking by the Spirit, they can produce the fruit of the Spirit, which includes self-control
 - Gal. 5:16-18, 22-23 - “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”
- The power Felix and Drusilla enjoyed did not save their souls; it couldn't even save their physical lives

The Judgment

- The Day of Judgment is inevitable for believers and unbelievers alike; no one gets out of it
 - Acts 17:30-31 - “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

The Judgment

- Rom. 14:9-12 - “For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”
- 2Cor. 5:10 - “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

The Judgment

- It is impossible to avoid the Judgment
 - 2Cor. 5:11 - “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”
 - 2Thes. 1:7-9 - “And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”

The Point

- It's not possible know exactly what Paul taught when he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment. We do know the effect it had on Felix
 - First he was afraid - Acts 24:25
 - Then he soothed his fear by postponing his decision
 - Then, even though he heard Paul teach for years, he returned to his greedy, bribe taking self - Acts 24:26-27

The Point

- Where are you?
 - Frightened by the Judgment?
 - Temporarily eased by postponing the matter?
 - Content to return to enslavement in sin?
- 2Cor. 6:1-2 - “We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”