

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 4

Speaker	Bible Basics Conference; Andrew Poots; Michael Hardt; Graham Warnes; Simon Attwood; Hugh Clark; Paul Dronsfield; Geoff Hawes
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[00:00:01] I think in our different sessions today and tomorrow we are attempting to distinguish things that differ and to see what the leading thoughts are in relation to each of our subjects.

But we are also finding that the truth of God is a whole, that all the truths with which we have been occupied and are going to be occupied are interconnected. And though we attempt to follow a particular subject through in scripture and to keep on [00:01:08] that track, we are finding that just like the track work at the throat of the major railway station crosses and criss-crosses, so our subjects also cross and criss-cross. And there are many passages in the New Testament where this is the case, where there is this complexity.

But if you have in your mind the principal thoughts connected with each of these separate subjects when you come to such passages as those, it will help you in your understanding of them.

[00:02:02] There are two facts that are the background to our subject in this session and they are in connection with what we have done, fact one, and in connection with what we are, fact two. And in relation to fact one, there are really two things, although I've highlighted what we have done.

In Romans 3 verse 23, there is what we have done and there is what we have not done.

What we have done is sinned.

[00:03:02] And to sin means to practise one's own will rather than to seek and to practise the will of God.

But not only have we sinned, but we haven't attained to God's standard.

And God's absolute standard is not the law, but his own glory.

And coming short of the glory of God means that we have come short of God's manifested excellence.

And I think that ties in with the definition of glory that Mike was giving us earlier on in connection with the rainbow and the refraction of light, where you have God's excellence [00:04:09] manifest and we've come short of that excellence.

In relation to fact two, we have what we are and that is that we are full of sin.

We have a nature that is fallen and that is inseparable from sin.

This principle where we choose our own will, we choose our own way, always, rather than choosing the will and way of God is instinct to this fallen nature.

So that so far as what we have done is concerned, this is the corrupt fruit that grows on the [00:05:10] corrupt tree of what we are.

We can see, can't we, just considering these two facts, how desperate our need is and indeed these are two issues, two facts that really have concerned believers from the very earliest times.

I've been struck already this morning by the number of occasions where reference has been made to the book of Job and I want to make reference again to the book of Job in relation [00:06:01] to these two facts.

Job asked in relation to the first fact, what we have done, the fact that we are sinners, in the light of that, how can man be just with God?

How can God reckon someone who is a sinner to be righteous in his sight?

And in relation to the second fact, what we are, Job asked, who can bring a clean man out of the unclean?

And in fact, our subjects of justification and deliverance this afternoon address these two questions and show how we can be just with God.

[00:07:02] The answer is we can be just in God's sight by means of justification, which is a subject addressed in the earlier part of the epistle to the Romans and who can bring a clean man out of the unclean? Of course God can.

And he brings the clean man out of the unclean by new birth, by giving us a new nature, making us partakers of the divine nature and this new nature is unmixed with sin. It is holy, it is perfect and he delivers us from the old nature.

And both of these things, as I think all the subjects that we are considering, have at [00:08:07] their basis the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

We'll look then first at the subject of justification, although justification and deliverance are closely connected with one another because justification is addressed in the epistle to the Romans up to chapter 5 verse 11 and the subject of deliverance is addressed in the epistle to the Romans from chapter 5 verse 12 onwards. When we look at the two words, justification and righteousness, in English at first glance they look rather different, although if we hyphenate the word justification, to be

just really means to be righteous and if we look at the two words in the Greek, we can say [00:09:07] in fact that the root of the two words is the same and in the Greek the two words are the same to the extent that they stand next to one another in a Greek concordance. So that to be justified really means to be clothed with the righteousness of God, to be reckoned righteous in God's sight and as Paul develops his subject in the first part of the epistle to the Romans, the first thing he does is to show us that we have no righteousness of our own.

We need this righteousness of God, we need justification because in ourselves we are [00:10:01] the opposite, we are unrighteous, there is none righteous, no not one and this quotation in Romans 3 is from Psalms 14 and 53 and if you look at the verse in those two Psalms you find in the case of Psalm 14 it's Jehovah, in the case of Psalm 53 it's God who looks down upon the children of men.

So he looks down upon the human race on earth and without exception he has to say there is none righteous, no not one.

The Jews were God's special earthly people and yet Isaiah has to say in Isaiah 64 verse [00:11:04] 6 all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

We were thinking earlier on Simon made reference to the fig leaves which Adam and Eve sewed together to make for themselves aprons to hide their nakedness, they were conscious that they were exposed to the scrutiny of God's eye, they were exposed to God's judgement but immediately God speaks to them, they realise that this clothing is inadequate and it's only when God clothes them with skins that are the product of the death of those animals from whom the skins came that they realised then that God had come in and provided for [00:12:02] them what they could not provide for themselves. And so it is in Isaiah's case and in relation to the children of Israel all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

The children of Israel were people under the law and it's important to emphasise at this point that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight. Just as we have seen that those efforts made by Adam and Eve to work up something themselves were in vain that shows us that on the principle of law, on the principle of works we cannot [00:13:04] make ourselves fit for the presence of God. Indeed the Apostle Paul speaks in Philippians I think it is where he says that I may be found in him not having my own righteousness which is by works of the law but righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ. Were it possible for someone to keep the law, to keep it perfectly all they would establish is their own righteousness.

But the righteousness with which we are clothed is the righteousness of God. It is a righteousness of God that has been secured by the death of the Lord Jesus and is revealed to us in the Gospel. [00:14:03] I might say there's a reference at the end of the third bullet point there to Romans four where the case is argued out and we see that Abraham was justified without any reference to the law. Before the law was given, before the right of circumcision was given we read that Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. So it is by faith, it is by believing God, it is by believing on the Lord Jesus that we are justified.

The righteousness of God secured and revealed.

Again we see this crossing over of different truths of scripture references already be made to Romans 4 25.

[00:15:05] He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. And we think of Exodus 12 and Exodus 14 and those two chapters very much go together because Exodus 12 shows that we are redeemed by blood and Exodus 14 shows that we are redeemed by power.

And both of these things are prominent in relation to our justification and in relation to our deliverance.

And we see this in the Lord Jesus who was delivered up for our offences.

His life was given, his blood was shed. But he was also raised again, divine power came in to raise him from among the dead, [00:16:07] to bring him forth from the grave and to give him life and this was for our justification.

It's righteousness of God revealed in the gospel and this is a really interesting scripture because when we read Romans 1 verse 17 we find that it is the righteousness of God that is at the foundation of the Christian gospel. Therein righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith according as it is written the just shall live by faith.

So again it is a question of God having been satisfied of all his claims, having been righteously [00:17:08] met in order that he might reckon righteousness, might reckon righteous those who believe on his son so that God can be just or righteous, justifying clothing in righteousness the believer. The righteousness of God applied to the believer. While it is towards all, it is only upon those who believe.

It is only those who through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus are justified.

And being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this is a really, really important point because our two subjects, justification and [00:18:06] deliverance are closely connected with one another but you cannot really move on to the subject of deliverance unless you first have solid peace in your soul that the question of your sins has been dealt with.

And that's why the subject of justification comes before the subject of deliverance. The point has already been made by another speaker that we are not justified by the righteousness of Christ which would be our Lord's personal righteousness as a man under law who kept it.

There are some other references as you can see that show that God, that the Lord Jesus [00:19:01] and the Holy Spirit are all involved in this matter of justifying the believer and they're certainly worth further consideration. So we come to the subject of deliverance. Justification is connected with what we have done, our guilt, whereas deliverance is connected with that fallen nature that we have as children of Adam.

It is a nature mixed with sin that cannot be separated out from sin.

It's called the flesh.

Paul in Romans 7 verse 18 speaks about my flesh and when you look at these references you see that in each case he is speaking about fallen human nature.

[00:20:07] But a word of caution.

Don't think that whenever you come across this word flesh in the New Testament it necessarily refers to the fallen nature that we have because it doesn't always refer to our fallen nature. It's not talking about the human body.

The human body is not sinful.

The human body is something that we can present to God, holy, acceptable to him. We can use the members of our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but that's because we choose to, not because the body is intrinsically sinful but because within us there is that [00:21:07] fallen sinful nature that we can and should distinguish from the body. And we can think of the reference to the Lord Jesus in John 1 verse 14 and the word became flesh.

It's simply speaking about the fact that the Lord at his incarnation took humanity but he didn't take fallen humanity. The human nature that he took was completely apart from sin. But we have a new nature that doesn't commit sin, that yields itself to God and has fruit unto holiness and the end eternal life. So old nature, new nature, how are we set free from the old nature and enabled to walk [00:22:02] in the new nature? What are the truths that God brings to bear upon this situation to deliver us and help us to be in this scene for him?

The first thing, and there are really four key things that we find in the chapters in the epistle to the Romans that deal with this subject, and the first thing is that we are to know certain things.

We are to know what God has done in connection with the fallen nature that we have. So we're looking outside of ourselves to see how God has addressed this situation.

And first of all we find that our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of [00:23:01] sin might be an old, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Mike mentioned earlier on that what could not be mended, God has ended.

We think of the Lord Jesus as a man who was unrighteously condemned to death and crucified, and we sometimes forget that God used those circumstances and that he made the Lord Jesus sin for us, and that the totality of sin and of our sins was laid on his head.

He identified himself completely with our guilt and with our state, and God dealt with [00:24:06] him there as such.

We think of crucifixion as a shameful death, and yet this is the death that our fallen nature deserved.

This is the right place so far as the flesh is concerned.

And God dealt with it there in the cross of Christ in order that the body of sin might be an old, in order that its power over our lives might be taken away so that we don't give in to the temptations of the flesh of which we are so often conscious.

[00:25:04] We are to know that he that is dead is free from sin.

When the believer dies, that old nature ceases to be active.

But in fact we have died in the Lord Jesus.

And in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So you can see we are brought out of that state where we are dominated by this sinful fallen nature that we have. We are brought into a new state in Christ in that he lives and he lives unto God.

And I began by emphasizing the fact that there are things that God wants us to know. [00:26:05] And you remember that the Lord Jesus said, the truth shall make you free. So that as we understand the truth, it really will set us free practically.

So knowing is the first key point. The second key point is reckoning. Reckoning in the light of what God has done in the work of the Lord Jesus. We are to reckon also ourselves to be dead, indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I was speaking earlier on about Exodus 12 and Exodus 14, the fact that we are redeemed by blood and by power.

But here also we have, I think, an allusion to the crossing of the Jordan. [00:27:03] We are to identify ourselves with the Lord and with his death and to follow him. Knowing, reckoning, knowing and reckoning are largely matters of the mind.

We come to a certain knowledge and we reckon in the light of that knowledge. But when we come to this word yielding, this is a much more day by day thing. We are not to yield our members as instruments of righteousness to sin, but yield ourselves unto God as those alive from the dead. For as ye have yielded your members, servants, to uncleanness and to iniquity, and to iniquity even so now.

Yield your members, servants, to righteousness and to holiness. And finally, by walking, knowing, reckoning, yielding, walking, walking in the spirit.

[00:28:07] If we walk in the spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Paul tells us in Galatians, he says to the Galatians, if ye live in the spirit, walk in the spirit. And if we walk in the spirit, we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Rather, although we are not under law, we shall fulfill its righteous requirements.

And we can be sure of the practical help of the Holy Spirit.

And it is striking as you read through these chapters in the epistles of the Romans, just how many references in Romans chapter 8 there are to the Holy Spirit. So that in conclusion, in summary, there is this wonderful verse in Galatians 2.

[00:29:12] I was going to say earlier on in connection with the various strands of truth that are before us.

As we follow up each strand of truth, we find that in each and every case, its study leads us to the Lord Jesus.

It leads us to his death and resurrection. It leads us up to the glory of God.

And this verse, this well-known verse in Galatians 2.20 seems to encapsulate that. The law could not give life.

It never gave an object. It never gave power. But in this verse, we have all three of those things. We have Christ as our object. We have Christ as our life. [00:30:03] And as we are occupied with him, the Son of God, whom each of us can say, love me, and gave himself for me, we shall find that we are empowered to answer to the exhortations that have been occupying us in these chapters.

If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. And this is true liberty. This is true victory.

May we be helped along these lines till the Lord comes.