

Thought For The Week

Articles: [Do I Have God's Approval? ~300 words](#), [~1700 words](#)

Do I Have God's Approval?

A Summary and Reflection on Steve's Sermon

On Sunday morning, June 7, 2026, Steve delivered a heartfelt and thought-provoking sermon titled "Do I Have God's Approval?" Drawing primarily from the book of Romans—his ongoing preaching focus—Steve wrestled openly with the lesson throughout the week. He expressed his desire for the message to unfold as the Lord intended, emphasizing the profound comfort that comes from knowing one has God's approval. The sermon challenged listeners to examine their lives against the standard of divine righteousness and to find assurance through faith.

Scripture Readings

Kevin opened with the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-10, proclaiming the blessings promised to the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness' sake. These words set a tone of kingdom values and divine favor for those who align their hearts with God.

Roger followed with Acts 10:34-36, where Peter declares that God shows no partiality. In every nation, the one who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. The message of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, underscores God's impartial yet demanding standard of righteousness.

These readings framed Steve's central question: Do you know whether you have God's approval?

What Pleases God?

Steve began by posing his familiar question: "What pleases God?" He turned to Hebrews 11:5-6 (NIV), recounting the account of Enoch, who was taken from this life without experiencing death because he pleased God. The key principle is clear: "Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Faith, Steve explained, is not mere intellectual assent but active belief that God is who He says He is and that He rewards diligent seekers. He expressed confidence that those gathered were pleasing God by seeking His will, while gently noting concern for those absent. The comfort of approval comes from searching out God and aligning with His desires.

God's Judgment and the Standard of Righteousness

To explore how we know if we have God's approval, Steve directed attention to Romans 2:12-16 (NIV). Those who sin apart from the law perish apart from it, and those under the law are judged by

it. Righteousness in God's sight belongs not to hearers of the law but to doers who obey it. Even Gentiles without the written law demonstrate its requirements when they instinctively do what it commands—the law written on their hearts, their consciences bearing witness.

This judgment occurs when God assesses people's secrets through Jesus Christ. Steve likened it to a courtroom where God justifies the righteous. The sermon emphasized that God's concern is our relationship to His will. Righteousness is not abstract; it is the condition of being as one ought to be, acceptable to God, a life wrought by the Spirit that conforms to His standards.

Consulting dictionary and Strong's definitions reinforced this: acting in accord with divine or moral law, free from guilt, morally right. Steve invited deeper reflection through the Psalms.

The Righteous in the Psalms

In Psalm 33, the psalmist calls the righteous to sing joyfully to the Lord, praising Him with harp, lyre, and skillful music. It is fitting for the upright to praise Him. Steve explained that the righteous are those who do God's will, concerned about their relationship with Him and living godly lives—caring deeply about what God thinks and how their behavior reflects His approval.

Psalm 34:15-22 further portrays God's care for the righteous: His eyes are on them, His ears attentive to their cry. He delivers them from troubles, is close to the brokenhearted, protects their bones, and ensures no one who takes refuge in Him is condemned. In contrast, His face is against evildoers. Again, the righteous are those walking in the light, in accordance with God's will.

God's Wrath Against Unrighteousness (Romans 1)

Steve contrasted this with Romans 1:18-25 (NIV), where the wrath of God is revealed against all godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth. God's invisible qualities—eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen in creation, leaving people without excuse. Those who knew God but neither glorified Him nor gave thanks allowed their thinking to become futile and hearts darkened. They exchanged God's glory for idols and were given over to sinful desires.

Such individuals walk contrary to God's will on purpose, exercising free will in defiance. This is unrighteousness—disregarding God's proper place, showing no respect for His authority over life, morals, divorce, honesty, or worship. Steve warned that neglecting God's will places one out of step with Him. Righteousness, by contrast, is harmony with God and recognition of His sovereignty.

Even God's patience in withholding immediate punishment is mercy, giving time to repent—not weakness.

Abraham: An Example of Faith Credited as Righteousness

Steve turned to Abraham to illustrate what pleases God. Called from idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham received staggering promises: a great nation, blessing to the world through his seed, and land as inheritance. Yet Abraham's faith grew gradually.

He struggled to fully trust God's protection, twice passing Sarah off as his sister out of fear. God had to intervene directly. In Genesis 15, despite Abraham's doubts about an heir at nearly 90 years old, God reaffirmed the promises and showed him the stars. "Abraham believed the Lord, and he

credited it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

Steve highlighted the Greek nuance: belief led to justification. God counted Abraham righteous not because of perfect behavior but because he trusted God’s promise. This moment marked a turning point where Abraham’s faith overcame natural impossibility (his and Sarah’s age).

Application to Believers: Justification, Baptism, and New Life

The sermon drew direct parallels to Christian experience. We are justified when we believe God’s offer of reconciliation through Christ’s cross—payment for sins to satisfy the law. Doubting this is unrighteousness; embracing it leads to God’s declaration: “I believe you. You are justified.”

Baptism for the remission of sins is the action where God “believes” our faith. Emerging from the watery grave, we enter newness of life—a changed existence dedicated to God’s will. Steve beautifully referenced Psalm 119, where David repeatedly pledges to observe God’s law as a lamp to his feet. At baptism, we make a similar covenant: to abandon worldly ways and attend to God’s teachings on marriage, speech, idolatry, generosity, trust, and every area of life.

This is the life of the righteous—concerned with God’s viewpoints on how life ought to be lived, morally aligned with His standards, and walking in the light.

Do You Have God’s Approval?

Steve’s message culminated in a clear invitation. If anyone needs to respond to God’s promise and act upon it—to be reconciled, forgiven, and counted righteous—the opportunity stands open. God approves those who fear Him and do what is right, as Peter declared. Through faith like Abraham’s, credited as righteousness, we can know with comforting assurance that we have God’s approval.

The congregation was invited to stand and sing a song of encouragement, responding to the call to worship and live as God’s approved people.

Practical Reflections for Today

Steve’s sermon challenges modern believers profoundly. In a world that suppresses truth and exchanges God’s glory for modern idols—success, comfort, self-determination—we must ask ourselves: Do our lives demonstrate active faith that seeks and pleases God? Are we hearers only, or doers of His word?

Righteousness is not self-achieved moral perfection but a credited status received by trusting God’s promises fulfilled in Jesus. Yet it produces a transformed life. Like Abraham, our faith may falter at times, but God’s patience calls us back. The righteous cry out and are heard; the Lord delivers them.

For the church today, this means examining relationships, decisions, and priorities. Does God hold His proper place? Are we walking in harmony with His revealed will in Scripture? The Beatitudes remind us that kingdom approval often looks different from worldly success—blessing comes to the meek, merciful, and persecuted for righteousness.

As Steve noted from Romans, God’s impartiality means the standard is the same for all nations: fear Him and do right. Creation itself testifies to His power, leaving no excuse for suppression of truth.

Parents, spouses, and individuals can find comfort and motivation here. God meets needs as Jesus taught in Matthew 6; we can trust rather than grasp for security through compromise. Baptism marks the beginning of a lifelong pursuit of godliness, guided by the lamp of God's word (Psalm 119).

Conclusion: The Comfort of Approval

Knowing we have God's approval is indeed comforting. It frees us from anxiety over ultimate judgment and empowers holy living. Enoch pleased God through faith. Abraham was credited righteous through belief. We too can stand approved through faith in Christ, demonstrated in obedient baptism and ongoing faithfulness.

Steve's transparent wrestling with the text models humility—ministers and members alike continually seek God's approval. May we all diligently seek Him, believe He rewards seekers, and live as the righteous described in the Psalms: praising joyfully, crying out in trouble, and taking refuge in the Lord who delivers.

This sermon calls us back to the heart of the gospel: God's righteousness credited to us through faith, producing lives that glorify Him. Let us respond today—whether in renewed commitment or first-time obedience—so that we may hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

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Do I Have God's Approval?

Steve's Sermon Summary

On June 7, 2026, Steve delivered a powerful and personal sermon titled "Do I Have God's Approval?" Drawing from his ongoing series in Romans, Steve wrestled openly with the lesson, seeking to deliver it as the Lord desired. His central question challenged every listener: Do you know whether you have God's approval? The comfort of knowing you do, he emphasized, is profound.

Kevin read the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-10, highlighting kingdom blessings for the poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure in heart, and those persecuted for righteousness. Roger followed with Acts 10:34-36, where Peter declares God shows no partiality—those who fear Him and do right are welcome in every nation through Jesus Christ, Lord of all.

Steve turned to Hebrews 11:5-6, noting that without faith it is impossible to please God. One must believe God exists and rewards those who diligently seek Him. Enoch pleased God through such faith. The sermon explored righteousness: not mere rule-keeping, but a life in harmony with God's will, acceptable to Him.

From Romans 2, Steve showed that God judges secrets through Christ, justifying the obedient. Romans 1 warns of God's wrath against those who suppress truth, exchange God's glory for idols, and walk contrary to His will on purpose—unrighteousness. In contrast, the righteous in Psalms 33 and 34 praise God, cry out to Him, and receive His deliverance.

The heart of the message centered on Abraham. Called from idolatrous Ur, Abraham received great promises yet struggled to fully trust. In Genesis 15, when he believed God's promise of a son despite old age, "it was credited to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). God justified him through faith.

Steve applied this directly: We are justified when we believe God's offer of reconciliation through Christ's cross. Baptism for the remission of sins marks our response, bringing newness of life dedicated to God's will, as Psalm 119 beautifully expresses. At baptism we promise to walk in obedience regarding marriage, speech, trust, and all of life.

Steve closed with an invitation to respond and be counted among God's approved—righteous in His eyes. The congregation stood to sing in response.

This sermon calls us to examine our faith: Are we truly seeking and trusting God? His approval comes not by perfection but by believing His promises fulfilled in Jesus and living accordingly. May we all walk as the righteous, comforted by His approval.

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