

26-0322p - Detailed Summary

26-0322p - *Righteous or Justified?*, Steve Cain

Bible Reader: John Nousek

This detailed summary by Grok, xAI, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

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Righteous or Justified?

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading (0:04 - 0:46): John Nousek

Romans 1:16-17: John reads Romans 1:16-17, emphasizing that Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the

Continued

Jew and also to the Greek. The passage reveals God's righteousness from faith to faith, and declares that the just shall live by faith.

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 45:12), Preacher: Steve Cain

(0:04 - 3:52) Scripture Reading and Introduction

Steve greets the congregation, expresses appreciation for their presence and love for God, and stresses the importance of working with God's Word as life's saving blood. He introduces the evening's topic as "Righteous or Justified?" (or righteousness versus justification), making it clear that no one can reach heaven without being justified. He states the necessity of justification as the core point to explore.

Steve begins by defining righteousness, consulting a dictionary definition and stressing that we must be righteous in God's sight, as God will not accept us otherwise. He poses the key question: Will we achieve righteousness through our own deeds (like Jesus did) or through justification with righteousness credited to us? He notes the audience already knows the answer but will explain it anyway.

He explains that the law seeks and judges righteousness, recalling last Sunday's Bible class discussion on being a just judge and how the Bible will judge us. Righteousness means being in right standing with God, reflecting His moral character, obeying His commandments, and living with integrity, faith, and justice.

(3:54 - 11:12) Challenges of Righteousness and God's Impartial Judgment

Steve describes the dictionary definition as a heavy set of criteria for true righteousness: right standing with God, reflecting His moral character, obedience, integrity, faith, and justice. He draws from Romans (especially chapter 3, the upcoming Bible class topic) where Paul concludes there is none righteous, no, not one.

God judges using Scripture as the standard, requiring perfection for classification as righteous.

Referencing last week's lesson, he compares this to Olympic judging in events like figure skating, ski jumping, snowboarding, and ice skating, where athletes are scored against strict standards but no one achieves perfection. Judges' scores determine winners, yet human judging remains subjective and potentially biased.

In contrast, God's judgment is impartial—He shows no favoritism or prejudice and is not a respecter of persons. He evaluates whether people meet His qualifications and standards. Steve introduces the law from Genesis: God established the law of sin and death, warning Adam that eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil would result in death.

He explains that sin means missing the mark or failing God's standard. The law declares that sin brings death. Referencing Romans 3:31, he asks whether faith nullifies the law; Paul answers no, faith upholds the law by respecting and honoring it.

The law's demand (sin brings death) is not circumvented but met through Jesus. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the standard no other human could achieve. Every person except Jesus has sinned and is subject to death—ultimately separation from God in hell rather than eternal life with Him.

God honors the law by offering His Son to die in humanity's place, respecting the condemnation the law pronounces on all sinners.

(11:13 - 11:55) Honoring the Law Through Christ's Sacrifice

Steve reiterates that God does not circumvent or alter the unchanging law. The law requires death for breaking it and cannot be softened or redefined. By sending His Son to the cross to pay the death penalty humanity owes, God fully honors and upholds the law through justification.

(11:56 - 13:37) Human Failure and God's Provision of Righteousness

Righteousness remains the goal for all mankind: right standing with God, reflecting His moral character, obeying commandments, and living with integrity, faith, and justice. However, everyone sins and falls short, becoming subject to death.

Paul declares no one has achieved this goal. Apart from the law, God's righteousness has been revealed (to which the law and prophets testify) and is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, with no distinction between Jew and Gentile, since all have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

Steve acknowledges he is somewhat rambling while following his notes but emphasizes the central truth.

(13:38 - 14:38) Necessity of Justification

The main point is that no one will reach heaven without justification. The only path to justification is obeying God's offer by coming under Jesus' sacrifice and leadership. He references Romans 3:19, stating the law speaks to those under it, silencing every mouth and holding the whole world accountable to God. No one will be declared righteous by works of the law; instead, the law makes us conscious of sin.

(14:39 - 15:18) Consciousness of Sin Through the Law

Steve reinforces that humans are not righteous—we fail to meet God’s goal and fall short of His glory due to sin.

(15:19 - 15:47) Righteousness Apart from the Law

He begins reading Romans 3:21 onward, noting that apart from the law, God’s righteousness has been made known, testified to by the law and the prophets. This means God provides righteousness independently of the law.

(15:48 - 18:12) God’s Offer Through Christ and His Eternal Purpose

This righteousness comes through Jesus as God’s offer, which individuals can accept or reject. The law and prophets anticipated this provision. Steve connects this to Ephesians 1, where Paul explains God’s purpose in creation.

He reads from Ephesians 1:3 (NIV), praising God who has blessed believers with every spiritual blessing in Christ. God chose us in Christ before the world’s creation to be holy and blameless in His sight.

(18:14 - 18:43) Predestined for Adoption

Continuing Ephesians 1, in love God predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, according to His pleasure and will, to the praise of His glorious grace.

(18:43 - 21:33) God’s Purpose in Creation and Redemption

Steve continues reading from Ephesians 1, emphasizing that God’s glorious grace has been freely given through Jesus, the one He loves. In Christ, believers have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God’s grace, which He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

He explains that God made known the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, purposed in Christ to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ when the times reach fulfillment. Believers were chosen and predestined according to God’s plan, who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, so that those who first hoped in Christ might praise His glory.

He stresses that this purpose is to glorify God. When believers heard the gospel of salvation and believed, they were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who serves as a deposit guaranteeing the inheritance until the redemption of God’s possession, all to the praise of His glory.

Steve concludes that God created humanity for this purpose: to redeem us so that in heaven we will eternally praise and glorify His glory.

(21:33 - 25:55) Glorifying God Through Salvation and Examples

God desires humanity to glorify Him. Steve cites Moses as an example, who appealed to God’s glory

when interceding for the Israelites to prevent their destruction. Moses argued that destroying them would make God a laughingstock among the nations, as He had brought them out of Egypt but could not complete the promise—thus appealing for God’s name and glory to be upheld.

He notes that believers should glorify God for their salvation and that God glorifies His name through what He does for His people. Steve references Paul’s discussion of the collection for the famine-stricken saints in Jerusalem, explaining that when the contribution reaches them and helps the Jewish families (and influences others), those recipients will glorify God in thanksgiving for His provision and salvation.

Returning to Romans 3, Steve reiterates the need for salvation from death. God demonstrated His righteousness at the present time by being just and the justifier of those who have faith in Christ. He rereads Romans 3:21-24: Apart from the law, God’s righteousness is revealed (testified by the law and prophets), given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, with no distinction between Jew and Gentile, since all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus.

(25:57 - 27:07) Justification Through Christ’s Atoning Sacrifice

All are subject to the death penalty due to sin and need justification to escape punishment. Justification comes freely by God’s grace through Christ’s redemption. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of His blood, received by faith.

This demonstrates God’s righteousness, honoring the law by sending Jesus to die on the cross and provide justification. God is not showing favoritism or prejudice; He remains righteous and beyond criticism.

(27:10 - 36:01) Demonstrating Righteousness and Justification by Faith

God presented Christ as an atoning sacrifice through His blood, received by faith, to demonstrate His righteousness. In His forbearance, He left former sins unpunished, but now demonstrates His righteousness at the present time to be just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.

Steve asks where boasting is—excluded, not by a law of works but by the law of faith. A person is justified by faith apart from works of the law. God is the God of both Jews and Gentiles, justifying the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through the same faith. Faith does not nullify the law but upholds it by respecting and honoring it.

He transitions to Romans 4, discussing the righteousness credited to Abraham. Abraham was not justified by works (or he could boast, but not before God). Scripture says Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

To the one who works, wages are an obligation, not a gift; but to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, faith is credited as righteousness. David echoes this blessedness: those whose transgressions are forgiven, sins covered, and sin not counted against them.

Righteousness is credited by God, not earned through works or deeds. No human merit can obtain the righteousness God requires for heaven; it must be given by Him through grace. God credits

righteousness when people obey His desire to come through Christ, recognize Jesus as Lord and Savior, and become His disciples in His church.

Steve references the Great Commission: go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Belief and baptism lead to salvation. Jesus' grace enabled His willing sacrifice on the cross for sins. Jesus ascended, entered the Holy of Holies, presented His blood, and God accepted the sacrifice. As High Priest, Jesus intercedes, and His blood cleanses those who walk in the light (per 1 John).

(36:01 - 36:40) Recapping Credited Righteousness in Romans 4

Steve rereads Romans 4:1-8 to reinforce that Abraham discovered justification by faith, not works. If justified by works, he could boast—but not before God. Scripture declares Abraham believed God, and it was credited as righteousness.

Wages for work are obligation, not gift; but faith in God who justifies the ungodly credits righteousness. David describes the blessedness of those credited with righteousness apart from works: transgressions forgiven, sins covered, sin not counted.

(36:41 - 37:29) Faith as the Key Revealed in the Gospel

Faith is central. Returning to Romans 1:16-17, Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. In the gospel, God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the righteous will live by faith.

God offers righteousness through the gospel message, a righteousness by faith from first to last.

(37:30 - 40:24) Belief, Reconciliation, and Christ's Intercession

Faith requires believing in God, recognizing sin has alienated us from Him and placed us under Satan's influence. God, in love and grace, offers reconciliation through Jesus: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

Believers must accept this offer, believe Jesus is the Christ and Savior anointed by God, and come to Him for forgiveness through His sacrifice. Jesus, as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, intercedes in heaven. As 1 John states, if we walk in the light, His blood continually cleanses us from sin.

God credits righteousness not because of earned merit or good deeds, but through grace. Jesus presents believers before God without spot or blemish. Steve references Colossians 1 (though the reading is cut off) to support this presentation without blemish.

(40:25 - 45:12) Reconciliation and Presentation Without Blemish

Steve reads from Colossians 1:15 onward, describing Jesus as the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. In Him all things were created—things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, powers, rulers, or authorities—all created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Jesus is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the

dead, so that in everything He might have supremacy. God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself—whether on earth or in heaven—by making peace through the blood shed on the cross.

He explains that believers were once alienated from God and enemies in their minds because of evil behavior, but now God has reconciled them by Christ's physical body through death. The purpose is to present them holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation. Steve highlights this phrase as one he frequently uses, noting that different translations say "without spot, without blemish," conveying the same meaning in the NIV.

He stresses the condition: if believers continue in their faith, established and firm, not moving from the hope held out in the gospel—which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, with Paul as its servant—then this presentation occurs. Righteousness must be credited to us, and it happens when we come to God through Jesus with complete, unwavering faith and acceptance.

This requires believing 100 percent that we are Christians coming to Jesus, that He is able to save us, and that He can present us before God without spot or blemish. The key criterion is becoming His disciple, which also means becoming a member of His church, His body.

Steve references the occasion when Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was, receiving various answers until Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responded that this was revealed by the Father in heaven, and upon this rock He would build His church. Believers are thus members of Jesus' body and His church, which He builds up, uniting them as one.

He extends an invitation: if anyone is not a member of the body of Christ, has not been baptized for the remission of sins, and has not put on Christ in baptism, then they are not in the church, not justified, and not righteous. He offers the opportunity to respond and be baptized while the congregation stands and sings a song of encouragement.