

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God's holiness – man's sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

In Paul's systematic presentation of the gospel in Romans he begins with the issue of sin – showing categorically that all are under the condemnation of sin. Sin is our universal problem before the all-HOLY God.

Slide # 2

Romans 1:18 – 3:20
The Whole World Guilty Before God

- 1:18-32 – Depraved Pagans
- 2:1-16 – Hypocritical Moralists
- 2:17-3:8 – **Self-Righteous Religionists**
- 3:9-20 – The Whole Human Race

Here is the universal problem – nobody keeps God's law – whether it be the law of conscience, the moral law, or the mosaic law which all overlap in terms of moral accountability. ALL are guilty of breaking God's law! None live up to God's holy standard.

So what is the answer to our sin problem? Paul as he develops his gospel presentation emphasizes two things: 1) He emphasizes Christ as Lord & Savior is the only God-provided answer to our sin problem. 2) He emphasizes that God's answer in Christ must be received by faith.

So strong is Paul's emphasis on faith that we could legitimately say that a major theme of the book is ***"The Right Kind of Faith"***.

Paul starts out in 1:5 by saying that his apostolic calling was ***"for obedience to the faith among all nations"***. Then he says the gospel ***"is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes"*** (Rom. 1:16). And then he follows this up by emphasizing the nature of a true saving faith as being ***"revealed from faith to faith"*** just as it is written ***"The just shall live by faith"*** (Rom. 1:17). A true saving faith is revealed in the life.

Paul then follows this up by saying that the goodness of God leads to repentance as seen in Rom. 2:4. And then finally at the end of Romans 2 he in effect defines repentance as a ***"circumcision of the heart"***. True faith is an internal matter of the heart involving the reality of repentance.

So all the way through Paul emphasizes accountability for sin in keeping with God's revelation of His truth; and then also personal responsibility for the obedience of faith involving repentance.

Paul has systematically shown that all are under the condemnation of sin whether it be the pagan, the moralist, or the religionist. He has just shown at the end of Romans 2 that the religious Jew is not made right with God on the basis of having the law or on the basis of circumcision. Rather, what God is looking is for a repentant response of the HEART.

Well, the religious Jew has a problem with what Paul is saying and so in Romans 3:1-8 Paul interacts with "push back" from an imaginary religious objector.

When an unrepentant religious person is threatened by the truth what they do is ARGUE. Instead of repenting they will raise OBJECTIONS, and then when you answer they will OBJECT to your answers and round and round and round it goes because they refuse to submit to the truth. This is the response Paul anticipates from the Jewish religionist here in Romans 3:1-8.

Paul has just got done showing that there is no fundamental difference between Jews and Gentiles in that all have broken the law of God whether it be His moral law or the Mosaic law. All are guilty before God. And he has shown that being right with God is not a matter of externals but rather an internal matter of the heart.

The religious Jew has a problem with this because throughout his entire life he has believed that simply being Jew meant he was in a favored position before God and not under condemnation like the Gentiles.

And so we come to the religious objector's challenges and Paul's responses to them.

Romans 3:1–8 (NKJV)

1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?

In the Jew's mind, Paul has just contradicted everything God has to say in the OT about the Jews being the chosen people with the identifying sign of circumcision. He has just said that neither the Jewish heritage centered in possession of the law (Rom. 2:17-24) nor merely the outward rite of circumcision (Rom. 2:25-29) makes any difference in one's standing before God. So, the pushback is that Paul seems to be saying there is nothing special about being Jewish.

This is the central objection.

Now logically we might expect Paul at this point to say, "Yes, that is absolutely right. Since all are guilty of breaking God's law in one way or another we are all at the same place and there is no advantage for the Jew." But that is not the direction he goes. Rather he says...

2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

"Much in every way" indicates that Paul sees the Jew as having many advantages but in this context, he only gets to one – which in essence is the chief one. Later in chapter 9:1-5, he will detail other advantages but here he zeroes in on the tremendous MAIN benefit to the Jew, namely to them **"were committed the oracles of God."** This is HUGE!

The word **"oracles"** (Gk. *logia*) means "sayings", "words" "pronouncements" or "utterances" of God (cf. Acts 7:38; Heb. 5:12; 1 Pet. 4:11). This is the inspired divine messages from God that make up the Scriptures. God uniquely gave His special revelation of "Thus saith the LORD" to the Jews. Thus, the Jews were uniquely privileged in being made the custodians of God's inspired revelation.

Slide # 3

Psalm 147:19–20 (NKJV)

19 He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel.

20 He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!

Slide # 4 (Corrie Ten Boom)

Corrie said,

"I remember Nollie (her sister) telling me: "We love the Jews because we can thank them for the two greatest treasures. First of all, a book written by the Jews. It is the Bible and we must thank Israel for it. It is a book which is almost bursting with good news and glorious promises. All of its writers were Jews, except Luke, but he was converted through a Jew." I want to thank you, the Jews, for this book. For the Bible has shown me the way to the second blessing Nollie mentioned. It got me acquainted with my greatest friend. He was a Jew. On His divine side he was the Son of God, but on his human side he was a Jew. This friend is my Savior."

The Jews had the great advantage of having the Scriptures. As Paul says in Rom. 10:17, "***faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***" Paul told Timothy that "***the Holy Scriptures...are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is Christ Jesus***" (2 Tim. 3:15). The gospel is found in the OT Scriptures (Gal. 3:8) and it was the law that was the intended tutor to bring people to Christ "***that we might be justified by faith***" (Gal. 3:24).

In our culture has any BLESSEING been more overlooked and taken more for granted than the availability of the Holy Scriptures? To have the living Word of God in our possession is a precious treasure beyond measure.

I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf 'till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen;

I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. For this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! – **John Wesley**

Yes, the Jews had the great advantage of having the Scriptures given to them firsthand – and yet they did not properly value it or take advantage of it. Jesus in John 5:46 said to the Jews, “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me.”

At this point the imaginary objector comes forth with another rhetorical question.

3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?

Note the word “some”. Paul is gracious in saying “some” while in fact MOST did not believe. Paul will show later that God always has a remnant in Israel, but consistently just a remnant (cf. Rom. 11:5). The phrase “**did not believe**” could just as well be translated as “**were unfaithful**” and scholars are divided as to how it should be taken.

However, we should note that while faith and faithfulness are distinct they are also related in the teaching of Paul. We have already noted that the belief that saves (Rom. 1:16) is then revealed from faith (initial faith) to faith (the life of faith) in the lives of those who then live by faith (Rom. 1:17).

Thus, in the theology of Paul faith and faithfulness are closely linked together. It is expected that true faith will demonstrate itself in some level of faithfulness (cf. Hab. 2:4; Rom. 2:6-10).

The Jews had the conviction that no matter what, circumcised Jews would be saved. They thought that their circumcision was an insurance policy and that they as the favored people were okay with God.

So now the question is, “Okay, if the Jews lack faith and are unfaithful, does that mean that God is unfaithful in His covenant promises to them?” This question challenges the integrity of God – claiming that He promised them an enduring relationship with Him. If now their unbelief puts them outside the good graces of God does this mean that God is unfaithful? That is the issue the objector brings forth.

By the way, this is exactly what the covenant theologians or those into replacement theology hold to. They claim God is now DONE with Israel and that all His promises to them are now fulfilled spiritually in the Church.

Slide # 5**Jeremiah 31:35–37 (NKJV)**

35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name):

36 **“If those ordinances depart** From before Me, says the LORD, **Then the seed of Israel shall also cease** From being a nation before Me forever.”

37 Thus says the LORD: **“If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD.**

God is saying in the strongest terms possible that He will never abandon the Jews as a people. And notice He says, they will not be cast off in spite of all they have done!

However, what the Jews failed to realize is that these promises are made in reference to the nation and that not all individual Jews will partake of the spiritual blessings of God. As Paul says in Romans 9:6, “**they are not all Israel who are of Israel.**” Just outwardly being a part of the group doesn’t automatically bring favor with God. It is necessary to have an INWARD conversion of faith in the heart. This is what they were missing.

Most Jews will not be saved. Even in the Tribulation Period when there will finally be a great turning to God in Israel, yet even so only 1/3 of them will actually be saved as seen in Zech. 13:8-9. God will fulfill all His promises to them as a people as further clarified in chapters 9-11, but to partake in it they as individual Jews do need to come to repentance and saving faith (cf. Isa. 55:6-7). They need a circumcision of the heart as Paul said in Romans 2:29.

The religionist at this point is trying to make the issue one of God’s character, but God puts the onus on human responsibility! The religionist says, “**God promised to save us as Jews**”, but in reality, God never promised to save them just because they are blood Jews, but rather on the basis of a repentant faith – a circumcision of the heart!

So, does the response of unbelieving unfaithfulness on the part of the Jews nullify the faithfulness of God to the promises in His Word?

4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: “That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.”

“Certainly not!” is emphatic! **“Let God be true”** means let God be what He is, true! God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He is a God of TRUTH and is always TRUE to Himself! He is completely reliable! He will never break His covenant promises! This amounts to an attack on the very character of God! In truth, God in His judgment is totally consistent with Himself at every point! He will ultimately fulfill all His covenant promises.

“Let God be true but every man a liar.” The **“every man a liar”** is a takeoff from Psalm 116:11 which says, **“All men are liars”**. If you put all the people of the world on one side saying one thing and God on the other side, God will be proven true and they will all be shown to be liars!

If there seems to be a discrepancy between His promises and what we perceive, the fault *always* lies with us, not with God. In any contention, He is right, even if the whole world lines up against Him.

-Steven Cole

I don't know about you but I always start with the presupposition that God is always right! Even if I don't understand it – He is right!

Slide # 6 (Spurgeon)



And then to back up what he is saying Paul quotes what is written in Scripture, and not just any Scripture but that which quotes David in his confession in Psalm 51:4 as saying, **“That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged.”**

The context of David's statement in Psalm 51 is in relationship to his sin of adultery with Bathsheba followed by murder and ongoing deceit. Then God sent Nathan the prophet to confront David (2 Sam. 12).

David in response repented and God forgave him, but He also said there would be lifelong grievous consequences. Rather than argue with God about being unfair David affirmed that God is justified in what He said. His judgment was right! David admitted he was wrong and God was right. That is the spirit of true repentance.

David in effect was saying, “*God, You are completely right in everything you have to say.*”

When it says, “***And may overcome when You are judged***” it means that when people call God into question over His ruling, in the end, God will always be shown to be right.

It is never a good idea to play “Judge” with God in trying to defend yourself. You are going to lose! God is going to be vindicated!

Job was the most righteous man on the earth. Suddenly all this calamity and trouble came upon him and he couldn’t understand why. And so, he contended with God claiming he was innocent and this just wasn’t right. But here is where it ended...

Slide # 7

Job 40:1–4 (NKJV)

1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:

2 “**Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?**

He who rebukes God, let him **answer** it.”

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 “Behold, **I am vile**; What shall I answer You? **I lay my hand over my mouth.**

In the end every mouth will be stopped before God and everyone will be quiet as a stone. God is always right! No one can argue their case before Him!

Whenever a sinner, whether Jewish or Gentile, stands in the courtroom of the Judge and pleads his case, the Judge will always be found to be in the right and will win the case.

– ***Moody Bible Commentary***

But religious objector is not done yet saying....

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)

This question assumes the person is following Paul's argument regarding God's righteous judgment, and yet seeks to make a sophisticated argument against the idea of God holding him accountable. If indeed the unfaithfulness of people demonstrates the righteousness of God (which it does) well then would God not be unjust for inflicting wrath?

This is such a crazy argument that Paul immediately, in a sense, apologizes for even bringing it forth - saying, "***I speak as a man***". This is a pure human argument – a depraved human argument.

What the person is saying is this: *If God is shown to be right by our sinfulness, then in our sinfulness we are actually bringing honor to Him. Therefore, wouldn't it unjust for God to inflict wrath on us?*

If humanity's unrighteousness reveals God's righteousness, why then should God punish unrighteousness? – ***Nelson Study Bible***

If the worst in man brings out the best in God, man's sin surely serves a useful purpose in God's plan. Then what room is there for human responsibility and liability? – ***New International Bible Commentary***

It is amazing the ingenuity that depravity can come up with in trying to defend itself. It is amazing how people can rationalize their sinfulness – even challenging God on His principles in an effort to try and excuse themselves.

This crazy thinking actually says my sin serves to magnify God in His righteousness and therefore He should not hold me accountable for it – as if my sinfulness is actually doing God a favor. The argument is my sin actually makes God look good so why should He judge me for it?

This is so absurd that Paul does not give an extended answer – but rather simply says...

6 Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

Again Paul responds with an emphatic "Certainly not!"

If it was the case that God would not judge Jewish sin because it somehow serves to exalt His character, then on what basis would God judge the pagan Gentile world? After all, they are a lot more overtly sinful, and if sinfulness makes God look good then why would they be judged?

And yet, all Jews knew that God was going to judge the world. It was a given.

Slide # 8

Genesis 18:25 (NKJV)

25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"**

Thus, Paul shows the inconsistency and foolishness of this argument (cf. Gen. 18:25; Job 34:17; Acts 17:31).

Every sinner can plead that his sin has been made to serve a good purpose, and on this premise there could be no judgment.

– Leon Morris

But the religious objector is not one to easily give up – and so another related objection is brought forth.

7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?

This is really the same objection as the one shared in verse 5 with a slightly different twist. In verse 5 the issue was unrighteousness that highlights the character of God; but here in verse 7 the issue is falsehood magnifies the truth of God.

Evidently, Paul had run into this argument before, perhaps repeatedly, and therefore it is emphasized.

The argument goes like this: If my lie serves to further God's truth then it is really to God's glory – and in that case, why am I still judged as a sinner? Again, the idea is that if my sin serves to make God look good – then why would He have a problem with it?

The fallacious idea is that people can lie to the glory of God because it serves to highlight the truth of God. It is to the benefit of God!

If such is the case the person reasons that he should not be called a sinner. He doesn't like that. He doesn't want to be classified as a "sinner". After all, he is making the case that he is an enhancer of God's glory. That sounds so much better than "Sinner".

And if the premise holds - that God's truth is glorified in my lie - then that is a good thing. Such a person should not be called out as a "sinner" but rather as one who is bringing glory to God.

"I lie and then God shines His truth on it and that brings glory to God." This sounds like a win win situation. "I can actually lie to the glory of God." And God should approve because it makes Him look good.

Just one problem. This is God's moral universe and it doesn't work that way. We don't set the terms – God does.

Sometimes a person can be too smart for their own good! You start playing these kinds of "mind games" with God and you are in big trouble.

Depravity can rationalize anything – even talking yourself into the idea that in your sin God is glorified. You can even get to where you think you have God in a corner to where if He is consistent, He can't judge you.

Oh, the depths of human depravity that seeks to elude God's righteous judgment and verdict of "guilty".

Thus, the unrepentant religious person is ever trying to argue his way out of accountability for his exposed sinfulness. It is clever but sinful! It is clever but folly. It is clever but fallacious reasoning according to God's impartiality and holy standards.

What they don't understand is that God can be glorified in our sin in the sense that His holiness contrasts with it, but at the same time, He can and must hold the sinner accountable. There is no inconsistency on God's part.

Our sin is like a BLACK velvet backdrop with the diamond of God's holiness brought into glorious contrast with it.

This doesn't mean that God approves the "dark as sin" backdrop of our sin. It's just the way it is. It doesn't mean God overlooks the darkness of our sin. In truth God's glory is not dependent on our sin – His character and truth just expose it.

And then Paul carries this flawed idea to its logical conclusion...

8 And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

This is a blasphemously ridiculous argument that says if being bad makes God look good then let us do bad so that good may come from it. This would be the logical conclusion from what is being argued.

This is clearly the errant idea that “*the end justifies the means*”.

And then Paul says, “*as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say.*” This is exactly what some people were accusing Paul of teaching! People were twisting Paul’s message of grace saying, that his message of grace means it doesn’t matter how we live. In fact, sin magnifies grace so let us sin so that grace may be all the more magnified.

You can see them taking statements like Romans 5:20 where Paul says, “*where sin abounded, grace abounded much more*” and twisting it to where it turns grace into license – all to a good end.

That is really what these slanderers were doing. They were saying that Paul says grace gives one a license to sin and that somehow then good comes from it, but in truth, he taught no such thing at all as he will show at great length in chapter 6.

Theologically the errant view Paul is talking about is called “antinomianism”.

Slide # 9

The word *antinomianism* comes from two Greek words, *anti*, meaning "against"; and *nomos*, meaning "law." *Antinomianism* means “against the law.” Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. – **Gotquestions.org**

Jude is very emphatic that antinomianism which says that under grace you have a license to sin is to be renounced in the strongest of terms.

Slide # 10

Jude 4 (ESV)

4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

These antinomian types have two problems. Not only are they ungodly and turn grace into a license to sin; but they also have a problem with the LORDSHIP of Jesus Christ.

It is true that we are not under the Mosaic Law but that does not mean we are under nothing. The Bible is clear that while we are not under the law of Moses, we are now under the law of Christ which is the law of love (cf. Gal. 6:2; Ja. 2:8). The Law is not our Master but the LORD is.

Under grace, we have been freed from both the penalty and the power of sin. Under grace, we now have the indwelling ministry of the Spirit that leads us into holiness and not into sin. Under grace, our very nature has been changed to where we now desire to live for God – even while we struggle against sin.

Paul did not even respond to these slanders other than to say, “***Their condemnation is just.***”

They will be judged by God for such foolish talk and misconstrued conclusions. Paul cuts it off right here. In essence, this is the end of this discussion. Paul has nothing more to say, other than to turn them over to God. Their condemnation is just. – **Steve Lawson**

In Paul’s mind, there is nothing more serious than corrupting the message of God’s grace. You can corrupt it in one of two ways.

- 1) You can add to grace claiming that you have to do something to help save yourself. This is a denial of the gospel of grace which Paul in Gal. 1:8-9 condemns in the strongest of terms saying if anyone preaches another gospel (other than the gospel of grace) let him be accursed – which is to say let him be damned.
- 2) You can take the position that grace gives you a license to sin which is also totally not true. Grace truly received is a life-changing reality.

In this section of Romans 3:1-8 the religionist is shown to present three essential arguments as to why he is okay before God.

- 1) The Jewish religionist thought he was okay because of His religious heritage. By way of application, people might think they are okay because they were born into a Christian family, because they have been baptized, or because they belong to a Church. Now indeed, being brought up in a Christian context has advantages, but it does not guarantee a person's salvation. Each person must make their own saving faith commitment. Paul has already shown that before God it's not externals that make a person right with God, but rather it is a matter of internals – a matter of the heart.
- 2) The Jewish religionists thought he was okay because of God's special promises to the Jews. What he failed to realize is that saving faith is personal. Yes, God's promises are true but they must be appropriated by a circumcision of the heart.

As a young man, I was brought up in a Church that had John 3:16 on the front wall. In my rebellion, I looked at that verse and said to myself, "God can't send me to hell because I believe." What I failed to realize is that intellectual assent is not sufficient – it is with the HEART that one believes and a true saving faith involves repentance – which Paul calls **"a circumcision of the heart"**. Yes, the promises of God are all good, but we must receive the word with "an honest and good heart" as it says in Luke 8:15.

- 3) The errant religionist in effect argues that grace gives a license to sin and in fact, God uses our sin to bring glory to Himself. In truth this line of thinking is so perverted it doesn't even deserve an answer – Paul simply says, **"Their condemnation is just."** One cannot presume on the GRACE of God. Paul pleaded with the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1).

The bottom line is very clear: If you contend with God He will win and you will be condemned! God is God! It's His moral universe. He sets the rules. He is large and in charge. We don't judge God – He is the judge of all.

You might argue your way all the way to hell, but you will never argue your way out of it.

It's easier to rationalize sin rather than to repent of it. It's easy to latch on to some objection about God or the Bible, use that objection to dodge the clear truth of the Bible about Jesus Christ, and then justify your own sin. The Lord Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of God's

Word. If He is true, then every objection against Him is a lie. God will prevail when He judges all sin. Make sure that you have repented of your sin and taken refuge in the Lamb who was slain for sinners! Jesus Christ and Him crucified is God's final answer to every objection! – **Pastor Steven Cole**

For true believers when God speaks that ends the argument! We humble ourselves under His sovereign authority. He is right – we are wrong. The only way to be right with God is on His terms – and His terms are faith in His Son as Lord and Savior!

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden they immediately realized that they were naked and sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings (Gen. 3:7). This represented human effort in trying to cover the effects of their sin. But then as God confronted them in the garden, He went on to make garments of skin (representing a blood sacrifice) and clothed them.

Here is the picture. People are sinners who are exposed before God. They try to cover themselves with their own goodness but they are still naked in sin before God. So, they try to cover themselves with religion in all its rituals and rules, but this also leaves them uncovered. Having been exposed they then try to cover themselves with various arguments which also leaves them naked in sin and exposed before God.

Slide # 11

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And **all our righteousneses are like filthy rags**; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Only when we finally see that all our efforts and religiosity are but a covering of filthy rags leaving us without any real covering before God; only when we finally see we are in sin with no means of covering ourselves – only in repentance when we acknowledge our naked condition and look to God for His covering can we be saved. And praise God He has provided a covering for our sin in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In saving faith God removes our sinful robes of unrighteousness and puts on us the perfect white robe of Christ's righteousness. In this, we see the truth of 2 Cor. 5:21.

Slide # 12

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

21 For He made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Christ took all our sin and in saving faith we get all His righteousness. That is a grace deal! The gospel above all is a gospel of grace and grace truly received is a life-changing reality!

Many of us are familiar with Hans Christian Anderson's story called, "*The Emperor's New Clothes*". The story is summarized in this way:

There was an Emperor, obsessed with his appreciation for clothes – fine linens, fancy robes and such, so he summoned and commissioned some of his master weavers under his rule to make for him a suit of the most expensive linen and the finest cloth.

These weavers, not wild about their self-centered Emperor, decide to make a fool of him and trick him into believing they have crafted the most beautiful of robes, made from a fine, but mysterious, magical cloth. They convince the King that the cloth they've used can only be seen by wise people. Of course, the king wanted to be seen as wise so he pretended he could see it and everyone played along.

After pretending to dress their emperor in clothes that didn't exist, the emperor was secretly discouraged that he, himself couldn't see the new outfit he was supposed to be wearing, which would imply that he, himself, was not wise. But not wanting to be thought of as unwise he pretended to be donned in the finest, most beautiful attire in the kingdom.

And so he went out into the world, parading throughout the kingdom in his birthday suit, extolling the virtues and the beauty of his new wardrobe. When the rest of the kingdom's people heard about it they, too did not want to be thought of as fools – so they "oooohhed" and "aaaahhed," pretending to admire the Emperor's new clothes.

And on it went until a small child, out in the public square, without concern for such supposed wisdom blurted out what everyone else was thinking: “***The Emperor’s not wearing any clothes!***” At once everyone knew the TRUTH including the Emperor!

That is a picture of phony religion! People put on a big show, they talk big, they have all kinds of arguments, and so often everyone plays along, but in truth, they are naked in their sin before God no matter what they or others say.

Reality before God is that we are either clothed in our own filthy rags of religion and self-effort, or we are clothed with Christ’s righteousness.

Let me ask you: Spiritually speaking, what are you clothed with today?

Are you clothed in your own supposed goodness?
Are you clothed in religion and rituals?
Are you clothed in sophisticated religious arguments?

Before God all of these leave you totally naked and exposed in sin!

Only being clothed in the righteousness of Christ will cover you from the condemnation of sin in the presence of the all holy God.

And the way we put on the righteousness of Christ is through faith!

Slide # 13

Philippians 3:8–9 (NKJV)

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ
9 and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is **through faith in Christ**, the **righteousness which is from God by faith;**

Count everything else loss (of no profit) and put your faith in Christ alone as your Lord and Savior, and when you do God will cloth you in the righteousness of Christ.

The answer to our sin – the only satisfying answer before God is Jesus!

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!