

SOUND DOCTRINE FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS – Studies in Romans

From Faith to Faith (Romans 1:17)

The first interpretive challenge in this epistle of Paul to the Christians in Rome is encountered in v17, where we read the following –

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

Clearly, Paul is laying a groundwork of support in Romans 1:17 for the rest of this masterpiece in sound doctrine. The initial portion of the verse, “the righteousness of God is revealed” continues the thought expressed in v16. How is the righteousness of God revealed? By means of the gospel in providing a lost and fallen mankind with salvation. Paul will affirm throughout his letter, that salvation is first and foremost, a proper judicial standing with God known as justification. It is this legal transaction which allows for a personal relationship with God to be established, with all of its accompanying privileges and responsibilities. It cannot be earned as a reward on the basis of good works. It can only be received as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ, who earned that right standing for us by means of His redemptive work on our behalf. Perhaps the most succinct description of justification found anywhere in the New Testament is recorded for us in 2 Corinthians 5:21 –

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

On the other hand, what does Paul mean by the expression “from faith to faith?” It is possible that he is simply accounting for the surprising growth of Christianity during the age of the early church. The response of faith to the proclamation of the gospel created a multiplier effect throughout the Roman Empire. But if Paul, in v17, is laying the groundwork for what is to come, this unique expression can be best understood as a **continuation of God’s redemptive purpose** from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. In other words, God’s plan of salvation has always been available on the basis of faith, never works! In order to validate his point, he uses a proof text from the Old Testament: Habakkuk 2:4, which he also quotes in Galatians 3:11. No one in the early church came to such a profound realization of this truth more so than a self-righteous Pharisee named Saul, to which he bears beautiful testimony in Philippians 3:9 –

“... and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH COMES FROM GOD ON THE BASIS OF FAITH . . .” (emphasis added)

If you haven’t yet made that decision of faith, there is no better time than right now. The Bible tells us that the greatest need of our lives is to be forgiven of our sin. That need has been met by the Divine person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. His death on the Cross paid the penalty of our sin. His resurrection from the dead gives us the opportunity to share in His eternal resurrection life. If you are willing to admit to God that you are a sinner in need of a Savior who will forgive you of your sin, then you can put your trust in Jesus Christ, by prayer, making Him your Savior and Lord. We have provided more detail on our website: <https://speakingtruthwithlove.com/> with a video series in our archive section entitled: “God’s Plan of Salvation.” Please feel free to access it, as well as using our contact page for answers to any questions you may have for me.