

THE DILEMMA OF GOD
Romans 3:21-31
11-09-08
ALDERWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

**BIG IDEA: HOW COULD GOD SAVE OUR MISERABLE
SOULS AND STILL REMAIN TRUE TO HIS HOLY JUSTICE?**

THINKING IT THROUGH...

1. We are all under the sentence of death in Hell.
2. There is no earthly way out of Hell—and--There is no earthly way into Heaven.
3. God wants to bring us to Heaven.
4. God can't sweep our sin under the carpet.
5. God can provide a justice-fulfilling substitute for our punishment
6. This "salvation" is offered as a gift and is apprehended by faith.

NOTE: *Now that he has demonstrated that all people are sinners, he goes back to the content of the gospel.* [MORRIS, 172]

VOCABULARY:

- **Righteousness: The right standing that comes from God**
 - [dikaiosunh] **Verse 21**, "A righteousness that comes from God"--*The right standing that comes from God*
- **Faith/Belief: confidence, trust, reliance on. Not just intellectual assent. It involves the idea of dependence upon.**
 - [pistis] --active, as belief directed toward a person or thing *confidence, faith, trust, reliance on*: Not just intellectual assent. It involves the idea of dependence upon.
- **Sin: do wrong, transgress, literally miss the mark.**
 - *amartano*, fut. *amartano*, sw; 1aor. *amartano*, rthsa; 2aor. *amartano*; pf. *amartano*, rthka; *be in error*; figuratively, of offending against God, man, religious or moral law *sin, do wrong, transgress*, opposite *euaggelizo* (*do what is right*)
 - **MORRIS, 190:** *The noun "hamartia" occurs 173 times in the New Testament, of which 64 are in Paul and no less than 48 in Romans. This is far and away the largest number in any one book, the next most frequent being Hebrews with 25. Paul also has a preponderance of the occurrence of the verb...*
- **Glory: That which is weighty, significant, impressive about God. doxa**, h' (1) as a manifestation of light *radiance, brightness, splendor* (AC 22.11); (2) as a manifestation of God's excellent power *glory, majesty* (RO 9.23); (3) as an excellent reputation *honor, glory, praise* (JN 5.44); (4) as a state characterized by honor, power, and remarkable appearance *glory, splendor* (LU 24.26);
 - Cf. Isaiah 6:3, *kavod*
 - **MORRIS, 177:** *The linking of God's glory with man's sin is intriguing. It would seem that God intended people to share in his glory (as we see in the story of Eden). But sin cut Adam off from all that, and sin cuts his descendants off still.*
- **Grace: God's salvation riches to me without respect to my merit or His obligation.**
 - *charis*, h' *grace*; (1) as a quality that adds delight or pleasure *graciousness, attractiveness, charm* (LU 4.22); (2) as a favorable attitude; (a) active, of what is felt toward another *goodwill, favor* (AC 2.47); (b) as a religious technical term for God's attitude toward human beings *kindness, grace, favor, helpfulness* (JN 1.16, 17; EP 2.8); (3) concretely; (a) of exceptional effects produced by God's favor *ability, power, enabling* (RO 12.6; 1C 15.10); (b) of practical proofs of goodwill from one person to another *kind deed, benefit, favor* (AC 24.27; 2C 1.15); *collection* for the poor, *generous gift* (1C 16.3); (4) as an experience or state resulting from God's favor *state of grace, favored position* (RO 5.2); (5) as a verbal thank offering to God

gratitude, thanks (1C 15.57; 2C 9.15); (6) as contained in formulas that express greetings or farewell in letters *goodwill, favor, blessing* (RO 1.7; 16.20)

THREE WAYS TO VIEW SALVATION [per MORRIS, 173]:

- **Justification: Legal acquittal.** [imagery from the law court]
 - Because of the payment of Jesus Christ, I am judged as “not guilty.”
 - MORRIS, 177: *This does not mean that they are “made righteous” in the sense “made virtuous.” It is a declaration that, on the basis of Christ’s saving work, believers are right with God.*
 - MORRIS, 178: *He is saying that when believing sinners are tried at the bar of God’s justice they will be acquitted because of Christ’s saving work which they have appropriated by faith.*
 - MORRIS, 144: *The word is a forensic or legal term with the meaning “acquit.” It is the normal word to use when the accused is declared “not guilty.”*
- **Redemption: The freeing of slave or prisoners of war by the payment of a ransom.** [imagery from the slave market] MORRIS, 179: *This picturesque statement had its origin in the release of prisoners of war on payment of a price (the ransom). It was extended to include the freeing of slaves, again by the payment of a price.*
- **Propitiation: Removal of wrath.** [NIV=*a sacrifice of atonement*] [imagery from the averting of wrath](the proper translation of the NIV’s “Sacrifice of atonement”) **i`lasth, rioj**, on with focus on the means by which sins are forgiven *having atoning power, bringing about reconciliation*; substantivally **to. i`lasth, rion** *means of forgiveness* (RO 3.25); by metonymy, with a focus on the place where sins are forgiven by means of the blood from an atoning sacrifice placed there *place of forgiveness, place where God forgives sins*, often translated *mercy seat* (HE 9.5)
 - **MORRIS, 180:** *There are problems with the next expression, which KJV rendered “a propitiation” and which nearly every modern translation waters down. Part of the trouble is that “propitiation” is neither a well-known nor a well-used word today, and translators like to employ something simpler. But the major reason is that propitiation means the removal of wrath and...some commentators find the concept of divine wrath distasteful and unworthy; so they write it out of Scripture. If there is no wrath there is no propitiation.*

NOTE: Romans 3:21-26 ...is possibly the most important single paragraph ever written...[MORRIS, 173]

Romans 3:21-31 *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.^{1 22} This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. ²⁹ Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.*

INTRODUCTION:

Martin Luther:

- Born November 10, 1483 in Eisleben, Germany
- Walking along a road one July in 1505, at age 21, he was knocked to ground by a sudden bolt of lightning. He cried out in terror, *St. Anne help me! I will become a monk.*
- And so he did. But through all his early years of religious training and devotion, he was overwhelmed with the righteous justice of God. *I was myself more than once driven to the*

¹ “The Law and the Prophets” (v. 21) means all the Old Testament. “Testify”—Note that Paul’s great example (Abraham) is from the Law, and Paul’s great text (Rom. 1:17) is from the Prophets.

very abyss of despair so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him!
(Bainton, 44)

- *I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the justice of God"—My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience.... Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith."-- Martin Luther (Bainton, 49)*
- This morning, we are going to take that spiritual journey with Martin Luther—from spiritual despair and hopelessness to the greatest hope in the world!!!

1. WE ARE ALL UNDER THE SENTENCE OF DEATH IN HELL.

(verse 25, *sacrifice of atonement*)

1. That is actually a rather bad translation. The right word for that verse is **propitiation**. The NIV translators used *sacrifice of atonement* because most people have no idea what propitiation means. It's actually in the dictionary on your shelf at home, but we rarely use the word in our common speech today.
 2. Propitiation means God is mad at sinners and He needs to be appeased. In other words, unless something satisfies His righteous wrath against us, we are all toast.
 3. In this connection, being toast means spending eternity in hell. Well, that's not a very popular teaching today. In fact a lot of folks wonder, *How could a loving God send anybody to Hell?*
 4. Most people are content to give a few people an address in Hell, like Nero and Hitler and criminal celebrities like Ted Bundy, but Hell for the average guy?... *No way!*
 5. Let's check out what Jesus said on the subject. By the way, it has often been observed that Jesus said more about Hell than He did about Heaven:
 - (Mat 5:29 NIV) *If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*
 - (Mat 10:28 NIV) *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*
 - (Mat 23:33 NIV) *To the Pharisees, the most religious people of the day, Jesus said, "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"*
 - (Mark 9:43 NIV) *If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.*
 - (Luke 16:22-24 NIV) *Jesus told us about...The rich man... [who] died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*
 6. If someone wants to argue about Hell, he has to go toe to toe with Jesus Christ on the subject.
 7. Some people, even Christians, who admit the existence of Hell, want to soften it a bit by teaching hell as annihilation rather than eternal punishment. Nice idea, but it's not biblical.
 - Jesus said, The fire never goes out.
 - Jesus said that the rich man was in conscious torment.
 - Peter said that sinning angels are being held in hell awaiting future judgment. (2 Pet 2:4 NIV)
 - John said that Satan and the antichrist and his false prophet will all be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. **Revelation 20:10**, *They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*
- I don't like that any more than you do, but I don't have the luxury of reinventing the Bible doctrine of Hell to make me feel better.
- Premier scholar **Leon Morris** warns Christians who want to make Hell a place of painless annihilation. He urges them to remember that the same word, *eternal*, that

- is used of heaven is also used of hell. So if we want heaven to be conscious and forever, how can we get away with making hell unconscious and terminal. (Leon Morris, "The Dreadful Harvest," *Christianity Today*, May 27, 1991, 36) I had better believe what God says and let it motivate me to be more aggressive and desperate about helping other people escape such a horrible, unthinkable eternal destiny.
8. Here's how Christian witness guru **Dr. James Kennedy** puts it: *If God would dip all pastors in hell for a fraction for a second and then yank them up by their shirttails – as they're standing there smoldering and their clothes and skin are full of black soot, and their shoes are half melted off, I think their commitment to the Great Commission would substantially increase.*
 9. **Starbucks cup**, *The Way I See It #250*: *In reality, hell is not such an intention of God as it is an invention of man. God is love and people are precious. Authentic truth is not so much taught or learned as it is remembered. Somewhere in your pre-incarnate consciousness you were loved absolutely because you were. Loved absolutely, and in reality, you still are! Remember who you are!* (Bishop Carlton Pearson, Author, speaker, spiritual leader and recording artist)
 10. **C. S. Lewis** was right, *"If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity."*

2. THERE IS NO EARTHLY WAY OUT OF HELL—AND--THERE IS NO EARTHLY WAY INTO HEAVEN.

- Chuck Colson was invited by a Mr. Abercrombie to address a study-luncheon of the power-establishment of a certain city, 20 men in dark suits and conservative ties. Somewhere in the talk, Colson referred to man's sinful nature. As soon as he opened the floor for questions, the first question was about sin.

"You don't really believe we are sinners, do you? I mean, you're too sophisticated to be one of those hellfire-and-brimstone fellows...Intelligent people don't go for that back-country preacher stuff..."

"Yes, sir," I replied. "I believe we are desperately sinful. What's inside each of us is really pretty ugly. In fact we deserve hell and would get it, but for the sacrifice of Christ for our sins."

Mr. Abercrombie himself looked distressed by now. "Well, I don't know about that," he said. "I'm a good person and have been all my life. I go to church, and I get exhausted spending all my time doing good works."

The room seemed particularly quiet, and twenty pairs of eyes were trained on me.

"If you believe that, Mr. Abercrombie - and I hate to say this, for you certainly won't invite me back - you are, for all of your good works, further away from the kingdom than the people I work with in prison who are aware of their own sins...."

*"In fact, gentlemen," I added..."if you really think about it, we are all really more like Adolf Hitler than like Jesus Christ." (Charles Colson, *The Body*, 190-191)*
- **Verse 21** makes it plain: salvation requires a righteousness that is sourced in God, and that level of righteousness can never be attained by keeping moral laws, *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known...*
 - It is theoretically possible that someone could make it to heaven by perfectly keeping the Old Testament. But no one in all of human history has been able to pull that off, except for Jesus Christ, and I'm not about to compare myself with Him! You see, the operative word is "perfectly." Not even 99.99% compliant will do. **James 2:10** stops the do-gooder in his tracks, *whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.* The Law of God isn't compartmentalized. It's a package deal. It's all or nothing.
 - What is required to get into heaven is not the best *man* can do, but rather the best *God* can do.
 - **Romans 4:2**, *If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God.*

- **Genesis 15:1-6** *The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." ² But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." ⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." ⁵ He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **6** Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*
 - It was from Abraham's story that we get this great affirmation:
 - **Romans 1:17--The just shall live by faith**
Galatians 3:11--The just shall live by faith
Hebrews 10:38 --The just shall live by faith
 - An ancient papyrus from 1350 BC tells the story of the Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife and judgment. When an ancient Egyptian died, *If the family performed all of their responsibilities, their relative's soul would arrive of the Hall of Judgment. There, his righteousness would determine whether or not he could enter the Egyptians' concept of bliss. Forty-two judges questioned the deceased during the Weighing of the Souls—the event that would determine the fate of his soul. A copy of the Book of the Dead was buried with him to furnish the "proper" answers to trick the judges into believing that he was righteous.*
 - Each judge asked a different question; the correct answer to each was "no."*
 - "Have you ever lied?"*
 - "No. I have never lied."*
 - Then the deceased was accompanied by Anubis, the jackal-headed escort of the dead, to the weighing of his heart against the Feather of Truth. If the heart was too heavy, the monster Ammut would devour it, dooming the soul.*
 - If the heart balanced, Thoth, the god of wisdom, recorded that action, and the deceased was presented to Osiris, god of the dead.*
 - The papyrus painting is filled with symbols of life, including the ankh, but its theme is deception. The judgment would be impossible to pass but for trickery. (Sandra Picklesimer Aldrich, "Who Will Stand Beside You...", Moody, November 1986, 28-29)*

GOD WANTS TO BRING US TO HEAVEN.

- **2 Peter 3:9** , *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*
- **Marilyn Monroe** during filming of *The Misfits*: *Her sleep was not sleep but the pulsation of an exhausted creature wrestling with some demon....[S]he saw herself rejected. Only some sublime act of grace could transcend this. And there was none. (Arthur Miller, *Timebends*, 484-85)*
 - During the filming of The Misfits he watched Marilyn descend into the depths of depression and despair. He feared for her life, as he watched their growing estrangement, her paranoia, and her growing dependence on barbiturates. One evening, after a doctor had been persuaded to give her yet another shot, Miller stood watching her as she slept. "I found myself straining to imagine miracles," he reflected. "What if she were to wake and I were able to say, 'God loves you, darling,' and she were able to believe it! How I wish I still had my religion and she hers." Donald W. McCullough, *The Trivialization of God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1995), 20.*
- A Martin Luther hymn:
 - In devil's dungeon chained I lay*
 - The pangs of death swept o'er me.*
 - My sin devoured me night and day*

*In which my mother bore me,
My anguish ever grew more rife,
I took no pleasure in my life
And sin had made me crazy.*

*Then was the Father troubled sore
To see me ever languish.
The Everlasting Pity swore
To save me from my anguish.
He turned to me his father heart
And chose himself a bitter part,
His Dearest did it cost him*

*Thus spoke the Son, "hold thou to me,
From now on thou wilt make it.
I gave my very life for thee
And for thee I will stake it.
For I am thine and thou art mine,
And where I am our lives entwine,
The Old Fiend cannot shake it.*

(Bainton, 50-51)

GOD CAN'T SWEEP OUR SIN UNDER THE CARPET.

- God faced a "**moral dilemma.**" On the one hand, because of his great love, he desired to save the fallen human race. On the other hand, because of his perfect justice, he needed to execute the punishment for sin. The solution was for a perfectly sinless man to die in the place of the race.
- **Romans 3:25**, *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might **be just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- **Remember who I am?** A condemned sinner under the wrath of God!
- **Except for the Cross!** *The cross shows us God's inflexible righteousness in the very means whereby sin is forgiven. (Leon Morris, 183)*
- *There is no antithesis between God's justice and his mercy. Paul is saying that it is not simply the fact that God forgives that shows him to be just. Indeed, that fact by itself raises a question about God's justice. As Barclay puts it, "**The natural thing to say, the inevitable thing to say, would be 'God is just, and, therefore, condemns the sinner as criminal.'**" But if God had simply punished sinners, while that would have left no doubts about his justice, it would have raised questions about his mercy, and the God of the Bible is both just and merciful. What Paul is saying is that the cross shows us both. It is the fact that he forgives by way of the cross that is conclusive. Grace and justice come together in this **resounding paradox**....The claims of justice as well as the claims of mercy are satisfied. (Morris, 184)*
- **Josh McDowell:** *Some time ago, I was in South Africa, sharing evidence for the Christian faith to the Muslims. In one of my talks, I made a point about the consistency of the character of God: He always acts according to His righteous nature. What He does. Is always consistent with what He is.*

After my talk, a young Muslim approached me. "Your concept of God," he said, "is not my concept of Allah. Allah is 'all-powerful.' Allah's powers can allow him to do anything."

"Can Allah lie and cheat?" I asked.

"Sure," he responded. "Allah can do all things. He is not limited like your God. If he wants to love, he loves. If he wants to hate, he hates. Allah is 'all-powerful.'"

"Could Allah punish you for something you did," I asked, "even if it were good?"

"If Allah did not like it, he would punish me."

"Then you don't always know how Allah might respond, do you?"

He thought for a moment. "No," he said at last. "I don't always know what he would do." He stopped, but added quickly. "But I do know Allah is 'all-powerful.'"

I nodded. "You see, if I served Allah, I would be serving him out of fear. If he exercised the power to do wrong as well as right, simply because he desired to, he would be punishing me from his own selfish desires. That would be a dreadful motivation from which to serve God, because I would never know what angered him." He was listening intently, so I continued. "You see, I serve God out of love. God, being holy and perfect and almighty, is worthy of my fear, but because I know He is a loving God who always acts consistently with His nature, I can serve Him out of love too. I always know what angers God and I always know what pleases Him." Josh McDowell, *The Test of Truth* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994), 86-87.

GOD CAN PROVIDE A JUSTICE-FULFILLING SUBSTITUTE FOR OUR PUNISHMENT

- **II Corinthians 5:21**, *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - Note that the **Old Testament sacrificial system** was never able to truly remove sin:
 - **Hebrews 10:4**, *because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*
 - God is the **exclusive distributor** of this righteousness.
 - **Psalm 103:8-12** *The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. ⁹ He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; ¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*
 - **During the Civil War** a man by the name of George Wyatt was drawn by lot to go to the front. He had a wife and six children. A young man named Richard Pratt offered to go in his stead. He was accepted and joined the ranks, bearing the name and number of George Wyatt. Before long Pratt was killed in action. The authorities later sought again to draft George Wyatt into service. He protested, entering the plea that he had died in the person of Pratt. He insisted that the authorities consult their own records as to the fact of his having died in identification with Pratt, his substitute. Wyatt was thereby exempted as beyond the claims of law and further service. He had died in the person of his representative. There we have the truth of identification in a nutshell. God's way of deliverance is through death—through identification with our Substitute in His death and resurrection. (Maxwell quoted in *BibSac*, jan-mar 1984, 73)
 - **Romans 3:23-26**, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*
- 1. Sin demands death.
 - a. When Adam and Eve first sinned, in an action rich with symbolism, God killed animals and made animal skin garments to cover the naked shame of the guilty pair.
 - b. In a statement that encompasses all of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, **Hebrews 9:22** announces, *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*
 - c. **Blood, blood, blood.** Wherever there is sin, there is death; there is sacrifice. What if you didn't know you were sinning. God wouldn't care about that, would He? Sorry, He does. **Numbers 15:27** *"But if just one person sins unintentionally, he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. ²⁸ The priest is to make atonement before the LORD for the one who erred by sinning*

unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven.

2. Only one sacrifice would do.
 - a. A so-called Christian Chinese feminist objects, *We cannot have one savior - just like the Big Mac in McDonalds, prepackaged, shipped all over the world. It won't do. It's imperialistic.* (Keith Fournier, *A House United?*, NavPress, Colorado Springs, Colorado: 1994, 237)
 - b. Why **won't** it do? The whole world is holding its breath hoping for a cure for AIDS; hoping for a cure for cancer. When a cure is found, there will be no protest about one solution or about imperialism. The world will line up for the biggest and fastest drug shipments they can get from whatever country first produces the drug.
 - c. Here I have a bottle of chloroquine tablets. Because I'm going to Haiti in 3 weeks, I have to start taking these for protection against malaria. It is the drug of choice for malaria risk anywhere in the world. That's not imperialistic. It's what works.
 - d. Just like international diseases, sin is no respected of international boundaries or ethnic bloodlines. The sin-bug is worldwide and the antidote is world class. And there is only one antidote: the blood of Christ.
 - e. Not the blood of Buddha or Mohammed or any other religious leader: just Christ. (**Acts 4:12 NIV**) *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

God Calls It Justification (v. 24)

THIS "SALVATION" IS OFFERED AS A GIFT AND IS APPREHENDED BY FAITH.

- **Romans 3:22**, *This righteousness from God comes **through faith in Jesus Christ** to all who believe.*
- How on earth can just believing something really change anything?
 - Believing seems so passive, not actualizing.
 - I believe that **Abraham Lincoln** was the Great Emancipator.
 - I believe that men have walked on the surface of the **moon**.
 - I believe that **electrons orbit** around the positively charged nucleus of the atom
 - Biblical faith is more than just believing that something is **true**--It is believing something enough to **act on it**.
 - .If my doctor tells me that I need to take two red pills for a day and then I will be well, do I believe him?
 - Yes, if I take my red pills.
 - Likewise, to believe in Jesus is more than just saying, *OK, I assent that these facts are true about Jesus.*
 - There is something called "**receiving**" Jesus
 - Trace Gospel-response "action" words
 - Mark 10:15, **Mark 10:15** *I tell you the truth, anyone who will not **receive** the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*
 - John 1:11-12, **John 1:11-12** *He came to that which was his own, but his own did **not receive** him. ¹² Yet to all who **received him**, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—*
 - Hey, just believing the facts about Jesus doesn't get anybody to heaven. **James 2:19** *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder.*

What exactly is the right response to the righteousness of Christ?

Faith in Jesus Christ says verse 22.

Believe says verse 22.

Faith in Jesus says verse 26.

8. That means a lot more than just intellectual buy-in. It means absolute existential dependence.

--Timothy G. Walton
Alderwood Community Church