

Rom 006 -- 2013-02-10 - Rom 01-17b and Habakkuk

Text

16 For [The reason for my eagerness to preach the gospel to you is that...]
 I am not ashamed of the gospel,
 for [the reason Paul is not ashamed of the gospel]
 it [the gospel] is the power of God
 for [the purpose of bringing about] salvation
 to everyone who believes,
 to the Jew first
 and also to the Greek.

17a For [the ultimate/most important point Paul is making]
 in it [the gospel]
 the righteousness of God is revealed
 from faith to faith;
 as it is written,

17b "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Exegetical Idea

In Paul's citation of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17b we see that in contrast to the proud who stand under the judgment of God, the righteous person shall live by faith -- their faith that comes from God via the revelation of God's faithfulness.

Homiletical Idea

Let us look intently at the word of God, for as we look upon the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel (17a) we see God's faithfulness; and God's faithfulness calls forth our faith which is God's means to the end of our life -- life in the sense of salvation and life in the sense of our life lived in obedience, that is conformity, to God and the restoration He has brought about in Christ.

Subject

God's Faithfulness as a Facet of His Righteousness

Compliments

1. Habakkuk's Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness
2. Paul's Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness
3. Our Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness

Goals

To encourage our looking long and hard look at the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel so that God's faithfulness would call forth our saving and living faith as it did with Habakkuk and with Paul

Sermon Outline

God's Faithfulness and Man's Faith

Habakkuk, Paul and Us

- I. Habakkuk's Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness
- II. Paul's Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness
- III. Our Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness

God's Faithfulness and Man's Faith

Habakkuk, Paul and Us

Introduction

Include here the thought that God's faithfulness is one facet of the diamond of His righteousness as developed last time.

Stott from Last Week

According to Stott: ... meaning... has been discussed throughout church history and has in consequence attracted an enormous, even unmanageable, literature" (p. 61). He lists the possibilities (see pp. 62-63):

1) **a divine attribute** (as Moo #1) describing "his character, together with his actions which are in keeping with his character."

2) **a divine activity**, "namely his saving intervention on behalf of his people..., (as Moo #3)... his righteousness denotes his loyalty to his covenant promises...;

3) **a divine achievement**... "righteousness from God as NIV renders 1:17 and 3:21 as Philippians 3:9 states [explicitly]... a righteous status... (as Moo #2) which [God] achieves through the atoning sacrifice of the cross, which he reveals in the gospel, and which he bestows freely on all who trust in Jesus Christ."

Expressing similar sentiments as Moo for not feeling compelled to choose only one of the possible meanings: "For myself, I have never been able to see why we have to choose, and why all these should not be combined... it is at one and the same time a quality, an activity and a gift."

Today we are looking at

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Our Text: Rom 1:17b which cites Hab 2:4

First let's read again Rom 1:16-17

I. **Habakkuk's Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness'**

A. Introduce and Orient People to Book of Habakkuk

1. Structure of Book -- (See Outline of Habakkuk in Additional Notes)

3. Paul's Citation Comes at the beginning of God's Answer to Habakkuk via a Vision

B. Narrow in on Paul's Citation from God to Habakkuk in 2:4

1. The Proud with the "not right" Soul vs.

2. The Righteous Who "will live by his faith"

C. The Faith God Encouraged in Habakkuk

1. As seen in 2:4

2. As seen in Chapter 3

- Re: all of Ch 3, Culver: "...prophecy ends with his own testimony that, as required by God [2:4], he would live out his life in faith in spite of what was to come."
- Re: 16-19 K&D: "the fruit of faith which this divine manifestation produces."
- Both see Ch. 3 as an expression of Habakkuk's faith coming from God's communication to Him.
- JP: These comments seem to agree with my understanding that God's revelation of His righteous judgment and salvation yields faith in His righteous ones.
- JP: Human faith seems to be both
 - the product of God's revelation of Himself as judge and savior (God's disclosure to Habakkuk and God's disclosure to all in the gospel)
 - the obligation God places on man as the right response to His self disclosure.

TRANS. -- God answered Habakkuk directly and in a vision communicating His faithfulness to bring judgment (confront the wickedness) upon the wicked in Judah (1:2-4) and the proud of Babylon (2:4...) and save the faithful. I see in here God's faithfulness to judge and save according to His promises calling forth Habakkuk's faith in God and his faithfulness in life.

II. Paul's Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness

A. Like Habakkuk Paul Received a Vision of His Own (Acts 9)

- Called a vision in Acts 26:19
- Acts 9:1ff -- Saul's Conversion

B. That Gospel Revelation (of God's Work in Christ Jesus) Enlivened Paul's Faith

1. From Believing God: That He Would Fulfill His Promises in the Future

2. To Believing God: That He Had Fulfilled His Promises in Christ Jesus

3. What Made the Difference?

- God Revealed What He Had Done in Christ, i.e.,
- God Revealed His Righteousness in the Gospel, i.e.,
- God Revealed His Faithfulness to Fulfill His Promises in Christ Jesus

4. Paul's enlivened and redirected faith is evident in his ministry of the gospel from that moment forward.

- Acts 9:20ff Paul's ministry immediately following conversion
- Acts 11:26 - end of Acts, Paul's ministry of the gospel in Antioch, on mission trips...
- Acts 26:19 Paul's faith expressed in his obedience to the vision

C. Paul's Logic in Romans 1:17

For the righteousness of God		in it [the gospel] is revealed from faith to faith
as it is written the righteous	shall live	by faith

The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith just as it is written in Habakkuk. And what was written in Habakkuk? According to Paul's citation, that, "the righteous shall live by faith."

Interestingly, Paul elected not to say as it does in the Hebrew text, that the righteous will live by **his** faith. Nor did Paul elect to say as it does in the Greek translation of Hab 2:4, that "the righteous shall live by **My** faith", i.e., God's faith. Rather Paul choose not to specify man's faith or God's faith, choosing instead to simply say, "the righteous shall live by faith."

Faith, apparently, is put forward as of first importance. I would argue that Paul's lack of specificity here may have been intentional recognizing that both are true and even both are meant in Habakkuk, i.e., that man's faith is called forth by the revelation of God's faithfulness. As Habakkuk's faith was encouraged by the revelation of God's righteousness in the vision, so too, the faith of all men is enlivened by the revelation of God's righteousness that is found in the gospel. Both man's faith and God's faithfulness are instrumental in the righteousness and life of man.

That being said I have to see that God's faithfulness is essential to man's saving faith. Man may have some manner of faith, even some manner of righteousness (Noah, Paul blamelessness); but it is neither saving faith, nor is it God's righteousness that man has unless it has been preceded by God's faithful action in history and the revelation of His faithfulness to man.

TRANS. -- I would argue that God's revelation of the Gospel was instrumental in Saul/Paul's conversion. Before God revealed His vision to Saul/Paul he was dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3); but after God revealed the truth of what He has done in Christ Jesus Paul was made alive, raised up, seated with Jesus in the heavenlies (Eph 2:4-10). I would say that God used His revelation of Himself in the Gospel (a revelation of His righteousness, a revelation of His faithfulness) to save Paul, to change him from a dead self-righteous man to a living new man made righteous by God's faithfulness to act in history in Christ and Paul's faith it invoked. What has this to do with us?

III. Our Faith in Relation to God's Faithfulness

A. Faith is Essential to Our Righteousness/Life/Salvation

1. Apparent General Rule

Stated Positively: Faith is Essential to Righteousness

IF No faith,

THEN No Righteousness, No Life, No Salvation

2. Early Association of Faith and Righteousness

Abraham

In the context of God revealing Himself to Abram and affirming and clarifying the promises He had made to him in Gen 12, God took Abram outside and showed him the innumerable stars in the sky and said, "So shall your descendants be" (15:5). Then in the next verse, in Gen 15:6, we find this statement about Abram: "Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Is this not our pattern: "God reveals Himself and His righteous dealings with man, then man responds in faith, and to the one who so responds in faith God "reckons it to him as righteousness." The revelation of God's righteousness (i.e., His faithfulness to bring about His promises) leads out the faith and faithfulness of man.

Paul will refer to this same verse in Ro 4:3, 20-22 and Gal 3:6. James also will cite this verse in his discussion on faith, salvation and works in ch. 2 esp v. 23.

Noah

Gen 6:8-9 -- ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. ⁹ These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

Behind Noah's righteousness, albeit in the shadows, I see his faith.

B. God's Faithfulness Enlivens Our Faith

God's faithfulness (understood as one facet of His righteousness) leads out our faith in Him both for our salvation and our lives of faithfulness in our daily walk.

C. God's Faithfulness is Revealed in the Gospel

1. Habakkuk was given a vision in his day calling forth his faith in God who would both judge and save
2. Paul was given a vision calling forth his faith in God who had saved in Jesus Christ
3. We are given a vision in our day when we hear or read the Gospel of God concerning His Son and that calls forth our faith

D. Listen/Read/Know What God has Revealed in the Gospel

1. On your own
2. In community
3. Receive!

Can you imagine if Abram would not have gone outside with God and taken the time to listen to what God had to say and see what God had to show? What if Habakkuk had only complained against God and had not gone up on the rampart to hear the Lord's vision? What if Paul had turned a deaf ear to our Lord Jesus, freaking out at his misfortune to have been blinded? What if the disciples had not taken the time to sit at Jesus feet? What if we live our lives without listening to Him?

TRANS. -- Our faith is led out by the revelation of God's righteousness in His self disclosures that are recorded for us in the Scriptures. May we give ear as if our life our salvation our righteousness depended on it, for indeed they do.

Conclusion

Now as much as I believe what I have said in this message is true, it is not all of the story. It is a look at one facet of God's righteousness revealed in the gospel in relation to human faith and human righteousness. There

are many more facets of His righteousness that I have not mentioned at all today. We would all do well to look long and hard from many different angles in as much light as possible so that we might understand all that God has revealed about His righteousness..

Another way of looking at God's righteousness revealed in the gospel is to see God's righteousness as that which produces our righteousness. Verse 16 says that the gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes. So clearly Paul is speaking in these verses and is concerned with the salvation of man.

Several commentators I read this past week see 'righteousness' in verse 17 as being the righteousness that comes from God to man. This is the NIV translation,

16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel a righteousness from God [JP:to man] is revealed, a righteousness [JP: from God to man] that is by faith from first to last [JP:by faith and nothing else], just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Douglas Moo sees this facet of righteousness being most forward in the text, i.e., that "the righteousness of God" can be defined as, "the act by which God brings people into right relationship with himself" (p.74). It is divine activity yielding the human status of righteousness. Moo is no laughing cow and he introduces this conclusion by noting that

"Paul links 'righteousness of God' closely with the response of faith in 1:17, in 3:21-22, and (cf.10:6) in 10:3. This ties the idea of 'righteousness' in the phrase 'righteousness of God' to Paul's use of the word generally in Romans, where it is typically linked to faith. And 'righteousness' is used most often in Romans to denote the 'gift of righteousness' (5:17) -- a righteous status that God bestows on the one who believes... note also the reference to 'righteousness *from* God' in Phil 3:9... Paul's use of 'righteousness' language in Romans, then, strongly suggests that 'righteousness of God' in 1:17; 3:21,22; and 10:3 includes reference to the status of righteousness "given" to the believer by God" (p.73).

I have more to learn about the righteousness of God and man and the faith and faithfulness God uses to save and give us life. May He sharpen and clarify our understanding as we give careful attention to His revelation we have in our Bibles.

Let's pray.

Summary

Discussion Questions

- How might we understand God's faithfulness in relation to God's righteousness? [God's faithfulness is one facet of the diamond of God's righteousness.]
- Read Habakkuk. What is the relationship between God's faithfulness and Habakkuk's faith? [God's faithfulness to judge evil and deliver His people according to His promises calls forth = enlivens... Habakkuk's faith in Him]
- With the context of Habakkuk in your mind as it was most likely in Paul's, how does Paul's citation of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17b ("but the righteous *man* shall live by faith") provided the Scriptural basis for Paul's assertion regarding the gospel in Romans 1:17a that, "in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith"?
- How is your faith led out by God's faithfulness? [Receiving the knowledge that God is faithful to both judge evil and save His people in His time and indeed reflecting on the fact that He has done just that in Jesus Christ, causes me to trust in Him and what He has done].
- In what way(s) do you live by faith? [My faith led out by God's faithfulness yields both: I live my life = salvation (new life in Christ for all eternity) and my life = living out of my salvation (obedience of faith, walking by faith, daily living by faith...)]
- What questions are provoked by these verses, and how might we go about answering them? [What is the relationship between God's righteousness, human faith, human life and human righteousness? I think Paul will answer in the rest of his letter. Therefore may we continue to pay careful attention to Paul's inspired words on these matters in the book of Romans].

Additional Notes

Outline of Habakkuk

- 1:1 Title/Introduction
- 1:2-4 Habakkuk's first question of complaint: Why God's apparent lack of proper response to the sins of Judah?
- 1:5-11 God's Answer: I am doing something (5), I am raising up the Chaldeans/Babylonians to judge/correct (12) unfaithful Judah, then I will hold the Chaldeans guilty as well (11)
- 1:12-17 Habakkuk questions God again as to how the Holy One (12) could appoint the wicked (13) to judge the comparatively more righteous (13)
- 2:1 Habakkuk waits for God's expected response of reproof to his complaining questions
- 2:2-20 God Answers Habakkuk in a vision important enough to inscribe on tablets and set before men that they may act on it (2); yet the fulfillment of the vision, although sure, may require waiting (3)
- 2-3 Preamble to the vision
- 4-20 Vision proper: beginning with a contrast in v.4 'the proud one, his [whose] soul is not right within him' vs. 'But' 'the righteous [who] will live by his faith' serving as instruction to Habakkuk to live by faith while God punishes the Chaldean's 'pride and unrighteousness' (Culver, p.55)
- 6-20 'Fivefold woe upon the Chaldeans' (K&D, p.67) Includes indications that the Chaldean who violently advance themselves at the expense of other people's lives (9-13) will yield under God's judgment to the 'glory of the Lord' who will take His rightful place (14); and ends with a statement of God's active presence before whom all should be silent (20). Perhaps even the prophet has said too much by way of complaint.
- 3:1 Habakkuk responds to God's answers in a highly emotional (see NASB note) poetic prayer understood to be a song/psalm expressing his understanding of the vision and his faith in God who revealed it (K&D)
- 2 Habakkuk consents to God's judgment and requests God's mercy in the midst of His wrath. K&D see v. 2 as 'theme' of remainder of chapter 3 which then is divided into two parts related to the two thoughts introduced here of wrath (3-15) and mercy (16-19) introduced here. Culver sees in verses 1-2 a 'Prayer of Hope'
- 3-15 God comes in judgment and for salvation (12-13) of His people. K&D: "a majestic theophany [depicts] the coming of the Lord to judge the world and bring salvation to His people and His anointed" (K&D p.92). Culver: Psalm of Praise
- 16-19 "I heard and... trembled..." people "will invade us" (16) and tremendous hardships will come (17), yet I will exult in the Lord, rejoice in the God of my salvation (18) K&D: A description of "the fruit of faith which this divine manifestation produces." Culver: A "proclamation of unwavering confidence in His ever-faithful God"