

Theme: Jesus is the righteous King in His personal character, His rule to judge sin and establish justice, and in bearing our sin and giving righteousness to His people.

I. Martin Luther and the (Un)Expected Gospel

- A. Luther's struggle with the righteousness of God (quote)
- B. Luther knew his sin, so how could God's righteousness be Good News or a cause for joy? We will see soon!
- C. Our Advent series - The (Un)Expected King

II. Rejoice - The King Is Coming!

- A. God calls for His people to rejoice!
Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9
 - 1. God is calling for His people to rejoice
 - 2. Daughter of Zion, Jerusalem - God's people
 - 3. Rejoice greatly - this is supreme joy!
 - 4. This is a repeat call from earlier in the book
"Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the Lord. Zechariah 2:10
 - 5. We have every reason to rejoice, no matter the circumstances, for we are the people of God!
- B. Rejoice for the King is coming!
Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! **See, your king comes to you,** righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

- 1. The reason the struggling people of God can rejoice is the promised Davidic King is coming!
- 2. The promise of the King to come was a key theme in the Old Testament
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the **government** will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince** of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his **government** and peace there will be no end. He will **reign on David's throne and over his kingdom**, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Isaiah 9:6–7
 - a. Note all of the governmental terms in this passage
 - b. This was repeated many times in Isaiah (& others)
In love a **throne** will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it — **one from the house of David** — one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of **righteousness**. Isaiah 16:5
"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to **David** a righteous Branch, a **King** who will **reign** wisely and do what is **just and right** in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: **The Lord Our Righteousness**. Jeremiah 23:5–6
 - 1. Note King, David, righteousness
 - 2. This was a key theme in the prophets
- 3. The people of God could have joy no matter their circumstances because God would fulfill all of His promises regarding the Davidic Messiah.

III. The King of Righteousness

- A. The coming King would be a Righteous King
Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, **your king comes to you, righteous** and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9
1. This King will be a righteous King
 2. This was common in the Messianic prophecies we just listed - Isaiah 9:6-7; 16:5; Jeremiah 23:5-6
 3. How is this King righteous?
- B. The King is righteous in His personal character
1. This is the obvious first meaning - the coming King is righteous
 2. This was a great reason to rejoice, for the kings of Israel and Judah had so often been unrighteous in their personal character - and therefore in their conduct as king.
 3. As God's King, the Messiah would be perfectly righteous in His character.
- C. The King would rule righteously, judging sin and establishing justice.
1. He is a King so righteousness characterizes His rule
 2. This was a major focus regarding the coming King

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord — ³ and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. **He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.** Isaiah 11:1–4

In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it — one from the house of David — one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness. Isaiah 16:5

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ² He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness **he will bring forth justice; ⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.** Isaiah 42:1–4

- a. The coming Davidic King, the Servant of the Lord, will establish righteousness
 - b. This King will rule righteously
3. But this was Luther's problem - if the King judges wickedness, what about Luther's sin?
 4. How can we rejoice if the King judges and slays the wicked - where does that leave me in my sin?

D. The King will give His righteousness to us!

1. The King is not only righteous in His character and actions - He gives His righteousness to His people so that they are spared from judgment!
2. Zechariah had already seen a vision of the King removing sin

Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: **I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.** ⁹ See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the Lord Almighty, **'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.** Zechariah 3:8–9

- a. Joshua the high priest was in filthy garments (his sin) and Satan was accusing him.
 - b. But the Branch, the Coming Davidic Messianic King, arrives and the sin of the land is removed in a day!
 - c. The King is not only righteous - He removes our unrighteousness!
 - d. But this was missed by many - it was (Un)Expected
3. Jeremiah prophesied the King would be our righteousness!
In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: **The Lord Our Righteousness.** Jeremiah 23:6
 - a. The King is not only righteous - He is our righteousness!
 - b. But this was missed by many - it was (Un)Expected
 4. This is the solution that was so unexpected to Luther - and to all who honestly think about it!

5. This is how Paul defined the Gospel

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Romans 1:17

- a. Literally "the righteousness of God is revealed"
 - b. But Luther (and the NIV) saw that since this is a righteousness by faith it is ultimately the righteousness that God gives to us. (Luther quote)
 - c. This righteousness is not something we work and create, it is God's righteousness that is given to us in Christ and is received by faith, not works.
6. This is also explicit in other passages and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. Philippians 3:9
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21
 7. What God is in His character and what He demands from us, this He also gives to us!
 8. This is the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Have I wrestled with the righteousness of God & my sin?
 1. Many today think Luther needed to chill out!
 2. We think God's righteousness and our sin are not a real problem

The Righteous King

Zechariah 9:9

November 27, 2022

Communion

Zephaniah 3:14-17

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas; righteousness; justification; law and gospel; prophecy (Old Testament)

3. Luther did not need to chill - we need to wake up!
4. God is utterly holy and righteous, and He will establish righteousness on the earth and judge sin - and sinners!
5. Has this reality sunk deep into my heart?
6. Have I ever despaired when I consider my own sin and the coming judgment of God?
7. There can be no salvation apart from realizing my own sin (which is why Paul immediately moves to the wrath of God against sinful humanity)
8. Let the Spirit convict you today if this has never happened!

B. Do I rejoice over the (Un)Expected Gospel?

1. Don't let our familiarity with the Gospel breed contempt!
2. What an unexpected wonder - our righteous King has taken our sin, borne the holy wrath due to us, and given us His righteousness!
3. This is truly Good News!

C. The (Un)Expected Invitation to the Table of the Lord

1. When we consider our sin, who would expect that we would ever be invited to the King's Table?
2. Yet this is what God has done for us!
3. Christian, come and rejoice in the Righteousness of our King - for what he is and demands He has given to us in Christ!

Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again do you need to fear any harm... for ¹⁷ the Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Go forth full of joy for you are blessed - and be a blessing!
Zephaniah 3:14-17

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

I had conceived a burning desire to understand what Paul meant in his Letter to the Romans, but thus far there had stood in my way, not the cold blood around my heart, but that one word which is in chapter one: "The righteousness of God is revealed in it." I hated that word, "righteousness of God," which, by the use and custom of all my teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically as referring to formal or active righteousness, as they call it, i.e., that righteousness by which God is righteous and by which he punishes sinners and the unrighteous. But I, blameless monk that I was, felt that before God I was a sinner with an extremely troubled conscience. I couldn't be sure that God was appeased by my satisfaction. I did not love, no, rather I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners. In silence, if I did not blaspheme, then certainly I grumbled vehemently and got angry at God. I said, "Isn't it enough that we miserable sinners, lost for all eternity because of original sin, are oppressed by every kind of calamity through the Ten Commandments? Why does God heap sorrow upon sorrow through the Gospel and through the Gospel threaten us with his righteousness and his wrath?" This was how I was raging with wild and disturbed conscience. I constantly badgered St. Paul about that spot in Romans 1 and anxiously wanted to know what he meant. (Martin Luther)

I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: "The righteousness of God is revealed in it, as it is written: 'The righteous person lives by faith.'" I began to understand that in this verse the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous person lives by a gift of God, that is by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the righteousness of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive righteousness, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The righteous person lives by faith." All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light...I exalted this sweetest word of mine, "the righteousness of God," with as much love as before I had hated it with hate. This phrase of Paul was for me the very gate of paradise. (Martin Luther)