**Week of May 5, 2019**

**Matthew 28:16-20 Act 1:6-8**

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid\*: yea, we establish the law.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

Today’s lesson focuses on Paul letter to the Romans. He was trying to give them the direction that God had given to them when it came to abiding by laws that they were unfaithfully practicing. Paul told the people that now their righteousness would be based on their faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ. It is ironic that the Law, a source of much pride for the Jews, demonstrated the need for justification by faith, which leveled the playing field between Jews and Gentiles, thus removing any room for a sense of superiority of Jews above Gentiles. There is only on God that justifies. There is only one God that justifies. There is only one way to receive God’s righteousness- by faith in Jesus the Christ. Faith gives all people the opportunity to be justified by God. God provided the ultimate sacrifice through Jesus the Christ and all that is required is for a person to believe and accept Jesus free gift of salvation. The doctrine of justification simply expressed is being placed by God in a right relationship with God. HE made it clear that it is only by God’s grace and mercy that sinners can be saved, through their acceptance of Jesus Christ. Receiving the gift of righteousness is to be justified by faith. All who receive the gift are expected by God to live as righteous people, devoted to the service of what God has determined to be right. Paul’s point to the Jews is that the Law was never intended to offer salvation. The Law only offered that standard of right living or righteousness.

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