

Introduction:

No set of words is more important to understanding Paul's letter to the Romans than these:

- *dike* - Root meaning justice.
- *dikaioo* - justify
- *dikaiosyne* - righteousness.
- *dikaios* - righteous

I. Words From The Dike Root

A. **Dike** - the root meaning of this word is justice.

1. From it stems many other forms of the word which the Apostle Paul uses extensively.
 - a) To give direction, to indicate, to establish.
 - b) Therefore it begin to be understood as law. As established can mean law.
2. God's law is considered righteous because it comes from Him who is righteous. His ways are right therefore they give us life and security.

B. **Dikaioo** - justify

1. Used 44 time in the LXX.
2. The Hebrew forms Qal-to be righteous. Piel, to be demonstrated as righteous.
3. A judge can therefore pronounce a person righteous or acquitted.
 - a) For Paul, it is always God who justifies and it is man who is justified.
 - b) Particularly true to Paul is that this justification takes place by faith and nothing else.
 - (1) *"If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.""* (Romans 4:2-3, NLT)
 - (2) *"For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are."* (Romans 3:20, NLT) also Gal 2:16.
 - (3) It is God who justifies/declares us righteous.

C. **Dikaiosyne** - righteousness

1. Used over 300 times in the OT.
2. Usually carries with it an 'ethical flavor' of understanding.
3. In the Greek this word is used most often to designate an attribute of God, righteousness. Though many also carry the connotation of relationship.
 - a) *"Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness."* (Psalm 51:14, NASB95PARA) Reflects relationship.
 - b) *"I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off; And My salvation will not delay. And I will grant salvation in Zion, And My glory for Israel."* (Isaiah 46:13, NASB95PARA) God is acting on behalf of the people!
 - c) *"this saving activity can also be considered from the standpoint of the human being who receives "God's righteousness." In these contexts, God's righteousness clearly includes the aspect of gift or status enjoyed by the recipient."* Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (pp. 81-82). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. *"Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; And let them say continually, "The Lord be*

magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant." And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness And Your praise all day long." (Psalm 35:27-28, NASB95PARA)

4. Another meaning for dikaiosyne, is not the saving activity of God but the motivation for that activity. *"In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge; Let me never be ashamed; In Your righteousness deliver me."* (Psalm 31:1, NASB95PARA) God's righteousness in passages such as speak of God's faithfulness, His commitment to His promises.
 - a) So much of our OT understanding has to do with meeting commitments imposed by covenant relationship, whereas this understanding reveals God's faithfulness in right action.
5. To summarize, then, we find that God's *dikaioynē* in the OT can denote God's character as that of a God who will always do what is right, God's activity of establishing right, and even, as a product of this activity, the state of those who have been, or hope to be, put right. Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (p. 84). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

D. **Dikaiois** - righteous.

1. Used over about 400 times in the OT.
2. Usually used to speak of a person who is characterized as righteous. It become the standard by which a pious, or holy person is noted.
3. Refers often to the one who keeps the will of God.

II. The Heart of the Gospel- Justification by Faith 1:18-4:25

- A. In Paul's statement of the theme of his letter, vs 16-17. Paul moves with focus precision from the gospel, to the salvation mediated by the gospel, to the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel.
 1. It is now this righteousness, God acting to bring people into a right relationship with Himself that occupies Paul's attention in the first part of his letter.
 2. "Righteousness" (*dikaioynē*) and its cognates "justify" (*dikaioō*) and "righteous" (*dikaiois*) occur 24 times in these verses (18-4:25), being particularly prominent (6 occurrences) in the passage that is the heart of this section, 3:21-26."
 3. But an even more prominent word (27x) is faith/pistis and believe/pisteuo. Righteousness by faith!
- B. Paul in this section announces two very unpopular aspects of this righteousness.
 1. First, It is an entirely gracious act on God's part that His righteousness could be received/ experienced only by faith.
 2. Second, Anyone, Jew or Gentile, could and needed to experience it on the same terms!
 3. In Paul's mind, if God is to be God of all His righteousness must be offered to all on the same basis.
- C. As we will look at this section of scripture we will find Paul speaking directly to the Jew, 2:1-3:20. Paul wants the Christian community in Rome to listen to this dialogue so that they understand his gospel.
 1. The points he argues reflect the very history of his missionary journeys.
 2. It is no wonder then that the "apostle to the Gentiles" would emphasize these points to Christian with whom he personally has had no contact.