

Session 3 Walking in Confidence before God (Rom. 3:21-31)

I. REVIEW OF SESSION 2

- A. The gospel of grace is distorted in two ways: first, by people seeking to **earn God's love** and forgiveness; second, by a **half-hearted response** to receiving God's grace. In both ways, people can receive the grace of God in vain. Receiving it *in vain* means receiving it in a way that neither produces *confidence* in God's love and power nor a desire to respond with *wholeheartedness*.
¹We...plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1)
- B. We can be confident in God's grace by understanding what the Word says about our salvation. It changes our life when we walk in the **assurance that God enjoys us even in our weakness**. We will not walk in victory over sin without having confidence to run to God instead of from God when we sin. Understanding grace gives us confidence that God loves us and will use us even in our weakness. The opposite of this is condemnation which is the fear of being rejected by God.
- C. There are important distinctions between justice, mercy and grace. They compliment each other. **Justice** is *getting what we deserve* (judgment). **Mercy** is *not getting what we deserve* (judgment). **Grace** is *getting what we do not deserve* (access to God's heart, presence, power and favor).
- D. The foundation of the gospel: the righteousness of God. The theme of Romans is God's righteousness and its power in our lives (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel is the power of God. Receiving it means we are empowered to obey God and be used by Him. The experience of His power (v. 16) rests on us receiving the gift of His righteousness (v. 17).
¹⁶...the gospel of Christ...is the power of God to salvation [from the penalty and power of sin] ...¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. (Rom. 1:16-17)
1. The word "salvation" includes freedom from both the **penalty** and the **power** of sin.
 2. The gift of righteousness is an essential doctrine in of the grace of God. We must understand the gift of righteousness and what the implications of receiving it are.
- E. Romans 1-8 is the most complete presentation of the gospel of grace. In Romans 1-4 Paul establishes that all men are guilty and unable to save themselves. First he sums up the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17), showing how all people are guilty before God (Rom. 1:18-3:20), and then explains how sinful people can be justified (Rom. 3:21-31) and walk in victory (Rom. 5-8).
- F. **Romans 1:18-32:** The *immoral person* is guilty before God without Jesus
Romans 2:1-16: The *moral person* is guilty before God without Jesus
Romans 2:17-3:8: The *religious person* is guilty before God without Jesus
Romans 3:9-20: *All people* are guilty before God; this is the doctrine of our sinful depravity.
Romans 3:21-31: God's solution is to *provide us* with the free gift of righteousness
Romans 4:1-25: *Salvation by faith is illustrated* in the life of two famous Jewish fathers:
Abraham, who lived *before* the law of Moses, and David, who lived *after* the law of Moses.

II. THE REVELATION OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS (ROM. 3:21-31)

- A. Romans 3:21-31 is the clearest statement in the Scripture on our salvation by grace. The challenge is Paul’s use of legal language—justification, propitiation, redemption, etc. The reason for this is because the way God saved us is through a legal exchange in His divine court. As we understand that we have a legal problem with a legal solution, we will better understand grace.
- B. The foundational truth about grace is that the righteousness of God—the very quality of God’s righteousness has been freely given to all sinners who repent and come to Jesus in faith.
- ²¹*Now the **righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed...** (Rom. 3:21)*
- C. We have received a quality of righteousness that can never be improved. It is the righteousness that God Himself possesses. God is not more righteous than the righteousness He gives us. Even He cannot increase the quality of it. The day we were born again we received His righteousness. A million years from now we will not be more righteous than on the day we were born again.
- D. God is holy and we are sinful. Therefore, we could not be in relationship with Him until the sin was removed. God did not overlook our sin—He paid for it. Jesus as the Innocent One became guilty before God so that we as the guilty ones might become innocent before God. Therefore, our confidence before God is not based on if we are doing good or bad, but on a legal exchange.
- E. There are two expressions of God’s righteousness, imputed and imparted. The moment we are born again, He gives us the gift of righteousness to empower us live righteously. This is **imputed** righteousness, which gives us a new **legal position** before God (Rom. 3-5); it is instantaneous. God gives us **imparted** righteousness, which describes our **living condition** (Rom. 6-8).
- F. When God looks at me, He sees my debt paid by Jesus and His righteousness imputed or credited to my account. This is a legal term. When He looks at us, He sees “100% righteousness” imputed to our account and He relates to us on the basis of that account. Thus, nothing hinders God from embracing us. Our compromise keeps us from enjoying His presence, but it does not hinder God.
- G. Imparted righteousness is the righteousness that gets worked out in our character. God gives us imputed righteousness to put us in a position before Him to receive His imparted righteousness.
- H. By understanding God’s justice, we realize that *all* can be saved, that we can stand *confidently before God*, and that we can be kept from the error of believing that there is *another way of salvation*, outside of Jesus paying the debt for our sin.
1. Everybody can be saved—even the most perverse man can receive God’s righteousness as a free gift because it is based on the justice of the innocent One paying our debt.
 2. We can have confidence before God—even when sincere believers are failing.
 3. There is only one way of salvation—because salvation is not God overlooking our sin, but paying for it in a just way. Since there is only One Man who was innocent and who became guilty, there is only one way to salvation.

- I. Paul describes the way of salvation (Rom. 3:21-24). The only way to earn salvation would be to be 100% obedient to God in all our thoughts, words, and deeds for 100% of our life (Jas. 2:10).
²¹***Now the righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed [made known], being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God, through faith [confidence in] in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3:21-24)***
1. ***Righteousness of God (v. 21):*** We receive a righteousness that can never be improved. Our new legal position of standing in God’s presence is based on a historical event, in which a legal transaction occurred in His court when.
 2. ***Freely (v. 24):*** We receive God’s righteousness freely, fully (100%), and instantly (at our new birth). Righteousness is a gift given on the basis of what Jesus did, not what we do.
 3. ***Witnessed by the Law (v. 21):*** This is the same way of salvation seen in the OT (Rom. 4). Some wrongly believe that in the Old Testament people were saved by works. They offered animal sacrifices which were a prophetic picture of the Messiah who would be the sacrifice. Jesus as the Lamb of God fulfilled the Old Testament sacrifices.
 4. ***Redemption (v. 24):*** Sin is not overlooked but paid for. Redemption is the term that the Greeks used to describe releasing a prisoner by paying the ransom price. Jesus, the innocent One, became guilty, so that we, the guilty ones, might become innocent.
 5. ***Being justified (v. 24):*** God declares us legally justified—“just as if we never sinned.” In His divine court, we are accepted, with no guilt or judgment against us.
 6. ***There is no difference (v. 22):*** There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, between the most religious and the most perverse, or between the most moral person and the most immoral, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Compare two people attempting to jump the Grand Canyon (it averages about 10 miles in width). Maybe one can jump fifty feet, and another, five feet. What difference would it make?
- J. We have become a new creation in Christ. The “he” that is a new creation is our spirit man.
¹⁷***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...¹⁹God was in Christ reconciling the world...not imputing their trespasses to them...²¹that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)***
- K. ***Old things passed away:*** We were under condemnation before God. We were powerless with regard to sin (at the heart level). We were under darkness, lacking ability to understand the Word or receive God’s direction for life. We were destitute, without hope of a good future in God.
- L. ***All things have become new:*** We are accepted and enjoyed by God. Our former judgment, powerlessness, and darkness have passed. We now have the authority of Jesus’ name and the indwelling Spirit. These enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan; to walk in victory over sin; and to receive understanding of God, His Word, and will. We have a significant destiny in God.

- M. Paul gives **characteristics** of our salvation (Rom. 3:25-31). It is consistent with God’s character (v. 25-26), available to all (v. 29-30), and fulfills the purpose of the Old Testament law (v. 31).
- ²⁵ *...whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed [in OT animal sacrifices], ²⁶to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law [principle]...the law of faith. ²⁸Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law [earning it]. (Rom. 3:25-28)*
1. **Just and justifier (v. 26):** The cross enables God to forgive sin without denying justice. God was perfectly just in all that He did in providing our justification by faith.
 - a. Justice was satisfied when Jesus as the Innocent One became guilty so that we as the guilty ones might become innocent. When God looks at me, He sees the debt Jesus paid and the righteousness imputed to my account. This is the basis of my confidence.
 - b. It would be injustice for God to punish Jesus with our sin then punish us with sin that was paid for. When we feel like we are failing, we must speak the truth over our heart about Jesus having fully paid for our sin and failure.
 2. **Propitiation (v. 25):** This means “to appease”; it is the word that is translated as “mercy-seat” (Heb. 9:25), the place of propitiation by sacrifice. Jesus was the “mercy-seat” for sinners and paid the just payment for our sin by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice, which appeased (satisfied) all the claims of justice in God’s court (1 Jn. 2:1-2). In Greek culture, a propitiatory sacrifice was one which averted wrath and appeased the gods.
 3. **Forbearance (v. 25):** God showed forbearance (restraint) in the Old Testament by passing over sin because of animal sacrifices, which prophetically spoke of Jesus’ death.
 4. **Boasting (v. 27):** The freeness of our salvation removes pride and condemnation.
- N. The gospel is the good news of salvation about receiving God’s righteousness (in three tenses).
1. **Justification:** our legal position—**past tense**, focused on my spirit (I have been saved)
 2. **Sanctification:** our living condition—**present tense**, focused on my soul (I am being saved)
 3. **Glorification:** our eternal exaltation—**future tense**, focused on my body (I will be saved)
- O. We experience the fullness of our salvation over three time frames. One third of our salvation is complete, the salvation of our spirit. Our **spirit has been** created anew in holiness (past tense).
- P. Understanding who we are as a new creation “in Christ” involves the following truths:
1. **Legal position:** what we received in Christ (gift of righteousness and the indwelling Spirit)
 2. **Living condition:** what we experience (the transformation of our life to walk in righteousness)
 3. **Affectionate relationship:** we are God’s beloved (as the Father’s sons and Jesus’ Bride)
 4. **Anointed partnership:** we are co-workers with Jesus (using our authority in Christ)