
Romans: Gospel People

Midweek Bible Study

Week 5 - Romans 3:1-26 - Justified through faith in Christ



3:1-8 - Overview...

1-2: Paul poses the question: Does the judgment under which the Jews stand mean they have no advantage at all? He then answers saying they actually have great advantage in possessing the words of God.

3-4a: Paul affirms the continuing faithfulness of God to his word and the Jewish people despite their widespread unfaithfulness.

4b: Quotation of Psalm 51:4b affirming that God is just in judging the sins of his people

5-8: Paul confirms the faithfulness of God in no way precludes God from judging the Jews. In fact he is proved faithful to his word in fulfilling the promise to judge disobedience.

3:9 - The universal reign of sin

"...Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin."

Romans 1:18

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness." (NIV)

Douglas Moo writes,

"What is needed is a new power to break in and set people free from sin - a power found in, *and only in*, the gospel of Jesus Christ."

3:10-18 - Old Testament scriptural precedent

Table showing Romans 3:10b-18 and corresponding OT verses and themes

10b

'There is no one righteous, not even one;

11

there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

12

All have turned away,
they have together become
worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.'

The universality of sin

Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 53:1-3;
Ecclesiastes 7:20

13

'Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practise deceit.'

'The poison of vipers is on their lips.'

14

'Their mouths are full of cursing and
bitterness.'

Sinning in word

Psalm 5:9

Psalm 140:3

Psalm 10:7 (LXX)

15

'Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16

ruin and misery mark their ways,

17

and the way of peace they do not know.'

Sinning through violence

Isaiah 59:7,8

18

'There is no fear of God before their
eyes.'

Summary and root issue

Psalm 36:1

3:19 - Accountable to God

'held accountable' - gk. *hypodikos* - legal term meaning 'answerable to' or 'liable to prosecution'

3:20 - The purpose of the Law

No-one can be justified by works of the law...

Galatians 2:15-16

15 "We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles **16** know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Douglas Moo writes,

"The central point Paul is making is that *no-one* is capable of doing *anything* to gain acceptance with God; this is why for *everyone* faith in Christ is the *only* possible way to God."

3:21-26 - The main point...

Martin Luther said of these verses,

"The chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible."

John Piper says,

"These verses should be the Sun round which everything else in our faith orbits."

3:21 - But now...

1:18-3:20 deal with the old era dominated by sin

3:21-4:25 deal with the new era dominated by the righteousness of God through faith in Christ

Martin Lloyd Jones said,

"There are no more wonderful words in the whole of scripture than just these two words, 'But now'"

3:23 - All have fallen short of the glory of God

Fall short - gk. *hysterountai* - 'falling short' or 'are lacking'

John Piper: "Living without God as your supreme treasure."

Is it a failure to acknowledge and embrace the glory of God or a failure to reflect the glory of God? Probably both!

3:24 - Justified freely by his grace

Justified

are justified - gk. *dikaiousmenoi* - 'are being justified'

Passive verb - God is the agent, we are the object upon whom he is acting

dikaiousmenoi has the same root as the greek word for righteousness which is *dikaiosynē*

dikaiousmenoi - not 'make righteous' but 'declare righteous'

Luke 7:29,

"All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, **acknowledged that God's way was right**, because they had been baptized by John"

bold text literally: 'justified God'

Freely

freely - gk. *dōrean*

Revelation 22:17,

"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take **the free gift** of the water of life." (the free gift - gk. *dōrean*)

By his grace...

Romans 4:4,

"Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited according to grace, but according to debt."

Romans 11:35-36,

“Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay them?”
For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Redemption means ‘deliverance at a cost’, ‘liberation through payment of a price’

gk. *apolutroseos* - redemption

gk. *lutron* - ransom

Mark 10:45,

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

3:25 - God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement

William Cowper wrote of his testimony when reading Romans 3:25,

“Immediately I received the strength to believe it, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fullness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed, and received the gospel.”

Phillip Hughes writes,

“Our own justification before God rests on the solid reality that the fulfilling of God’s justice in Christ was at the same time the fulfilling of his love for us.”

sacrifice of atonement - gk. *hilasterion* - ‘mercy seat’, ‘means of propitiation’

Leviticus 16:14,

“He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side*; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.”