

Romans

October 11, 2009

Romans Three

Romans 3:21-26

This is the tenth lesson in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘**The just shall live by faith.**’ “ Romans 1:16-17

Title: “**The Gospel**”

We have considered the **Doctrine of Condemnation** or the **Wrath of God** that includes 1:18 through 3:20.

In this lesson we will take up the **The Doctrine of Justification, which is the righteousness of God**, which runs from 3:21 thru 5:21.

The subsections are:

- 3:21-31 Summary statement on the **method** of Justification.
- 4:1-25 **An example** of the method using Abraham
- 5:1-11 The **results** of being made right with God.
- 5:12-21 The **grounds** whereby God makes anyone right.

Read Romans 3:19-31

We will only deal with vs 21-26 today.

Some say, if you miss this Summary Statement {3:21-26} on the **method** of Justification, you will miss the entire epistle. I would go further and say that if you don't grasp this passage in its essence, you will have missed the gospel itself. No, I will further boldly say that if you do not, in some degree, grasp what it means to be justified **by** God, on His initiative, you are yet in your sins and are trusting in some form of the “deeds of the law.”

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As profound and simple is the truth of “Justification by grace through faith alone,” there are many on the “broad way that leads to destruction” who will not despise any and all “deeds of the law” as to their being justified before God.

On this passage:

Martin Luther: “...the chief point, and the very central place of the epistle and of the whole Bible.”

John Calvin: “... there is not probably in the whole Bible a passage which sets forth more profoundly the righteousness of God in Christ.”

John Calvin: “Justification is the main hinge upon which religion turns.”

For emphasis read 3:21-26 once more.

What then is **justification**? From the last study:

Justification is a **judicial** act by God in which the one who is **actually guilty** is declared **not guilty**!

It is objective! Outside of you! You must look to the what Jesus achieve on the cross of Calvary!

It is a forensic act, i.e., having to do with legal proceedings.

Having been justified; we are free from the **guilt** of sin.

God **regards** us as not guilty!

Justification is a **declaration** that God’s justice is satisfied.
No more condemnation!

Justification is the **antithesis** of condemnation;
the removal of condemnation by fiat, by God’s declaration.

Declared to be righteous, not **made** to be righteous.

The righteousness of God is **imputed**, not **infused**! {explain }

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If one's presentation of the gospel does not conform to 3:21-26, then what they preach is not the gospel, it is, rather, what Paul condemns in Galatians as "a different gospel." Let's be reminded of what we learned in 1:1; "the gospel of God." The gospel of God is a righteousness, not just **about** God, but a righteousness **provided by** God!

God is not **trying** to save anyone.

God **is saving** all those He predestined, called, and justified, and those only will be glorified {8:30}.

As we look at vs 21-26, there is so much here that we could spend a study on each word. I don't wish to weary you, but at the same time I fear that I will leave out an important truth that is imbedded in these verses.

Someone has compiled fifteen points regarding the **righteousness of God** in vs 21-26:

- vs 21 01. It is righteousness **provided by God**.
- vs 21 02 It is displayed **now**.
- vs 21 03 It is **apart**, or separate from the law.
- vs 21 04 It is **revealed**. Not derived by human effort.
- vs 21 05 It is **not new**, the law and the prophets witness to it.
- vs 22 06 It is **effective through faith** in Jesus Christ.
- vs 22 07 **All who believe** receive it.
- vs 24 08 It is the **free gift** of God's grace.
- vs 24 09 It is given through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus.
- vs 25 10 The redemption price is the **blood of Jesus; propitiation** by blood redemption.
- vs 25 11 The atonement reaches **backward** as well as **forward**.
- vs 26 12 It has been clearly demonstrated that **God is just**.
- vs 26 13 God's justice is not compromised; **sin is punished**.
- vs 26 14 His **grace is satisfied**.
- vs 26 15 **All this** for the believer in Jesus.

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vs 21 **“But now...”** Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the great British preacher and expositor of Romans, preaching on this verse says that, “there are no more wonderful words in the whole of Scripture than just these two words, **‘but now.’** ”

Romans 6:21-22 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 **But now** having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Romans 7:5-6 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 **But now** we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Galatians 4:8-9 8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. 9 **But now** after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

Ephesians 2:11-13 11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 **But now** in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but **now you** are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

Do you have a **“but now”** in your experience with God? MLJ

The utter hopelessness of being dominated and enslaved to sin, to be “under sin,” with the wrath of God rightly settled on my wicked soul: **“But now**, apart from the law, a righteousness from God, attested by the law and the prophets, has been **revealed.”**

“Once I was blind, but now I see!”

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Once I was **dead** in trespasses and sin, **“but now!”** GRACE, GRACE, GRACE!

Does the devil come to you and accuse you? A memory comes into your mind:
What a mess you are. Remember what you did?
How can you think that you are saved? **“But now!”**

You will never appreciate grace until you can say, **“but now.”**

Do you struggle with “deeds of the law?”

Have you been listening to some preacher, trying to build a crowd, tell you,
“God will save you if you do six back flips and kiss a duck.”

It matters not what he says after he says something to the effect, that God will save you, if you _____. It will be a form of “deeds of the law.”
What that preacher is selling is “another gospel,” something that he imagines that you must do so as to place God under obligation to save you. If what the preacher tells you, as to how salvation comes is not in keeping with these verses, it is simply a false gospel.

One time in the history of the world, God told a man, “Do this and live.”
But that man failed. Now the word is not “DO,” but “DONE!”

That first man was Adam; and the second Adam is Christ!

Works says, “DO,” Grace says, “DONE!”

“But now, **apart from the law...**”

This **does not mean**, as some teach, that God first used the law in an past dispensation or time and now He saves through the gospel.
Nor does it mean that God attempted to save by law, and failing that, He came up with “Plan B.”

God does not have a “Plan B.”

Once I myself heard Ernest Ansley say, “God did not know He would need a Calvary when He placed Adam in the Garden.” This false prophet thinks God has a “Plan B.”

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What it **does mean** is that God's salvation has never been by "deeds of the law," "but now the righteousness of God is revealed...." What was a mystery, seen only in type and adumbration, is now made known in a public spectacle.

We will stop at this point because our time is up but if the Lord wills we will take it up next Sunday.