

Romans 3:19–26

- ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
- ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
- ²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
- ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;
- ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
- 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,
- ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

How Can We Be Right With God? Romans 3:18-26

INTRO:

On October 31, 1517 an Augustinian Monk nailed a challenge to an academic debate to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church and the entire world was changed. Out of these 95 theses, which dealt with how a sinful person could be righteous before a Holy God, arose the Protestant Reformation. The monk Dr. Martin Luther was the Bible professor at Wittenberg University and in teaching Romans came across a truth clearly taught in that book but neglected by the church for centuries. To remember that event and to glorify our eternal God, I want to turn our attention to this vital truth. We will see it in two parts.

I. Why we need to be Declared Righteous. (Verses 19-20)

II. How We Can Be Declared Righteous before a Holy God. (Verse 21-26)

I. Why we need to be Declared Righteous. (Verses 19-20)

Romans 3:19-20 *“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

A. The theme of Paul’s letter to the Roman church is found in **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.’”

B. After stating this theme, Paul began developing it by talking about sin. We emerge from the well thought discussion of how we are all sinners and without excuse before God, Paul summarizes his discussion in today’s text. First, we are all sinners. The point of the Law is not to save or make anyone righteous it is to shut our mouths before God and demonstrate our great need of righteousness. Paul said it, *“[in order] that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”* (v19) We are without excuse before God. We are all guilty.’

C. Second, we must unequivocally understand, the works of the Law cannot make anyone righteous.

v.20 *“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

This is vitally important because, if we do not understand that Christ alone can save us and not we ourselves, we cannot be saved!

II. How We Can Be Declared Righteous before a Holy God. (Verse 21-26)

Romans 3:22-25a *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith.”*

A. This is a series of long sentences, but we will attempt to untangle them so we see Paul’s point. First, the righteousness, which Paul wrote about, was not new with him.

vs.21-22 *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.”*

This is a righteousness the entire Old Testament wrote about. This is a righteousness open to both Jews and Gentiles alike, if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, it is not a righteousness that we can earn or work up. It is righteousness credited to us by God the Father because we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. This is available to all peoples because all have sinned, all must be declared righteous by God or they are lost.

vs.24-25 *“For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

There is no other way to God. There is no other way we can be saved.

C. The basis of our justification is our redemption which is in Christ.

v.24-25 *“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith.”*

Two words are vitally important here. The word redemption describes how Jesus paid a ransom price for us. Jesus did not present his blood to Satan. Satan did not have a holy nature that demanded a blood sacrifice for sin. God’s righteous nature demanded it. The word propitiation was used in the LXX to describe the mercy seat, but if we stop there we miss the blessing of this word. The word means God’s wrath was satisfied, the cost of forgiveness was paid. There is a verse in **Hebrews 9:26** which always thrills my soul.

“[The Lord Jesus] then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

Jesus put away our sins. This is why we could read,

Hebrews 10:17 *“Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.”*

D. Why is all this important? It is because we need to know how God views all of this so we can be sure of heaven. If God has not declared us righteous and this does not fit His plan, we will not be saved no matter how wonderful it feels. There are two points that Paul makes.

1. Paul said, God did it this way so He might be seen as righteous in how He acted in the Old Testament.

v.25 *“To demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.”*

What is Paul’s point? Do you remember how in the Day of Atonement and in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, sin was covered it was not completely put away? When Jesus came, the sins which were covered for those who believed are completely put away.

2. This is important because God's justice is satisfied in the present.

v.26 *“To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, [in order] that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”*

Anyone who understands, by grace, God's holiness and hatred of sin, understands why Jesus had to die.

Why is this important?

1. When we realize our sins need to be forgiven. We instinctively know that the wages of sin is death, so we know God cannot just say “I forgive” and be faithful to His holy nature. We can through what Paul wrote understand how Christ paid it all and there is really nothing left for us to pay.

2. If you are here and not know the forgiveness of your sins, you can believe and be saved.