

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen in our previous studies, Paul is acting as a prosecuting attorney condemning the whole world before God because of their sin.

In Romans 1:18-32 Paul shows how the unrighteous heathen are condemned by creation.

Then, in Romans 2:1-16 he shows how the self-righteous moralist is condemned by their own conscious.

And lastly, in Romans 2:17-29 Paul shows how the super-religious person is condemned by the Law of God.

Now, as we will see in Romans 3:1-20 that Paul is going to condemn all humanity, that no one can stand before God in their own righteousness no matter how good they may be or seem to be! All are guilty before God, but Paul is not going to leave us in that condition with no way out.

From Romans 3:21 through Romans 5:21 Paul is going to speak of justification and how the righteousness of God is revealed from heaven apart from the works of the Law.

Now before we get to our text this evening, let me share this with you because it will shed some light on where, not only Jews are at but Gentiles as well. We are told,

Hans Christian Andersen's story of *The Emperor's New Clothes* is among everyone's favorites because of its humor and because of the point it so aptly makes. We probably all know the story: A certain emperor was very fond of appearances and clothing. So when certain clever philosophers (actually they were con men) offered to weave him a rare and costly garment, he was quite receptive. He especially liked their promise that the garment would be invisible to all but the wise and pure in heart. The delighted emperor commissioned his new clothing at great cost, and the con men sat before the empty looms and pretended to be weaving.

Soon the emperor's curiosity became such that he sent his chief minister to see how things were going. Seeing no cloth on the busy looms, and not wanting to be thought unwise and impure in heart, the official returned with a report about the fabulous beauty of the cloth. After a time the weavers asked for more money. Again the emperor became impatient, sending his second chief minister, who returned with an even more enthusiastic report. Next the emperor went himself. Though he too saw nothing, he did not want to appear stupid, so he proclaimed the clothing excellent and beautiful. He even gave the weavers medals.

Finally, on the day set for the grand parade, the con men dressed the emperor in his nakedness and then skipped town. As the emperor paraded before his people, *au naturel*, the whole populace joined in praising his beautiful new clothing, lest they be thought of as fools and knaves. Thus the absurd parade continued – until in a moment of quietness a child was heard to say, “The emperor has no clothes!” At once everyone knew the truth, including the emperor. One innocent but honest remark by a small child who did not know enough to keep his mouth shut stripped away the hypocritical pretense of the entire nation.

The Emperor's New Clothes is such a great story that we use the term proverbially to describe a common tendency: We remain quiet while a fallacy is being promoted to which everyone is subscribing, because we do not want to be thought of as fools.

As we approach the third chapter of Romans, we must keep in mind that it well describes the condition of the Jews whom Paul has just been addressing. The Jews imagined themselves to be clothed with a righteousness that was actually nonexistent. They were duped by a misleading religious confidence. So Paul, like the little boy, stripped away their layers of delusion. They believed because they possessed the Word of God they were safe. They saw themselves as guides to the blind, correctors of foolishness, teachers of the immature. But Paul undressed them, proving that having God's Word is no guarantee of life. Paul also stripped away their errant confidence in circumcision, showing that their religious affiliation would not save them.

As he undressed his fellow Jews, he also undresses us, stripping away our misleading confidence in having God's Word and our "right" affiliations. For all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, true righteousness is a matter of the heart!

- R. Kent Hughes, *Romans – Righteousness from Heaven*, pp. 71-72

Here's the thing. If you think by standing before God in your own righteousness that He will accept you, you are wrong. Your righteousness is like filthy rags before a holy and righteous God! You are naked, all your sins are exposed.

It is only when we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ that we are no longer naked before God. All our sins have been covered in the blood of Christ and that is what Paul has been showing us over the last few weeks.

The reality is, as I have said, we are all naked before God or as Paul put it, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Romans 3:23.

With that in mind, let’s begin reading in Romans chapter 3 starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word.

ROMANS 3

VERSES 1-2

As we have seen, in Romans 2:17-29, Paul has explained that the super religious person, the Jews, were condemned by the commandments of God. In other words, having the Law, being circumcised will not save a Jewish person or for that matter, anyone!

And that leads us to what is said here in Romans 3:1. Paul is asking the question that some may have regarding the Jews. The question is very simple. “If that is true, then what advantage is there in being a Jew?”

And then Paul answers that question in Romans 3:2. Paul tells us that there is an advantage of being a Jew for the oracles; the Words of God “**were**” entrusted to them.

Notice that it is in the past tense, but it still was a privilege, an honor to have the Words of God entrusted to them and yet they did not apply those things to their life and thus, they were accountable to God!

And Paul will expound on this idea of the blessings the Jews received from God when we get to Romans chapter 9.

But let's put ourselves, Christians, in their shoes. Think about this. We as Christians have been entrusted with so much by God and it is an advantage if we apply these things to our lives, if we can live what we believe. Otherwise it is just a bunch of head knowledge that won't save you or help you in your walk with God.

One writer put it like this, "They were people of special privilege. God had revealed His word to them. We are people of special privilege in that God has given us His word. Tonight we are here to study the Word of God. And that is a tremendous advantage to have the Word of God! An advantage if you keep the Word of God and live by the Word of God. But if you don't keep the Word of God, if you don't live by the Word, then having the Word itself is not an advantage. But in reality, a responsibility. And you have a greater responsibility, knowing the will of God than a person who has never known the will of God or the Word of God." (Source Unknown)

Look at the next question that is asked in Romans 3:3 or what Paul anticipated the next question may be.

VERSES 3-4

Here is the next question that Paul is anticipating from his audience. "Okay, granted, not all Jews have believed. But if that is true, and it is, are you saying that God will go back on His promises? Can the unbelief of some cause God to break His Word?"

Think of it like this, "The Jews failed; doesn't that mean God failed? No. God's promise to send Israel the Redeemer was not defeated by their willful disobedience and rejection. All His promises for the future of the nation will be fulfilled to His glory in spite of their unbelief. Now, my friend, you may not like that, but I personally thank God that His promises to me do not depend on my faithfulness. If it had depended on me, I would have been lost long ago. Thank God for *His* faithfulness!" (J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*, p. 661) Amen to that!

Spurgeon put it like this, “I have to say, with Paul, ‘What if some did not believe?’ It is no new thing; for there have always been some who have rejected the revelation of God. What then? You and I had better go on believing, and testing for ourselves, and proving the faithfulness of God, and living upon Christ our Lord, even though we see another set of doubters, and another, and yet another *ad infinitum*. The gospel is no failure, as many of us know.”

Here’s the thing. Just because some did not believe doesn’t make God unfaithful, that His Words will not come to pass!

To this question of the unbelief of man making God unfaithful, Paul says “**Certainly not!**”

And in the Greek, it is the strongest negative Greek expression and it carries the idea of it being impossible! God can never be unfaithful to His promises, it is not in His nature, it is not in His character. We should be so thankful for that. He is ***FAITHFUL!***

It is as Psalm 119:89-90 tells us, “**Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.**”

Now, in answering this question, Paul quotes out of Psalm 51:4, where David came face-to-face with his sin with Bathsheba praying for God’s forgiveness.

The idea is, God is faithful, He will forgive and when He judges, He is fair, He is righteous.

Now as people look at this world, as they see all the devastation and tragedy that takes place, they like to blame God. We tend to call storms or other tragedies, “*Acts of God*” but we need to understand that before the flood there were no storms, there was no rain.

In fact, before the sin of Adam there was no death!

But ever since sin occurred in the Garden of Eden, the wickedness of man continued to grow and grow until we are told in Genesis 6:5-8, **“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”**

Thus, God spared Noah and his family to re-populate the earth, destroying sinful man but the nature of sin was still in Noah and his descendants.

Thus, after the flood, in fact after the sin of Adam, the death and decay process began and continues on until Christ comes and redeems this world or as Paul said in Romans 8:22-23, **“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

Christ paid in full the penalty of our sins, but we still see the effects of sin in this world and we are still in these bodies of flesh. But, as I have said, Jesus will return and restore this earth to the way it was when He created it in the first place!

It is as we are told in Isaiah 11:6-9, **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”**

But again, there are those who refuse to believe in God and what He has done for us. But that does not make it untrue. To Paul’s words, *“Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar”* Spurgeon wrote, “It is a strange, strong expression; but it is none too strong. If God says one thing, and every man in the world says another, God is true, and all men are false. God speaks the truth, and cannot lie. God cannot change; his word, like himself, is immutable. We are to believe God’s truth if nobody else believes it. The general consensus of opinion is nothing to a Christian. He believes God’s word, and he thinks more of that than of the universal opinion of men.”

Now, on to the next question that Paul is anticipating that they may ask.

VERSES 5-8

This is an argument that some will use. What he is saying is this. “If my unrighteousness will demonstrate God’s righteousness, how can God judge me? My sin ultimately serves to bring Him more glory, and that is good!”

I don’t have to tell you that is just plain foolish. But let me give you an example and I think you will see what I mean.

“Can you hear Judas make his case? ‘Lord, I know that I betrayed Jesus, but You used it for good. In fact, if I hadn’t done what I did, Jesus wouldn’t have gone to the cross at all. What I did even fulfilled the Scriptures. How can You judge me at all?’ The answer to Judas might go like this: ‘Yes, God used your wickedness but it was still your wickedness. There was no good or pure motive in your heart at all. It is no credit to you that God brought good out of your evil. You stand guilty before God.’”

- David Guzik, Romans 3

I think that drives the point home and as Paul concludes he says that he is speaking as a man.

In other words, he is explaining this through the eyes of sinful man and the reality is, even sinful man would see this as foolish. And yet man tries to use it, at times, to justify his behavior!

It is amazing the things we will use to show we are not wrong, but in the end, it is just foolish.

Listen to what Paul wrote in Romans 6:1-2, **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”**

And in Romans 6:15-19 Paul wrote, **“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”**

Hopefully that just makes sense to you. Now we see Paul answer that question beginning in verse 6 of Romans chapter 3. Paul is saying, ***“Perish the thought!”*** And think about it. If that were true, then God could never judge anyone!

And he continues answering that question in Romans 3:7-8. And Paul takes this even deeper. He shows us that a person can lie about God, what God has done in their life and yet the other person is blessed by it and God is glorified, thus, how can God judge that person, good came out of it!

Seems like a situational ethics question but again it is foolish. It seems like Paul was being accused of saying these things, but how in the world did people come to conclusions like that?

It is very simple, God gives to us a beautiful gift and Satan comes and perverts it. The gift is that God has given us salvation through Christ, as Paul said in Romans 6:23, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the [free] gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Thus, Satan comes in and says that as Christians we can do whatever we want, we now have a license to sin and as we do God gets the glory!

How wicked is Satan and how depraved is man! If that is where your heart is at you need to do a heart check and see if you are truly saved!

We have read some verses out of Romans chapter 6 dealing with sin and I think what Paul is saying is very clear. Praise God for the amazing grace He is bestowed upon us.

And yet, in some churches, they condemn grace for they see it as too much freedom for us to handle!

How ridiculous, God's gift to us is free and we have liberty to do whatever we want, but our desire is to do those things that are pleasing to Him. Our works don't save us they just show that we are saved!

So we have seen that the unrighteous heathen are condemned by creation in Romans 1:18-32.

We then saw that the self-righteous moralist is condemned by his conscience in Romans 2:1-16.

We then looked at how the super religious person is condemned by the commandments of God in Romans 2:17-29.

And here in Romans 3:1-8 Paul answered some questions that some of his readers may have regarding the advantage that the Jews have and unbelief making God a liar as well as continuing in sin so God will be glorified!

Now, in Romans 3:9-20 Paul will show us that the whole world is guilty before God. If you did not fit into one of those other categories, then this one will show you where you stand, guilty before God!

VERSE 9

Some see this question as the Jews being better than the Gentiles and others see at as the Jews being worse than the Gentiles. That is not the issue, both Jew and Gentile are sinners separated from God. But I lean towards the fact that the question deals with Jews are better than Gentiles.

Yes, Paul was a Jew and he is speaking as a Jew. But Paul makes it perfectly clear that the Jewish person has no more right with God than a pagan, a moralist! We are *ALL* under the same sin and condemnation!

And it is true that God chose the Jewish people to be His instruments to not only bring forth the Messiah, but to show others of the true and living God! But it is clear that it was not because they were better than anyone else, they weren't!

We are told of this in Deuteronomy 9:5-6, **“It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.”**

You see, the bottom line is that all have sinned, both Jew and Gentile, and sin has them in bondage with no way to break free on their own.

As we read on we will see that Paul is going to give a 14-count indictment against man, and in a sense, you can see this as God speaking this forth as these words come out of the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, this is how God sees man in his flesh apart from Christ.

Turgenev, the Russian poet, put this perfectly when he said, “I don’t know what the heart of a bad man is like, but I do know what the heart of a good man is like and it is terrible.”

Exactly!

Let’s read on and see how God sees us in our own righteousness.

VERSES 10-18

As you look at what Paul is saying here in this indictment against man, he looks at the human condition from top to bottom. He begins with the head and moves down to the feet!

Warren Wiersbe calls this passage “An X-ray study of the lost sinner, from head to foot.”

And the idea here is that the entire body of man is filled with sin and rebellion against God.

“What are you saying Pastor Joe, that there are no good people out there?”

I am not saying that, but God is! You see, according to God’s standard, how many of us are righteous before Him? ***NONE!***

In fact, there has only been one righteous man and that is Jesus! Apart from God no one understands God or the condition they are truly in.

Unless God draws you, you would not seek after God on your own. Man goes and does his own thing, not living to please God apart from Christ. All their efforts apart from Christ are worthless before Him.

Thus, the heart of man is evil, not good. Now please, don’t get me wrong, some are better than others when you compare man to man, but that is not the standard. God is the standard and we all fall far short of that standard leaving only God to be good!

Now, I don't know about you, but this look at the human condition is depressing. What's the point? The Apostle Paul wants us to understand our complete inability to save ourselves. The fall touches every part of man's being, and the inventory of body parts corrupted by the fall demonstrates this.

And make no mistake about it, what is born in the heart will overflow and come out of their lips. It is amazing what can flow from the lips of man, and it is just a reflection of where a person's heart is at!

It is as James tells us regarding the tongue, **“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”** James 3:2-12.

And, not only is man's heart evil, not only does his hands produce evil and his lips speak forth evil, but his feet are swift to run to evil.

Because of that, the wicked are not at rest, not at peace, but they toss and turn like a raging sea. Isaiah 57:21 tells us that very thing, **“There is no peace,’ Says my God, ‘for the wicked.”**

Now the question may be, “Why does man behave like this?” And I think that Romans 3:18 tells us, **“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

When you don't fear God, when you don't have the proper respect for Him, then sin will flourish! This summarizes the entire thought. Every sin and rebellion against God happens because we do not have a proper respect for Him. Wherever there is sin, there is no fear of God.

Look at this 14-count indictment that Paul spoke of regarding man.

Indictment number 1: ***NONE ARE RIGHTEOUS!***

Indictment number 2: ***NO ONE UNDERSTANDS GOD!***

Indictment number 3: ***NONE SEEK AFTER GOD!***

Indictment number 4: ***THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE!***

Indictment number 5: ***SINFUL MAN IS UNPROFITABLE!***

Indictment number 6: ***THERE IS NONE WHO DO GOOD, NO, NOT ONE!***

Indictment number 7: ***THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN TOMB!***

Indictment number 8: ***THEY PRACTICE DECEIT WITH THEIR TONGUES!***

Indictment number 9: ***THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS!***

Indictment number 10: ***THEIR MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS!***

Indictment number 11: ***UNREGENERATE MAN'S FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD!***

Indictment number 12: ***DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS!***

Indictment number 13: ***UNREGENERATE MAN DOES NOT KNOW THE WAY OF PEACE!***

Indictment number 14: ***THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES!***

Robert Haldane sums this up for us as he wrote,

It is astonishing that men, while they acknowledge that there is a God, should act without any fear of His displeasure. Yet this is their character. They fear a worm of the dust like themselves, but disregard the Most High. . . . They are more afraid of man than of God – of his anger, his contempt, or ridicule. The fear of man prevents them from doing many things from which they are not restrained by the fear of God. They love not His character, not rendering to it that veneration which is due; they respect not His authority. Such is the state of human nature while the heart is unchanged.

- Robert Haldane, Exposition of Romans, p. 121

And William MacDonald put it like this for us,

Here we see the total depravity of man, by which we mean that sin has affected all of mankind and that it has affected every part of his being. Obviously every man has not committed every sin, but he has a nature which is capable of committing them all.

If Paul had wanted to give a more complete catalog of sins, he could have mentioned the sins of sex: adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, perversion, bestiality, prostitution, rape, lewdness, pornography, and smut.

He could have mentioned the sins associated with war: destruction of innocents, atrocities, gas chambers, ovens, concentration camps, torture devices, sadism.

He could have mentioned sins of the home: unfaithfulness, divorce, wifebeating, mental cruelty, child abuse.

Add to these the crimes of murder, mutilation, theft, burglary, embezzlement, vandalism, graft, corruption.

Also the sins of speech: profanity, suggestive jokes, sensual language, cursing, blasphemy, lies, backbiting, gossip, character assassination, grumbling, and complaining.

Other personal sins are: drunkenness, drug addiction, pride, envy, covetousness, ingratitude, filthy thought-life, hatred, and bitterness.

The list is seemingly endless - pollution, littering, racism, exploitation, deceit, betrayal, broken promises, and on and on. What further proof of human depravity is needed?

- William MacDonald

I think that is very clear, “**There is none righteous, no not one . . . There is none who does good, no not one.**”

VERSES 19-20

Paul points out that this horrific description of man's utter sinfulness comes to us in the Law; and it is intended for those under the Law, to silence every critic and to demonstrate the universal guilt of mankind – that all the world may become guilty before God.

You see, Paul is saying that the Law is just an instrument to show us our failure to be righteous before God; it is an instrument of condemnation not justification!

It doesn't make the Law evil, it is good, the problem is that man is evil, and the Law points us to that fact.

And think about it like this. You would never know if a line was crooked unless there was a straight line to show us – the Law is that straight line to show us!

When you look in the mirror and see your dirty face can the mirror cleanse your face? Of course not, it can only show you that your face is dirty!

Paul, in Galatians 3:23-29 tells us, **“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**

You see, the Law points us to our Savior, it points us to Jesus. Now, if you try to live by the Law, obtain salvation by the Law, James tells us, **“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”** James 2:10.

You see, I can keep the law of the land all my life and then, for whatever reason, I steal something, and I get caught.

As I stand before the judge my defense goes as follows, “Your honor, I have kept the law all my life, and I have only transgressed this once, so that counts for something, I can get off, right?”

The judge would say, “You are guilty and have to pay the penalty, keeping the law all your life doesn’t win you any points, you were only doing what you were supposed to do!”

On the spiritual side, Paul says we are all guilty no matter how good we think we are!

Remember what Paul said, “**There is none righteous, no not one . . . There is none who does good, no not one.**”

As we read on, from Romans 3:21 through Romans 5:21 Paul is going to speak of justification and how the righteousness of God is revealed from heaven apart from the works of the Law.

VERSES 21-22

Paul opens this section up by saying, “**But now**” and this speaks of the newness of God’s work in Jesus Christ – it really is a *New Covenant*. “**Being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets**” reminds us that there is still continuity with God’s work in former times. The Law and the Prophets spoke of salvation being through the Messiah and not the Law, it is the New Covenant that Jeremiah and others spoke of!

And, as I have said, Paul has moved from the judgment of man into a section on the justification of man apart from the Law, a righteousness that is from God. And we will see this in Romans 3:21 through Romans 5:21.

And like I have said, we need to understand that this is not a new idea, for the Law and the Prophets spoke of this gift of God.

As we move into Romans chapter 4 next time we will see Paul illustrate this for us from the Law as he speaks of Abraham (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:1-3, 9-23) and the Prophets as he speaks of David (Psalm 32:1-2, Romans 4:4-8).

And please understand that God's righteousness that has been given to us is not in addition to the Law but as Paul said, it is "**apart from the Law.**"

Thus, the Law doesn't save us, Jesus does, and that gift is extended to all and then it is up to each individual to either receive it and believe it or reject it and not believe the gift that God has for them!

Make no mistake about it, there is no other way to obtain this righteousness. This righteousness is not *earned* through obedience to the Law; it is a *received* righteousness, gained through faith in Jesus Christ.

Spurgeon put it like this, "There is a little book entitled, *Every man his own lawyer*. Well, nowadays, according to some people, it seems as if every man is to be his own saviour; but if I had, say; a dozen gospels, and I had to sort them out, and give the right gospel to the right man, what a fix I should be in! I believe that, oftentimes, I should be giving your gospel to someone else, and someone else's gospel to you; and what a muddle it would all be! But now we have one universal cure . . . The blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ will save every man who trusts him, for 'there is no difference.'"

Also, I want you to see that when Paul says, "**For there is no difference**" he is speaking of the fact that salvation is available to all. Both Jews and Gentiles will get to heaven the same way and that is through Jesus Christ and His righteousness imputed into our lives by faith.

Now, if you are still struggling with this, thinking good works or the Law will add to your salvation, listen carefully to what Paul says next.

VERSE 23

The word for “**sin**” in the Greek is a word that means to “miss the mark” as when an archer misses the bulls eye.

What is the mark? It is sinless perfection - the glory of God - His perfect standard.

Now, in knowing that, how many have sinned?

Paul tells us that “**all have sinned**” not most or just a few or just some!

In fact, in the Greek “**fall short**” is in the present tense stating an action or that we “**keep falling short.**”

So all have missed the mark of perfection and it does not matter if you miss it by an inch or a millions miles, you still miss the mark of perfection and you will not get to heaven by your own efforts, good works, the keeping of the Law! “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**”

Then what can we do? Paul answers that in the next verse!

VERSE 24

Paul tells us that we are, “**justified**” and he says that we are feely justified, that there was no cost we had to pay.

And the word, “**justified**” speaks of rendering innocent, to be righteous, and God has freely given us that verdict based upon Christ in us.

Think of justification like this, *“just if id” never sinned!* That is what God has done, not what we have done.

Now some may wonder if God just ignores our sin. Not at all, that would make Him unrighteous. What has happened is that Jesus paid in full the penalty for our sins, all of them, and thus, there is no record of our sins any longer.

Let me illustrate it like this. Warren Wiersbe wrote the following story about the Rolls Royce and it relates to what we are talking about here regarding justification. He wrote,

My friend Dr. Roy Gustafson has the finest illustration of justification I have ever heard. It seems that there was a man in England who put his Rolls-Royce on a boat and went across to the continent to go on a holiday. While he was driving around Europe, something happened to the motor of his car. He cabled the Rolls-Royce people back in England and asked, “I’m having trouble with my car; what do you suggest I do?” Well, the Rolls-Royce people flew a mechanic over! The mechanic repaired the car and flew back to England and left the man to continue his holiday.

As you can imagine, the fellow was wondering, “How much is this going to cost me?” So when he got back to England, he wrote the people a letter and asked how much he owed them. He received a letter from the office that read: “Dear Sir: There is no record anywhere in our files that anything ever went wrong with a Rolls-Royce.” That is justification!

- W. Wiersbe, *Key Words of the Christian Life*, p. 16

Exactly! And we need to understand the sinful state we were in. Paul spoke of that already. And thus, the only way we can be justified is to be justified freely! We can’t purchase it with our good works. Never could and never will be able to!

It is a grace gift! And grace speaks of getting what we don't deserve, God gives us life freely! And mercy speaks of not getting what we do deserve, death!

And, not only are we justified, but Paul tells us that we have "**redemption**" through Jesus as well!

The idea of redemption is buying back something, and it involves a cost. "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**" John 3:16.

We were slaves to sin and Jesus came and redeemed us from that bondage, He freely paid the cost and we did not add anything to this redemption except receiving it by faith!

There is another thing that Paul speaks of regarding what the Lord has done for us and that is found in Romans 8:25. Let's read on and see what that is all about.

VERSES 25-26

Jesus, by His death, became the substitute sacrifice for us, a propitiation. When He hung on the cross of Calvary He was judged in our place as the sins of the world were cast upon Him. Thus, the Father could demonstrate His righteousness in judgment against sin while sparing us who deserve His judgment!

You see, this word, "**propitiation**" means the satisfying of God's holy Law, the meeting of its just demands, so that God can freely forgive those who come to Christ. The word "**blood**" tells us what the price was. Jesus had to die on the cross in order to satisfy the Law and justify lost sinners.

This word, “**propitiation**” in the Greek is HILASTERION, (hil-as-tay’-ree-on) and it is used in the Septuagint for the mercy seat which was the lid that covered the Ark of the Covenant where the Law of God was kept.

And on the Day of Atonement, Yon Kippur the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood of a goat upon the mercy seat to atone for the sins of the people, Leviticus 16:15. But Jesus has come to be that perfect sacrifice and to take away, not cover our sins.

It is as Isaiah 53:4-6 tells us, **“Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

And Clarke put it like this, “Here we learn that God designed to give the most evident displays of both his justice and mercy. Of his justice, in requiring a sacrifice, and absolutely refusing to give the salvation to a lost world in any other way; and of his mercy, in providing **THE** sacrifice which his justice required.” Exactly!

VERSE 27-28

“Let me tell you how good I am, how lucky God is to have a guy like me!” Forget about it! There is no room for boasting for our salvation is not based upon how good we are but how great He is! It is all about our faith in Jesus, He saves, we don’t!

The bottom line is this and many miss it. When our salvation is based upon the principle of *FAITH*, then there can be no room for boasting.

Think of it like this. The justified person says, *“I did all the sinning; Jesus did all the saving.”*

In other words, as Paul tells us, **“... a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”** Romans 3:28.

VERSES 29-30

There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. It is as Paul said in Romans 2:11, **“For there is no partiality with God.”**

Not only is the righteousness of God in Christ available to both Jews and Gentiles, it is also received the same way, by grace through faith!

Remember the early church had a problem, some Jews were saying that the Gentiles needed to keep the Law of Moses and be circumcised, and Peter speaks up at this meeting and says, **“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”** Acts 15:10-11.

Notice, the Jews are saved just as the Gentiles are saved, by faith in Jesus!

That is what Paul is saying here in Romans as well! **“since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.”** Romans 3:30.

Whatever the reason for the use of different prepositions here, **“by”** and **“through”** there is no difference in the instrumental cause of justification; it is *FAITH* in both cases.

VERSE 31

So, if we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, someone might ask, “If the Law doesn’t make us righteous, what good is it? Paul, you have just made the Law void. You are going against the Law of God.”

But that is not true. Paul tells us that the Gospel establishes the Law. How is that done?

Keep in mind that the Law demands perfect obedience. Thus, if you break the Law, and we all do, then there is a penalty that must be paid for breaking the Law.

That penalty is *DEATH!*

So, for us to pay the debt for breaking the Law we have to die and be eternally separated from God, we would be lost forever!

That brings us to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel tells us how God became flesh, dwelt among us to pay in full the penalty for our sins!

And that free gift is for all, but they must receive it by faith.

Thus, the gospel of salvation by faith upholds the Law by insisting that its utmost demands must be and have been fully met.

You see, the Law is important, and its purpose is fulfilled when it exposes to an individual their sin and their hopelessness to do anything about it, pointing them to Jesus, the only one who can help!

One writer put it like this,

“As far as salvation is concerned, the gospel does not replace the law, because the law was never a means of salvation. The law was given to show men the perfect standards of God’s righteousness and to show that those standards are impossible to meet in man’s own power. The purpose of the law was to drive men to faith in God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared God’s perfect standards to be higher even than those of the Old Covenant. A person breaks God’s law, He said, not only by killing but even by hating (Matt. 5:21–22), not only by committing adultery but by having lustful thoughts (5:27–28). If it is impossible to fulfill perfectly the Mosaic law, how much more impossible is it to keep the standards set forth by Christ in His earthly ministry.” (Source Unknown)

Let me close by sharing again what Paul said in Romans 3:21-26, **“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, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”**

Praise the Lord for His indescribable gift that He has given to us, His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins!

Don’t be like many today who think their righteousness will get them into heaven, it won’t! Remember, apart from Christ, “The emperor has no clothes!”