



## ROMANS 3:21-28 “BUT NOW: THE GOSPEL”

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### Opening Theme: “BUT NOW / BUT GOD”

- Romans 3 opens with two powerful words: “**But now.**”
- “But” reverses what came before and introduces hope.
- Throughout Scripture, “**But God**” changes everything:
  - Abraham was too old — **but God**
  - Moses felt inadequate — **but God**
  - David was small — **but God**
- When we add “**But God**” to our situation, hope enters.
- Matthew 19:26 — With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

### The Problem: Sin (Romans 3:23)

- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Sin is choosing our way over God’s way — rejecting His authority.
- Sin separates us from God and brings spiritual death.
- From Adam and Eve onward, humanity has lived with this brokenness.
- God did not create us for shame, guilt, or separation, but for relationship.

### Common Human Responses to Sin

- **Covering up:** hiding shame like Adam and Eve with fig leaves.
- **Comparing:** finding someone worse to feel better about ourselves.
- **Religion:** trying to earn righteousness through good behavior or rules.
- None of these remove guilt or fix the problem.
- The Law reveals sin but cannot save us from it.

### The Plan: God’s Justice and Mercy (Romans 3:24–26)

- God is perfectly **just** and cannot ignore sin.
- Every sin must be judged — justice matters.
- At the same time, God is **merciful, loving, and kind.**
- God’s plan was revealed long before Jesus:
  - Genesis 3:15 — promise of a coming Savior.
  - Sacrificial system — substitutionary death.
  - Prophets foretold a suffering Messiah.
- Jesus came as fully God and fully man to fulfill the Law.

### Jesus and the Cross

- Jesus lived the perfect life we could not live.
- He died the death we deserved to die.
- On the cross, Jesus bore the wrath of God for our sin.
- His blood cleanses us completely — no more fig leaves needed.
- Through Jesus, God remains both just and merciful.

### The Good News: Faith, Not Boasting (Romans 3:27–28)

- No one can boast in their own righteousness.
- Human “resumes” — achievements, morality, religion — are insufficient.
- Jesus submitted the only resume that matters.
- When we put our faith in Christ, His righteousness becomes ours.
- We are made right with God by grace through faith alone.

### In Christ

- We are forgiven, justified, redeemed, and set free.
- We are adopted as sons and daughters of God.
- We have peace with God and access to His presence.
- Nothing can separate us from His love.
- This is the gospel: The problem was real, the plan was costly, and the good news is complete.

## Connect Group Discussion

### Warm up:

1. When someone says “I have good news, and I have bad news” which would you prefer to hear first and why?
2. What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

### Study & Discussion:

1. Where do you personally feel the tension between “knowing the gospel” and actually being moved by it? What do you think causes the good news to lose its emotional or spiritual weight over time, even when the theology is familiar?
2. Which of the three coping strategies for sin—covering, comparing, or relying on religion—do you find yourself defaulting to most often, and why? What does that pattern reveal about what you’re trusting to give you a sense of worth or safety?
3. What would it practically look like for you to stop presenting your own “resume” before God and others and instead rest in Christ’s finished work? How might this change the way you handle failure, success, or comparison in daily life?
4. When you hear the phrase “But now” or “But God” applied to your own story, where do you most need that interruption right now? What situation, struggle, or identity narrative might God be inviting you to reframe through the gospel rather than self-effort?

### Practice for the Week: “BUT GOD”

#### 1. Name the struggle (Daily)

Once a day, honestly name what feels heavy, tempting, or out of control.

#### 2. Interrupt it with truth

Say out loud:

**“But God...”**

Finish the sentence with a gospel truth (His grace, mercy, power, or faithfulness).

#### 3. Drop the resume (Midweek)

Ask: Where am I trying to earn God’s approval?

Pray:

“Jesus, I receive Your finished work.”

#### 4. End with gratitude

Thank God for forgiveness and grace you didn’t earn.

#### Anchor Verse:

Romans 3:22 — We are made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ.