

Sermon Notes
Good News Church
Romans - The Righteous Will Live by Faith
Chapter 3 – “Justified Freely by His Grace”
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10-4-26

PRIMARY MESSAGE OF ROMANS

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” – Romans 1:17

THEMES

CH. 1-3 Depravity, Justice, and Grace

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of today’s message from Romans 3 is **to understand “Justification by faith,”** the HOW “The righteous will live by faith?” When we understand the “How?” gives us a greater appreciation for the the What?” which in turn, enlarges our hearts with gratitude and activates our lives with joyfulness.

6 QUESTIONS

1. Is there any advantage to growing up in a home that honors God?
2. Is God unjust?
3. Are we better than others?
4. Can we be justified by the Law?
5. **How are we justified by grace?**
6. Can we boast?

TEXT: Romans 3:1-31

1. Is there any advantage? (vs. 1-2)

1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

- Is there any advantage of growing up in the church end of a Christian home? Absolutely!
 - If you grew up in church, you have the blessing of knowing the great hymns of the faith (dating back to the 8th century “Be Thou My Vision”), fellowship, mentors, youth pastors, etc., but mostly, you have God’s Words of eternal life!
 - Every person here this morning has a tremendous advantage of anyone not here this morning, because you are hearing and have access to the Word of God

2. Is God Unjust? (vs. 5, 8)

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? 8 And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”?

- If our sinfulness makes God's righteousness shine even brighter, then isn't it wrong for God to punish sinners? What are you, CRAZY?!?
- **Grigori Rasputin (1869-1916)** – a Russian mystic and faith healer who claimed this distorted view that, because our sin makes God's grace appear even greater, than we should sin all the more.

3. Are We Better? (vs. 9a, 10-12, 18)

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

- **Are we (Believers) better than non-Believers? Umm... NO! We're not good. Only God is good.**
 - We are unrighteous, having no understanding, not seeking after God, completely unprofitable (worthless), evil, lying, cursing, wrongdoing, cravers of destruction, without any fear of God whatsoever.
 - **From our feet to our tongue to the top of our heads, we are wholly (not "holy") corrupted.**
 - In man's natural state, he seeks after God in the same way that a mouse seeks after a cat. 😊
- **Q: Why do people not want the Good News?**
 - "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." - John 3:19

4. Justified by Law? (vs. 20)

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight.

- There is NO power in the Law to help us obey the Law. It only shows us what we must do and not do.

5. Justified by Grace?

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.

"Justified freely by His grace"

- If we don't get "justification by faith alone" right, then everything else we believe about Christ falls apart.

Judgment THEN Declaration vs. Declaration THEN Judgment

Judgment decision of “guilty” followed by pardon and forgiveness **(NO)**

vs.

Declaration of “not guilty” followed by judgment decision of righteous **(YES)**

What is Justification? (Westminster Shorter Catechism #33) 1649:

Justification is an act of God’s free grace unto sinners, whereby he pardons all their sins, accepts them as righteous in his sight; not for anything in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ, imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

Theology 101

- **Imputation (def):** apply or credit to one’s account
- **Propitiation (def):** taking upon; to satisfy the demands of justice (God’s wrath)
 - Jesus (the sacrificial Lamb) on the cross was our propitiation, upon which God poured out His wrath as the just punishment for sin.
- **Expiation (def):** removing from; God removes our sin and casts it away from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12)

IN SUMMARY - The doctrine of Justification says that God **declares** that we are **justified** in His sight (seen as perfectly righteous), even while we are still sinners. He is able to do so, because He provides both **propitiation** (Jesus taking upon Himself our sin and the wrath of God that sin deserves) and **expiation** (God taking away our sin and removing it from us forever, never to be remembered again), and it is **faith** that makes this real in our lives.

Justification is not pardon.

- **Pardon (def):** *“the excusing of an offense without exacting a penalty.”*
- **Pardon is after having been found guilty and receiving a sentence of punishment for your crime, being released and forgiven.**

Justification is different.

COURT ROOM ILLUSTRATION: Imagine having committed a crime that is so heinous, you know that you very well make it the death penalty. On the day of your court hearing, you walk into the courtroom. Your attorney is already in the room, conversing with the judge beforehand. When it comes time for your court hearing to begin, the judge asks you to stand and declares that you have been justified and you are free to go. You’re shocked!

What just happened? There was no trial, but you were just declared “not guilty” as if you had not even committed the crime. You left the courtroom, walked to the parking garage, got in your car and drove home. You still can’t believe what just happened. You decide to call your attorney to get more details. You get voicemail over and over and over again. Your attorney is not answering. You call the courthouse to find out more details. And that’s when you find out that the judge did not dismiss your crime, your guilt, or your punishment.

Your court appointed attorney (Advocate) worked out a mutual deal with the judge to take the charges himself, be declared to guilty, and receive the sentence that should have been yours. What was the sentence? Certainly not! You're hoping that the judge was somehow lenient by not giving the sentence that your crime deserved. That is not however, the case. Your attorney received a sentence of the death penalty and will be scheduled for execution.

It dawned on me that when Jesus was unjustly arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and brought before Pilate, the exact opposite happened to him. He was basically declared "guilty" before any legal proceedings ever commenced.

6. Can We Boast?

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

- We obviously have zero room for boasting about our salvation because it is not we who saved ourselves. It is God who saves. Our only participation is to be the one being saved.
 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and **that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**" – Ephesians 2:8-9

What difference does all of this make?

When you know how deeply and unconditionally you are loved, your self-esteem and self-confidence begin to stabilize, gratitude increases, and the light of your life begins to shine brighter. Your impact for Christ and influence in the world (at home, in your neighborhood, at work, on the ball field, in the classroom, etc.) increases.

We have a joyfulness in worship with humor and laughter. We don't have to be SO serious. That's a result of this theology of justification by faith. We are not flippant, but we are free!

Martin Luther embodied this freedom. Most every evening, he and his wife, Katy, would host college students and young adults for dinner and discussion about the Bible. Katy would make dinner and she would also make beer! (NOTE: Jacob Schmalzle has Katy Luther's recipe and they had it on tap at their brewery (which was also a church), Castle Church Brewing. Steve & Kathy Trawick have been there. :)

A lot of churches and pastors won't preach this full message of grace because they don't want their people unshackled from the oars. They're afraid there would be no one left to do the work of ministry, so they preach guilt. The reality is, when we realize that we are set free by grace, the volunteer manpower increases, because people no longer "have to" serve, they "want to" serve.

CONCLUSION

When Jesus said that He had come to set the captives free, He meant it. Because of God's justifying grace, you are free. Truly and completely free. Whom the Son sets free is free indeed (John 8:36)!

And THAT'S Good News!