

LESSON 10

May 5, 2024

Unit III: Standing in the Faith

No Need to Boast

DEVOTIONAL READING: John 3:1-8, 13-17

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Romans 3:21-30

PRINT PASSAGE: Romans 3:21-30

KEY VERSES

There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:22b-24, KJV)

.....

There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:22b-24, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Compare being justified by the Law and works with being justified by faith in Christ.
- Value your faith in Jesus Christ.
- Become more intentional about reflecting genuine faith in daily living.

*Key Terms

Atonement (verse 25)—Greek: *hilastérion* (hil-as-tay'-ree-on): propitiatory; a sin offering, by which the wrath of the deity shall be appeased; a means of propitiation; "propitiation" (KJV).

Boasting (verse 27)—Greek: *kauchesis* (kow'-khay-sis): the act of bragging, glorying, exultation.

Justified (verse 24)—Greek: *dikaioó* (dik-ah-yo'-o): showed to be righteous; declared righteous; cleared of all charges related to sins.

Righteousness (verse 21)—Greek: *dikaíosuné* (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay): justice; (usually if not always in a Jewish atmosphere), justice, justness, the righteousness of which God is the source or author, but practically: divine righteousness.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

The first verse of the book of Romans identifies Paul as its author (see Romans 1:1). His purpose for writing was to explain God's extraordinary plan of salvation to Jews and Gentiles and to teach how its principles are to be lived practically. Because Paul had not visited the Roman Christians, his secondary purpose was to introduce himself to the believers in Rome before his anticipated visit. The first three chapters form the contextual foundation for this lesson. First, Paul explains humanity's total depravity and God's right to judge them for rejecting Him (chapter 1). Next, Paul focuses on the religious Jews who arrogantly condemned others but overlooked that they were equally guilty and could not be made righteous by keeping the Law (chapter 2). Chapter 3 begins with Paul's answers to a series of questions from an imaginary objector to his previous teaching (verses 1-20). In the chapter's conclusion, Paul pointed out the inability of the Law to justify sinners and revealed that the only way to be righteous in God's sight is through faith in Jesus Christ (verses 21-28). Finally, Paul emphasized that this extraordinary gift of justification by faith is available to both Jews and Gentiles who place their faith in Christ (verses 29-31).

Introduction

One of the most important questions anyone will ever answer is, "Are you a Christian?" Unfortunately, many who so eagerly claim Christ are completely unclear on what makes a person a Christian. Too many equate busy religious activity, good deeds, or church membership with being a Christian. Some claim Christianity because they are, by their own assessment, "good people" ("good" in their own eyes, that is, without regard for biblical standards). Others measure their faith by the many things they avoid or abstain from doing.

The truth is that things like church "busyness," community service, and our feeling pride in ourselves have nothing to do with making us right in God's sight, as it concerns salvation. People love to give "testimonies" about what they do, how often they visit the sick, and how they never fail to tithe, and so on. And while we should do such things, they do not give us cause to brag or receive public praise. Becoming a Christian is a gift from God and therefore negates any basis for boasting. According to Romans 3:23, everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glory. We are only saved by God's gift of

grace through having faith in Jesus Christ. If there is any occasion for boasting, it should be in our weaknesses and Christ's Cross. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us, and through His great sacrifice, those who trust and obey Him are marked or imputed with righteousness. Now, every believer has the privilege of sharing with others what God did for us through Jesus.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

There's Only One Way (*Romans 3:21-26*)

KJV

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

**25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**

NIV

**21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.
22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—
26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.**

These verses attest to Paul's argument that the only way God justifies any sinner, Jew or Gentile, is by his or her having faith in Jesus' atoning death on the Cross. Paul begins this section with "But now" (**verse 21**), indicating an essential contrast with what he argues in verse 20, that no one will be declared righteous by keeping the Law. Paul rejects the notion of "works righteousness," asserting that has God declared as righteous those accept Christ by faith. No further merit or qualification is necessary—salvation is based solely based on Christ's redemption. Paul further clarifies the believer's status by pointing out that God's righteousness was authenticated by the Law and Prophets through Old Testament promises. In **verses 22-23**, Paul explains the meaning of the righteousness of God. It comes by faith, not works, and is available to all who believe without racial or cultural distinction. God makes no distinctions because the entire human race has sinned and come short of God's moral and spiritual standards. Paul dismissed the common notion among Jews that their unique position as God's people made them righteous without the necessity of faith in Jesus. God justifies and saves His people, not based on pedigree and privilege—only by His grace through faith (**verse 24a**). This legal acquittal was made possible because God dealt with humanity's sin through Christ's death (**verse 24b**). Christ's death paid in full the ransom to redeem sinners from sin's enslavement. At Calvary, Christ became the propitiation or complete satisfaction of God's demands against sinful humanity (**verse 25a**). In **verses 25b-26**, Paul explains God's purpose for delaying dealing with humanity's sin and guilt. God had not ignored humanity's sin. His forbearance only revealed His great desire to lead people to repent, reveal His provision for sin through Christ's death, and demonstrate His justice. God is both just and merciful. He punishes and condemns sin. By His mercy, however, God welcomes and justifies all who accept His gift of salvation by faith in Christ alone—the only way to be justified.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How does Paul's explanation of the way to salvation inform the church's evangelistic efforts?

Nothing to Boast About (*Romans 3:27-30*)

KJV

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.
28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:
30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

NIV

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith.
28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.
29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,
30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

After finishing his explanation of the righteousness that God provides for sinners, Paul presented a series of rhetorical questions he anticipated from his Jewish readers. First, Paul asks readers if there is any reason or basis for Jews to boast in their unique position as God's chosen people and quickly responds that there is none (**verse 27a**). Righteousness through justification is possible only by God's undeserved favor, thus eliminating the possibility that salvation results from any human merit or focused effort. Next, Paul asks whether observance of the Law was the basis of Jewish believers' boasting (**verse 27b**). Again, the answer is no. God justifies sinners based on their expressed faith (**verse 28**). In **verses 29-30**, Paul continues exposing the erroneous Jewish perspective of their privileged spiritual status. Jews worshipped God as the Creator of all humanity. The fact remains that every living soul stands in equal need of divine forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Thus, salvation for all is based on Christ's sacrificial death, and God sovereignly deals with humanity on the same basis. God justifies both the Jew and the Gentile through faith alone. The principle of justification by faith should inform and guide all the church's efforts to reach the lost, minister to spiritual needs, and please the Lord.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is the greatest danger of allowing or encouraging Christians to believe that salvation is attainable through good works?

A Closing Thought

Paul explains that the only path to righteousness is justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. As in Paul's day, many modern-day Christians are falsely convinced that they can please God by their works. They mistakenly assume that holding various positions and working within the church gives them bragging rights or favor with God as it concerns salvation. Paul was clear, however, that human effort cannot earn or maintain righteous standing before God. Salvation is God's undeserved gift, available only by a genuine profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Gratitude, not personal boasting, is the only proper response to God's free gifts of righteousness and eternal salvation through His Son, Jesus.

Your Life

The partner of justification is sanctification, the ongoing process of being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. Justification is God's work, but godly living is the responsibility of every justified believer. Take a moment to reflect on your daily priorities and your life as a whole. Is your Christian faith a well-kept secret, or a clear witness to others of the righteousness that God has so graciously bestowed on you?

Your World!

Paul explained that all have sinned and fallen short of God's righteous expectations. No one is inherently good or righteous enough to please God without Christ's sacrifice. Instead of boasting or condemning anyone, believers who have received God's gracious gift should share the message of hope, love, and eternal life available to anyone who will accept it by faith in Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank You for imputing Christ's righteousness to our sin account. In gratitude, we seek Your strength and guidance through the Holy Spirit to evangelize others so they can experience the undeserved gift of being justified by faith. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Next week's lesson continues exploring faith's role in righteousness as it examines the life of Abraham. Read Romans 4:13-25.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, May 6	"God Is Generous to the Unworthy"	(Matthew 20:1-16)
TUESDAY, May 7	"A Great and Blessed Nation"	(Genesis 13:14-18)
WEDNESDAY, May 8	"A Promise of Countless Heirs"	(Genesis 15:1-6)
THURSDAY, May 9	"Little Children, Your Sins Are Forgiven"	(1 John 2:12-17)
FRIDAY, May 10	"God's Abundant Forgiveness"	(Psalm 32)
SATURDAY, May 11	"Trust God, Who Justified the Ungodly"	(Romans 4:1-12)
SUNDAY, May 12	"Christ Was Raised for Our Justification"	(Romans 4:13-25)