

## Romans 3:21-31 Justification by Faith

### **Text**

<sup>21</sup>But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup>even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; <sup>25</sup>whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. <sup>29</sup>Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

<sup>31</sup>Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

### **Key Points in the text**

- We have all sinned and fallen short and our sin has caused God to be angry with us.
- God's anger towards us must be appeased.
- God's anger is appeased by the blood of Jesus, by which those who believe are justified by faith, which is a gift from God.

### **Text Study**

**<sup>21</sup>But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup>even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**

Verses 21 - 23 serve as a reminder of things Paul taught us already.

- Verse 21, points us back to 1:16-17, and tells us the righteousness of God was shown, revealed, manifested in the gospel.
- Verse 21, also points us back to 1:2-3, telling us the coming of the gospel was indicated or witnessed by the scriptures (Law), through the prophets.
- Verse 22 and 23, points us back to 1:18 - 3:20, reminding us that we are all under sin and have fallen short, and need to repent unto salvation.

In these verses we are starting to see the good news as we see a way for us to be made righteous apart from the judgement of the law. We see a separation or distinction between the bad news and the good news. One happens because of us (bad news) and the other happens despite us (good news).

- Verse 22 shows a link between the righteousness of God and those who have faith or believe in Jesus Christ.
- Verse 21 shows us that this righteousness is obtained apart from the fulfillment of the Law.

**<sup>24</sup>being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; <sup>25</sup>whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

## Definitions

- Propitiation: the action of propitiating or appeasing God. Appease means relieve or satisfy.
- Forbearance: patient self-control; restraint and tolerance.

Verses 24-26, show how God's wrath is propitiated by the public shedding of blood of Jesus Christ and explains how this propitiation and its resulting passing over of our sins is just.

- The life and death of Jesus satisfied the wrath of God.
- His life and death could do this because He being innocent and God, was able to take the punishment for us on Himself.
- Finally this great exchange can only happen if the person has faith in the work of Jesus.

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Three things to point out here

- The law of faith, that says that if you believe in the one that fulfilled the old law you are righteous.
- There is only one God and He is the God of both the Jew and the Gentile.
- There is no boasting
  - We did not fulfill the law, Jesus did.
  - Our justification is to the glory of God alone, how can we boast?

**<sup>31</sup>Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.**

There is a new law, but that does not mean the old law is voided out

- If it were then what did Jesus fulfill?
- The law is even more important as it is why we need the good news.
- The good news is not that the law is void but that if we have faith in the one who fulfilled the law we are justified by faith alone.

**Application**

- REJOICE IN THE LORD, and again I say REJOICE
- When you are struggling, reflect on the justification that Jesus bought for you and that it is yours forever.
- Remember that, Christians are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as revealed in Scripture alone, all to the glory of God alone.

**Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview**

Text: Romans 4:1-12

Focus: Abraham as an Example of Faith

Devotional: Psalm 32

Preparation: Read [The Faith of Abraham](#)

## The Faith of Abraham Hebrews 11:8–22

God's self-revelation in Scripture does not come to us as just one book or one genre of literature. Scripture contains sixty-six different books and many literary genres that together give us a rich and multifaceted depiction of our Creator and the life of faith. For a realistic explanation of how faith works itself out in the lives of ordinary sinners, few portions of the Bible give a clearer picture than the Old Testament narratives. In these stories, we read of adulterers, thieves, liars, murderers, and tyrants who were transformed by God and who persevered in faith even though they sometimes fell back into sinful patterns. In other words, we relate easily to these stories because they are about people just like us.

One thing the Old Testament makes particularly clear is that passionate faith and the sometimes brutal nature of reality go hand in hand. So often we see that turmoil was the crucible in which the faith of the old covenant saints was formed. The greatest Old Testament examples of trust in God are found in accounts of the most difficult of circumstances, just as we find in our own day.

Hebrews 11 gives us many examples of faith as it comments on the lives of several faithful old covenant men and women. Verse 8, for instance, reminds us that Abraham left Ur and journeyed to far-away Canaan "by faith" ([Heb. 11:8](#)). This was no easy feat for the patriarch. He was elderly and well established when he heard the Lord's call ([Gen. 12:4](#)), and he had to leave behind almost everything he knew and many of his comforts to go to a land he had never seen. This was great faith indeed, for who could make such a journey apart from confident trust in our Creator?

Abraham not only believed in God; he believed God. He had not the faith of demons, who know God exists, but saving faith that reveals itself through obedience to the Lord ([James 2:14–26](#)). We better understand the greatness of the patriarch's faith when we see that Abraham remained a stranger on the earth even during his time in Canaan ([Heb. 11:13](#)). He never owned any part of the Promised Land except his burial plot ([Gen. 23](#)), so from a worldly perspective he foolishly left everything behind in Ur. But Abraham was no fool. He bought the plot in confidence that the land would be his, that he would inherit it at the resurrection. Placing his bones there was a kind of deposit that showed his trust that he would finally receive his inheritance ([Heb. 11:14–16](#); see also vv. 17–19, 22).

### Coram Deo

Many people in this world will regard us as fools for leaving everything behind for God. So often, the sacrifices that we make do not lead to any evident reward in this life, so it is easy for earthly minded people to believe Christianity is a fool's game. Yet, we know that the Lord will bless us abundantly at His return for all that we have given up for His sake ([Mark 10:29–31](#)). And as these heavenly treasures cannot be lost, we actually make the wisest decision possible when we follow Christ.