

# Justified

March 22, 2020

Romans 3:21-4:3

In Romans 3:19-20, Paul observed that the law has only one real function, to expose our sin. In our text for today, Paul is telling people how they can become clean before God. Many people mistakenly believe that good works makes a person acceptable before God. However, seeking to become clean by good works is impossible. The Bible says,

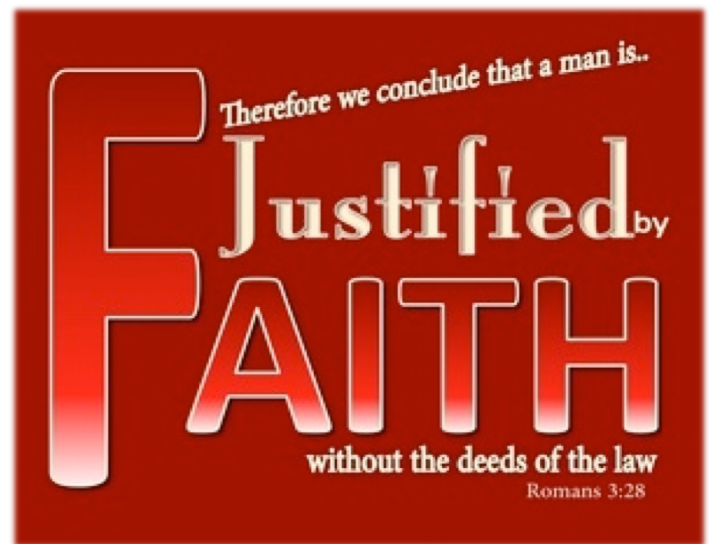
*“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags ...”* (Isaiah 64:6).

Paul is pointing all sinners to Jesus and telling them that only through faith in him can they become clean before God. The word the Bible uses to describe someone made clean is the word justified. A saved sinner is justified because they have been made clean by the blood of Christ. However, for a person to become clean they must exercise faith. Faith entails two things. First, it requires belief. I believe that Jesus can make me clean. Second, it requires trust. I trust that when I place my faith in Jesus that He in fact does make me clean.

When a person is made clean by Jesus, they are in possession of something they never had before — the righteousness of God. As a result, when the Father sees us, He no longer sees our sin, but the perfect righteousness of Jesus. Because of Jesus we are clean, with the joy of knowing that we can never be removed from His presence. This is God’s grace. All people are invited to come to the fountain and be washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

Through Faith (Romans 3:21-24)

- Paul uses a series of questions and answers to establish that God is God of Jews **and** Gentiles.
- **“But now”** is a transition from Paul talking about the wrath of God to the righteousness of God.
- The righteousness of God is made known without the law.
  - *righteous* ... Being righteous literally means to be right, especially in a moral way
- The covenant based on the law is superseded by the Gospel
  - Everyone, Jew or Gentile, has access to God’s righteousness
- Paul adds a new element - **Faith**
  - Righteousness is revealed in the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ
  - Through the Law we know the presence of sin. Through Faith righteousness is revealed.
- Righteousness is only available through faith in Jesus.
  - It is available to everyone who has faith.
- **“For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God.”**
- Not everyone who sinned will be justified (universalism), but everyone has access to that justification by God’s grace.
- Our only hope is to receive by faith that which is freely given.
  - **Can Christians boast about being saved?**
  - **Did Jesus come to abolish Old Testament law?**



## JUSTIFIED BY FAITH



*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 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.’”* Rom. 1:16-17



### In Jesus (Romans 3:25-26)

- **“Whom God has set forth”**
- God is the one who initiated the entire process of redemption.
  - Humans have nothing to offer to atone for our sins.
- **“to be a propitiation”**
  - Propitiation describes the covering on the Ark of the Covenant
  - This covering was the mercy seat where God atoned the sins of the people on the day of atonement.
  - Goat’s blood was sprinkled on the covering behind the curtain in the holy of holies.
- In the new covenant, God publicly presented Jesus as our atoning sacrifice on the cross.
- Paul says that God’s purpose in presenting Jesus as an atoning sacrifice was to make clear (to declare, to prove, to show) God’s own righteousness.
- **“the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”**
  - God declares those that believe (have faith) in Jesus can rest assured that our righteousness is secured in Christ.

*Psalm 12:28*

*In the way of righteousness there is life;  
along that path is immortality.*

➤ **Have you ever redeemed something or someone?**

➤ **How does God want us to respond to Jesus?**

### For All People (Romans 3:27-31)

- Again, Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions and answers to drive home his point.
- First Paul addressed boasting:
  - Compare the principle of works to the principle of faith. One can boast about his works but how can one boast about his faith – it is a gift of God’s grace.
  - Since salvation can only come through faith in Christ, there are no grounds for boasting.
- Second Paul addressed one God of Jew and Gentile:
  - If there is one God, then God must be God of both Jew and Gentile.
  - God would justify both Jew and Gentiles through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.
- Third Paul addressed the Law:
  - With Paul’s emphasis on faith, does that mean the law has no value any longer?
  - **“God forbid”** – Paul answered with a resounding YES the law is still valid. Remember Jesus said He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Matthew 5:17-20

➤ **Since there is one God, is there anyone who cannot know Him?**

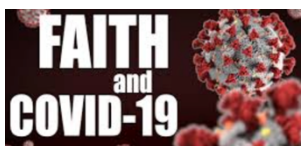
➤ **What role does the Law have in view of salvation only by faith in Jesus Christ?**

### Including Abraham (Romans 4:1-3)

- Paul now turns to Abraham as a test case to show his doctrine of justification by faith instead of by works of the law. Abraham was held in the highest regard by Jews.
  - If anyone had a right to boast it would be Abraham
- Paul says that the God who justified Abraham by faith was the same God who justified the Gentiles and the Jews.
  - Therefore, even Abraham could not boast.
- **“Abraham believed God, and ...counted unto him for righteousness.”**



**Biblical Truth: All who accept the gospel by faith are justified before the Father.**



*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*