



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

ROMANS 3:21-31

RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH— March 28, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

CHAPTER 3:9-20 The introduction to this lesson begins in verse 9 where the Jews asks Paul, *"What then? Are we better than they?"*—referring to the Gentiles. Paul answers *"No."* Because it's written that *"there are none that's righteous, no not one! They're gone out of the way, useless, and evil. Their throat is an open grave with their tongues that use deceit, and their lips are like poisonous snakes. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. They don't know the way of peace. They don't even have the fear of God in their eyes."* So, verse 19 says *"Now we know..."* Paul was trying to let them know that if they thought this was just about the heathen or Gentiles, this also referred to the Jews who was under the Law. Whatever the law said, it was said to those under its power. Now they are without excuse and no one can have anything to say in self-defense about the matter, for everyone had to realize his guilt before God. Man has a sinful nature, a sinful tongue, and portray sinful actions. There is nothing good about man under sin's power. All are guilty before God. A man outside of Jesus Christ is under the power of sin, and he is helpless to escape from it by himself.

LESSON: I. ALIENATED BY SIN ROMANS 3:21-23

3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;— The word **"But now"** is very important, for it refers to an appointed time; a period in time for God to reveal, manifest, bring to light His righteousness. In order for righteousness to come, God had to do it. The righteousness of God is Christ Himself! Paul is showing them a better way to become righteous, not by the works of the law. No flesh meaning no human being is justified by the works of the law because the law could only show them the sin, not take it away. He says, *"now the righteousness of God is manifested without the law."* The law fails in two critical areas:

1. The law does not allow disobedience. It requires obedience. Anyone who disobeys the law becomes a lawbreaker, a transgressor. He's guilty and is to be condemned.
2. The law does not have the power to make a person obedient. It does not have the power to prevent a person from disobeying. It only shows a person's disobedience and his inadequate strength to be obedient. It only reveals a person's inability to secure any righteousness whatsoever by self-effort.

Every time a man took his sacrifice to the Temple for a sin offering, confessed his sin, and the animal was sacrificed, he was testifying that he had faith in a righteousness that was not his own and it was a temporary covering for sin. Thus, the law and the prophets bore witness to the righteousness of God. Jesus is that righteousness. The **"Righteousness of God"** means the perfection of God's character which God provides for man in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet He was totally apart from sin. The term: *"the Old Testament Law and the prophets"* was a reference to the Old Testament.

God's Law, given in the Old Testament was not enough for the Jews. They reasoned that if the law was really God's Word, then it must include—have embodied within it—every rule and regulation for conduct. Therefore, they took the great principles of the law and reduced them to thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations became the "oral or Scribal Law." ¹The Law in the Old

¹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/matthew/11.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>



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Testament, and in fact the Old Testament itself, is a type and shadow of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The Old Testament constantly prophesied about Jesus coming to fulfill all prophecy.

Jesus was the fulfillment. Jesus fulfilled the law was to complete its purpose. When we come to Christ and are forgiven, the law is fulfilled. The law and prophets had witnessed to the righteousness of God. The scriptures referred first to Abraham. It signified God's plan. *"And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him as righteousness"* Gen.15:6 and in Rom.4:3 says *"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."* This was a taste of God's righteousness to come for every man.

3:22 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:— The important thing to remember is that we were all alienated from God by sin. Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God by faith who will bring us all back to God. This righteousness come unto and upon all that believe. If you are Jew or Gentile, there is no difference. Two words that stood out to me are **faith and believe**.

The dictionary defines **faith** as *a strong belief or trust in someone or something*. The scripture says, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"* (Heb.11:1). When people say they have faith, what they really mean is "I believe" or "I trust." But having faith is more than just believing or trusting, because faith speaks. Everyone believes in or trusts something. The scripture says *"Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well; the devils believe, and tremble"* Jam.2:19. That's why we must have faith in the Person of Jesus Christ who brought God's righteousness (the perfection of God's character) to and upon all who believe! *"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"* Rom.10:17. The scriptures had spoken of the righteousness of God, now what was spoken, we receive Jesus by confessing with our mouths (by *faith*) and believing in our hearts (Rom.10:9). Faith is the action of what I believe. It's the activation of both together. Heb.11:6 says, *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."*

All of us, whether Jew or Gentile needed the Saving faith of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect embodiment of God's righteousness. Scripture is clear in its declaration that righteousness is for everyone to believe by faith, whether Jew or Gentile. There is no difference.

3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;— All have offended God's holy being and have broken God's righteous law, and have come short of the glory of God. Instead of mankind expressing God, we expressed sin and his sinful self. Hence, mankind falls short. But we were made by God in His image, that to express His glory. The glory of God is His moral glory, His excellence, splendor, brilliance, brightness, magnificence, preeminence, dignity, majesty, and grace. Lastly, Glory is light.

- John sees how bright the glory of God is when he has the vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:10-11).
- Jesus' inner circle looks on at the light of God's glory manifested at the **Mount of Transfiguration** (Matt.17:1-2).
- Stephen sees the glory of God as he is stoned to death (Acts 7:55).
- Saul who became Paul experienced the light of God's glory as he is struck down off his horse (Acts 22:6, 11).
- And Moses experienced the light of God's glory as he came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of testimony as the skin of His face shone brightly (Exo.34:29-30).

Although they saw and experienced the glory of God, they all missed the mark; for they all have the sin nature, just like us; sin is present in all of us, and this makes us come short of being perfect of glorifying God. Sin alienates us.

II. ACCEPTED BY GRACE ROMANS 3:24-26

3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:— Even though we fall short, we are being justified... (acquitted of guilt and sin). Our gift of righteousness is provided only through the action of God's redemption through Jesus Christ. *"Redemption"* signifies a buying back (from the power of sin and death). His redemptive measure of His sacrifice, His cross, and His death brought it all about. Because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we are redeemed when God's very own Son paid the price on that cross! Paul makes three observations about the justification of God.



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1. Justification is a free gift of God. "*Being justified freely*" means being justified without any prior conditions being met.
2. Justification is not earned by man, but it is by God's grace and by God's grace alone. "*Being justified by God's grace*" means it is graciously given. But His grace is favor we don't deserve nor qualify for His justification, but we enjoy it. You cannot earn something that's freely given.
3. Justification is only provided through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The price of our redemption came at a hefty price of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Matt.20:28, I Cor.6:20; I Pt.1:18-19).

Therefore, we are justified in the sight of God when the righteousness of Christ is placed upon us by the grace of God, freely, without cause. Only then, God views us as ransomed by the blood of Christ.

3:25 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;— Jesus Christ is the One whom God had set forth to be the "*Propitiation*" meaning the sacrifice, covering, satisfaction, a payment, the appeasement for sin. Three significant points:

1. God is the One who set forth Christ to be the propitiation for man's sins. It was nobody else but God! "*Set forth*" means purposed, determined, resolved, and ordained Christ to be... God purposed and foreordained before the beginning of the world that Christ was to be the propitiation for the world's sins.
2. The propitiation was through faith in Christ's blood. For God to accept Christ as the propitiation for man's sin, the sacrifice would have to be a blood sacrifice (Christ's blood). This was something man couldn't work for because if he tried, the wages wouldn't be counted as grace, but as debt (4:4). And this was a debt man couldn't pay. However, if he didn't work for it, but believed on the One who justifies the ungodly, then his faith is counted for righteousness (4:5). Jesus is the only Perfect One willing to die for man. So, believe and have faith.
 - It meant the supreme sacrifice Christ paid for man's sins.
 - It meant the terrible sufferings Christ underwent for man's sins.
 - It meant the voluntary laying down of Christ's life on the cross that caused God to accept man. All of man's sins were laid on that cross.
3. To declare God righteousness: For and Through...
 - for the remission of sins that are past. In the Old Testament was the blood of the slain lamb on the doorpost of the Israelites for the remission (pass over) of sins. The death angel passed over the Israelites when judgment came upon the Egyptians. God's righteousness is seen in that prior to Calvary they were not permanently dealt with under the Old Covenant. They were passed over. **But now,** God declares His righteousness without the law (3:21) in a propitiation through faith in Christ's blood (3:25) to atone and justify mankind. Christ died for our sins, and God accepts His death as the sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, His forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ declares God's righteousness!
 - through the forbearance of God. God's righteousness is seen in the forbearance (restraint), that is, in His patience and longsuffering with man's sin. The sacrifice was necessary because God had not fully punished sin. God could have destroyed all flesh, but He kept eight in the time of Noah. God waited until Christ came before condemning sin in the flesh (our sins placed upon Him). In God's forbearance in holding back the punishment of sin shows and declares His righteousness.

3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Paul is saying that Righteousness had to come at the right time and had one great purpose—to declare God's righteousness in Him being just and justifier. God is righteous and just, therefore, He always does what's right, and He always acts justly toward all of us. This is the reason He has provided a perfect righteousness for man.

- God's righteousness is seen in Him being just. It was necessary to validate the justice of God. He did the right and just thing as He accepted the death of Christ as the substitute for our sins. He placed the punishment of sin upon Christ. And in Him being a just God, His righteousness is declared by His justice.
- God's righteousness is seen in Him being the justifier of all who believe. God takes our faith and counts it as righteousness. That's what He did for Abraham! He takes our faith and judges us acceptable to

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Him. Therefore, all who believe in Jesus have been justified, thus declaring God's righteousness.

III. ASSURED BY FAITH ROMANS 3:27-31

3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. The answer to where is boasting is that it is shut-out. There's no room for man's boasting in the plan of God. *"What caused boasting to be inappropriate?" "Is it by the law of works?"* – Paul answers, *"No, but by a law requiring faith."* If man could work to be justified, then he would have reason to boast. But *"we are saved by God's grace through faith, not of works."* And why? – *"Lest any man should boast"* (Eph.2:8-9). When we consider that man is corruptible, and that man can do nothing beyond this life, then boasting is excluded.

3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Paul comes to the conclusion that a man is justified by faith alone. Faith justifies a man without the deeds or works of the law. Why does God save us by faith alone?

1. Faith eliminates human pride.
2. Faith exalts God, not people.
3. Faith makes salvation available to all.
4. Faith admits that we can't keep the law or measure up to God's standards—we need help.
5. Faith is based upon relationship with God, not on performance for God. We are to believe in God and His righteousness.

3:29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:— The question is asked and answered. There is not a god of the Jews and another god of the Gentiles. There is One God! Paul is a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but he is also called apostle to the Gentiles. God created everyone, therefore, He is the God of all, meaning Jews and Gentiles. Some thought there are different gods of the races and nations of the world— a different god for Africa, a different god for India, a different god for Arabs, and a different god for Americans. and so on. There is only One God who created all things, and He will be the One who will justify us as we see in the next verse.

3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. It has been proven that there is One living God, and He alone justifies the Jews (the circumcised) by faith and justifies the uncircumcised (everyone else) through the same faith. Faith is the common denominator in which the living God upholds justification.

3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. The answer to the question of do we void the law through faith? That would be God forbid! We do not void the law. Faith upholds and establishes the Law! As said before— the circumcision is justified by faith, and the uncircumcision is justified through faith. God is the One who established the Law by fulfilling both the statues and penalty demanded by the law. Jesus Christ is the One the law pointed to and set forth as the penalty demanded by the law. He's everything that God said a man should be. Therefore, Jesus Himself is the perfect fulfillment of the law. He took the penalty and the punishment of man upon Himself and died for man. Man is thereby absolved (released; freed) from the penalty and punishment exacted by the law. Now, we can obey God's laws through faith in Jesus Christ. He has fulfilled what the law stood for in which man could not accomplish. We do not disqualify the law for it has accomplished what it was supposed to do—bring forth the righteousness of God by faith. God's laws are established in our hearts by faith. We don't disqualify the circumcised because they were under the law of Moses, for it brought forth the uncircumcised that came through faith. Our faith does not nullify the law, it ushered us in to be justified by faith. The believer upholds and establishes the law when he admits he is a sinner—a law breaker. And in so doing, he admits that the law is good.

- It's good when it points out our sin. The law reveals sin. It makes us uncomfortable and leads us to confess our need for help outside ourselves.
- It's good because it points man to Christ.
- It's good when we are obedient to it.

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Again, in so doing the believer's faith establishes that the law is good. Our faith is in One God. Therefore, in seeing what Christ has done for the believer, the believer's faith upholds and establishes the law. It does not make the law void or of no affect because the righteousness of God is Jesus Christ by faith. Jesus was not, and is not, a destroyer; He is a builder. He did not come to destroy the Word of God, but to free it from the way the Pharisees and Scribes had wrongly interpreted it. He does not release men from, the duty and responsibility of the law; He fulfills and strengthens and even enlarges the law. It means that a person is now free to serve God in the spirit and life of the law, not just in the letter of the law.

SIN ALIENATED US	GRACE ACCEPTED US AND FAITH ASSURED US
THE LAW ALIENATES MAN BY SIN	CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS THE FULFILLMENT THAT BOUGHT BACK MAN
THE LAW SENTENCED MAN	CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FREED MAN
THE LAW COULD NOT SAVE MAN	CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS BROUGHT SALVATION TO MAN

SUMMARY:

Paul points out to the Jews that God's righteousness was now revealed without the law. The Old Testament Law and the prophets had witnessed to the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God comes by faith in Jesus Christ to and upon all who believe. And that righteousness is for everyone, whether Jew or Gentile. There is no difference. Instead of man expressing God, man expresses sin, and his sinful self comes short of the glory of God (**3:21-23**).

Being justified freely by God's grace meant that justification is a free gift provided through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus. God had set forth (foreordained) Jesus Christ to be the propitiation (sacrifice) for man's sins. The propitiation was through faith in Christ's blood. This was to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins that were past (in former times). God's forbearance (holding back) the punishment of sin showed and declared His righteousness. Righteousness had to come at the right time and had one great purpose—to declare God's righteousness, that He might be just and the One who justifies those who believe in Jesus (**3:24-26**).

There is no room for man's boasting in the plan of God. A law of works causes men to be focused upon self. If man created himself and saved himself from sin and death by his own works and deeds, then he is the one to be glorified. Therefore, the law of faith excludes boasting. God has provided the way for man to be saved from sin, death, and hell. Therefore, it's not a contest. Boasting should only be toward the Creator and not in man's own works. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified without the deeds or works of the law, but by faith. There is One God. And it is only by faith that reveals only One God who deals equally with Jews and Gentiles. He alone justifies the Jews (the circumcised) by faith and justifies the Gentiles (the uncircumcised) through the same faith. Faith is the common denominator in which the living God upholds justification. Our faith does not nullify the law, we uphold and establish the law when we admit we are a sinner—a law breaker. It points out our sin, and points man to Christ. And when we are obedient to it, we admit that the law is good and makes us guilty and leads us to confess our need for help outside ourselves. Therefore, in seeing what Christ has done for the believer, the believer's faith upholds and establishes the law. It does not make the law of no affect or void because the righteousness of God is Jesus Christ by faith. We are justified by faith (**3:27-31**).