

(Romans) Romans 3:19-5:21

by Zac Poonen

Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, trusting Him completely and acknowledging your sin, and not by works or trying to earn it.

Duration: 48:25

Scripture: Romans 2:11, Romans 3:19-20, Romans 3:22, Romans 3:31, Romans 4:17-18, Romans 5:3

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Gods Righteousness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of justifying the right edge of a typewritten page to explain how God justifies our lives. He emphasizes that our past lives may be filled with sin and imperfections, but God can make them straight and righteous through the righteousness of Christ. The speaker also discusses the concept of justification, explaining that it goes beyond forgiveness and includes being declared righteous by God. He highlights that justification is a gift from God, received through faith, and that it demonstrates God's righteousness and grace.

Transcript

Romans and chapter 3 and verse 19. In the last few studies, we were looking at how the Holy Spirit tries to impress upon the religious person, and that could apply to all Christians who are very religious, who go to church and read the Bible and pray and do many, many religious activities, how in God's eyes they are as guilty as all the other sinners in the world who don't indulge in any type of religious activity, or as guilty as people of any other religion. In God's eyes, all human beings, irrespective of their religion, are sinners.

And it's only as we take that position first that we can come to experience salvation. If ever we think that God saves us because we are better than other people, our salvation will be faulty. And that's why Paul takes a long time here, and the Holy Spirit takes a long time, to emphasize the fact that every single person is just as guilty as the other.

No one is better in any way. And he says here in verse 19, that every mouth may be closed, it says in the last part of chapter 3 in verse 19, that all the world may become accountable to God. Whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law.

When we hear God's word, we become more responsible than those who have never heard God's word. Many people don't realize that our guilt increases every time we hear God's word, because Jesus said that to whom more is committed, more will be required. In other words, more is required from Christians by

God than by non-Christians.

The standard by which Christians are going to be judged is far higher, because we have the truth of God, we've got God's word. And we are actually more guilty than, and the whole world is guilty before God. And going back to the law which God gave to the Jews in the Old Testament, he says in verse 20, by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in His sight, because through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

We know that Moses gave ten commandments to Israel, but nobody can be justified by the law, because nobody could keep those commandments, particularly the tenth one. The tenth one was, you shall not covet, you shall not lust in your heart after your neighbor's wife, or desire his servant, or his anything that is your neighbor's. And every honest person would have to admit that he could never keep God's law perfectly.

And we can ask then, why did God give the law? Here is the answer, verse 20. By the law is the knowledge of sin. The law was never given to save people.

Nobody could be saved by the law. The law was like a mirror. James chapter 1, verse 23 to 25 says, the law is like a mirror.

And a mirror is not something with which we can close our eyes. Clean our face. But a mirror is very useful to show us what the condition of our face is like.

In fact, we would not be able to know the condition of our face without a mirror. So a mirror is very useful. And the law was exactly like that.

But once you have seen the dirt on your face in a mirror, what do you do? You don't take the mirror to clean your face. You can't take the law to cleanse yourself. The law could cleanse nobody.

The law could not justify anyone. The law could not give anybody eternal life. The law could only show a person, this is your condition before God.

You have come short of God's standard. You see, a lot of people find it difficult to acknowledge that. And that's why God had to give them the law.

It's like a man who's got a dirty face, who doesn't believe that his face is dirty until you show him a mirror. And when you show him the mirror, well, he has no more argument left. He realizes his face is dirty if he's honest.

Of course, people could still be dishonest and pretend that their face is not dirty. But the honest person will acknowledge, yes, my face is dirty. And the honest person will acknowledge when he faces up to the standards of God's law, yeah, I'm a sinner.

I acknowledge that. So, now salvation is not through the law. But apart from the law, verse 21, the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe, for there is no distinction.

So God has provided salvation, bringing people up to the standard of His righteousness, through Jesus Christ. And this is by faith. It's got nothing to do with keeping the law.

Because there is no distinction. Because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, the unrighteous person, the religious person is unrighteous, the godless person, immoral person is unrighteous, there is no distinction. Every single person has sinned.

And to sin means not just commit murder or adultery, but to come short of the glory of God, verse 23. Anyone who comes short of the standards of God's glory is a sinner. And who can claim he is not? God's standard is 100%.

Even if you get 99%, you've come short. If you've sinned once, you're guilty, just as much as the person who's sinned thousands of times. One hole in a vessel is enough to make all the water leak out, just like a thousand holes.

You don't need a thousand holes. One hole is equal to a thousand holes. One sin is equal to a thousand sins.

You've come short of God's glory. So God's way of salvation is therefore to justify people freely, by grace. By grace means just because he's good.

As a gift means you don't have to pay a single thing for it. It's not by keeping certain standards. You accept a gift.

God forgives you, declares you righteous. This is the redemption, verse 24, which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. That means when Jesus shed His blood, that God was publicly displaying on Calvary's cross, God's holy standards have been propitiated or met.

And thereby, God has demonstrated His righteousness. It's not that He just overlooked a sinner's sin. A lot of people think, well, God will just overlook my sin.

He can't overlook your sin. But being a just God, because Christ has paid the price for your sin, therefore He can forgive you. And there's the righteousness of God, we see in verse 26, that He's absolutely righteous in declaring us righteous, because somebody has paid our debt.

How can a creditor demand money from you when somebody has already cleared your debt? And that's what God is able to declare us righteous, no debt, because somebody has paid our debt. We're justified. So can we boast about that? Can anyone boast and say, well, I'm a better person, and that's why God chose me? No.

Because if it was by the law that you were justified, then you could boast, I kept it, the other fellow didn't keep it. Or I worked and he didn't. But here, there's no boasting, because it's a matter of believing, it's a matter of receiving a free gift.

That person got a gift, and I got a gift. The religious person got a gift, and the irreligious person got a gift. Both got it freely.

And so we maintain, verse 28, that a man is justified by faith. Apart from the works of the law, God is the God of Jews and of Gentiles. God is the God of Christians and of non-Christians.

And He who justifies one will justify the other also. The one who is baptized or not baptized, salvation is by faith. Now He says, does this mean, verse 31, that the law is canceled, that we don't need the mirror

anymore? May it never be.

On the contrary, we establish the law. We say the law is very important. It shows us our sin.

God's word shows us our sin. But salvation comes by faith in believing that Christ died on the cross to pay our debt, to clear our sin. And the one who humbly says, Lord, there's nothing good in me, I come with empty hands, I'm no good, receives that forgiveness freely.

And this is where the religious person finds it more difficult. The godless person finds it very, very easy. And so the religious person needs to come on exactly the same ground as the godless person.

That's the point. There is no difference, no distinction. All have sinned.

And we come before God and say, Lord, I'm just as bad as a sinner, as the godless immoral person, and we can get forgiveness just as freely as the other person. Today we come in our study to Romans and chapter 4 and verse 1. In the Bible, Romans chapter 4 and verse 1. He's speaking here about, in our previous study we saw that, how God does not accept us on the basis of our good works. It's not that good works don't have a place in the Christian life.

They have a lot of place after we have been forgiven, but not before we are forgiven. That's the point. A lot of people think there's no place for good works either before or after we are forgiven, which is wrong.

As wrong as the people who think they can be forgiven because of their good works. There's plenty of place for good works after we are forgiven, but no place at all for good works before we are forgiven, because our forgiveness is not based on our good works. Our forgiveness is not based on keeping certain standards or keeping the law or any such thing.

What shall we say then? He says, what about Abraham our forefather? For if Abraham, chapter 4 verse 2, was justified by works, he'd have something to boast about. He says, let's go back to Abraham. All of you Jews, he's writing to Jews here, boast about Abraham being your father.

How was he justified before God? What does the Bible say? The Bible says that Abraham was also the father of all who believe today. Spiritually, he's the father, even of Christians. Physically, he's the father of the Jews.

How was he justified? Was he justified because he did a lot of good works? No. If you turn back to Genesis 15, verse 5 and 6, it says here that Abraham believed God, and that's quoted here in Romans 4, verse 3. Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. And the word believe, way back there in Genesis 15 in the Hebrew, is a word called aman, from which we get the word which we use at the end of our prayers, amin, amin.

And what does amin mean? Amin means it shall be so. At the end of our prayers, when we say amin, we are saying it will be so. I believe that what I have prayed, God will grant me, because I've asked in the name of Jesus Christ, it will be so.

It's an expression of faith that God has heard my prayer, God's accepted me. And when God told Abraham, way back there in Genesis chapter 15, about how he was going to make his descendants like the stars in the sky, in Genesis 15, verse 5, even though he had no children at that time, it says Abraham believed God. He didn't have a single child, but God said your seed is going to be like the stars in the sky.

Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. So, righteousness was put to Abraham's account, not because he did anything, but because he believed. He simply believed, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

So, he says, Abraham is in the same condition. How did God accept him? It was not because of any works that he did. It was not because he obeyed God in leaving Uru, the Chaldees, that he was justified.

No doubt, Abraham's faith later manifested itself in works, when he offered up his son, for example, as we read in James chapter 2. But, he was not justified on the basis of works. No, we need to be very clear on that. Faith without works is dead.

That is true. There is a need to distinguish between a living faith and a dead faith. But, we must not be confused to thinking that we are justified by works.

This is a very clear difference. It is not a very subtle thing. It is very open and clear.

We are justified not by works, but by faith. But, James explains in chapter 2 that that has to be a living faith and not a dead one. We are declared righteous by God if we trust Him actively.

Now, what is a dead faith? A dead faith is one which is only in the intellect. And, James says that even the devils have that type of faith. They believe in one God.

You believe in a God. The devils believe that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world. You also believe that.

That does not change the devil and it will not change you. A living faith is where we commit our life to Christ, where we give ourselves to Him and receive Him. So, Abraham said Amen to God.

There was an inner trust and confidence in God, saying, Lord, if you have said it, I believe it. And, it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now, when you come to God and you have turned from your sin, and you accept what God says, that your sins are blotted out, God will not remember your sins against you anymore.

You believe it. You believe the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed you from sin. You say Amen to that.

You say, Lord, I believe that is true. You are declared righteous. Because you trusted God's word.

You could not save yourself, but you trusted God completely. You leaned upon God's promise and His word and accepted it. Now, verse 4. To the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due.

Now, if you say, well, I want to be saved by my works, well, then you are not going to get a gift from God. You are going to get wages. And, you better come up to God's standard.

I can guarantee you will be lost. This is why the Pharisees in Jesus' time could not experience salvation. Why? Why is it godless women caught in adultery, murderers on the cross could get forgiveness, but not religious Pharisees? The reason was because they wanted to be saved by their works.

And their good works never came up to God's standard. They felt they were righteous. And Jesus said, I have not come for people who think they are righteous.

I have come for people who are willing to acknowledge that they are sinners. And anyone who is willing to acknowledge that he is a sinner can be forgiven. And that is why the sinners flocked around Jesus and were forgiven.

And the religious people who were unwilling to acknowledge that they were sinners were not forgiven. To the one who does not work, that does not mean he does not do anything. It means he does not believe that his works can forgive his sin.

Do you know that a million good deeds you do can never blot out even one sin in your past life? Sin is such a terrible thing that even if you do a million good works, it cannot blot out one sin that you have committed. But if you say, well, I am going to work, you will never get forgiveness. But the one who says, Lord, I am not going to work for my forgiveness because I can never be forgiven, but believes, I believe that you forgive me freely and you declare me righteous even though I am an ungodly person, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

And he says the same with David. Verse 6, David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works. He quotes Psalm 32, Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, whose sins have been covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. Is this blessing then upon the circumcised or upon the uncircumcised also? For whom is this blessing? Is it only for the Jews, descendants of Abraham and David? He says David also recognized that it is by faith that we are justified. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.

It has got nothing to do with works. God does it freely. He says now for whom is this blessing? Is it only for the Jewish people? Is it only for Christians? No.

We say faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. And then he takes a very subtle point from the Old Testament. He says when was Abraham circumcised? That was in Genesis 17.

And when was he declared righteous? In Genesis 15, long before he was circumcised. So he says he was declared righteous by God long before he was circumcised. So what is that proof? The circumcision was only a sign, verse 11, of the faith which he had when he was uncircumcised so that he can be the father of all, those who are circumcised and those who are not circumcised.

It is a very subtle point he brings out there. But it is very interesting. And he is the father of circumcision to those, verse 12, not only are of the circumcision but who are also following the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while he was uncircumcised.

What he is trying to say is that the promise, God's justification of Abraham was done before he was circumcised so that he could be an example to all of us, those who have gone through a ritual of baptism or not baptism. Justification is not on the basis of any of these rituals. It is by simple faith in Jesus Christ.

And if we open our heart and trust him, we can be justified before him, accepted, freely forgiven and declared righteous. In our last study we were considering how Abraham was declared righteous by God before he went through any religious ritual like circumcision. And Paul uses that point to prove that therefore justification is by faith and not by fulfilling any religious ritual.

And the fact that Abraham was declared righteous before he was circumcised is the proof that he is the father, spiritual father of all who believe whether they are circumcised or not. That righteousness is put to our account on the basis of faith and not on the basis of any works or any religious ritual. Romans 4 and verse 13.

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the law but through the righteousness of faith. When God promised in Genesis 15 that he would have descendants as the stars in the sky, and when God promised to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him, that promise was not through the law. The law came many, many years later.

Many years, 400 years or more later. And Abraham was given these promises much before the law was given. So he says this has got nothing to do with the law.

If those who are off the law, verse 14, are heirs, then faith is made empty and the promise is nullified. He says if it is only those who are under the law, the Jewish people only are accepted, then God's promises have been nullified. But what does the law actually bring, he says.

Verse 15. The law brings wrath. There is judgment.

Because everybody has violated the law. If you try to come to God on the basis of law, if you ever come to God on the basis of your own goodness or your own good works, all you will get from God, he says, is judgment, not justification. Wrath, punishment.

But where there is no law, there is no violation. For this reason, it is by faith that it might be in accordance with grace. See, God equalizes us all, and that's what many religious people find it difficult to accept.

They don't like to be classified in the same category as prostitutes and murderers and thieves. And that's where our humility is tested. If you want God to accept you, my dear friend, however good you may be, and I think a lot of people who have grown up in good God-fearing homes have a problem here finding salvation by faith because their life has been so good.

And God puts you, who think you're a good person, in exactly the same category as the worst thieves and criminals in the world and says, it's just a matter of opportunity. You didn't have the opportunity to commit those sins, or you didn't have the provocation to commit those sins that those people had. Otherwise, there's absolutely no difference between you who claim to be such a good person and that other person.

Your nature, which you inherited all the way from Adam through your parents, is exactly the same nature that that person who is a sinner and a thief and a murderer and a criminal has. There's really no difference between both of you. If you can accept that, you've got a solid basis for your salvation.

If you don't accept that, I want to tell you that all your life you're going to have problems in your relationship with God. There is no distinction. Paul emphasizes this so much.

Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, this is what he's trying to emphasize. Salvation is by faith. Justification is by faith.

Being declared righteous is by faith so that it can be by grace, freely, so that the promise can be certain for all, not just those who keep the law, but even those who don't know anything about the law. And that's why

when God said to Abraham, He quotes the Old Testament promise, I have made you a father of many nations as it is written, verse 17. He believed in God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

In verse 18, in hope, against hope, he believed in order that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken so shall your descendants be like the stars in the sky. And when he heard that promise, he did not think of doing something. He did not think of strengthening his body.

He couldn't do it. But his faith laid hold of God. Verse 19, it says he did not become weak in faith, but he looked at his own body, which is as good as dead, since he was a hundred years old.

And he looked at the deadness of Sarah's womb, who was ninety years old and never born a single child till then. And there was no hope there. He looked at his body.

He looked at Sarah's body. He said, impossible. But then he looked at the promise of God.

And he did not waver in unbelief. But he grew strong in faith and gave glory to God. How did he manifest his faith? By saying, I believe that what God has promised, he is able to perform.

It was not a question of whether he was going to perform anything. You know, this is so important for us to understand that the whole Christian life, the Bible says, the righteous person has to live by faith. And here we see as one of the clearest definitions of faith.

That is, you look at your own condition and there is no hope there. And then you look at God's promise. And you base all your confidence on God's promise.

Not what you are able to accomplish, but what God is able to do in you. This is the secret of forgiveness. This is the secret of justification.

This is the secret of holiness. This is the secret of sanctification. This is the secret of service.

It is the secret of everything. It is not a question of what you are able to do. If God calls you to serve him, you do not have to look at what your own capabilities are.

Forget your capabilities. If God called you to serve him, he will give you the power to serve him. If you serve God by your own abilities or how much money you can raise for God's work or how much musical ability you have or speaking ability you have, your service is going to be pretty useless.

I might as well tell you right now. That is why you find in history God has used people sometimes who have no ability at all. God has picked them up, anointed them, filled them with the Holy Spirit and done a work through them.

And those who depend on their own ability, they have just been a failure. So Abraham did not look at his own ability. He looked at his own ability and said, well I know there is no hope there.

He looked at Sarah, there was no hope there. And then he looked at God's promise. So if you want to have faith, what is the answer? Do not look at yourself or your abilities, your capabilities or what you think you can do.

Just look at God's promise. And when you look at God's promise, like Abraham, you will not shake. He did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith by giving glory to God.

And he was fully assured what God had promised he was able to perform and therefore it was reckoned to him as righteousness. He just did that. He said, Lord, you promised it, you will do it.

Now that reckoning of righteousness, it says in verse 23, was not only for Abraham's sake but for us too. And for our sake, for whom it will also be reckoned if we believe that Jesus our Lord was raised from the dead. In God who raised Jesus from the dead, he was delivered for our sins and raised again for our justification.

What have we learned there? That God raised up Jesus from the dead. Now we have looked at Abraham who was absolutely helpless. And God empowered his body.

Sarah was absolutely barren. God empowered her body, gave her a child. What about Jesus? He was dead too, in the grave.

And a dead person, you know, is absolutely helpless to do anything for himself. And it says here, God raised him from the dead. And he was raised again for our justification.

Now the message there for us is we can be as helpless as a dead person, and the God who raised up Jesus from the dead raises us up also from our dead spiritual condition and declares us righteous. It is the helpless person whom God comes and helps, the one who is unable to do anything for himself. That's what gives hope for every one of us.

God puts us all on the same level. Acknowledge that you are helpless and God will come to help you, declare you righteous immediately. We look at Romans chapter 5. We have been looking in the past few studies about the subject of justification.

We have been looking at justification as it is described in Romans chapter 4 and the latter part of chapter 3. And justification is a word which many Christians don't understand. Here it says in Romans 5, 1, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Justification is more than forgiveness.

When God forgives us, that's great. Our debt is removed, our guilt is removed, our debt is cleared. We can come before God without any sense of guilt.

But to be justified is more than that. To be justified is to be declared righteous. And the best way I could illustrate that is, if a person, if you for example, were taken to a court as a criminal, and there your guilt is very clearly portrayed and you have been proved to be thoroughly guilty, but the judge in great mercy forgives you and lets you go.

You come out of the court happy because you are forgiven, but you hang your head in shame before all the others who are watching you because you know you were a criminal. A forgiven criminal. Happy because you are forgiven, but feeling ashamed because you are a criminal.

So that's forgiveness. What is justification? Justification is more than that. Back to the court, you stand there and the judge looks at all the records and says, You are not a criminal at all.

All these charges are false. You are a righteous person. This time you come out of the court, again forgiven, again happy, but this time your head is not hanging down because you are not a criminal.

People accused you of being a criminal, but the judge declared you righteous. You see the difference between forgiveness and justification. In both cases you are happy, you are forgiven, but in one case you come out because you are declared righteous.

Not just forgiven, but righteous. God says you are righteous. And that's what makes us lift our head when we come before God and what makes us lift our head when we stand before people.

We don't have to hang our head in shame because of all the sins we have committed in our past life. Think of the number of sins you and I have committed. We should be hanging our head in shame all through our life.

We would never have the boldness to even preach the gospel to another person, to claim that we are witnesses for God, for a holy God. How in the world could we lift up our head and say we are witnesses for a holy God when we are conscious of all the filthy things we have done in our past life? There is only one way when you recognize that God not only forgives you, but justifies you. He puts the righteousness of Christ to your account.

You deserve nothing, but in your bank account the righteousness of Christ has been put. Or to use another example, you have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ covers me from head to foot.

That God, when He looks at me, how does He see me? How does He see you? He sees you as righteous as Jesus Christ. Unbelievable, but true. When God told Abraham, you are going to have seed like the stars in the sky, that was unbelievable.

He didn't even have one son, but he said, Amen. Yes, it is going to be so. And it was true.

If he had said, no, well, Lord, I don't believe that, it is not possible, then he would not have been declared righteous. And when God says to you, you have acknowledged your sin, you have repented, you have come to Christ, you have trusted Christ, having died for your sins and trusted that He is raised from the dead, you are declared righteous. Not only forgiven, but you are as righteous as Christ.

And you say, how can that be? Well, then it won't be true in your case, because you don't believe. Here is another person who says, Amen. It is true.

By faith, he is declared righteous. It doesn't matter how guilty your past life has been. You are justified.

To use another illustration of being justified, in computer language, the word justified is used for getting the right edge of a written paragraph in a straight line. If you look at a book, you will find that the left edge is a straight line and the right edge is a straight line too. That is called justification.

In the old days when we used manual typewriters, you could get the left edge straight, but you could never get the right edge of your page or paper straight. It would be jagged. And when you write something on a computer today, your right edge can all be jagged.

You write fifty lines like that and then highlight the whole thing and then give one command, justify. Immediately, that right edge of your paragraph becomes absolutely straight. And it doesn't matter whether

there were three lines in that paragraph or three thousand lines.

They are all justified in a moment. This is what God does with our life. When you look back at your past life, it could be like the jagged edge of a typewritten page.

Nothing straight. Not even one line straight. Not even one day of your life without sin.

And God says, justify it in a moment. Your whole life has become like a straight, perfectly straight edge. The righteousness of Christ.

Here is a modern day illustration of justification. You must accept it. You must believe it.

God sees you like that. Never mind how people see you. Then, we have peace with God.

Verse 1, Romans 5, 1. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Peace. No tension with God now.

God has accepted us. And through Him, through Christ, we have obtained an introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand. We stand there.

We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We also rejoice in tribulation now. Once you are justified, you are not worried about tribulation because you know that tribulation has a purpose.

It is to produce in you perseverance and patience. And as you allow patience to do a work in you, it produces character. And character produces hope.

And hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. The purpose of all tribulation is to produce character. You know that character can never be produced in us apart from tribulation.

And when we continue in that way, we are never going to be disappointed. The Holy Spirit has been poured in our hearts to shed the love of God in our hearts. And that means two things.

To assure us of God's perfect love for us and also to fill our hearts with love for other people. And He goes on to say in verse 6, while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. One will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man, some would even dare to die.

You know, we do not feel like dying for someone who is very upright, who pays his taxes and does everything right. But we may be willing to die for a good man who is good to other people. But Christ died for the ungodly.

God demonstrates His love for us when we were not good. Christ died for us. His love goes beyond whether we deserve it or not.

Much more than if Christ died for us when we were sinners and if God showed His love for us when we were still in sin. How much more now that we have been justified by His blood, that means declared righteous by the blood of Jesus. How much more we shall be saved from the wrath of God.

There is no need for any of us to live in fear that one day God will pour out His anger or judgment on us. No. When we were enemies, God reconciled us through the death of His Son.

Now that we are reconciled, don't you think He will give us His resurrection life to save us from the power of sin? Sure. And therefore, verse 11, we rejoice in God Himself through whom we have received this reconciliation. So there are three things here we rejoice in.

First of all, verse 2, in hope of the glory of God one day. Secondly, in tribulation, verse 3, because we know that produces character. And ultimately the greatest thing we rejoice, verse 11, is in God Himself.

In our personal relationship with Him, God who has reconciled us to Himself, accepted us in Christ and made us one with Him. In our last study, we were considering some of the blessings of being justified by faith in Romans chapter 5, verses 1 to 11. It's a wonderful thing when we understand that God has not only forgiven us, but also declared us righteous in His eyes.

As righteous as Christ Himself. This is the meaning of justification. Just as if I had never sinned in my whole life.

I find very few Christians accept this position because they are always looking at themselves. They feel, oh, I have been such a terrible sinner. And they glorify their sin more than the power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

It says in Romans 5, verse 9, we are justified by His blood. Now I want to ask you one question. Is your sin greater in power than the blood of Jesus Christ? The answer is no.

Confess that however great a sinner you may have been, the blood that Jesus shed on Calvary's cross when He died, atones for all your sin. It's blotted out. Not only blotted out, God has declared you righteous.

You have been cleansed so thoroughly that when God looks at you today, first of all, He looks at you as though you have never sinned in your whole life. And secondly, He looks at you clothed with the righteousness of Christ as holy as Christ is Himself. And then He goes on to compare Adam with Christ in the remaining verses of Romans chapter 5. He says, how did sin enter the world? Verse 12.

Through one man. And because of that, death through sin spread to all men, because all have sinned. He is trying to point out that just like through one man Adam's sin came to the world, through one man Christ, righteousness has also come.

This is what He is trying to contrast in these two men. The man Adam and the man Christ Jesus. And then He says, even though the law was not given to many thousands of years after Adam, sin was still there.

But sin could not be put to a person's account until the law was given. Where there is no law, sin is not imputed. Verse 13.

But even though sin is not imputed, sin was there. And the proof of that is death reigned from Adam to Moses. The law came only through Moses, but still people died, because there was sin.

Whether there is law or no law, sin was still there. And men died from Adam to Moses. Death reigned even over those, verse 14, who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam.

They sinned. They disobeyed God's laws even though the law was not given externally by Moses, but they had a conscience. They had violated it.

And the wages of sin is death. Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death, and it brought death. And Adam, He says, is a type, a foreshadowing of Christ who was to come in the future, who was the second man.

But the free gift, He says in the transgression. It is so different. By the transgression of one man, Adam, many people died.

Much more, verse 15, did the grace of God and the gift by grace of one man, by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to many. So it is just like sin was passed on from Adam to all who belong to his race. God now gives the free gift of righteousness to all who trust in Christ.

It is freely. So no one can say, why does God punish me because of Adam's sin? God is forgiving you because of Christ's righteousness. And the gift, verse 16, is not like that which came through the one who sinned.

On the one hand, the judgment arose from one transgression, resulting in condemnation. But on the other hand, the free gift arose from many transgressions, resulting in justification. It was one sin that brought judgment upon Adam.

But look at the free gift. We have committed millions of sins, and God forgives them all freely in a moment, and declares us righteous. And see how much more wonderful justification is than condemnation.

The condemnation that came upon Adam for one sin, and see the justification that God declares through Christ for us, how much greater it is. This is the contrast He is trying to bring out. And He repeats it again and again.

Verse 17, by the transgression of the one, death reigned. Death became the ruler over all the human race because of one man's sin. Much more now, those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

He says, when I was connected to Adam, what happened? Death reigned in my life. Death was the ruler, spiritual death, ruling every area of my life, and finally bringing physical death as well, eternal death, separation from God forever and ever. This is what reigned.

This was the king on earth, till Jesus came with grace and the gift of righteousness. Justification is the gift of righteousness. Now He later on speaks about how this righteousness becomes part of our character.

But right now He is establishing how we are declared righteous before God. You see, God cannot accept us if there is the slightest sin in our life. Even if you have confessed your sin, there is still a lot of unconscious sin in your life.

And even if we confess all our known sin, there is still lots and lots of unconscious sin in our life. God cannot accept us. And even if we are free from sin, God cannot accept us because we are not righteous.

The only standard God accepts is the standard of Jesus Christ's righteousness. And you can be accepted before God only if that righteousness, your righteousness, is equal to the righteousness of Christ. How can that ever be? Is there anyone who is anywhere near that standard? Nobody.

And that's how we see the so-called religious person is as filthy a sinner in God's eyes as the murderer and the thief. And so the only way that any sinner, religious or irreligious, can be accepted is if the righteousness of Christ is put to their account and they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Then

God sees them as having the righteousness of Christ.

Then God can accept them. That's the only basis. Today, the only basis on which God can accept a man is if he humbles himself and says, Lord, despite all my good works and my religious activity, I am a sinner and I want to come as a sinner and be forgiven and clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

And that is put to his account. So it says in verse 18, As through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. He's comparing what happened in Eden when Adam sinned.

One act and sin and condemnation came upon all the descendants of Adam. He's comparing that with Calvary, where with one act of righteousness, where Jesus died for the sins of the entire human race, justification of life came to all men. But we have to accept it.

God doesn't force anyone to receive anything. Through one man's disobedience, verse 19, Adam's many were made sinners. So through the obedience of one Christ, many will be made righteous.

Again, we have to accept it. The law came that transgression might increase. That means people will become more aware of their sin.

But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. And just as sin reigned in death, so grace can now reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. That's God's ultimate goal.

What is God's purpose for your life? That grace, God's grace, might reign through righteousness to eternal life, make you partake of God's own nature. That's what eternal life describes through Jesus Christ our Lord. God's not happy with forgiving you.

He wants more than that. He wants you to partake of eternal life, His own nature, through His grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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