

Romans V

Introduction

Charles Swindoll introduces these verses as unwrapping the gift. He says that even though our sin-sick state is terminal it is also curable!

Romans 3:21-31 *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. ²⁹ Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, ³⁰ since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.*

Romans 3:21-22 *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.* Paul describes here the righteousness of God in very poetic terms. The Greek word means manifested which was often used figuratively in Greek to describe the rising of the sun. In the darkness of human history where mankind desperately tried in vain to obtain the righteousness, grace dawned with the rising of the gospel. This righteousness does not come from within us, it comes ONLY through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* The problems for us is that Humanity and God do not measure righteousness by the

Romans V

same standard. Very simply God's standard of righteousness is perfection; we tend to think of it as competition. We judge our own goodness based on the relative goodness of others. And, comparatively speaking, some people do lead impressive moral lives.

As an illustration only lets take someone's righteousness measured by their ability in the high jump. At the moment the world record is 2.45 meters, 8ft and ½ inch. If the standard of righteousness were measured by one's vertical leap, professed athletes would be put most of us to shame. Maybe we might do half or three quarters but none of us here would be anywhere near the top.

Imagine watching the high jump from an airplane circling about 32000 feet over the field where the high jump is happening. Let's pretend that heaven. It would be absurd to think someone could jump their way into heaven. It is actually impossible. It is impossible to obtain God's righteousness through human effort.

Paul taught in Chapter 2 about the dangers of self righteousness, that self righteous people are just as wrong as the unrighteous. We must make sure that we don't become self-righteous. None of us are more righteous than anyone else. The only difference is that we have accepted Jesus. But it doesn't give us the right to judge others. We are not morally superior to other people.

So how do we obtain righteousness? It can only be received as a gift. Romans 3:24 *and all are justified as a gift of his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* The term justified may need some explanation. Justified describes the legal status of a defendant before the judge and their legal standing ultimately determines his or her future. If a person is considered *just* they will receive no punishment. If they are considered *unjust* they could face a fine, imprisonment, or worse. A person must establish their innocence against a charge in order to be declared just by the judge.

In our earlier studies on Romans we have established according to Paul's teaching that no one is able to stand innocent before the judge, the creator of

Romans V

this world. And we have seen to day that all of us have fallen short of the creators standard and are found guilty.

Therefore we must be justified by some other means. The Bible says this we are justified – declared just: as a gift, by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Though we stand guilty before God the judge, we are declared just by means of a transfer of righteousness to our account from that of Jesus Christ. Illustration of sinners with playing cards – King of Love.

On June 23rd, 2000 in America a deaf couple stood before a judge. They were behind on their rent and the landlord took them to court for the money they owed. The couple had decided to get married after living together. In getting married they unfortunately lost some of their disability benefits, which meant they could no longer make the rental payment and so were now in arrears and had no way of making up the deficit. The landlord was due the money; the couple were guilty on non-payment. Justice had to be done. Nevertheless, the judge's compassion caused him to do something. He waited until the prosecuting attorney finished his case. Then, he suddenly left the courtroom for a few minutes and returned. In his hand he had all money in cash that was owed and he gave it to the landlord's attorney and said these words ***consider it paid***. The debt was paid and the case dismissed. The law had been satisfied and the defendants were just in the eyes of the court.

In a similar way we have a transfer of righteousness from the account of someone else to cover our moral deficit so that we might stand justified before the court of heaven. This happened by Jesus' grace. This is a free gift given, ***not because we are good, but because He is good***. So how do we receive this transfer of righteousness; the answer is ***through the redemption of Christ?***

Years ago before governments offered benefits or assistance, people could become completely destitute with no one to turn to for help. The only possible means of escaping a debtor's prison or starvation was to become **indentured** to someone wealthy. In other words, the wealthy person would pay off their debts in exchange for slavery. The years of service would be determined by the

Romans V

amount of debt they owed. There was a possibility that a greedy master could keep the person hopelessly indentured forever. They could also sell of a slave at any time if they so wished. So let's focus on the fact that one is sold.

If someone was unimaginably kind, they could bid for a slave, purchase him and then set them free. This slave would be redeemed from debt and slavery. The Bible clearly tells us that all of mankind has been enslaved to sin by virtue of our moral debt. The Law of God demands payment in order for us to be considered *righteous* or *just* but we are hopelessly unable to pay off our debt. We need some one to redeem us, someone who could pay off our debt for us. We have a Redeemer in Jesus Christ who paid our debt in full.

Romans 3:25 *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.* Paul uses this word propitiation to explain how Jesus redeemed humanity. In Jewish history, there was a special day, once a year, called the Day of Atonement. On that day the High Priest would bring two male goats before all the people as they gathered together. He would cast lots, the equivalent of flipping a coin. The Hebrews didn't believe in chance. Casting lots was their way of releasing control and letting God choose. The priest then offered the goat on which the lot fell for a sacrifice to God to pay for the sins of the people.

The High Priest **only** would then enter the most holy place once, each year. In the Holy place was the Ark of the Covenant. The presence of God could be seen in the form of light called the Shekinah. Above the Ark of the Covenant was what was called the mercy seat. The High Priest would then take the blood of the sacrificed goat and sprinkle it on the mercy seat. This was propitiation. God was then appeased by the blood of the sacrifice for the people's sins.

The High Priest then came out of the Holy Place and laid hands on the head of the other goat in the sight of the people, symbolically transferring the sins of the community to the scapegoat. The goat was then allowed to run free in the wilderness bearing on itself the sins of the people.

Romans V

When Adam sinned he reaped the consequences of sin, which is death. The penalty of our sin has become our overwhelming debt in the courts of heaven. We stand before a Judge who demands justice. The only penalty He can give is death.

In the New Testament we find that the casting of lots fell on Jesus. Not by man but by God. Jesus was the chosen sacrifice by God to die for the sins of this world. When Jesus was crucified on the cross He had the sins of the world placed on Him, transferred to Him, Yours and mine. He had no sin of His own – only ours. He took our sins and our punishment on himself.

Jesus, was also our High Priest. He was chosen by God to bring the sacrifice of blood in the presence of God. When He died he sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat to appease God's anger. When He died He paid the price with his own death, **PAID IN FULL!** God accepted this. Jesus' righteousness then covers our sin. When we accept Jesus Christ into our lives, His righteousness is transferred to us and the debt is paid by Him.

The standard of Righteousness has never been anything less than perfection, which we can never achieve. Our only Hope is to be declared righteous by the gracious gift of God. We can only be declared righteous by the gracious gift of God. We receive this gift through faith in Jesus Christ, who took our punishment on our behalf, satisfying the heavenly court's requirements that justice be served. In order to benefit from this we need to accept Jesus Christ.

What would have happened to the deaf couple in the court if they refused to accept the money needed to cover their debt? It would have done them no good until it was received. Sometimes pride prevents us accepting the gift.

There is a name for what the compassionate judge offered. It is called Grace, unmerited favour; mercy that is never earned or deserved; it cannot be demanded only be received. Faith in Jesus requires a humble admission that we are helpless to redeem ourselves.

Romans V

Salvation is being declared righteous before the Creator and Judge. It cannot be earned by good works it can only be received through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is a transfer of righteousness from Jesus' Christ account to ours; it is a gift of grace motivated by God's goodness, not ours; it is a display of God's love for us, not our love for Him. And Salvation is for all people, for whosoever will receive it.