

The Righteousness of God through Faith

(Romans 3:21-26)

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—

²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

No Way Out!

“The most unexplored region in the world today at noon was in my head.”



Paul's Direction in Romans, chapters 1-3

- (Romans 1:18-32) Immoral people are guilty before God
- (Romans 2:1-16) Moral people are guilty too
- (Romans 2:17-3:8) Even religious people are guilty
- **(Romans 3:9-20) The whole world is guilty before God**
- (Romans 3:21-31) The righteousness of God through faith

Everyone is Guilty According to the Law

(Romans 3:9-20)

Everyone is guilty of sin:

For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin
(Romans 3:9)

All the Law can do is reveal our sin—it does not make us righteous:

²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight,
since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

No Way Out



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- (Romans 1:18-32) Immoral people are guilty before God
- (Romans 2:1-16) Moral people are guilty too
- (Romans 2:17-3:8) Even religious people are guilty
- (Romans 3:9-20) The whole world is guilty before God
- **(Romans 3:21-31) The righteousness of God through faith**

Overview of Romans 3:21-26

- One of the most important passages in the Bible
- It is also one of the most difficult passages to understand, because there are so many subtle doctrines that are inextricably intertwined in this passage

The Way of Salvation:

(A simple explanation)

- Accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of your life and you will be saved.
- Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus], Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)
- “And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul . . . And sought them with their whole desire, and he was found by them” (2 Chronicles 15:12,15)

The Way of Salvation

(A moderately complex explanation)

- God loves us and created humankind to be in relationship with him. However, because of human sin we are separated from God.
- To restore our relationship with God, we must be righteous, because God is holy, righteous, and just.
- But none of us are righteous because we are all guilty of sin.
- So, what is the solution?
- God provides a way for us to be righteous, but it is not by our own efforts.
- Jesus is righteous, and he has already paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross. (Jesus is the sacrifice that satisfies the demands of a righteous and just God, i.e., Jesus is the propitiation—the payment—for our sins, and his blood redeems us.)
- If we have faith (believe) that Jesus died for our sins (faith in the faithfulness of Jesus), we are saved by God's grace because God credits us with Jesus' righteousness.
- By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are "born again" when we trust in Jesus as our Savior and Lord (No Holding Back!), thus restoring our relationship with God.



$f(x) = x^2$
Find the derivative

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h}$$

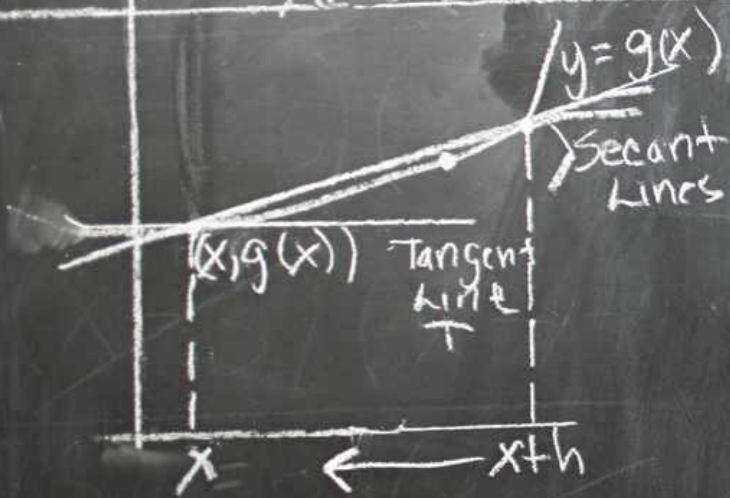
$$\text{Slope}(S) = \frac{y_1 - y_0}{x_1 - x_0} = \frac{g(x+h) - g(x)}{(x+h) - x} = \frac{g(x+h) - g(x)}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{x+h-x}{h(\sqrt{x+h} + \sqrt{x})}$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{h}{h(\sqrt{x+h} + \sqrt{x})}$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{\sqrt{x+h} + \sqrt{x}}$$

$$= \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}$$



$$f'(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h}$$

$$f(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{(x+h)^2 - x^2}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{x^2 + 2xh + h^2 - x^2}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{2xh + h^2}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} h(2x + h)$$

$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} (2x + h)$$

$$\text{Slope}(T) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{g(x+h) - g(x)}{h}$$

$$\frac{df}{dx} \left[\frac{d}{dx} (x^n) = nx^{n-1} \right]$$

$$f(x) = \lim_{\Delta x \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+\Delta x) - f(x)}{\Delta x}$$

$$f(a) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(a+h) - f(a)}{h}$$

$$f'(a) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x) - f(a)}{h}$$

The Way of Salvation: (A complicated explanation)

- A close-reading of today's passage, Romans 3:21-26.
- Note: for further study and reflection, today's slides and sermon are available on the New Life Fellowship website. On the home page, click on "Current Teaching Series" and then click on the link for today's sermon. The slides appear as a link above the recorded sermon.

Righteousness

(Romans 3:21)

- *Dikaeosine Theo* (Greek): “The righteousness of God”
- ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)
- ²¹ But now **the righteousness of God** has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— (Romans 3:21)
- The righteousness ***of God*** = The righteousness ***bestowed by God***

“Righteousness”

- “An attribute of God’s being; God’s right and just character, actions, and judgments. . . . Includes God’s salvation and mercy to those whom the covenanting God has promised to be faithful. [I will be your God and you will be my people.] “Righteousness and salvation are . . . provided for all those who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*)
- “So that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21)

Faith/Faithfulness

(Romans 3:22)

- ²² the righteousness of God through **faith** in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:
- ***Pistis*: “faith in” or “the faithfulness of”** (Greek)
 - --“through (our) **faith in** Jesus Christ for all who believe” (what we do)
 - --“through the **faithfulness of** Jesus Christ” (what Jesus has done)
 - --“through **faith in the faithfulness of** Jesus Christ” for all who believe
- “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

Sin

(Romans 3:23)

- ²³ for all have **sinned** and fall short of the glory of God
- **“Sin”**: **“The fundamental unbelief, distrust, and rejection of God as the center of reality.** The Bible presents sin as both fallen humanity’s state of separation and alienation from God, and as a person’s purposeful disobedience to God’s will as evidenced in concrete thought or act. As an inherent part of the human condition, sin is universal, and it is both corporate and individual. (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*)
- “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8)

Justified/Justification

(Romans 3:24)

- ²⁴ and are **justified** by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24)
- “**Justified**”: a legal act whereby a judge wipes clean a person’s ledger-of-sins as if they were never even committed. Sins are not merely pardoned but are as if they never happened.

Justified/Justification

(Romans 3:24)

Definition of “Justification”:

“The divine act whereby God makes humans, who are sinful and therefore worthy of condemnation, acceptable before a God who is holy and righteous. More appropriately described as ‘justification by grace through faith,’ this key doctrine of the Reformation asserts that a sinner is justified (pardoned from the punishment and condemnation of sin) and brought into relationship with God by faith in God’s grace alone” (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*).

Justified/Justification

(Romans 3:24)

- **A Comparison: “Justification” vs. “Sanctification”**
- **Justification:** a moment of spiritual regeneration when a person is “born again” of the Holy Spirit, saved from sin, and granted eternal life with Jesus Christ
- **Sanctification:** a life-long process of growing more Christ-like

Justified/Justification

(Romans 3:24)

- “The truly justified are those who acknowledge their sin and trust in God for forgiveness and his righteousness” (*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*)
- ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:13-14)

Grace

(Romans 3:24)

- ²⁴ and are justified by his **grace** as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24)
- **Definition of “Grace”**: Unmerited favor. (We receive blessings that we do not deserve.)
- ⁸ For by **grace** you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the **gift** of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Redemption

(Romans 3:24)

- ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus,
- Original definition of "redemption": To buy a slave and free them
- **Definition of Redemption:** "The process by which sinful humans are 'bought back' from the bondage of sin into relationship with God through grace by the 'payment' of Jesus' death" (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*)
- ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7)

Propitiation

(Romans 3:25)

- ²⁵ whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (Romans 3:25)
- **Definition of "Propitiation":** "An offering that turns away the wrath of God directed against sin. According to the New Testament, god has provided the offering that removes the divine wrath, for in love the Father sent the Son to be the propitiation (or atoning sacrifice) for human sin" (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*)

Propitiation

- “Jesus Christ, the God-man, bore the punishment due our sins and so satisfied the demands of a righteous God” (Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*).
- ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)
- ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Just/Justifier

(Romans 3:26)

- ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be **just** and the **justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:26)
- **Definition of “Just”**: demonstrates justice (decides rewards and punishments).
“God judges equitably; he does not clear the guilty or forsake the righteous”
(*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*)

Bringing it all together . . .

- “God’s righteousness, which expresses itself in wrath and judgment against unrepentant sinners, triumphs through love in the form of salvation from sin for those who repent and claim God’s covenant promise fulfilled in Christ.”

(D.W. Diehl, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*)

Bringing it all together . . .

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Takeaway:

Salvation is through Jesus Christ!

- ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)



Let Us Pray

A photograph of two hands raised in prayer, holding a glowing white cross. The hands are silhouetted against a bright, golden sunset sky with clouds. The sun is visible through the cross, creating a lens flare effect. The background shows a horizon line over water.