

GROWTH GROUP STUDY: JESUS SAVES

"You are more sinful than you could dare imagine, and you are more loved and accepted than you could ever dare hope."

- Tim Keller

REFLECT

1. Begin by having someone share when he or she became a Christian.
2. What are some ways people try to cleanse themselves of guilt? Feel accepted?

ENCOUNTER

We now get to Romans 3:23-26. The reformer Martin Luther called these verses the most important in the whole Bible. Break down each statement. While many Christians are familiar with the first part of verse 23, fewer have memorized or studied the end of verse 23. Yet it contains the gospel message. Unpack Paul's tightly woven argument phrase by phrase.

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 (Romans 3:21-25, ESV).

3. Review what these verses say about God's holiness and our sinfulness.
4. If righteousness doesn't come through the law, then what is the purpose of the law?
5. Make a list of all the words that Paul uses to describe salvation in verses 24-25. Do you know what each of these means and what they teach about our need for salvation?

6. How does the cross show both the mercy and justice of God?

TRANSFORM

7. In addition to Scripture, God also uses songs to help us grow in our love of the gospel. What songs have helped you understand the meaning of the gospel?
8. What would you say to someone who asked you, "What must I do to be saved?" For example, answer the question for a child or a coworker.

DEFINITIONS:

- Justified: to be declared righteous.
- Propitiation: a wrath removing sacrifice.
- Redemption: to be bought from the slave market of sin.

9. Paul concludes that the cross removes our boasting. As you spend time in prayer, focus on Christ, the cross, and the greatness of our salvation.

PRAYER

*By Your perfect sacrifice I've been brought near
Your enemy You've made Your friend
Pouring out the riches of Your glorious grace
Your mercy and Your kindness know no end*

*Your blood has washed away my sin
Jesus, thank You
The Father's wrath completely satisfied
Jesus, thank You
Once Your enemy, now seated at Your table
Jesus, thank You*

~"Jesus, Thank You," Pat Sczebel~