

The Just, the Justifier, and the Justified

Romans 3:1-31 ESV Today is about allowing our thinking being formed by the gospel – the gospel is God’s wisdom which is different than man’s. It’s about worldview. 1Cor. 1:21-22 ESV “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach^{to} to save those who believe.”

I. The Just.

- a. The Gentiles are under sin. Because they chose independence from God and did not acknowledge Him or give thanks, “God gave them over...” – there is a grace that was restraining the Gentiles, a light that they could have moved towards, but when they rejected it the darkness took over and sin showed how bad it can become. *John 3:19 ESV “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”
- b. The Jews are also under sin.
 - i. They were privileged to be trusted with the oracles of God – His commands and His promises.
 - ii. Instead of coming to Him, they have hidden behind their religious performance and pedigree and God has given them over to their darkness – they’ve made the enemies of God blaspheme while maintaining a religious front. Matt. 6:22-23 ESV “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” *Starting out in light and then covering your darkness.
- c. God is a faithful and just judge. He quotes Psalm 51:3-4 ESV “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.”
- d. God is true though every man be a liar – He is light and in Him is no darkness at all. (1John 1:5) Proverbs 19:3 NIV “A person’s own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the LORD.” It’s Your fault! I didn’t ask to be created! I don’t even understand myself. Humanism sees humanity as good and blames God for the suffering of the world. It’s not God, it’s sin and darkness that has caused all the suffering. God will ultimately remove it but He had another plan that uses it.

II. The Justifier.

- a. “But now...” God’s righteousness has appeared apart from our failure to keep the law. His righteousness is a Person who entered the human race under the law.

- i. Galatians 4:4 NIV “But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law...”
 - ii. He didn’t overthrow the law, but fulfilled it as one of us. He became the propitiation of our sins. *He decreed as our judge that “the soul who sins will die.” He took His judge robes off and enter the human race and took the full justice and wrath our sin deserved on Himself. Those sins that were pushed forward in the Old Testament could now be fully removed.
- b. On the basis that justice has been fulfilled, He can now be the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. He has decreed this by His own plan and grace.
- c. John 5:24 ESV “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” There is a judgment for our sins but it already happened! Our time before the judgment seat of Christ is for rewards, not sins. This was His plan. He is both Just and the Justifier.

III. The justified.

- a. We must accept Jesus and His death on the cross as the only way of salvation. You can’t accept Jesus as a moral teacher and a good example only; we must accept Him and His death on the cross as our salvation. When we do, we leave our identity in sin and gain a new identity in His righteousness.
 - i. The skin – just take off the fig leaves. (Genesis 3:21) He made the skin (by the death of an innocent animal) and He clothed them with it.
 - ii. The best robe – just take off the smelly, dirty garment you’ve been wearing.
 - iii. The wedding garment. Matt. 22:11 ESV “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.” Famous evangelist George Whitefield: “You must not only be made sick of your sin, but you must be sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness; it is the last idol taken out of your heart.”
- b. We have no boast before God. Our identity can’t be in our own performance, heritage, gifts, nationality, personality or in our religious affiliations. The gospel silences us and offers us a new identity, or a new boast.
 - i. The invitation God gives us: Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV “Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his

riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

ii. We are only left to boast in His love for us poured out on the cross.

Galatians 6:14 ESV “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which^[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” I’m no longer living for the world’s validation, nor do I need the what the world offers to comfort me. The cross – God’s perfect love and His perfect justice.

c. Amazing Grace. 1Corinthians 1:28-31 ESV “God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being^[a] might boast in the presence of God. And because of him^[b] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

i. “Because of Him...” Grace drew us – we only responded to His drawing, knocking, enlightening.

ii. “Wisdom...” We have adopted the grace given at the cross as our worldview. Not just our truth, the truth.

iii. “Righteousness...” He has made us righteous in Christ – this is ours – it can’t be stolen, or lost – only given back. Imputed righteousness.

iv. “Sanctification...” He is making us righteous by transforming our lives by His grace in an ongoing process. Imparted righteousness that the world can see.

v. “Redemption...” This is when we will be made completely righteous by His grace at the coming of Christ. We will then be free of the sin nature and get our new immortal, imperishable bodies.

Altar call and sing all four verses of Amazing Grace.