

Romans: Unashamed; the righteous shall live by faith
Romans 3:21-31 prt 10

INTRO:

Review:

- In Romans 1:18- 3:20, we saw that we are all unrighteous and under sins control.
- Vs 21 “ but now” *But now* is a segue into a whole new scene, it’s a literary shift AND an historical shift in salvation history
- It is a theological smorgasbord. We see the mega themes of the saving righteousness of God: justification, redemption, propitiation, forbearance, grace, faith, and more.

- Consider what a few scholars have said about this passage.
 - Reformation leader Martin Luther said that it is “the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible,”
 - Leon Morris says it “is possibly the most important single paragraph ever written”

- BUT NOW, in 3:21–31, we learn of the greatness of our HERO, Jesus Christ and His saving work on behalf of sinners.

OPEN:

- The OT book of Ruth tells an amazing story of Ruth being redeemed by a heroic figure named Boaz.
- Ruth was a foreigner from Moab who married a Hebrew, the son of Elimelech and Naomi. However, all the men died – both Elimelech and his two sons.
- Naomi and Ruth move back to Bethlehem, Naomi’s home town and Ruth meets a kind man named Boaz while gleaning grain in his field.
- She finds favor in his eyes and soon finds out he is a kinsman redeemer.
- The kinsman-redeemer is a male relative who, according to various laws of the Pentateuch, had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need. The Hebrew term (*go el*) for kinsman-redeemer designates one who delivers or rescues or redeems property or person.
- One night Ruth goes to Boaz and asks him to be their redeemer: “Marry me, love me, and redeem me and my family.”
- Boaz does both by buying back (redeems) Elimelech’s property for Naomi and marries (redeems) Ruth.
- Boaz and Ruth were David’s great grandparents.
- Naomi and Ruth were in a dire situation; they were helpless. It was the 2nd act of their lives where death had become the villain
- Then steps in the hero, Boaz, who brings redemption and life by buying Elimelech’s property for Naomi and marrying Ruth – it was the 3rd act.
- The hero steps in and saves the helpless
- We are Ruth in this story, according to all Paul laid out for us, we are helpless, foreigners in need of a redeemer.

- This passage shows who and how our redeemer steps in.
- Vs 21 “ but now” *But now* is a segue into a whole new scene, it’s a literary shift AND an historical shift in salvation history – it’s an intervention. Jesus STEPS in.

1. Jesus steps in to give us true righteousness.

Vs 21-24b *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,*

- Jesus has stepped in to rescue us from the wrath to come (cf. 1 Cor 15:20; Eph 2:13; Col 1:22).
- “Righteousness is a validating performance record which opens doors.” Tim Keller

Examples:

- If you want a job, you get out a resume. That resume is your vocational record that you hope to open doors.
- If you want to be accepted by a certain college, you have an academic record, test scores, a GPA, a list of your scholastic involvements.... In hope to open doors.
- If you want to buy a house, your beacon score has to be over a certain number – if you have a good score, its your financial ‘validating performance record’
- These performance records mean “I’m worthy of this position. Accept me.” If your performance record is good enough, if you’re good enough, the door opens.
- All of life seems to be this way: If my performance record is good enough, I am rewarded with open doors... raises, fraternities, sororities, politics, career advancements, beauty contests, grad school acceptance, team sports –all of life’s doors opening seem to be based on our ‘validating performance record.’
- That’s the reason every religion and every culture, everywhere in the world, believes it’s the same with God. If there is a God and you want to have a spiritual connection, it’s the same.
- It’s not a vocational record or an academic record; it’s a moral record.
- I have to perform to get to Heaven, to be connected with the divine, to have God.

- Maybe you are thinking that this doesn't apply to you – you aren't really into religion or the whole God thing, or that you are just curious about it all, or possibly you just haven't given all this righteousness stuff a lot of thought.
- This is what we all need to understand: EVERYONE is seeking righteousness (justification). We all deeply desire to have a validating performance record that tells us and the world that we are GOOD and acceptable.
- All of us have inside of us a desire to justify their existence – “this is why my life counts.”
 - Intelligence – if I'm smart enough, my life counts
 - Wealth – If I have enough wealth, my life counts (My worth is in my net worth)
 - Parenting – If my kids are happy and healthy, my life counts
 - Looks – If I look good enough (weight, physique, makeup, clothes, lifestyle), my life counts
 - Popularity – If I can belong to a certain people group, club, circle of friends, I will be accepted, then my life counts.
 - Accomplishments – If I can win the award, be the best, win at what's important to me, then my life counts.
- All of that is seeking righteousness – seeking a validating performance report that makes my life count.
- Your wealth is not just your wealth?
- Your beauty isn't just your beauty.
- Your youth isn't just your youth.
- Your family is not just your family.
- **They're your righteousness – a false righteousness**
- What Paul is trying to tell us is that Jesus, our hero, has the greatest resume, the highest GPA, the greatest credit report when it comes to what matters and he wants you to lay down your false righteousness and receive his true righteousness as a gift to be received.
- What makes you a Christian is not so much that you repent of your sins. You should repent of your sins, but that can make you just another Pharisee.
- No, what makes you a Christian is you repent of your false righteousness your false justification

2. Jesus steps up to pay for our redemption. 1 Jesus steps in to give us true righteousness.

24b through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

A. What did Jesus do to give us true righteousness?

- He redeemed us.
- What is redemption?
- The exodus and Passover

- Mirrored in the law – the year of Jubilee
all slaves were released, all debts were forgiven, and all property was returned to its original owners.

- Mirrored in the law – kinsman redeemer

B. How did Jesus pay for our redemption?

- Propitiation by his blood.

- What is propitiation?

- The word propitiation carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.

- Bumper sticker that reads “God’s not mad at you” out of context is dangerous.

- Propitiation. The GK word is same as Mercy Seat in the Septuagint,

- The Cherubim on each side represent the judicial acts of God (Ezekiel). There are two so that a true witness can be established.

- Under the mercy seat, contained in the ark, is the stone tablets - 10 commandments; the law.

- The blood sprinkled on the Mercy seat stood between the executors (cherubim) and the law. In other words, the only thing that keeps us from the execution of the cherubim based on the judgment of the law is the blood of a spotless lamb.

- Christ the spotless lamb, is our propitiation, the Mercy Seat of appeasing the righteous wrath of God where Christ sits as proprietor and king of His people forever. Lord JESUS!

- The picture is not of the Father as an angry old man and Jesus as a nice and mild man who offers to satisfy the rage of his crazy dad. There is unity in the action and purpose in this work. The Father puts the Son forward, and the Son willingly obeys the Father.
Vs 30 since God is one
- You can't pit anger and justice against love and goodness. It's the love and goodness that makes you angry at injustice!
- The reason God is so angry at the sin and evil that's destroying the human race he loves and made, destroying the world he loves and made, the reason he's so angry is *because* he's so filled with love and goodness. If he wasn't filled with love and goodness, he wouldn't care.
- So the more loving you are, the easier you get angry, and the easier you get angry at sin and wrongdoing and things that are destroying the things you love. To pit love and justice against each other is silly.
- Wrath is what our sin and rebellion justly deserve. Even though God is a God of infinite love, he does not show mercy at the expense of his justice, so propitiation is the way that the loving God shows us mercy justly.

C. How do we receive this gift of grace?

- Through faith – believing. Trusting this gospel is true.
- If you have faith of a mustard seed, you can say to the mountain... what if your mountain isn't obstacles in your life – maybe it's your own reason for existence, your self justification.
- I think many of us in the room believe Jesus atoned for our sins on the cross but have never repented of our false righteousness, false justifications.

3. **Jesus steps down to show us who HE really is.**

Vs 25b 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.

- God did not overlook sin because he is fickle or forgetful but because he is kind and patient, desiring people to repent and because he planned resolve it through the cross.
- The only way to be both just AND the justifier was to come into the world as a human. Humans first sinned and a human had to pay the debt. Jesus is the 2nd Adam who did

not fall to temptation by the enemy, did not fail in the garden, and by a tree reversed the curse of Adam's sin from eating from the forbidden tree.

- He remained righteous (Just) then He justified us by dying in our place, becoming our propitiation, then making an exchange for all who believe His gospel – he takes on our sin and gives us his true righteousness (just). He is just and justifier
- Love and justice meet and we get both when we trust in Him.

4. We step into salvation by faith alone.

- The word 'Faith' is used 8 times in these 11 verses.

***Vs 27** Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. **28** For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. **29** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, **30** since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith..*

- We humbly realize salvation has nothing to do with us – we were totally depraved, dead in our sins, unable to want God.
- Understanding this brings humility – that humility comes from faith in the gospel.
- God is one – a reference to the trinity. Now that we have been redeemed, made right and made a part of the family, we can share the unity with one another like the Trinity shares with one another.

***Vs 31** Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law*

- We uphold the moral law. The 10 commandments are the summary of the moral law; The great commandment is the summary of the 10 commandments.
- Jesus perfectly loved God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind; he perfectly loved his neighbor (that's us) as himself. He fulfilled the law; that's what Paul says.
- We are to love God and others – because we have been justified, redeemed, and forgiven, BY the love of God – we too can now love and obey God AND love and honor people.

CONCLUSION:

- Ruth asks Boaz to cover her with his garment – as a kinsman, a relative. to redeem her and her family.

- Boaz said, “I will bear the price myself to buy back the land and redeem the family.” More than that, he doesn’t just cover her debt; he marries her. He loves her.
- In a way, he gives her justification. All that he is and all that he has is now hers. he floods her life with love and honor.
- That’s what Jesus Christ has done for us – He is the preeminent, Kinsman Redeemer.
- First of all, what did it take for him to become a kinsman? He had to be flesh and blood? He had to come from heaven to earth. He had to empty himself of all of his glory. He had to be found in likeness as a human being.
- Secondly, what did it take for him to be a redeemer? It didn’t just cost him his money; it cost him his life, propitiation. He bore the cost himself. When Jesus Christ went to the cross, he didn’t deserve it; he didn’t need to, but he did it for us, voluntarily.
- Do you not see now what it means to be a Christian? Being a Christian is not to say, “I promise to really try hard. I’ll try to live like Jesus. I’ll try to come to church. I’ll try to obey the Ten Commandments.” No! What it means to become a Christian is to say, “Spread your garment over me. Be my redeemer!”

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. What do you think have been some, or are some, of your false justifications (false righteousness)?
2. Explain how God’s wrath and anger actually demonstrate His love.
3. What does it mean that Christ has redeemed us?