

ROMANS

3:1-31

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Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 19th February 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Psalm 51:1-19

Introduction

Three weeks ago we began studying the Bible book of Romans - the third time we've studied this particular book of the Bible as a church - and as we've seen, this letter written from the apostle Paul to the Christians in Rome, covers much, and doesn't stick to the easy things to discuss.

Chapter overview of Romans

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- **Chapters 1-8:** Christian doctrine
 - Sin (1-3), Salvation (4-5), Sanctification (6-8)
- **Chapters 9-11:** Israel
 - Israel - Past (9), Present (10), Future (11)
- **Chapters 12-16:** Practical Christian living
 - Practical Christianity

As mentioned last week, these opening 3 chapters in particular are kind of a low point in the book, because they deal with *our* lowest point - they deal with our sin. But good news is coming of course, for in Romans chapter 8 Paul will declare that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. But in order for us to understand that, we need to understand the things we read here. The good news will only make sense in light of the bad news.

So as a quick refresher then, in chapter 1, Paul sends his greetings to all in the church, saying how he prays for them without ceasing, how he desires to visit them, and wants to be a blessing to them. And then he states how he is not ashamed of the gospel that is the good news of what Jesus has done for us - because it can save *anyone*, which is truly wonderful news, because we *all* need saving.

Next, he underlines this need by showing how our unrighteousness demands God's punishment, listing at least 26 ways in which mankind has sinned against God. And then, as he writes chapter 2, lest any of us think we're still good enough to qualify for God's blessing, he says the self-righteous man is inexcusable too - because he does the same things. He is in fact, a hypocrite.

Thus, we are all in the same boat. We *all* need a Saviour.

Overview of chapter three

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- v1-8 - Is God unjust?
- v9-20 - We have all sinned
- v21-26 - We are justified by grace
- v27-31 - We have nothing to boast of

So then, as we move through chapter three, we'll first see Paul say that God is right to judge us, noting that we have all sinned. But also how God, through His *grace*, has justified all those who put their faith in Jesus, that we might not receive the punishment that was due to us. And given we contribute nothing to that, he'll say we can't boast about ourselves.

Chapter three

Let's get started then. In verse 1 we see Paul ask the first of around a dozen rhetorical questions that we find in this chapter, which he asks in order to make us think and to give us the answers to those questions.

We read...

Romans 3:1

What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?

The context for this question is that Paul concluded chapter two saying, specifically to the Jews, that their circumcision - a symbol of their separation to God, which they were proud of - was worthless if they didn't keep their hearts separated to Him. That is, a *symbol* of faithfulness is only of benefit if there *is* faithfulness - much like a wedding ring is a only great symbol of separation to your spouse if you are faithful to them. Without that faithfulness, it is a worthless gesture.

Does that mean then, that there is no distinction between the gentile and the Jew? Is there no benefit to God having called Israel His chosen people? That's what Paul will answer in verse 2.

But before we get there, what are we to make of it as Christian men? Should we be circumcised? Well, you'll no doubt be relieved to know, that's not what the Bible says. Of course there may be medical reasons to do so, but there's no Biblical command to do so.

We see two helpful examples that give us clarity on this. In Acts 16 we see that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, whose mother was Jewish and father was Greek. But in Galatians 2 we read that Titus, whose both parents were Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised. Why the different approach? Because circumcising Timothy was to open up the door for him to share the gospel with the Jews (since Timothy was half Jewish). But Titus was all Greek - and as such, there was no need for him to be circumcised. So if someone tries to compel you to be circumcised (and I'm sure your natural reaction is to run away) then know that it is not necessary to do so as a Christian.

So then, "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?"

Romans 3:2

Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

That is, Israel were blessed by having *and* keeping the law. Though they often disobeyed, there are many times throughout history they were blessed practically by keeping it.

One example, as noted by more than one Bible teacher, is that when the bubonic plague swept across Europe, killing one of every three people, the Jewish population was left virtually untouched, because in keeping the detail of the law, the Jews were protected from the plague due to the hygienic and dietary regulations contained within the law.

But Israel are also blessed in the promises given to them. Many get their theology in a mess by believing God has finished with Israel, even suggesting they have been replaced by the church. But Paul will address that in this very letter by saying that God hasn't done away with Israel. And indeed, God still has a plan and a purpose for them - after all, it will be for Israel that Jesus will return to this earth at His second coming... not for the church, for we'll already be with Him in Heaven by that point. And so despite their disobedience, there is blessing and promise for them.

Dr. Adolph Saphir, a converted Jew, made this point: "The view that is so prevalent, that Israel is a shadow of the church, and now that the type is fulfilled vanishes from our horizon, is altogether unscriptural. Israel is not the shadow fulfilled and absorbed in the church, but the basis on which the church rests."

Again, Israel's *faithlessness* will not destroy God's promise. We read Paul's next questions...

Romans 3:3

For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?

In other words, will Israel's (or our) faithlessness, cancel out God's faithfulness? Paul is clear...

Romans 3:4

Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:

"That You may be justified in Your words,
And may overcome when You are judged."

Where is this written? In Psalm 51 that we read earlier. And specifically in verse 4.

Psalm 51:1-4

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. **For I acknowledge my transgressions,** And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— **That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.**

So as we or others recognise our sin for what it is, we see that God is perfectly justified in judging us. In fact, our wretchedness only serves to show how holy God Himself is. And in the case of the Jew, we see that their unbelief verifies what God said would happen, that they would disobey Him.

But that gives rise to another question, which Paul is also quick to answer emphatically:

Romans 3:5-6

But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

So here Paul is using a human argument - that's why he says he speaks as a man. And that argument is that if we are making God look good by our sin, then isn't God unfair that He should judge us for our sin? And he replies saying "certainly not!" because the truth is that God doesn't need our sin in order to be righteous. And if that were the case then God could not judge the world.

Think of it like this - you have a white shirt that has become dirty playing rugby, and you place it next to a fresh, clean one - immediately you notice how clean the fresh one is. The clean one isn't any cleaner because the dirty one is dirty. Rather it only serves to show it for what is already is, and that is a perfectly clean shirt.

Likewise, our sin doesn't make God holy. He's holy anyway. And so simply, when we sin, God's holiness is made evident. And He is not unjust in judging us.

Paul now switches from asking if *God* is unjust in judging us for our sin, to asking if *we* are justified in sinning - that is, do we have a valid excuse? He writes:

Romans 3:7

For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?

He's saying; while God isn't *made* righteous through my sin, if God's righteousness is made *more obvious* through me being a sinner, aren't I doing God a favour by looking so bad that He might look so good? Because if that's the case, why would God judge me?

He continues...

Romans 3:8

And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

What does Paul's answer mean? Well, we are not to sin in an attempt to make God look good! - we can't use that as an excuse, as that would be like taking some of your clothes, dragging them around the garden on a rainy day, in order to show how clean the others are - that's just madness. The end never justifies the means. While we are to seek God's glory, and the good of man, it is never right to do wrong with the awful excuse that it might lead to something good... at some point.

When it comes to our relationship with God we must remember what our sin cost. When writing to the Corinthians about sexual sin, Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 6:20

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

That price was the agonising death of Jesus on the cross for you. No wonder Paul describes those who suggested he was encouraging sin as slanderous!

Now, hopefully we see the problem in what they were doing. But, let us not forget the first two chapters - for do we do the same thing? Are we self-righteous in saying "I'd never slander anyone" yet actually are found to do so?

Consider this - have you ever heard someone say something you disagree with, and instead of going to them to talk with them about it, you talk to someone else, and your murmur and complain about it? That can happen in many contexts - but especially in a church family when it comes to times of Bible study such as this on a Sunday morning, or times of fellowship and discussion such as home groups.

Let me give you a good example that shows how we should be. Some of you will remember the late Chuck Smith, who faithfully pastored Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa for many years, and the late Chuck Missler, who was a great Bible teacher - who often taught at that church as well as many others. They were both friends with Walt Martin - a baptist minister, author and founder of the Christian Research Institute.

One day, Walt Martin said to Chuck Missler; "Chuck, did you hear what Chuck Smith said?!" and went on to quote a few comments of Smith's. Missler replied, "Walt, I know you're too Biblical to not have gone and spoken to him about that - what did he say?". And sure enough, Walt's tone was in jest - because he had asked Smith to clarify what he'd said, and there was zero Biblical issue with it.

I love that example - these good men knew each other loved the Lord. And rather than choose slander, they pursued unity. That's how we should be. If you ever hear someone from this church say something that you perceive to be unscriptural - whether from the pulpit or armchair - whether the pastor, elders, the children or the adults - don't stir up strife through slander, but talk to them. And do so at the earliest opportunity, rather than letting something fester.

Here, of course, had Paul been encouraging sin, it would have been right for others to rebuke him. But he had not been, and rather they had *slanderously* reported that he was. But now, was he in turn wrong to call this out? No - Paul was not being self-righteous toward them, for we read...

Romans 3:9

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

Rather than self-righteousness from Paul here, he says; "look - we all have the same problem - we're all guilty before God, regardless of our background, culture, nationality, ethnicity, riches or social status". We are all slaves to sin - a point he'll develop further in chapter six.

Leaving us with no room for manoeuvre, he now quotes from Psalm 14, Ecclesiastes 7 and Isaiah 53, laying multiple charges against us:

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

Let's read where that's taken from. First, Psalm 14:1-3

Psalm 14:1-3

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

And then Ecclesiastes 7:20

Ecclesiastes 7:20

For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

And lastly, Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Turning back to Romans:

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

[Don't read verses out]

The first charge is that we are not righteous - that is, we are not right with God. He's not someone we can agree to disagree with. When we sin, blame is entirely on our side.

Neither have we sought Him. And in fact, we've turned away from Him and done evil in His sight. The word *unprofitable* here, is the idea of having spoiled – like fruit that has gone bad. We've become unpalatable and unpleasant.

Next, Paul quotes from three separate Psalms, saying:

Romans 3:13

Their throat is an open tomb;
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";
"The poison of asps is under their lips";

The first quote is from Psalm 5:9

Psalm 5:9

For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue.

Next, he quotes from Psalm 52:2-4

Psalm 52:2-4

Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, Lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah. You love all devouring words, You deceitful tongue.

Then finally he quotes from Psalm 140:1-3

Psalm 140:1-3

Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men, Who plan evil things in their hearts; They continually gather together for war. They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; The poison of asps is under their lips.

So what is the point Paul is making back here in Romans?:

Romans 3:13

Their throat is an open tomb;
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";
"The poison of asps is under their lips";

Like a doctor who first asks you open your mouth to check your throat, then asks you to stick out your tongue, so Paul shows how our Great Physician has seen our wickedness for what it is.

Like an open tomb would allow the smell of rotting flesh to be obvious – so our flesh is seen for the horror that it is. And when our tongue is examined there is further bad news – we read "The poison of asps is under their lips". The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible, so let's turn to James:

James 3:1-10

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

Paul continues here in Romans 3:14

Romans 3:14

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

In this case, he quotes from Psalm 10:7

Psalm 10:7

His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.

And don't we know this to be true? It seems that increasingly that people curse and swear in casual everyday conversation. From the playground to the high street to the gym to the office. But God says this is sinful - and our language as Christians should be free from it.

We read on...

Romans 3:15-17

"Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known."

Here, Paul is quoting from Isaiah 59:7-8 where we read...

Isaiah 59:7-8

Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, And there is no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Just look at the world around us - whether in how one person treats another, or one nation treats another, there is innocent blood shed. The evening news is where they start by saying "Good evening" and then tell you why it isn't, right? Sin and injustice abound. Truthfulness is not a quality that many people are known by, but deceiving others certainly is.

And what is the result? A world where everyone wants peace, but has absolutely no idea how to find it. Why? We read on...

Romans 3:18

"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

This world has utterly lost sight of God. Paul is quoting here from Psalm 36 - let's read the first four verses:

Psalm 36:1-4

An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own eyes, When he finds out his iniquity and when he hates. The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise and to do good. He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good; He does not abhor evil.

We do not have the reverence for God that we should. For He is holy. He is perfect. And we, very clearly, are not. We really have reason to fear God, for the charges laid against us are severe. And lest you fall into self-righteousness, don't think that this didn't apply to you before you were saved. And if you do not know Jesus as your Saviour, don't think that this doesn't apply to you at all. For Paul says next:

Romans 3:19

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

We looked last week how there is no escape from God's law, from His holy requirements. There is no chance that our offence will not be discovered - just look at what we've just read! And we will not be able to escape beyond the jurisdiction of God's court. We have no hope of a legal technicality letting us off, nor is God unjust - he is not so corrupt as to let sin go unpunished.

With this case Paul has built, we are found guilty - with no higher court that we can appeal to, and no possible hope of escape from the punishment we deserve. Our only hope rests on the wrong person being convicted in our place - and that's where Paul is going in this chapter.

But next he writes:

Romans 3:20

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

What?! You might think. The law isn't there to help me?! No.

Consider how the traffic laws we have are not to make you look like a good driver. If you stick to the speed limit, don't run over cyclists, remember to indicate when turning, and don't reverse without looking, then you don't deserve special applause for that! Rather, the law is there to highlight when you have done something wrong!

And in the case of God's holy law, it reveals how very sinful we really are. Why? So that we understand our position and condition before a just and holy God. That we might understand our desperate need for a Saviour, for we now realise there is nothing we can do to save ourselves, so great is the weight of the law against us. And no-one is exempt. For we read that no flesh will be justified by the law.

We see then, holding onto the law to save you, is like grabbing hold of a parachute as you jump out of the plane, only to realise that you grabbed a bag of cement - rather than save you, it will pull you to the ground. So, likewise the law will not justify you, it will only expose the problem you have, regardless of who you are... remember in verse 20 we read that the law shows the whole world guilty before God. And as a result, we see our need for a Saviour. And that is exactly the function of God's law. We read in Galatians 3:24

Galatians 3:24

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

It has been well said that the law can chase a man to Calvary, but no further. That is the law brings us to the foot of Jesus' cross - but it cannot save us, just like a mirror can only tell you how dirty you are, it cannot make you clean. We are in a sorry state. But God doesn't want to leave us there. But don't suppose that he wants to reform you. For that would not be enough - your past sin still requires justice be done. And wondrous news is that justice was done through Jesus dying on the cross in your place.

Let's read on...

Romans 3:21-23

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We see the righteousness of God in that justice is carried out, but His wrath poured out on Christ, not us. His Son in our place. That we might be seen as His sons! We read this marvellous verse in 2 Corinthians 5:

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

God Himself is the one who justifies us - but not through the works of the law. Neither through reforming us, but by redeeming us through the completed work of Jesus on the cross. He was made sin for us. That's incredible! But how do we obtain that? Through works? No, by faith.

And who can be justified in this way? Anyone. Let's suppose for a moment you were going to try and jump across the English Channel. It doesn't matter if you are 10 meters or 10 miles short - any attempt by you would be totally insufficient. Or consider what would happen if you were jumping from one building to another and you miss - it doesn't matter how much by!

The implication in the text here is that we *have* fallen and *continue* to fall short of God's glory.

And it is a sad product of the self-righteousness of some - and some Christians - that there are people who feel that they are totally unworthy of God's grace to the extent that they could never be a Christian, that they could never be saved.

Let me tell you this - there is nothing you have done that God cannot forgive. But you do need God's forgiveness. If you feel unworthy, know this; *we are all unworthy*. It's not how we compare to others, but how we compare to God. And we have *all* fallen short of the glory of God. We *all* need a Saviour because we are *all* sinners, because there are *none* righteous - *no not one*.

And whoever we are, whatever we have done. We can only be saved through His grace. We read in verse 24...

Romans 3:24

being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

This is a big verse. Not in the number of words, but what it says.

First there is the term justification. It's a legal term that speaks much more than forgiveness or pardon. It means being declared righteous — just as if we never sinned at all. Here's a helpful example...

An English gentleman bought a Rolls Royce in England and had it shipped across the English Channel so he could motor through France. In the midst of his tour, however, the Rolls broke down. So the man called the dealer in London and said, "The car I bought is broken."

"We'll take care of it immediately," was the dealer's reply. And, sure enough, within the hour, a team of mechanics flew to France, took the Rolls apart, repaired it, and returned to England.

Following the completion of his tour, the Englishman returned home and waited for what was sure to be a hefty bill for the repair of his car. But it never came. So finally he called the Rolls dealership and said, "I've been back for several months, but I haven't received a bill for your services."

"A bill for what?" asked the voice on the other end.

"A bill for the repairs you did in France on my Rolls."

"Sir," insisted the dealer, "we have no record whatsoever of any repairs being done on any Rolls Royce at any time. Thank you."

That's justification—just as if it never broke down! You see, the Lord doesn't say, "I've been bearing with you and putting up with all of your sin, but I'm such a good God that I'll overlook it." No! Once I have faith in Jesus Christ, God looks at me as being justified—as though I never sinned at all.

That's what justification is. That is what God has done through Christ - there is no record of our sin. What amazing grace this is.

We also read that we are justified *freely*. The greek word behind this is translated elsewhere in John 15:25 as "without a cause" when saying that Jesus had been hated without a cause, as in there was no basis for it. And that's the same here; God didn't look at us and think, *they are such wonderful people, I really should do something for them!* Rather, it is God's nature - *His* loving kindness, *His* mercy, *His* love, that led to our salvation.

And we read this justification was through His grace - through Jesus dying in our place that He might redeem us. Redemption being the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment, or clearing a debt.

Paul continues speaking of Jesus in verse 25...

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,

That is, Jesus was set forth as this payment in full for our sin, through His death on the cross, that we might be saved through faith in Him. Rather than wipe mankind from the face of the earth when Adam & Eve sinned, He patiently waited for the time when He would send Jesus to pay for all sin. Not only ours, but all that had ever been committed by anyone that had lived before.

The purpose of which was, we read...

Romans 3:26

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Consider this example. A judge presides in court, and both determines and declares that the defendant, his son, is guilty of a misdemeanour and must pay a hefty fine, or go to jail. However, the son has no way of paying the fine. So what does the judge do? He cannot let his son off because he wants to see him free. The judge must see that justice is done. So what he does at that moment, is he leaves the bench, and goes and stands in the dock in his sons place, and pays the fine. In doing so, he sees justice is done, AND that the fine is paid.

And that is exactly what God has done for us. God's righteousness is shown in that He is just, seeing that the price is paid for our sin. And our justifier, paying for our sin by sending Jesus to die in our place.

However, this is not something that is automatically applied to all, but to *The one who has faith in Jesus*. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16) - payment in full for all who'll accept - but only the one who has faith in Christ is justified.

In the courtroom example, the son must accept his father paying the fine in his place. And likewise we must accept by faith that Christ has paid for our sin. Without that, you'll have to stand in front of God as your judge, and with no way you can justify yourself - you'll be served the punishment you rightfully deserve for your sin.

You may remember Socrates comment I shared a couple of weeks ago... that 'maybe deity can forgive sin, but I don't see how' - THIS IS HOW.

Naturally then, Paul says...

Romans 3:27

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

Since you have done nothing to earn your own salvation, how can you boast? Did you contribute to it at all? Did *you* die on the cross? How on earth could we boast about something God has done that we didn't deserve, so that we don't receive what we do deserve?

Romans 3:28

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Once more, no keeping of the law could ever save us – for we have already broken so much of it. The law doesn't help us, it leaves us helpless. It shows our need for a Saviour. And there is nothing we have done to contribute to our salvation. We read in Ephesians 2:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

As one commentator put it, faith alone in Christ will pardon and cancel the death penalty. There is no boast that we can make of ourselves. However, while we are not to make much of ourselves, we are to make much of Christ and what He has done for us. Paul wrote to the Galatians:

Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

As Paul concludes this chapter, he asks some final questions...

Romans 3:29-30

Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

That is, since justification is by what Christ has done, not through possessing the law, then salvation isn't limited to Jews. Rather, whoever believes. We read Jesus words in John chapter 3:

John 3:14-16

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that **whoever** believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever** believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It is one and the same God who justifies those who have been given the law and those who have lived without it. It is God who justifies the unrighteous AND the self-righteous.

Paul asks a final question here...

Romans 3:31

Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

What he is saying, is that we see the demands of the law are satisfied in Christ's sacrifice for us. While the law can't save, and leaves us helpless, it is not useless - for as we've read, it is our tutor to bring us to Christ - that we might realise how much we need Him as our Saviour.

Wow, huh?! There is so much in this letter. And so much in even this one chapter. We would do well to make personal study of it far beyond our time together on Sunday mornings. And I really encourage you to do that.

Conclusion

As I close this morning, let me leave you with this helpful note from Finnis Dake's Bible commentary:

Dake: We Conclude That

1. All have sinned (Rom. 1:18--Rom. 3:18,23).
2. All are guilty before God (Rom. 3:19-20).
3. The law cannot justify anyone (Rom. 3:20).
4. The law only condemns (Rom. 3:20).
5. God has provided redemption by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21-26).
6. All boasting is excluded and man is helpless to save himself (Rom. 3:27).
7. People are justified only by accepting God's plan of redemption (Rom. 3:28).

With such a glorious gospel, we need to share it with those around us. Let's be actively thinking how we can do that more.

Application questions

- What is the gospel? How would you explain it to someone?
- What opportunities can you find to share the gospel more often?

For the audio recording of this Bible study, and for additional studies, please see the DCF web site:



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