

## Romans 3

Our word for today is **righteousness** - being right with God, or “being in a right relationship with God.”

Last week, we learned that the coming judgment of God is a “righteous judgment” (2:5). In order to survive this judgment, we will need to become righteous ourselves. But, how? The Jews always knew they were the righteous ones, because God had given them his holy laws. They believed they had God’s “most favored nation” status. Unfortunately, no one could perfectly keep all of God’s laws. Last week, Paul wrote that they now had no excuse before God (2:1) because as they judged others, they came under judgment themselves.

Thus, salvation is more than just knowing the right things to do, or even believing the right things. Salvation is always tied to our actions, as well. Our actions (our right living) are the proof, or evidence, of our right thinking.

### Read Romans 3: 1-8

1. Thru being given God’s laws, the Jews were greatly blessed. But not all Jews were faithful to them, and now fall under God’s condemnation. Does this mean that God wasn’t faithful to them (v.3)? “By no means,” says Paul. It shows there is no favoritism with God. It shows that God is just and fair - even his “most favored status” nation does not get “special treatment.”
2. And no, you can’t twist it and say, “my sin is a great chance for God to show how merciful he is!”
3. The Jews thought receiving God’s Laws (oracles) gave them a special privilege. Paul is stating that instead of a privilege, knowing God’s Laws gives them a special responsibility, which they have not lived up to. Thus, they stand in judgment.

**Question - Have you ever known someone whose life was miraculously spared (a privilege), and they realized that God had given them a special opportunity to serve others (a responsibility)?**

### Read Romans 3: 9-20

This passage is a long quote from various OT phrases. Paul just strings them together from memory. This was a custom of Jewish rabbis. Not all the quotes are verbatim correct. This method was called *charaz* in Hebrew, which literally means *stringing pearls*.

1. What is the gist? Both Jews and non-Jews are under the power of sin - guilty before God.
2. In v. 12, Paul uses the word “useless.” It means to render useless, sort of like milk gone sour. “Human nature without Christ is soured and useless.” (Barclay)
3. Some commentators have pointed out that these OT quotations describe 3 things:
  - a) A character whose characteristics are ignorance, indifference, crookedness, and unprofitableness
  - b) A tongue whose tones are destructive, deceitful and malignant
  - c) A conduct whose marks are oppression, injury and the inability to be satisfied.These 3 are the result of disregard of God.
4. “Through the law comes the knowledge of sin” (v.20) This is the classic meaning of the “Law as Schoolmaster.” Thus, it took the Law to show us how far we fall short of God’s expectations. It’s as if the Law is our report card - we measure ourselves up against it’s standards, and we see how low we measure.
5. However, all this bad news does not mean that Paul saw humanity as hopeless at all. All this just implies that we need a Savior to get us out of this mess we’re in.

Read Romans 3: 21-28 The Only Way to Be Right with God

1. There is a righteousness apart from the Law - thru faith in Christ for all who believe. (v.22)
2. All (absolutely everybody - Jew or Gentile) have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (v.23)
3. V. 24 The word justified is a legal term from court which means to be reckoned or treated with a certain distinction. The opposite is condemnation. Even though we are found guilty before God, God justifies us, or reckons or treats us as if we were right, or innocent, in his eyes. How does this happen? In v.24, it is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Christ, who died in our place, as our substitute, has paid the penalty of sin for us.
4. V. 25 "The sacrifice of atonement by his blood" uses the word for appeasement or propitiation. The sacrifice is used to atone for the sinner, or put the sinner back on a right relationship with God.
5. V. 30. It is the same God for Jews and Gentiles alike. Both are justified through faith in Christ, his sacrifice for all of us who believe.