

Just Justifier of our Justification
Romans 3:21-31

Getting Started

- ❖ If you had a minute in an elevator to explain to someone how we can be right with God, what would you say?
- ❖ The biblical doctrine of justification highlights the exclusivity of the gospel: we can only be saved through faith in Jesus. How does this concept sound to the “tolerant” ears of our day in general? What has your experience been when your belief in the gospel has come into conflict with the more tolerant beliefs of someone else?

Digging Deeper

- ❖ **Reread our sermon text Romans 3:21-31.**
 - The first six verses (21-26) are some of the most loved and studied verses in Romans. C. E. B. Cranfield considers them to be “the centre and heart” of the letter. Leon Morris goes a step further and suggests this is “possibly the most important single paragraph ever written.” What is it about Romans 3:21-26 that might evoke such responses?
 - Paul’s first two words (“But now”) separate before and after, offering a glimpse of hope to all who wonder about their standing before God and their eternal destiny. What characterized people before? And now that the righteousness of God has appeared in Christ, how are they characterized?
 - Paul refers to the righteousness of God frequently in Romans. How many times does he mention it in our sermon text? What do you understand the “righteousness of God” to mean?
 - How does understanding that justification is by faith alone affect your relationship with God? Do you ever find yourself relying on something other than faith? What makes those alternatives attractive?
 - How does the doctrine of justification by faith connect to the ideas of: acceptance, validation, self-worth, freedom from guilt, and relief of pressure?
 - The cross is alluded to when Paul mentions Christ’s blood in v. 25. Because his blood was shed, we have God’s anger turned away from us.
 - Do you ever have feelings of God being angry at you, even though you believe in Jesus? How does this passage reveal that God loves you?
 - Since Christ paid for us, we do not even own ourselves. What does that mean for areas of our life that we want to keep to ourselves?

(Over)

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Think About It!

*Justification (its source God and his grace, its ground Christ and his cross, and its means faith alone, altogether apart from works) is the heart of the gospel and unique to Christianity. No other system, ideology or religion proclaims a free forgiveness and a new life to those who have done nothing to deserve it but a lot to deserve judgment instead. On the contrary, all other systems teach some form of self-salvation through good works of religion, righteousness or philanthropy. Christianity, by contrast, is not in its essence a religion at all; it is a gospel, the gospel, good news that God's grace has turned away his wrath, that God's Son has died our death and borne our judgment, that God has mercy on the undeserving, and that there is nothing left for us to do, or even contribute. **Faith's only function is to receive what grace offers.** (John Stott)*

Praying Together

The very first petition of the Lord's Prayer begins with "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name". This week discuss the meaning, implications and application of this petition and allow it to shape your prayer. Some guidance:

- Look up the meaning of "hallowed" and apply it
- What is the implication that God is our Father? How should this shape our prayers?
- An important implication of this petition is praising God for His holiness. By extension, we are asking for His name to be "hallowed" in us, i.e., we are asking Him to shape us into the image of Jesus so that we too can be holy as God is holy.
- What are some names of God and their meanings? You can pray specifically the name of God and apply it to a life situation.

(Note: In this year's study of Romans, our study questions are being inspired by or derived from books, commentaries and bible studies authored by: Max Lucado, John MacArthur, R.C. Sproul, Jack Hayford and Tim Keller.)