



Justification By Faith

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28)

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“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:19-31).

INTRODUCTION

Romans 3:19-31 brings us to one of the most powerful and foundational passages in all of Scripture. In these verses, the apostle Paul leads us from the depths of human guilt to the heights of God’s grace. He takes us into God’s courtroom, delivers heaven’s verdict on humanity, and then unveils God’s glorious remedy in Jesus Christ.

This message is not only for the unbeliever who needs salvation—it is also for the believer who needs sanctification. For Paul shows us not only **how we are saved**, but also **why we must live godly lives** because we are saved. Let’s consider these in five parts:

- 1) All humanity is guilty before God
- 2) God provides righteousness through faith
- 3) All have sinned, but God justifies freely
- 4) Justification destroys all boasting
- 5) Faith does not cancel the law—it establishes it.

1. ALL HUMANITY IS GUILTY BEFORE GOD (vv. 19–20)

Paul opens with a devastating declaration in Romans 3:19: *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”*.

A. In God’s Courtroom Every Mouth Is Stopped

Picture a courtroom. The evidence is overwhelming. Witness after witness confirms the facts. Eventually the accused can say nothing. No more excuses. No more arguing. No more justifying oneself. The judge says, “Guilty,” and the court stands silent. Paul says this is exactly what God’s law does—it **stops every mouth**:

- Not only the mouth of the thief and murderer,
- but also the mouths of the moral person, the religious person and the self-righteous person.

B. The Law Shows Us Our Sin

Romans 3:20 says: *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* The law is like an X-ray machine. It cannot heal the cancer of sin—it only reveals it.

- **Ecclesiastes 7:20:** *"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."*
- **Isaiah 64:6—***"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..."*
- **1 John 1:8:** *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

The key messages from these are:

- To the Non-Christian: stop arguing with God.
- To the Christian: stop pretending that you don't need grace every day.

Having declared all humanity guilty, Paul goes on to reveal God's glorious provision.

2. GOD PROVIDES RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH (vv. 21–22)

Paul writes: **Romans 3:21:** *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."* The phrase "But now" is one of the greatest turning points in Scripture as follows:

A. God's Righteousness Is Revealed Apart from the Law

We could never climb up to God by our righteousness, so God brought His righteousness down to us in Christ.

B. Salvation Is for All Who Believe

Romans 3:22: *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe..."* This righteousness is not earned—it is received.

- **Galatians 2:16:** *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ..."*
- **John 3:16:** *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Consider the key message from the story of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. When fiery serpents bit the Israelites, God told Moses to lift up a brass serpent. He did not tell them to climb, crawl, work, or pay. He simply said: *"Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."* (Numbers 21:8–9). Likewise, today—sin has bitten us, but Christ has been lifted up. Whoever **looks** to Him in faith will live.

But why do we need this righteousness? Paul answers plainly that:

3. ALL HAVE SINNED, BUT GOD JUSTIFIES FREELY (vv. 23–26)

A. Universal Sinfulness

Romans 3:23 says: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* All means all:

- The church kid and the gang member,
- the religious and the rebellious,
- the moral and the immoral.

B. Justified Freely by Grace

Romans 3:24 continues: *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in*



Christ Jesus.” **Freely means without cost to us, but not without cost to God.**

C. Christ the Propitiation

Romans 3:25: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood...”

Propitiation means the wrath-absorbing sacrifice.

- **Ephesians 2:8–9:** “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
- **Titus 3:5:** “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...”

Propitiation can be illustrated with the story of the man in the Pit:

A man fell into a deep pit.

- A philosopher walked by and said, “Think positive thoughts.”
- A religious leader said, “Do better next time.”
- A psychologist said, “You only think you’re in a pit.”
- A moralist said, “You deserve the pit.”

But Jesus Christ climbed into the pit and lifted the man out. That is redemption.

If salvation is by grace, what happens to human pride?

4. JUSTIFICATION DESTROYS ALL BOASTING (vv. 27–30)

Romans 3:27: “Where is boasting then? It is excluded.”

A. Grace Leaves No Room for Pride

No one in heaven will say:

- “I was good enough,”
- “I earned my way,”
- “I kept the law well.”

All of us will say:

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” (Revelation 1:5)

- **Jeremiah 9:23–24:** “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom... But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me...”
- **1 Corinthians 1:29–31:** “That no flesh should glory in his presence... He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

The story of two drowning men illustrates how justification destroys all boasting:

- One man drowned in five metres of water.
- Another drowned in fifty metres of water.

Which one is more dead?

Neither. Likewise, the “good” sinner and the “bad” sinner are equally lost without Christ.

But if we are saved by grace, does this mean we can live carelessly? Paul answers firmly:

5. FAITH DOES NOT CANCEL THE LAW—IT ESTABLISHES IT (v. 31)

Paul concludes in Romans 3:31: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

A. True Faith Produces Obedience

- Grace is not freedom to sin.
- Grace is freedom **from** sin.
- **Romans 6:1–2:** *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”*
- **Matthew 5:16:** *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*
- **Ephesians 2:10:** *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”*

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he did not say, “Thank you for saving me—now I will continue my old life.” Rather, he said: *“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor...”* (Luke 19:8) Grace changed him. **True faith always transforms the life.**

CONCLUSION

Romans 3:19–31 teaches that:

1. We are all guilty.
2. We are justified only by faith.
3. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ.
4. Grace destroys boasting.
5. True faith leads to godly living.

To the Non-Christian, today is the day to believe on Christ for salvation. To the Christian, Walk worthy of the grace you have received.

Philippians 1:27: *“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...”*

- Let every believer walk in the holiness that grace produces.
- Let every sinner flee to the Saviour who justifies the ungodly.
- And let all of us glory not in ourselves, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord write these truths upon our hearts.

Amen.