

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Adult Bible Study – Week #5 – 2026 & 2027

Romans 3:21-30

October 13 & 14, 2026

Review

1. In 2:17 – 3:8, Paul takes on some of the arguments that the Jews would make *against* the gospel of Jesus which proclaims that salvation is through *faith* and not through *works of the law*
 - a. He shows that knowing the law and doing the law are two different things
 - b. And...no one – not even the “best” Jew – actually fulfills the law
 - c. A relationship with God is a *spiritual* matter, not a *physical* one
 - d. The Jews, however, at least can say that *they* were the ones through whom God revealed his Law and by whom God was born into the world as the Messiah
2. In 3:9-20, Paul concludes his argument that *all* are condemned by their sin – Jew and non-Jew alike
 - a. No one is able to fulfill the law
 - b. Therefore, no human being can be counted as righteous (justified) before God

Romans 3:21-30

3. “But now...” – something big is coming, a radical shift in the conversation is about to happen
4. In Christ Jesus – God expresses his faithfulness to his creation in a new (and decisive) way
5. God’s answer (through Christ) to universal *sin* is universal *faith*
6. Note that God’s “universal wrath” (against sin) is dealt with through God’s “universal grace/love” – which all serves the purpose of:
 - a. Renewing God’s original intent for Creation
 - b. Continuing God’s offer of relationship with his beloved Creatures
7. Note the *universal* scope of salvation – offered to all people
8. In a way, the whole point of Romans is that you and I can have a relationship with God only on God’s terms – through faith in his grace-inspired love
9. We are delivered from our idolatry: which means that we give up all our attempts to try to make God love us
10. All of what Paul is saying has already been attested in the Law & Prophets
11. John Calvin – to be “in Christ” is to be “out of ourselves”
12. Verses 21-26 is the heart of the gospel
13. Christ does two things:
 - a. Demonstrates God’s righteousness
 - i. Through *atonement* – sin must be answered, dealt with, paid for, and this is what happens in Christ’s sinless life and self-sacrifice on the cross
 - b. Accomplishes our righteousness – as we trust Christ and what Christ has done
 - i. We cast ourselves upon God’s mercy show in Christ, trusting that what God did for Jesus (in human terms) God will do for us (resurrect us to eternal/abundant life)
14. This *grace* then frees us for a whole new nexus of relationships
 - a. Now we are motivated by grace, not by law or fear or earning love
 - b. Now there is no basis for boasting – we simply cannot earn or deserve God’s love
 - c. Now we can survive anything in life because we know God forgives
 - d. And now:
 - i. We must spread this good news *to everyone...*
 - ii. Because the good news is *for everyone*
 - iii. The Gospel is both a gift and an obligation (Achtmeier)

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. Romans forces us to look at our sin. What is the advantage of contemplating our sin? What is the disadvantage?
- B. State in your own words how it is that the Law cannot save us.
- C. State in your own words what it means to “be righteous”
- D. What things in life lead us to break relationship with others? How does this experience teach us about our relationship with God?
- E. Evaluate your relationships in terms of whether or not they are based on grace or based on law (unconditional versus conditional terms).
- F. Does Paul’s description of God’s grace mean that God saves everyone? How so? How not?
- G. How will you spread the gospel today?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Primary Source: Romans, Interpretation Commentary, Paul Achtemeier

Other Sources: The Message of Romans, The Bible Speaks Today, and Romans: God’s Good News for the World, both by John Stott and The Epistle to the Romans, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries, C.K. Barrett