

Walking in Confidence before God (Rom. 3:21-31)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We can be confident in God’s grace by understanding what the Word says about our salvation. It changes our life when we walk in the ***assurance that God enjoys us even in our weakness***. We will not walk in victory over sin without having confidence to run to God instead of from God when we sin. Understanding grace gives us confidence that God loves us and will use us even in our weakness. The opposite of this is condemnation which is the fear of being rejected by God.
- B. The foundation of the gospel: the righteousness of God. The theme of Romans is God’s righteousness and its power in our lives (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel is the power of God. Receiving it means we are empowered to obey God and be used by Him. The experience of His power (v. 16) rests on us receiving the gift of His righteousness (v. 17).
*¹⁶...the **gospel of Christ...is the power of God to salvation** [from the penalty and power of sin] ...¹⁷For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed from faith to faith. (Rom. 1:16-17)*
- C. The word “salvation” includes freedom from both the **penalty** and the **power** of sin. The gift of righteousness is an essential doctrine in of the grace of God. We must understand the gift of righteousness and what the implications of receiving it are.
- D. Romans 1-8 is the most complete presentation of the gospel of grace. In Romans 1-4 Paul establishes that all men are guilty and unable to save themselves. First he sums up the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17), showing how all people are guilty before God (Rom. 1:18-3:20), and then explains how sinful people can be justified (Rom. 3:21-31) and walk in victory (Rom. 5-8).

II. IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS BRINGS CONFIDENCE (ROM. 3:21-31)

- A. Romans 3:21-31 is the clearest statement in the Scripture on our salvation by grace. The challenge is Paul’s use of legal language—justification, propitiation, redemption, etc. The reason for this is because the way God saved us is through a legal exchange in His divine court. As we understand that we have a legal problem with a legal solution, we will better understand grace.
- B. The foundational truth about grace is that the righteousness of God—the very quality of God’s righteousness has been freely given to all sinners who repent and come to Jesus in faith. It’s called imputed righteousness, and it brings confidence in the midst of our weakness to follow Christ.
*²¹Now the **righteousness of God** apart from the law [earning it] is **revealed**... (Rom. 3:21)*
- C. We have received a quality of righteousness that can never be improved. It is the righteousness that God Himself possesses. God is not more righteous than the righteousness He gives us. God is holy and we are sinful. Therefore, we could not be in relationship with Him until the sin was removed. God did not overlook our sin—He paid for it. Jesus as the Innocent One became guilty before God so that we as the guilty ones might become innocent before God. Therefore, our confidence before God is not based on if we are doing good or bad, but on a legal exchange.

- D. There are two expressions of God’s righteousness, imputed and imparted. The moment we are born again, He gives us the gift of righteousness to empower us live righteously. This is **imputed** righteousness, which gives us a new **legal position** before God (Rom. 3-5); it is instantaneous. God gives us **imparted** righteousness, which describes our **living condition** (Rom. 6-8).
- E. When God looks at me, He sees my debt paid by Jesus and His righteousness imputed or credited to my account. This is a legal term. When He looks at us, He sees “100% righteousness” imputed to our account and He relates to us on the basis of that account. Thus, nothing hinders God from embracing us. Our compromise keeps us from enjoying His presence, but it does not hinder God.
- F. Imparted righteousness is the righteousness that gets worked out in our character. God gives us imputed righteousness to put us in a position before Him to receive His imparted righteousness.
- G. Everybody can be saved—even the most perverse man can receive God’s righteousness as a free gift because it is based on the justice of the innocent One paying our debt. We can have confidence before God—even when sincere believers are failing.
- ²¹Now the **righteousness of God** apart from the law [earning it] is **revealed** [made known], **being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets**, ²²even the **righteousness of God**, through faith [confidence in] in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is **no difference**; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**. (Rom. 3:21-24)*
- H. **Righteousness of God (v. 21)**: We receive a righteousness that can never be improved. Our new legal position of standing in God’s presence is based on a historical event, in which a legal transaction occurred in His court when.
- I. **Redemption (v. 24)**: Sin is not overlooked but paid for. Redemption is a term that describes the releasing of a prisoner by paying the ransom price. Jesus, the innocent One, became guilty, so that we, the guilty ones, might become innocent.
- J. **Being justified (v. 24)**: God declares us legally justified—“just as if we never sinned.” In His divine court, we are accepted, with no guilt or judgment against us. We have become a new creation in Christ. The “he” that is a new creation is our spirit man.
- ¹⁷If anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away...**all things have become new**...¹⁹God was in Christ reconciling the world...**not imputing their trespasses to them**...²¹that **we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God**. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)*
- K. **Old things passed away**: We were under **condemnation** before God. We were **powerless** with regard to sin (at the heart level). We were under **darkness**, lacking ability to understand the Word or receive God’s direction for life. We were **destitute**, without hope of a good future in God.
- L. **All things have become new**: We are **accepted and enjoyed** by God. Our former judgment, powerlessness, and darkness have passed. We now have the **authority of Jesus’ name** and the **indwelling Spirit**. These enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan; to walk in victory over sin; and to receive understanding of God, His Word, and will. We have a significant **destiny** in God.

- M. Paul gives **characteristics** of our salvation (Rom. 3:25-31). It is consistent with God’s character (v. 25-26), available to all (v. 29-30), and fulfills the purpose of the Old Testament law (v. 31).
- N. **Just and justifier (v. 26):** The cross enables God to forgive sin without denying justice. God was perfectly just in all that He did in providing our justification by faith.
- O. Justice was satisfied when Jesus as the Innocent One became guilty so that we as the guilty ones might become innocent. When God looks at me, He sees the debt Jesus paid and the righteousness imputed to my account. This is the basis of my confidence.
- P. It would be injustice for God to punish Jesus with our sin then punish us with sin that was paid for. When we feel like we are failing, we must speak the truth over our heart about Jesus having fully paid for our sin and failure.
- Q. **Propitiation (v. 25):** This means “to appease”; it is the word that is translated as “mercy-seat” (Heb. 9:25), the place of propitiation by sacrifice. Jesus was the “mercy-seat” for sinners and paid the just payment for our sin by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice, which appeased (satisfied) all the claims of justice in God’s court (1 Jn. 2:1-2). In Greek culture, a propitiatory sacrifice was one which averted wrath and appeased the gods.
- R. The gospel is the good news of salvation about receiving God’s righteousness (in three tenses).
1. **Justification:** *our legal position—past tense*, focused on my spirit (I have been saved)
2. **Sanctification:** *our living condition—present tense*, focused on my soul (I am being saved)
3. **Glorification:** *our eternal exaltation—future tense*, focused on my body (I will be saved)