

THE GOD WHO JUSTIFIES

The Greatest Sentence Ever Written

Romans Series
PBC 2025

Text: Romans 3:21-31

Our text this morning:

- Opens the 2nd major section of Romans (***Romans in five words: Euangelion, Condemnation, Salvation, Confirmation, Application***).
- Most significant paragraph in the entire book (3:21-31)
- Most significant sentence in the entire Bible (3:21-26)
- Answers the two most important questions in life – “How can a man be right with God?” (*Job 9:2; 25:4 – “How can a man be in the right before God?”*) and “How can God do this justly?” (*Gen 18:25 – “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”*)

A. **2nd most important question in life is:** How can a sinful man be right with a holy God? This question lies at the core of every human soul – no matter how they hide it, push it away, or suppress it. During our darkest moments – especially when we face our own mortality – our soul screams out, “What do I have to do to be righteous before God?”

But if that is the 2nd most important question in life, what is the most important question? What could be more important than finding out how I can be made righteous before God?

B. **The most important question in the universe is:** “How can God justify people like us without compromising His moral integrity and righteous character?”

Because if in justifying us, God himself is seen to be unjust, then the entire foundation on which the universe stands will collapse. This is

essentially what is at the core of Abraham's question to God in Gen 18:25 – *"Shall not the Judge of the earth do what is just?"*

And this is precisely what this paragraph does – while it explains how we are made righteous, its primary focus is on God more than on us. Here we discover the immensity and beauty of the salvation God has designed for two important ends: 1) to justify sinners; and, 2) to justify them justly.

And to ensure we don't overlook the powerful, life-changing truths conveyed in this great sentence, Paul aims to answer five important questions we should all be asking about these verses!

I. What is God doing? *Manifesting His righteousness through faith in Jesus for all who believe (3:21-23).*

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- This paragraph is ***primarily about God*** before it relates to us! And the thing that is set forth about God in these verses is His righteousness (3:21, 22, 25, 26).
- God is the one acting in this paragraph (not us) – and what He is doing is revealing His righteousness ***in making sinners righteous in His sight*** by His grace by granting them a righteousness they do not merit or deserve! In other words, He is justifying the unrighteous, guilty sinner who has been condemned before Him in 3:19-20!
- **You could say it this way, this paragraph sets forth for all to see how God is justifying sinners justly!**

II. How is God doing it? *By His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3:24-25a).*

and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

2nd question: “How does the righteousness of God revealed and announced in the gospel actually justify a guilty sinner like me?”

A. *By His Grace: . . . we are justified by his grace*

B. *Freely: . . . as a gift*

C. *Through the Redemption that is in Christ*

D. *By His Blood that atoned for our sins and propitiated God’s Wrath . . . Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood.*

E. *To be received by faith (not works)*

NOTE: Faith is more than just what we say we believe with our mouths. Faith involves turning away from our own efforts and fully surrendering to Christ—what He has done for us by dying on the cross and who He has become to us through His resurrection from the dead—***Our Savior and Lord! This is why Paul describes salvation as the “obedience of faith” (1:5).***

III. Why is God doing it this way? *That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (3:25b-26).*

This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- The reason God designed salvation in this way to demonstrate (prove) two important realities about Himself.
 1. That He was just when He forgave the sins of His people in the former times before the obedient life and sacrificial death of Jesus (v. 25b).
 2. That He is just in this present age when He forgives the sins of anyone who has (present tense) faith in Jesus (a particular historical person who lived and died and rose again) – (v. 26).

IV. What does it require of us? Through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe (3:22, 26).

Romans 3:22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction:

Romans 3:26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Obtaining the gift requires that we exercise faith by believing in Jesus. The kind of faith Paul is talking about here requires:

- that we submit to God's true assessment of us.
- that we abandon our own efforts to obtain righteousness.
- that we obey the Gospel by repenting of our sin and coming to Christ by faith in His work and not by our human effort/works.
- that we believe God – fully entrust ourselves to him – and commit ourselves to be lifelong, faithful disciples of Jesus who treasure Him more than anything else in our lives, including our own life!

V. What does it accomplish for us? (3:27-31)

A. It Produces Humble gratitude by killing all human boasting – It kills Pride and Arrogance in Us! (3:27-28)

Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

B. It Unites Believers by removing all sinful discrimination – It brings Loving Unity and Spiritual Acceptance among Us! (3:29-30)

Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

C. It Promotes Grace-enabled Obedience by excluding all self-gratifying antinomianism – It results in joyful obedience (3:31)

Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Conclusion

Whatever is at the center of our life becomes the anchor that keeps our life steady and the compass guiding everything we do. Since whatever is

at the core of our life defines who we are, we must evaluate whether what is at the center of our life aligns with what God says should be there.

This paragraph shows us what this center must be if we are to fulfill the purpose for which we were created – ***to live out the supreme value and satisfying beauty of God's glory!*** For this to happen, Jesus can't be on the fringes of our lives; He must be at the very heart of who we are as people.

And this will only happen if we believe that the God who justified us is, in fact, just in all His ways and in all His dealings with us!

- Do you believe God has been just toward you in all things – including the things that caused deep pain and sorrow?
- Does your life – your words, attitude, spirit, and deeds – confirm to those around you that you truly believe God has been fair in His dealings with you?