

Romans 3:21-26

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[0 : 00] Do you be seated? And turn if you will to Romans 3 and verses 21 to 26. And let me say again we'll meet for prayer on Wednesday and we would love you to join us. It's on Zoom, it'll be for an hour and please do join us this Wednesday for prayer at 8 o'clock.

Last night at Sunday school we learnt three words children, didn't we? Can you remember what the three words were? Can you remember what the three were? Cokie. Shout it out for me Cokie if you can. Justification was one of them. Ethan. Redemption. One more. Rebecca that's sort of a hand up isn't it?

That's right, propitiation isn't it? Justification, redemption, propitiation. They're big words aren't they? People are forever moaning at me. Don't use big words, don't use big words. You cannot understand the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ without big words.

In the same way in the work that you do, in the kind of things that you're interested in, there's technical language. There'll be technical language about hockey, I'm sure. Maybe smaller words. But motorbikes. If you're into all these sorts of things, if you were going to talk to me about that, there would be words that I don't understand. That's just the nature of life. And it's the same when we come to the gospel. There are certain words that are biblical words that you need to understand and you need to put them into your vocabulary.

[1 : 33] And if you don't know what they are, write them down, ask me afterwards. We need to understand these three big words. Justification, redemption, propitiation. In fact, we cannot live the Christian life without it.

And so after that little rant, let me get to the same word. We come this morning to good news. I suspect you feel you need good news.

We come this morning to the heart of the Christian faith. The centre of our faith. Where God speaks for himself. And in Romans chapter 3 and verses 21 to 26, God takes us, as it were, into holy ground.

And he says that the righteousness, which he's talked about before, that God is in the right, he is right, and he demands righteousness. And you and I do not have it.

But, he says, doesn't he, in verse 21, the righteousness of God has been revealed. It has been manifest. And then he tells us that God is just.

[2 : 44] And God is the justifier. God is the one who makes and declares right. And I think Romans chapter 3, verses 21 to 26, are very, very important for you and I to understand. And so, first of all, I want to say this.

Let's look at what God has done. Let's look at what God has done. God says to you this morning, look what I've done. Verse 21, but now the righteousness of God has been manifest apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it.

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. What does God say?

What does it say that God has done? He has made manifest. He has revealed his righteousness.

Righteousness. And we know, don't we, from our studies in Romans, from the start of the year, that righteousness is right at the very heart of Romans.

It's at the very heart of the good news of God. It would be helpful to us when the translators were translating the Bible from Greek into English.

[3 : 54] If, when they were translating the word justify, which is related to the word righteousness, if they translated that word justify as declare righteous.

If they did that every time, I think we'd know that it was the same word group as righteousness. That word coming up again and again. That Romans is all about, and the gospel is all about righteousness.

There's a sense in which righteousness and justification, meaning to declare righteous, that those words are law court words. That's where Paul takes you.

They are law court words. We're going to see two other types of words. Describe the good news of the Lord Jesus. But the first group of words are law court words. Righteousness and justification, meaning to declare righteous, means the judge hears your case.

He hears your case. And having heard your case, he declares how you stand with regards to the law.

[5 : 05] And he says, with regards to the law, you are declared to stand righteous in the right, or you are declared you are found to stand wicked.

And that's what the word group righteousness is about. It is law court words. Standing before the judge. Having your case heard.

And hearing him declare his verdict. Hearing him declare how he views you. How you stand in regards to God's law.

Now there's two ways in which the phrase, the righteousness of God, can be understood. And sometimes we confuse them. One of the ways that it can be understood is that God is righteous. So in other words, the righteousness of God could mean this. God is on the right side of the law. God is on the right side of the law. God is righteous. God is upright. He is upright and he is good.

[6 : 10] And he is pure. And so sometimes when we hear the phrase, the righteousness of God, that is an explanation of the character of God, of what God is like.

God is righteous. We see that. But sometimes the phrase is used in another way. It is telling us that this is something that God gives. The righteousness of God can mean simply that God is righteous. But that there is a righteousness that God gives. That comes from God. That God is willing to give. Some people translate it this way. A God righteousness. That he is willing to give to us. Or he is willing to put to our account, if you like. If you take it like that. It is not talking here in Romans 3 about the character of God.

But it is telling you something about the gift of God. It is not just telling you that God is upright. And that God is righteousness. But God gives this great gift.

[7 : 16] He gives this gift to sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Who trust him. Who put their faith in him.

Who depend entirely upon him. That he is willing to give this righteousness. To count this righteousness. In other words. And so the judge is willing to reach a position.

Where he counts you. As being on the right side of the law. Even though you are wicked. Even though you know that you have sinned.

In word and in thought and in deed. The judge reaches a place. Where he is willing to count you. As being on the right side of the law.

Because the judge is willing to give you his righteousness. And that is what God has done. Let God speak for himself this morning.

[8 : 19] There are four facts stated here. With regards to what God has done. In giving us his righteousness. Can you see it? First of all. We see that God is the one who has provided it. That is what God has done.

Up to now. Do you remember what we learned in Romans? We've learned in Romans. That God is angry with sinners. That the wrath of God is being revealed.

Towards men and women and boys and girls. And we've learned. Haven't we? As we've gone through Romans. That God will judge sinners. He judges sinners now. But there will come a day. When God will finally and totally judge sinners.

And he will judge in righteousness. And this is the God whom we've despised. This is the God whom we've sinned against. And we've twisted his glory. In fact we've stolen his glory.

And we've put ourselves in his place. We've made idols of the good gifts. That God has given to us. And the things that he has made. And we've twisted them. And perverted them.

[9 : 21] And yet all. In spite of all of this. We are being willing. We are being told that God is willing. To give this righteousness. He gives it.

And so remember. Who is the giver? And secondly. He gives it now. Can you see it? Verse 21. But now.

Right now. Right now. The righteousness of God. Has been manifested. It is available to you right now. Right here. That's the second thing.

Right now. The third thing is. It comes apart from the law. That means. It's not measured by your ability. To do what God commands.

It's not measured by your ability. To do what God requires. It is a gift. It is entirely separate. From your inability.

[10:20] To do what God commands you to do. So it's not based on good works. That he finds you doing. It's not based on how much you. You give to charity. Of how generous you are.

With your time. It's not based on how you give your time. To good causes. It is apart from the law. He's saying to us really clearly isn't it.

It's not on the terms of your worship. Or your service. Or your devotion. It is a free gift. From God. That is available now. And fourth thing is.

He's saying that it has been revealed. The righteousness of God. Has been manifested. That means it has been unveiled. It's not hidden any longer.

It's not invented. It's not made up. It's not a novel idea. But it's something that has been there all along.

[11:16] But at a certain point in history. God chooses to unveil it. And reveal it through the Lord Jesus Christ. The worst Christmas present I ever got.

Was a piano. And the piano arrived. At the end of October. And it was in the front room. I wasn't allowed in the front room. And my father put a sheet over it. As if I didn't know what was under the sheet. And so Christmas morning came.

I'd be learning the piano for about four. Three. Well. Probably only a year. I was awful on it. And didn't improve at all. And on Christmas day. I walked in to the front room. And the sheet was pulled off.

And there was this piano. It's a disastrous present. It was unveiled. Oh. I can't think of anything worse. Than having a piano for Christmas.

But this. It was there. I knew it was there. But it's unveiled. But the gospel. The gospel is there. This is. The other thing he points out. Doesn't he. He says. It's been all there. Along.

[12:19] But at a certain point in history. God chooses to unveil it. He pulls the sheet off. And he reveals it. Through the Lord Jesus Christ. And then we see. Fifthly. The fifth thing there. Is that it's apart from the law.

It's witnessed. To by the law and the prophets. So it's clear. Isn't it. That the whole Old Testament. Builds up to this. And so when you look at.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament. It's not as if they were something substandard. But they were pointing forward. To the death. And resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when you take these. Five facts. And you look at what God has done. It tells you that God has done something astonishing. It tells you that he's done something marvelous. And wonderful.

And good. And kind. And gracious. And merciful. And that is what it is adding up to. As God reveals. It here. With regards to himself.

[13:16] It's the first thing that stands out. Look at what God has done. The second thing is. Look at what Jesus has done. Verse 24 and 25. I know I'm jumping over a couple of verses. But we'll come back to that. Look at verse 24. And are justified by his grace.

As a gift. Through the redemption. That is in Christ. Jesus. The translators. Wanted to help us. They would have. Instead of using that word justified.

They would have used the word. Declared righteous. And so we are declared. Righteous. Verse 24. By his grace. As a gift.

Through the redemption. That is in Christ. Jesus. Whom God. Put forward. As a propitiation. By his blood. To be received.

By faith. And this was to show. God's righteousness. Because in his forbearance. He had passed over. Former sins. Now what God is doing here.

[14:20] He is saying. This righteousness. This righteousness. That you do not have. I'm going to give it to you. And I'm going to count it to you.

As if it belongs to you. That's what God has done. But how is it done? How is that possible? What we see in verses 24 to 25.

Is the mechanics. Of how. God gets to that place. Where he is able to say. I'm going to give you. This righteousness. What we see in these verses.

Is what the Lord Jesus. Must do. In order for you. And I. To be justified. For the declaring. Of that righteousness. To become ours. And so he says.

With regards to the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you see that big word. In verse 24. Through the redemption. That is in Christ Jesus. That he must be a ransom.

[15:24] He must pay a ransom price. Do you see that? He is the redemption. The Lord Jesus. The ransom price. And then the second thing we see. In verse 25.

God put him forward. Forward. As a propitiation. And so there's two further words. Aren't there? Two other big words. You have the great gospel word. Of righteousness.

And justification. And then you've got. The second word. Redemption. And the third word.

Propitiation. Let's explain. What those words mean. Try and grasp.

The wonder. Of what this good news. Is all about. They tell us. How God can reach a place. Where he declares us righteous. Even though we're wicked. Because that is the real problem.

If he declares us righteous. We are tempted. To think about that. And think. If he declares us righteous. Isn't that somehow. Unjust. Because.

[16:20] You and I know. That we're not righteous. So there's something going on here. Which is hard to understand. We really need to grasp. How God. Explains to us. A righteousness.

From God. Is being revealed. It comes from God. It comes to sinners. We all fall short. Of the glory of God. Which means. We despise his glory. We belittle his glory. And yet.

He's going to declare us righteous. How is he going to do that? How can that happen? Well it happens. Christ does this. On the basis. Of what he gives Christ to do.

That he gives his only. Begotten son. To die in our place. And on that basis. He explains it in two ways. In this text. The first is that.

By giving Jesus Christ. As a redemption. A ransom price. And then secondly. By giving Jesus Christ.

[17:17] For there to be propitiation. Law court words. Righteousness. Justification. And then these other two words. Redemption. The second word. Redemption. Is a slave market word.

It's a slave market word. That is what redemption. Is all about. It's what the word ransom price. Is all about.

That there was a price to be paid. There was a price to be purchased. For a slave. And to ransom. That slave. That slave. Out of his slavery. How can God. Reach a place. Where he declares. Sinners like you and me. Who are wicked. And he declares them righteous. Without him being unjust.

Well he gives. His only begotten son. His only begotten son. The Lord Jesus. He pays the ransom price. We were slaves to sin. We were caught.

[18:15] Under the. Tyranny. Of the devil. We were caught. In the grip. And in the power. Of sin. And Satan. And no way of escape.

And we could do nothing. But serve him. And again. What has Romans 1 to 3. Been teaching us. It's been teaching that. All over and over again. That we're in slavery to sin. And what slavery to Satan.

Looks like. And so God sends. His one and only son. In order for there to be. A redemption price paid. Sometimes when we hear.

That question. We think. Well who was the ransom. Price paid to. Who was redemption. Paid to. Was it paid to Satan.

No. That is not true. Who is the redemption price. Paid to. It is paid to God. And what helps us next.

[19:15] Is this next word. The ransom price. Is a propitiation. The two things. Are locked together.

The slavery. To sin. Do you remember. It puts us under the wrath. And the anger of God. God. And the wrath of God. Needs to be dealt with. It needs to be dealt with.

Justly. And so God comes. With the great plan. Of salvation. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Willingly. Enters into. This world. And says.

I will stand with them. I will stand. In their place. I will be counted. As one of them. I will bear the punishment. That is due to them. I will ransom them. Out of the tyranny of sin.

And out of the tyranny of Satan. And by satisfying. The wrath of God. And the justice. Of God. That will fall upon them. The price that he pays.

[20:13] Can you see it? It's clearly stated. Just look. At verse 25. Whom God. Put forward.

As a propitiation. By his. Blood. And that offends. Many many people. Many many religious people.

Get offended by that. That there is a payment. In Christ's blood. And yet. That is the way it is written. That is the way it is revealed to us.

In the written. And authoritative word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ gave his blood. He gave his blood. Which means he died. To satisfy the wrath.

And justice of God. Otherwise. You. Are still under the wrath. And justice of God. So it tells us.

[21 : 08] In the second place. What Jesus has done. In order for you and I. To be declared righteous. In order for you and I. To be justified. He provides.

He provides. The redemption price. Which is. The propitiation. Of the wrath of God. The wrath of God. Is turned aside. The diverting.

Of the wrath of God. In order that we might be declared. To be the righteousness of God. God. And so the third thing.

I want to say. Is this. What does this teach us about God? What does this show us. About God? We've seen what God has done. We've seen what the Lord Jesus has done.

So what does this show us. About God? Does it show us. That God is immoral? Does it show us. That God is unfair?

[22 : 06] Does it show us. That God is unjust? That's what kind of. What angry atheism says. Isn't it? Dawkins goes to town. On this passage. Saying it's just immoral. It's unfair. It's unjust.

Is that. Is that what it tells us about God? No. Look at verse. In the middle of verse 25. This was to show us.

God's righteousness. Because in his divine. Forbearance. He had passed over. Former sins. 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 Christ. What does it tell you about God? This is what you're called.

To believe. That he is righteous. That he is just. That he is upright. It tells you that. And it tells you that. In a particular way. In what way? In this way.

[23 : 01] Can you see it? Right in the middle of verse 25. He is forbearing. He is forbearing.

That is. He does not punish. Sinners. Immediately. God is patient. God is patient with you. It means God.

Puts up with rebellion. And sin for a long. Long time. Forbearance means. That God does not punish. Sin. And sinners. Immediately.

Forbearance means. He holds back. On his final judgment. Forbearance means. He calls. A truce. It is not that there is peace. But that he called a truce.

And when he says. I won't act yet. To punish. Sinners. And of course. In the context. The sins that we committed. In the past. I think in the context here.

[24 : 05] He is referring. To the sins of people. Before the Lord Jesus Christ. They lived and died. What was God doing? God was being. Very very patient. And God gave them.

All that they needed. To believe. In that coming sacrifice. And he would count. That to them. And so you remember. That we are told. That Abraham was justified.

By faith. That is what the word. Of God teaches. God did not step in. To bring punishment. At that time. He held back. And so what.

What does that mean? That when he sends. Christ. He sends Christ. To bear the punishment. For sins. And stand. In the place. Of sinners. And it means.

That God shows. A just. Mercy. And a merciful. Justice. A just. Mercy. And a merciful.

[25 : 03] Justice. What does it tell you. About God. What God has done. He's revealed. His righteousness. Giving it. As a gift. How does he do that? He does that. Through Christ. Through what Christ.

Has done. This righteousness. Being. Declared righteous. Comes to us. Because of the ransom paid. And because of the propitiation. That sacrifice. Which averts the wrath of God.

And so God is just. And the justifier. At the very same time. And so we stand before God. This morning. Still ungodly. Still sinning. But not having.

Accounted to us. Not having it. Accounted to us. Because the righteousness. Of Christ. The righteousness. Of another. Is put to our account. And that is the glory.

Of the wonderful. Wonderful. Good news. And so let God. Speak for himself. This morning. And you are called.

[26 : 02] Upon this morning. To believe it. And to build your life. Upon it. Go back to what he says. In verse 22. He says this. The righteousness.

Of God. Through faith. In Jesus Christ. For all who believe. For there is no distinction. For all have sinned. And fallen short. Of the glory. Of God. And are justified. By his grace. As a gift. Through the redemption.

That is received. That is in Christ Jesus. Whom God. Put forward. As a propitiation. By his blood. To be received. By faith.

And so. This morning. What is the response. Called for. The response. Called for. Is that you would believe. And to believe this. Now. Right now.

[27 : 00] The words. By faith. Are really important. By faith. The New Testament. Is always clear. Is very clear.

That it never uses. The word by. In the sense of. On account of. Let me. Let me try. And tease that out. So it's not. On account. Of faith.

That you are saved. It's not. On account. Of your faith. That you are justified. The New Testament. Always. Uses the word. By.

In the sense. Of through. That means. When the New Testament. Uses the word. By. It is pointing you. Not to your faith. But to Jesus. You are not.

Justified. You are not. Declared. Righteous. By God. On account. Of believing. You are justified. You are declared. Righteousness. Because of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 59] And faith. Is what takes you. To Jesus. We are justified. On account. Of Jesus Christ. We're justified.

On account. Of faith. Because faith. Is. The thing. That takes us. To the Lord Jesus. The New Testament. Never says. We are justified. On account. Of our faith.

It's why. In the reformers. They spoke of. Sola fide. They spoke of. By faith alone. But what they meant. By that. Was it is. By Christ alone. When you understand.

The simplicity. Of this. You come to Christ. You lay hold. Of Christ. You are not. Justified. By faith. You are justified.

By Christ. JC Ryle. Said this. Faith. Is laying hold. Of a saviour's hand. Laying. On a husband's arm. Receiving.

[28 : 56] A physician's medicine. It brings. With it. Nothing. To Christ. But a sinful soul. It gives. Nothing. Contributes. Nothing. Pays. Nothing. Performs.

Nothing. It only receives. And takes. Accepts. Grasps. And embraces. The glorious gift. Of justification. Which Christ. Bestows. And so.

I call you today. To believe. To come to Jesus. To thank God. For this great news. That there is one.

The God. Man. Christ. Jesus. Who has died. In your place. God. And to see this. As the most wonderful. Just. Mercy. And the most merciful.

Justice. Because God. Is good. And the gospel. To you. Is good. And so. Hear the word.

[30 : 20] Of God. This morning. And come to Christ. Let's pray. Let's pray.