

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

8 - If We're SO wrong, How Can We Be Made Right with God?

Romans 3:21-25a

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“To tell men the worst about themselves is not to hinder conversion. On the contrary, the real impediment to conversion is the absence of conviction of sin. The preacher’s first duty is to address that fact by awakening the conscience to the meaning of sin, and to sin understood not simply as wrong action requiring forgiveness, but as an evil principle governing man’s very heart. A sinner’s knowledge of his own inability is therefore part of the knowledge which leads him to recognize that what he needs is a new nature.”

~ Iain Murray

Romans 3:21-25a

Martin Luther referred to this portion of Scripture as “... the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible.”

Leon Morris says this is “... possibly the single most important paragraph ever written.”

John Piper preached that this paragraph perhaps contains “... the most central or important words in the Bible.”

Although Romans has 16 chapters, today we’ll be looking at a text that is oftentimes referred to as the center of the letter; not because of where we find it, but because of what we find in it—the GOOD NEWS of the Gospel!

Four Things You Must Know About How We’re Made Right With God

1. Righteousness is revealed by God to all who believe!

Rom. 3:21 “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed,”

Don’t lose sight of what’s in the previous verse (Rom. 3:20). No amount of effort, searching or trying will lead one to righteousness. God is the revealer of this salvation by grace!

Eph. 2:8,9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, **and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works,** lest anyone should boast.”

Acts 15:11 “But we believe that **through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved** in the same manner as they.”

As a reminder of ALL that Paul has written thus far about our sinful nature apart from Christ, he adds a parenthetical phrase to remind us of a very important fact: the ground is level at the foot of the cross.

Rom. 3:22,23 “even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, **to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**”

2. Righteousness is free—a gift of God’s grace!

Rom. 3:24 “being **justified freely by His grace...**”

Rom. 4:4 “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.”

Rom. 11:6 “And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.”

3. Righteousness is expensive—and only Christ was able to pay.

Righteousness is free to those who believe, but Someone had to pay dearly in order for us to receive it, and Jesus Christ was the only one who was able to pay. He is our righteousness.

Rom. 3:24 “being justified freely by His grace **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**”

Heb. 9:12,15 “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, **having obtained eternal redemption...** And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the **redemption** of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

4. Righteousness is paid only by atoning sacrifice.

God didn’t simply overlook our sins and make like they weren’t there.

Rom. 3:24 “whom God set forth *as a* **propitiation** by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness,”

God the Father sent God the Son, Jesus Christ, as a **propitiation—a wrath-absorbing sacrifice**—so He would receive the wrath we deserved.

The Scriptures are clear Who is at the center of our righteousness. It’s God from start to finish!

Revealed by God (Rom. 3:21)

Freely justified by His grace (Rom. 3:24a)

Redeemed in Christ (Rom. 3:24b)

Payment in full made by the Son to the Father (Rom. 3:25a)

“Salvation is from our side a choice; from the divine side it is a seizing upon, an apprehending, a conquest by the Most High God. Our accepting and willing are reactions rather than actions.”

~ A.W. Tozer