

# SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

## *In The Grip of God's Grace*

### The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

#### **Romans 3:20-31 - "How God Saves Sinners"**

Romans 3:20-31, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."*

All human beings, of every race and rank, of every creed and culture, Jews and Gentiles, the immoral and the moral, the religious and the irreligious, are without any exception sinful, guilty, inexcusable and speechless before God.

Paul's description of the terrible human predicament in Romans 1:18-3:19, left no ray of light, no flicker of hope, no prospect of rescue!

Romans 3:19, *"... every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."*

You might say that this presents a dilemma for both God and man from the human point of view.

How can we as sinful beings ever be made righteous in the sight of God? Divine justice demands the condemnation of mankind, yet divine love wants to save the guilty human race.

The answer to the question, "how does God save sinners?" is found in the next main division of Romans, called "Salvation" – the righteousness of God revealed (Romans 3:21-8:39).

The answer: In Christ Jesus! See Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, ..."

Contrast:

Romans 1:16-18, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;"

Romans 3:21, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;"

From God's wrath to God's righteousness.

Paul takes out a new brush; "But now"

The very heart of Romans

The Good News of how God Saves Sinners!

Alva J. McClain – If you could have just six verses out of the Bible, and all the rest be taken away, I would select Romans 3:21-26, all of God's gospel is there, and in a way its found nowhere else in the word of God."

Donald Grey Barnhouse – I am convinced today, after these many years of Bible study, that these verses are the most important in the Bible.

How does God save sinners?

5 Ways:

1. Absolutely apart from the Law (vs. 20-21)

Romans 3:20-21, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;"

A) No one can be justified by keeping the Law (vs. 20)

What does the word "justified" mean?

It's a key word – used also in vs. 24, 26, 28 & 30

It's a legal or forensic term, belonging to the law courts. It's the opposite of condemnation. Both are the pronouncements of a judge.

It's not the same as 'pardon', it's negative.

Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Don't confuse 'justification' and 'sanctification'.

You can't be justified by Law keeping.

B) The purpose of the Law is to terrify, not to justify (vs. 20b)

Illustration – Romans 3:31, *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."*

C) "But Now!" – there is a righteousness of God apart from the law.

It is seen in the Old Testament

1. By the Law – types – the sacrificial system
2. By the Prophets – Isaiah 53

Also Romans 4:1-8 Abraham & David Illustrated.

2. Through faith in Jesus Christ (vs. 22-23)

Romans 3:22-23, *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"*

Three times in this paragraph Paul underlines the necessity of faith (vs. 22, 25, & 26)

The New Living Translation - *"We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, and this is true for everyone who believes no matter who we are."*

The only way to be justified before God and have the righteousness of God is through faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

Faith alone! – What about James?

Faith is not a work – it is utter reliance upon the living Lord Jesus.

Jesus Christ is the object of saving faith.

John Wesley – "... did trust in Christ, in Christ alone, for salvation."

This righteousness is unto all, and upon all that believe (vs. 22)

Why?

Because all have sinned! (vs. 23)

Every person is saved the same way – by faith

– it's available to everyone.

Faith is the eye that looks to him, the hand that receives his free gift, the mouth that drinks the living water, faith's only function is to receive what grace offers.

Have you?

### 3. By Grace (vs. 24)

*Romans 3:24, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"*

The source of our justification is God and His grace.

Only the Bible teaches that God saves sinners solely by His grace, through faith.

What is Grace? – simply stated, grace is unmerited favor. It is undeserved on the part of the recipient.

God's amazing Grace!

Salvation from beginning to end belongs to the initiative of God the father.

When God who is love acts towards us it becomes grace and mercy.

Grace is God loving, God stooping, God coming to the rescue, God giving Himself generously in and through Jesus Christ.

Notice in verse 24 the word, "freely" – Literally, it's without a cause.

Why would God want to save sinners?

1. To demonstrate His love – John 3:16
2. To display His grace – Ephesians 2:7

3. To make us His 'workmanship' – Ephesians 2:10

We are trophies of His grace.

“all to the praise of the glory of His grace.”

We must never presume on the Grace of God,

The Grace of God received changes one's life.

The gospel is the good news of God's Grace.

4. At great cost to God (vs. 24b-25)

*Romans 3:24b-25, "...through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"*

The ground of our justification: Christ and His Cross.

If God saves sinners freely by His grace, on what ground does He do so? How can the righteous God declare the unrighteous to be righteous without either compromising His righteousness or condoning their unrighteousness?

God's answer is the Cross!

The key words of the Cross are:

1. Redemption (vs. 24)

It's in Christ Jesus.

2. Propitiation (vs. 25)

In the pagan perspective, human beings try to placate their bad-tempered deities with their own paltry offerings. According to the Christian revelation, God's own great love propitiated his own holy wrath through the gift of his own dear Son, who took our place, bore our sin and died our death. Thus God himself gave himself to save us from himself.

This is the righteous basis on which the righteous God can 'righteous' the unrighteous without compromising his righteousness.

## 5. In Perfect Justice (vs. 26)

Romans 3:26, *"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."*

Three Questions:

### 1. Where is boasting? - (vs. 27-28)

Romans 3:27-28, *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."*

### 2. Is God the God of the Jews only? (vs. 29-30)

Romans 3:29-30, *"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."*

### 3. Do we nullify the Law through faith? (vs. 31)

Romans 3:31, *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."*