

## God is Just

Romans 3:21-27

### Main Idea

The righteousness of God rescues the injustice of man.

### Overview

#### **Defining righteousness.**

- Living up to God's standards.
- Fulfilling our inward (e.g. emotions and thoughts) and outward (e.g. speech and job) responsibilities in a way consistent with that which God has deemed good.
- Using our legislative (promotion of rules/laws), judicial (moral evaluation of actions) and executive (carrying out of godly standards) prerogatives in a way consistent with God's good.
- God is righteous if He lives in a way consistent with what He has Himself once deemed good.

#### **When did the rescue happen? (Rom 3:21)**

- The Law (Ex 20) bears witness to God's intrinsic righteousness, by including commands consistent with God's character.
  - For instance, God values humans as image bearers (Gen 1:27) and prohibits murder.
  - Similarly, God is faithful towards His people and prohibits adultery.
- The Law (cf. Gen 15, Rom 4:2) and the Prophets (Ps 32, Rom 4:5-8) also bear witness to God's given righteousness on people.
- "But now", God has more recently revealed His given righteousness through Christ's perfect life, death and resurrection.

#### **Who is involved in the rescue? (Rom 3:22-23)**

- God is the main agent
- Man is the main recipient
- God rescues only the one who believes (trusts, has faith) in Jesus as the Christ (anointed, living, saving, God-mediating King of his/her personal life - Isa 11).

#### **How is the rescue happening? (Rom 3:24-26)**

- By grace, not works; otherwise, justification would be a due (Rom 4:4).
- By redemption found in Jesus Christ.
  - Redemption is ransom at a cost. In this case, God frees us from the bondage of sin (Rom 6:6) and the lure of using works to become righteous (Rom 4:4).
- By propitiation through Jesus' blood (i.e. the shedding of His blood as He died on the cross - Heb 9:22).
  - On the cross, God poured on Jesus the sum total of His wrath against each sin committed by each sinner trusting in God alone to be forgiven for the sinner's sins). Christ propitiates God.
  - Christ quenches God's rightful wrath against each of those sins (Rom 1:18).
- Note: v26 points out that, since God had decided not to instantly condemn, but to patiently forgive (or "pass over"), through animal sacrifices, sins committed before Christ Himself was offered as a sacrifice to God on the cross, there had to be a mechanism whereby the totality of God's just wrath against sin would be appeased.
  - Otherwise, God would not have been righteous in His rescuing of unrighteous people. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is that mechanism, whereby God is established as

righteous (even in the way He rescues sinners) and the one bestows His immaculate righteousness on sinners who trust in Him for the forgiveness of their own sins.

### **So what? (Rom 3:27)**

- Humility through faith (not works) in Christ alone for righteousness before God.
- Humility through hospitality towards sinners ("all" in Rom 3:22).
- Humility through extending missions to all nations ("all" in Rom 3:22)

### **Final remarks:**

- If possible, get out of situations that lead you to predictable unrighteousness.
- If you suffer for righteousness' sake, set your hope on Christ in whose eyes your suffering has great value. (Mat 5:10-12, 1Pe 3:14-18).

Take this text close to your heart for peace and courage. Then carry it with you in the Lion's dens of the world, to reach any soul which God can justify and thereby save, from His just wrath against sin.

### Questions

**Discussion Starter:** Describe how you see the world longing for justice.

1. Read Romans 3:10-21. What is Paul's point in these verses and what are the implications?
2. Verse 21 says the purpose of the law is to reveal sin. How does it do that?
3. Read verses 21-31. Notice the repetition of God's righteousness. What does that mean?
4. Why it is important to understand this passage focuses on God's righteousness and not ours?
5. What is our role in "obtaining" righteousness?
6. Define the words God uses to describe our rescue: redemption, propitiation, justification.
7. Describe situations in which each one of the following aspects of the Gospel have been specifically helpful for you to remember personally or in your counsel of another: redemption, propitiation, justification.
8. What do we learn about God's character from verses 25b-26?
9. According to verse 27, our boasting should be excluded. How can our CG grow in "humility" as discussed in the sermon from Rom 3:27?
10. Verses 27-31 discuss the role of faith and works. Explain when it can be useful to remind one another that genuine faith in Christ is always accompanied with godly works.  
If we truly understand
11. Why is God's justice a good thing? What implications does this have in fighting against social injustice? How might this approach be similar to and different from approaches advocated by non-Christian organizations?

**Accountability:** How have you been challenged by Rom 3:21-27? What are you grateful for, in light of Rom 3:21-27, when you consider RC?