

It's All Grace
Redemption is solely reliant on grace
Blueprint for Breakthrough Series – Part 7
Romans 3:21-31
April 25-26, 2026

Introduction

- This message may be the most important message you ever hear. Due to **content**. If we get anything right, we need to get this core of Christianity right.
 - Seekers – a huge piece of the **essence** of Christianity.
- Grace – **the free expression of God's love toward mankind that causes joy. It's unearned kindness and favor. It's one of the key aspects of Christianity that separates it from all other religions of the world.**
 - Striving vs. Rescue – Religious systems by which mankind can become good enough to get to someplace or some reality better versus Christianity = mankind is INCAPABLE. But God came to us and rescued us. Salvation was provided because of His glorious nature.
 - The Rub – in religion there is a matter of humans controlling the process. We can choose to either be better or worse. We can choose to meditate or not. We can choose to do rituals or not, but it's on our terms. And that is one of the great struggles for a self-obsessed race like humanity. We wrestle with accepting that God loves us so much that He made a way to restore us to Himself and at the end of the day...

You can't **EARN** it; you can only **ACCEPT** it.

- Last Week – **Sam Koopmans** AIM
 - The Gospel is the main thing – whenever we put something else before the gospel, we are off.
 - Cross or nothing - That we as humans don't just need a little bit of help from God to get right, our brokenness is so deep it needs the cross and Jesus Christ.
- This Week – **one of the greatest portions of the entire Bible!** From a human vantage point, it's **the most important news** we've ever received.
- Context – **Paul's been talking about what's wrong** with humanity. He's talked about sin and brokenness. He's talked about being separated from God. He's talked about mankind being doomed, **and then Romans 3:21 begins...**

Lesson

- A Great Revelation
 - God made a new way of salvation
 - **Romans 3:21-22a** – *“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.”*

- But now – Like a breath of fresh air blowing into a stifling hot room, the phrase, 'but now.' It was like this but now it's going to be like that... a paradigm shift in the story of mankind and God. The Good News.
- the righteousness of God has been manifested – Righteousness means moral purity. It means that things are 'right' and good. For so long mankind has desperately needed purifying, cleanings, and healing. NOW, this purification, this beauty and goodness of God, HAS BEEN REVEALED. It's become real. Manifested means, 'readily perceived, easily understood.' God has MADE A WAY to get to the purity that God requires.
- apart from the law - Mosaic Law: ritual purification, kosher eating, honoring holy festivals, moral purity, adherence to laws and guidelines. Even then it was impossible to fulfill. Still had mercy in it. BUT NOW, God has made a new way of connecting with Him, becoming purified to be with Him, and it's separate from the Mosaic Law.
- although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – Not an entirely new thought. Everything spoke of a time in the future when God would make things right. THIS IS THAT MOMENT.
- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ – And what is THE WAY that the Old Testament saints talked about? It was the Messiah who was revealed to be Jesus Christ of Nazareth. HE would bring the righteousness of God to mankind. HE would be the ONE to change everything. He, the Son of God, the anointed One, the Messiah would be the fresh way of salvation, the fulfillment of the law, the completion of the system of the Old Testament.
- for all who believe - This salvation, this righteousness, this WAY is accessible for ALL who BELIEVE. It is no longer restricted.
- The Perfect Answer
 - All mankind is doomed and Christ is the answer
 - Romans 3:22b-25a – *"For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ 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."*
 - For there is no distinction – Blessed Jews had made it far more than it was and were taking it out of context and using it for sinful purposes. Nevertheless, the WAY through Jesus Christ provides no distinction between people groups.
 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God - ALL of mankind is broken and sinful and heading toward eternal death. Paul has made that very clear up to this point. Even his Jewish family.
 - and are justified – NICNT = justification: "acquitted by God from all 'charges' that could be brought against a person because of his or her

sins.” It explains that what was expected only at the final judgment is declared at the moment of salvation (belief).

- by his grace as a gift - Human beings cannot earn it. That means when God brought it, it was a gift. His grace, unearned favor, was a gift to mankind to save them.
 - through the redemption – ‘bought with a price.’ God was owed for the sins against Him and was, as a just God, going to demand their payment (satiating). When Jesus Christ paid for them, God put all that penalty on Christ on the cross and it was ‘paid’ to God.
 - that is in Christ Jesus, - ‘in Christ Jesus’ = new reality, the new salvation, the new way, is found in what Jesus Christ has done and who Jesus Christ is. It’s in the whole package of what Jesus Christ represents and embodies that saves us. It’s not just the cross. It’s not just His birth. It’s not just His death. It’s not just His ministry. It’s not just His inauguration of the kingdom. It’s not just His defeat of sin, death and the works of the devil. It’s all of that and more.
 - whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, - one of the benefits of big theological words = one word, they paint a picture of a concept. Propitiation = an offering, likely blood offering, is offered to make things right.
 - OT Temple/Tabernacle - Day of Atonement ritual with Mercy Seat (mercy over sin for now). Now it’s Jesus. Although we are still practically (not in standing) sinful people, we are asking that in His mercy and grace, He would allow the blood of Christ to pay for those sins and He would continue to have relationship with us.
 - to be received by faith – the way to access and benefit from God’s gracious gift of justification/righteousness/salvation is faith. Faith is the intent and real belief that something is true and operating as if it’s so. It’s taking someone’s word as fact and standing upon it, when other perspectives challenge it. It’s choosing to trust and believe the one who said it MORE than other voices or opinions, including one’s own.
- Ever-Just
 - God’s justice is upheld in the gospel
 - Romans 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.”*
 - This was to show God’s righteousness - This timely manifestation, revelation, and demonstration of the Son of God coming to earth and doing all that was necessary for the salvation of mankind, all of that, was in part to demonstrate that God was who He said He was: Righteous, good and just.

- because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins –God’s been patient with mankind and has, in a sense, let sin go un-punished properly. The rules are: if you sin, you die. Period. How is that just? How is that following the rules? How is God still a good God if He’s letting evil continue?
 - It was to show his righteousness at the present time - God was letting the plan play out. He knew that He would send His Son Jesus Christ to die for all sins past, present and future. He knew that things would be made right. All sins would be dealt with. His justice plan was finally revealed in the present day of Jesus Christ.
 - so that he might be just , and the justifier – upholder of justice and savior: God is righteous and good all the time and doing good things.
 - of the one who has faith in Jesus – And WHO is He purifying and justifying? The person who has faith in Jesus.
- The Great Gift
 - We can’t brag about the way of faith
 - Romans 3:27-30 – *“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. ²⁹ 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.”*
 - Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded – Jews have always wanted to boast about their standing as special chosen people of God. Paul was one. What’s wrong with bragging about being a special child of God? Normally, nothing. It’s when it gets selfish and exclusive that things go bad. no allowance for a human to be bragging about self-accomplishment. We can brag about what God’s done all day, but when we get into self-focus, self-praise, we get into trouble.
 - By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith – The bragging is ruined because there’s a new way. Is it a new law system being enacted? No. Is it a new way of mankind doing good things (works) to earn their way to heaven? No. It’s a way of faith. Belief and trust becomes the new access point for being purified and made righteous. Paul is pointing out that it’s all a matter of how the law (Mosaic law) was used. If it was used as a system of human achievement by a person then it’s a ‘law of works’ and it was bogus. However, if it was used by faith (I do these things to display my heart before God in relationship to Him – as the law was intended) it’s a law of faith, and good.
 - For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law – Faith vs. System.
 - Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one — Paul then challenges the common

Jewish mindset of thinking they were the exclusive club (only ones to get saved). God is bigger than local, He's worldwide.

- who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith – God saves Jews and non-Jews. It's ALWAYS been faith.

- Empowerment for Righteousness
 - Faith only affirms obedience
 - *Romans 3:31 – “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.”*
 - Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! – what this all means about their precious Mosaic Law that they were taught to love, adore, and follow. If there's a new way of faith through Jesus Christ does that mean that everything they believed about the law and all the moral purity they strove for, is negated??? Not at all. It still had a purpose.
 - On the contrary, we uphold the law - Because of what Christ did on the cross and what the Holy Spirit is doing within us, we, as Christians, are able to do what the law was always trying to accomplish, keep us relationally connected to God in beautiful loving ways. Rather than the 'way of faith' being a fork in the road and demoting the value of the law, it is the way of fulfillment.

Conclusion

- Not New but Powerful -
 1. We Need Jesus - We all need to be saved by Jesus because our sin has condemned us to eternal death.
 2. We Need to be Honest - We need to become acutely aware of our brokenness and own the fact that we have not been living for God. Sometimes it was ignorantly and sometimes it was rebelliously, but at some point we need to own up to what we have become.
 3. Jesus Made a Way - The Good News is that Jesus came and made a way for us to be rescued from ourselves by living a perfect life and dying on the cross for our sins. He trades His perfection for our imperfection.
 4. We Access it Through Faith - When we believe that He is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do and live as if that's fact, we transform into children of God and we are made right with God.
 5. Cleansing is Full and Relationship Starts - In that moment, our sins are washed away, the penalty is paid, and we are acquitted from all wrong-doing, so that we can connect with God and walk in joy and freedom.
 6. Practical Sin Issues in Process - Our sin today is still temporarily causing us problems, but it no longer dictates our future existence. We are no longer doomed, but we are still in process of our outsides matching our new insides.
 7. Our New Reality - Every day we walk in perpetual grace and God sees us as purified and righteous in His sight. He is not angry at all His children. He is partnering to get us to live out our new reality here and now. We have the room

to be in process. We are loved already and operate FROM that love of God,
NOT FOR love from God.