



(Times are approximate)

Welcome - (~1 min)

Opening prayer – (~1 min)

Opening Comments – (~<n> min)

- Paul now summarizes his previous historical and experiential arguments he has made in 3:1-8.
- Thus his beginning statement, “*What then? Are we any better? Not at all!*” and proceeds to explain why they (*he could be speaking to us*) aren’t.
- Most believe Paul is now speaking to the Jew and he is saying that the Jew has no more refuge from the wrath of God than the Gentile.
- This most likely shocked many in the church because many were trying to merge this new theology with their old theology or traditions.
- Paul is indicating that it doesn’t fit, in fact, it can’t fit because it is entirely new – the old theology was based on what men/women did (i.e., sacrifices, offerings, appeasing God through priestly order, etc.)
- Paul again brings in the depravity and death of people because of their sinfulness.
- We will see from these verses that people are unable to be righteous, to understand spiritual things, unable to seek God.
- Paul paraphrases Psalms 14:1-3 to indicate this is not a new problem and “*no one does good... all have turned aside, they together have become corrupt...*”
- Great men have discussed the idea of whether or not, by our own *will*, can we seek God?
- Pelagius and Augustine discussed this at length and Augustine had a phrase for this inherent human inability: *non posse non peccare* which translate means “not able not to sin.”
- Martin Luther and Erasmus discussed the subject and Martin Luther stated, “*in the special area of an individual’s choice of God or failure to choose God, the will was impotent.*”
- He goes on to say, “*we can no more choose God by our enslaved wills than we can please Him by our sullied moral acts. All we can do is call upon God for mercy, knowing even as we seek to do so that we cannot even call for mercy unless God is first active to convict us of sin (Holy Spirit’s work) and lead us to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.*”
- So going through this passage, we see the “*Coup de Grâce*” from God through Jesus Christ so people can be freed from a *will in bondage* to a *free will* (via the Holy Spirit’s conviction) which is freed to make a choice of believing or not believing.

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~<n> min)

**Week’s Aim:** The “*Coup de Grâce*”

Webster’s definition for “*Coup de Grâce*” from *Old French*, literal meaning: “*stroke of mercy*”

- We all need a “*stroke of mercy*” don’t you think?
- We would be a miserable lot (the human race) without God’s grace, mercy, justice, and righteousness.
- It is interesting to see the progression Paul takes us through in this passage to the “*bottom line,*” that God and Jesus Christ have done all the “*work!*”

- Our responsibility is to believe.
- God even gives us the free gift of *faith* to enable us to see the need for a decision
- John says in, **John 20:31**, referring to his gospel, “But these are written that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by **believing** you may have life in His name.”

### Topic for Day 1: Overview - Read Romans 3:9-31

- Just get a few comments on each of these questions from people, the verses will be discussed in more depth in the following days.

1. From a cursory read, what would you say people's problem is according to Paul's words (some paraphrased) from the Old Testament?

2. What does Paul say God can do for people?

3. What good news/hope did you see in this passage?

### Application 1: What did you learn from the sermon and how might you apply it to your life this week?

- Be sure to have a couple of people share here – this is a “*personal*” question, it is good to hear how people applied something from the sermon so others can hear.
- This is a good time to encourage people to take notes during the sermon – there is a page for note taking which will help them with this question – it will be on all study lessons.

### Topic for Day 2: The problem: All are unrighteous and need God's mercy - 3:9-20

You read the passage or have someone in your group read it – ask others to follow along in their Bibles

*“What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written: “There is no one **righteous**, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is **no one** who understands, **no one** who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, **they** have together become worthless; there is **no one** who does good, not even one.” <sup>13</sup> **Their** throats are open graves; **their** tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on **their** lips.” <sup>14</sup> **Their** mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” <sup>15</sup> **Their** feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark **their** ways, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace **they** do not know.” <sup>18</sup> “There is no fear of God before **their** eyes.” <sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore **no one** will be declared **righteous** in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”*

1. In verses 9-20, how many times do you see the word(s):

- Paul’s words are from these sources: (verses 10-12 - Psalms 14:1-3, 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20; verse 13a - Psalm 5:9; verse 13b – Psalm 140:3; verse 14 – Psalm 10:7; verses 14-17 – Isaiah 59:7,8; and verse 18 – Psalm 36:1.)

"no one" (4x – 3:11, 12, 20); "their/they" ( 9x – 3:12-18); "righteous" (2x – 3:10,20)

### What does that tell you about the importance of these words?

- Writers in the Old Testament followed the idea of repeating words to emphasize the thoughts/phrases.
- That is true here, the writer was emphasizing how people are depraved and far from the *righteousness* of God.

2. List the things unrighteous people do:

- This list will vary by individual but have multiple people share so you find most of the things listed.
- Groupings are as follows:
- **Actions:** people do not understand; don't seek God; all have turned away; are worthless (in God's sight); do not do good (In God's eyes)
- **Speech:** Throats open graves; tongues deceitful; viperous lips; mouths full of bitterness;
- **Violence:** feet shed blood; miserable/ruined ways; do not know peace
- This list serves to affirm what theologians speak of as *total depravity*, i.e., not that people in their natural state are as bad as they can possibly be, but rather that their entire being is adversely affected by sin. People's whole nature is permeated with it. Human relations also suffer, because society can be no better than those who constitute it. Some of the obvious effects--conflict and bloodshed—have been specified

### 3. Paul quotes Psalm 36:1 in verse 3:18 to identify the reason people are this way. What is the reason?

- *"There is **no fear of God** before their eyes"*
- This is the summation of the root cause for the depravity Paul has listed.
- It was true in his day and ours as well. "Fear" of God isn't even spoken of in traditional or contemporary churches today.
- Today churches are all about His grace, love, peace, joy, salvation. But nothing is said about what happens if people do nothing regarding their salvation.
- By definition, this could be called lying by misrepresentation. A lie by omission occurs when an important fact is left out in order to foster a misconception. When the seller of a car declares it has been serviced regularly but does not tell that a fault was reported at the last service, the seller lies by omission.
- Paul wanted the church at Rome to understand the importance and seriousness of not a proper respect (fearing) for God!

### 4. What are Paul's conclusions in verses 3:19-20?

- Paul has concluded that every human being is: 1) accountable to God for their actions; 2) guilty of having done countless things wrong; 3) will never be justified by God on the basis of anything they are done, even their "best" works.
- He has declared that **no one** will be declared righteous by observing the law.
- Attempting to observe the law only guarantees people will become conscious of their sin!

**Application 2: How might you demonstrate your respect (fear) of God throughout this day? Everyday?**  
(you might write them on a note and keep it with you)

**Topic for Day 3: God's solution: His mercy is through Him making His righteousness available. - 21-23**

**Read these verses or have someone read them – others follow**

*"But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference (implication to no difference in Jews and Gentiles)."*

#### 1. Using a dictionary (Bible dictionary best) write the definitions for righteous and righteousness:

- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary – **righteousness** – holy and upright living, in accordance with God's standard. The word righteousness comes from a root word that means "straightness." It refers to a state that conforms to an authoritative standard. Righteousness is a moral concept. God's character is the definition and source of all righteousness (Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4; Rom. 9:14). Therefore, man's righteousness is defined in terms of God's.
- The sacrificial system in the Old Testament and the cross of Jesus in the New Testament show man's need for righteousness.

- “We are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Is. 64:6).
- The cross of Jesus is a public demonstration of God’s righteousness. God accounts or transfers the righteousness of Christ to those who trust in Him (Rom. 4:3-22; Gal. 3:6; Phil. 3:9). We do not become righteous because of our inherent goodness; God sees us as righteous because of our identification by faith with His Son.

## 2. First things first, according to 3:20 who will be declared righteous by following the law?

- No one! They will only become conscious of their sin.

## 3. What has God done according to verse 21?

“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.”

- This verse says so much you need to spend some time here: “But now” Paul now begins to explain the only way to avoid the wrath of God.
- “A righteousness from God” – nothing He had to do – nothing those in Rome, or that we have done to deserve it.
- Rather, it’s His method of bringing people into right relation to Himself
- “apart from the law” This isn’t saying the law had no value – remember the law was given 1) to restrain people from doing bad things; 2) to point to the need for a Messiah
- “has been made known” literally “has been manifested” – God has made this righteousness known
- Paul makes sure that his readers understand that this righteousness is true by saying “to which the Law and the Prophets testify”
- This phrase always refers to the entire Old Testament, e.g. the Word of God!

## 4. How does a person receive this righteousness (verse 22)?

- Paul says “this righteousness from God comes through **faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.**”
- Paul identifies two things by which this righteousness comes to a person: 1) through faith which is a free gift of God, (Gal. 2:8 “For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith**--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (most scholars say this phrase is referring to **faith**) —not by works, so that no one can boast.”) and 2) the person believing.
- Our faith is a free gift of God which is made available so we have the opportunity to believe Christ is our Savior or not.
- Without God calling us, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and giving us a faith that reveals the truth of His Word, we would never even consider believing to Christ.

## 5. List the process of acquiring a belief in Jesus Christ as recorded in Romans 1:5, 10:9-10, 14:

1. Unwinding **10:14**, Paul identifies how this process begins: Step 1: someone must share the gospel message with the person; Step 2: once they have heard the message; Step 3: believing what has been heard.
  2. Paul touches on this in **1:5**, one must have knowledge of the true meaning of the gospel message and then become obedient to that message.
  3. Finally, Paul says in **10:9-10**, one must **confess** that Jesus is his/her Lord **and believe** that God raised Him from the dead.
- From **verses 21-23** we see God’s “Coup de Grâce” so He can view those in Rome and us as righteous.

## Application 3: What have you learned about God in this lesson?

## Topic for Day 4: Jesus' accomplishment: His mercy and justification offered through Jesus. - 24-26

Read these verses or have someone read them – follow along

*“and are justified freely by His (God’s) grace through faith in His (Jesus’) blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished --- He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus Christ.”*

### 1. Again, using your dictionary, write the definitions for justice, justified, redemption, and atonement:

- Definitions from Nelson’s Dictionary
- **Justice** – the practice of what is right and just. Justice (or “judgment,” KJV) specifies what is right, not only as measured by a code of law, but also by what makes for right relationships as well as harmony and peace.
- The English term justice has a strong legal flavor. But the concept of justice in the Bible goes beyond the law courts to everyday life. The Bible speaks of “doing justice” (Ps. 82:3; Prov. 21:3), whereas we speak of “getting justice.”
- Doing justice is to maintain what is right or to set things right. Justice is done when honorable relations are maintained between husbands and wives, employers and employees, government and citizens, man and God.
- **Justification** – God’s fair and impartial treatment of all people. As a God of justice (Is. 30:18), He is interested in fairness as well as in what makes for right relationships. His actions and decisions are true and right (Job 34:12; Rev. 16:7). His demands on individuals and nations to look after victims of oppression are just demands (Ps. 82). As Lord and Judge, God brings justice to nations (Ps. 67:4), and “sets things right” in behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the victims of injustice (Ps. 103:6; 146:6-9). For the wicked, the unjust, and the oppressor, God as supreme Judge of the earth is a dreaded force. But for all who are unjustly treated, God’s just action is reason for hope.
- **Redemption** – deliverance by payment of a price. In the New Testament, redemption refers to salvation from sin, death, and the wrath of God by Christ’s sacrifice. In the Old Testament, the word redemption refers to redemption by a KINSMAN (Lev. 25:24, 51-52; Ruth 4:6; Jer. 32:7-8), and ransom (Ps. 111:9; 130:7).
- The New Testament emphasizes the tremendous cost of redemption. “the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:19; Eph. 1:7), which is also called an atonement sacrifice, “a propitiation by His blood” (Rom. 3:25). Believers are exhorted to remember the “price” of their redemption as a motivation to personal holiness (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:13-19). The Bible also emphasizes the result of redemption: freedom from sin and freedom to serve God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- **Atonement** – the act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. The word can be broken into three parts which express this great truth in simple but profound terms: “at-one-ment.” Through God’s atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of at-one-ment with God, in spite of our sin.

### 2. How does redemption come (vs. 24)?

- “Freely” is the Greek word *dōrean* meaning “without a cause” – being justified without a cause.
- Paul was saying it was not anything they had done, could do, nor deserve, there was no reason for people to be justified!
- There is *common* grace – all people have experienced this grace – air people breath, sunshine, rain, food, shelter
- It is safe to say that in Paul’s day and ours, there is no one who hasn’t experienced *common* grace
- Then there is *saving* grace – this is what Paul is referring to – it is *saving* grace through Jesus Christ
- *Redemption* is always connected with God’s *grace*.
- This *redemption* comes by the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and *His shed blood!*

- So Paul brings to the church in Rome, a reminder of God's solution and Jesus' accomplishment.

### 3. His atonement is achieved by faith in what (vs. 25)?

- Faith in Jesus' blood.
- To experience His atonement we must respond to His free gift of grace and faith by believing His shed blood covers our sins.
- A word you don't hear today is *propitiation* (KJV) which speaks of another facet of our *righteousness* in Christ.
- *Propitiation* is the deflection of God's wrath – Jesus deflected God's wrath by His sacrifice of His holiness and purity by becoming a man and taking on our sins!
- Some may have concerns or confusion by the wording in **25** regarding His forbearance and what follows those words.
- A simple way to look at that is this: When Jesus Christ came, all those who had the Messiah as the object of their faith in the Old Testament, God *justified*.

### 4. What attributes (character traits) of God do you find in verses 24-26?

- Encourage everyone to share on this one – might just go around the group so everyone can share.
- Grace (**24**), Justifier (**24-26**), Redeemer (**24**), Sacrificial Father (**25**), Just (**25-26**), Patient (forbearance) (**25**), Faithful (**26**)

### Application 4: What is something you have learned, or been reminded of, that you can apply to your life?

#### Topic for Day 5: Our response: Don't boast, but by faith, accept His mercy and believe in Jesus. - 27-31

#### 1. How many times is the word *faith* used in these five verses? What does that say to you about faith?

- Five times (vs. 27, 28, 30-2x, 31)
- Faith being used redundantly this many times identifies Paul's intensity regarding the need for faith.

#### 2. After reading Hebrews 11:1, in your own words write a definition of faith:

- **Hebrews 11:1** "*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*"
- Nelson' Dictionary - a belief in or confident attitude toward God, involving commitment to His will for one's life.

#### 3. We sometimes hear others boasting about their faith and relationship with God, but what does Paul say about boasting?

- He says, "*Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.*" (**3:27a**)
- What did the Jews have to be *proud/boastful* about? They were proud to be a Jew;
- They boasted about being God's chosen people, ancestors of Messiah, God's promises.
- They boasted of their faith, their special relationship with God, they had the law, and so on.
- Paul was saying (paraphrasing) if you have nothing to do with your salvation, then how can you boast?
- The moment the object of our faith is Jesus Christ, He *redeems us* and God *sees His justification*
- Simply put, when a person thinks they can *do something* to bring themselves nearer to God, what they have actually done is confess their *unawareness* of their true distance from God!

#### 4. How would you define self-righteousness and how do you avoid it?

- Webster - self-righteous is being convinced of one's own righteousness especially in contrast with the actions and beliefs of others; narrow-mindedly moralistic

**5. Find two principles Paul identifies in verses 27-28:**

- Paul is speaking of the principle of the law and the principle of faith – both in **vs. 27**.

**6. From verse 31, how does faith uphold the law?**

**3:31** - *“Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”*

- There are those who say the Law no longer has purpose – they are called *antinomianist*
- Antinomianism means *to oppose the law* – the law no longer applies
- This idea is present in our day – some of their ideas:
  - 1) There are those who say the Holy Spirit teaches them all they need to know
  - They don’t need the law to teach them what pleases God or what doesn’t
  - 2) There are those who say the Christ has covered all sin and God no longer sees their sins
  - And from this logic (which isn’t wrong as stated), they conclude their behavior doesn’t matter to God
  - The truth is, no person who is really in Christ will treat God’s Law flippantly
  - 3) There are those who say today that the only law we need to follow is the law of love!
  - It doesn’t take a genius to see where that faulty thinking has gotten us!
  - The truth is this, if a person really lived the law of love Christ spoke of in **Matt. 22:37-38** *“Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*
  - They would be following the 10 commandments and all the other commandments in Scripture!
  - Back to our question, How does being saved by grace through faith uphold the Law?
    - 1<sup>st</sup> – it establishes the Law in God’s character – God is a Holy God – God demands holiness and the law holds out the principle of holiness
    - His love provided the way for us to fulfill this Holy requirement of the Law
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> – the law shows us our sinfulness – keeps us straight, having a repentant heart
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> – the way in which the law is established, it kills our old nature – it convicts us of guilt
    - The law is like a mirror – it shows the dirt but **it** can’t do anything about the dirt
    - 4<sup>th</sup> – most important – the law establishes the final authority of God as Judge on law breakers!
    - God *righteous* judgment on sin and His salvation by *grace* both uphold the law!
    - It can be said that a person with this One Faith, upholds this One Law, to show the One God’s authority.

**Application 5: After all this study, what will your response be? Have you believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior and committed your life to Him? If not, will you pray for His guidance?**

**If you have, how would you explain coming to Christ to a stranger (writing it down is good)**

**Closing Comments – (~<n> min)**

- In closing, Paul has done an excellent job of identifying the peoples problems in the church in Rome and these problems still exist today.
- His letter could be sent to CCPC and it would apply in the same way.
- We have seen God’s solution to the problem, freely offered
- We have seen Jesus’ accomplishments on our behalf
- And we close with the thoughts of what has, is, or will be our response to all this?

**Closing Prayers – (~1 min)**