

Booklet Two

Justification By Grace Through Faith

The Heart of the Gospel

<i>April 22nd</i>	<i>Romans 1:18-32</i>	<i>Wrath</i>
<i>April 29th</i>	<i>Romans 2:1-29</i>	<i>Righteous Judgment</i>
<i>May 6th</i>	<i>Romans 3:1-20</i>	<i>Faithful</i>
<i>May 13th</i>	<i>Romans 3:21-31</i>	<i>Righteousness</i>
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“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.”

Romans 3:20

Romans 1:18-32

Wrath

The good news of Jesus is a truthful message. It speaks to the truth of human brokenness. It speaks to our true condition. Not what we want to hear, but what we need to hear. The truth is that the relationship with God, creation, and other people is marked by destruction and foolishness. Paul says that we as human beings “suppress the truth” meaning we ignore our condition or distract ourselves with self-centered activities in order to not have to face the truth. This blind foolishness leads us away from blessing and goodness. God gives over, or allows, mankind to taste the fruit of this way of destruction. The end result of this way of foolishness is death and separation of all that is good and right.

1. Why is the revelation of God’s wrath so important to understanding the gospel (v.18)? This wrath is the anger of God. Not a violent anger but a settled opposition and anger at the godlessness and wickedness of sin and its destruction of people.
2. In verse 18 Paul characterized wickedness as the “suppression of truth”. Discuss ways this is done and what it looks like in ours and other people’s lives?
3. How does the created world around us point to God? How does creation point to truth? (vs. 19)
4. In verses 21-23 Paul explains the nature of sin. How is all sin ultimately against God?
5. In verses 24-28 we are told a few times that God “gave them over”. What does this tell us about God’s nature? Why do you think God honors our desires? What is the relationship between our desires (loves) and our worship? How do our desires reveal themselves in our actions?
6. In verses 26-32 we are given a list of very specific human actions that reveal wickedness and godlessness. Why is it important to have specific lists of activities and attitudes that reveal the wrath of God? Why do we react negatively to being told some things are wrong? How does truth expose these things in our lives for what they are?
7. What is the end result of these sinful actions and attitudes in our lives? Why is it so important to understand this truth?

Romans 2:1-29

Righteous Judgment

The gospel is indeed good news, but one must accept the bad news about himself and his condition before he can realize his need for the good news. He must recognize that he/she is poor in spirit, spiritually bankrupt, absolutely with no power to do anything on his own to gain the kingdom of heaven and salvation. Before we get to the gospel (the good news) justification by faith alone, we must be brought kicking and screaming, if necessary, before the holy standard of God's law so that we might be duly persuaded of our need for the gospel. RC Sproul said, God's righteous judgment shows no partiality. It is the same for Jews and Greeks.

The main idea of Romans 2 is God's judgment against evil and the fact that evil doers will be judged. God is concerned about the heart. Nobody can rely on being a Jew, having Abraham as their father, being circumcised, going to church, teaching Sunday school for 25 years, or being better than their neighbor as a means of salvation. It is not the hearers of the law that are righteous before God, but the doers of the law. All need the good news, for all mankind is desperate. God is interested in the heart of mankind.

1. Chapter 2 builds on the theme of chapter one of God's wrath against mankind's sinfulness. Why do you think Paul introduces this theme to those who, "pass judgment on someone else"?
Verses 1-4
2. How can religiosity produce pride in our lives?
3. Why are we told God's wrath is poured out on the religious (verses 5-11)?
4. In verses 12-16 Paul introduces the theme of the law. Does this idea of the law extend beyond just Judaism? If so how do we see this law principle in other places?
5. How is the human conscience a reflection of the law principle?
6. How does the judgment (v.16) of God relate to this law?
7. In verses 17-28 Paul addresses the religious Jew. How do you think Paul's own story (Acts 9; Acts 22) impacted his understanding the dangers of the law?
8. What is the predominate sin of the religious Jew in verses 17-27?
9. What is the difference between outward and inward identity with God (v.28-29)?
10. Paul introduces the idea of the Spirit in verse 29. How do passages from the O.T point to this truth? Read Jeremiah 31:30-37; Ezekiel 36:24-32.

Romans 3:1-20

Faithful

There is amazing value in following Jesus as a Savior and Lord. But, have you ever thought that value could even run deeper than you ever believed? Great news—the value is so much deeper than we can wrap our minds around.

At the heart of this amazing value is God's faithfulness to you, His child. His faithfulness cannot change, even if we are unfaithful to Him.

1. In chapter 3, Paul explores the problem of people placing their emphasis upon outward performance or believing that a relationship with God is dependent upon what they do. (We will also discuss this in chapters 9-11). He begins with a rhetorical question: "is there any advantage to being a Jew?" How does Paul answer this question? We may, at times, ask similar questions--Is there any advantage to a Christian upbringing (even if you did not have a personal relationship with Jesus)? What's the value of reading my Bible?
2. In verse 3, Paul asks another question. Does the unfaithfulness of hypocritical people take away from God's faithful work in our world? Have you ever heard people use this excuse about not having faith in God? Why do you think this is this such a prevalent excuse for people? How does Paul respond (v.4)? How should we respond when people use this excuse for not responding to God?
3. Verses 5-8 explore other common justifications that people use to excuse their rebellion. How does Paul address the temptation to do whatever we want? What does this say about our true condition as human beings? Why does the way we live matter to God and others (v.6)? What does the final judgment of God do to our understanding of life on earth? How does this point to God's faithfulness (v.4)?
4. In verses 9-20 Paul concludes this section of Romans that deals with the human condition and God's righteous judgment on all people.
5. What is the conclusion to the human condition (v.9,10)? List the multiple symptoms of the human condition in verses 11-18? How have you seen these symptoms in your own life and the lives of others?
6. Verse 19 says no one can stand on their own righteousness. All people will stand before a Holy God to be judged. How does this truth change the way you view yourself? Others?
7. In verse 20 Paul introduces the purpose of the law principle. Why is it that God has given us the law? How does the knowledge of our true condition help us?

Romans 3:21-31

Righteousness

Romans 3:21 is a turning point in the letter. Up to this point, Paul has been sharing the truth of our sinful unrighteous condition under the wrath of God. In verse 21 we are told “But now”. Many times, in our world we are told flattery and then, the bad news (but...). Not God. He tells us the truth then he gives us the good news of His grace! Apart from human effort God has revealed His righteousness. This is a righteousness given through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness is a big word but it simple means that everything is right, good, and at peace. All this is made possible through the blood atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. This is called justification and redemption. God’s redemption makes righteousness (right, good, peace) possible for all people who have faith in Jesus. This is good news!

1. Verse 21 says “apart” from the law the righteousness of God is made known. What is the significance of this revelation being apart from the law? How does the law and prophets testify to this revelation?
2. Verse 22 says righteousness is a gift. Why is this significant? Who is the giver and how does that change everything? To receive the gift faith must be placed in Jesus. How does Jesus uniquely reveal the righteousness of God? How is faith available to everyone (Jew and Gentile) alike?
3. Verse 23 reminds us of our true human condition (Chapters 1-2). How does Paul define sin? What is the difference between people defining sin and God defining sin? How would you attempt to describe God’s glory?
4. Justified is a legal term for righteousness (right, good, peace). Why is the message of free justification so radical? How is this different than our world? How would you define grace? How would you define redemption? How does the person of Jesus help us understand grace and redemption?
5. Verse 25 introduces the idea of atonement. This was a term the Jews would have understood from the Old Testament sacrificial system. The atonement was literally a covering. It signifies a covering over guilt and punishment. It also has a positive meaning of forgiveness and bringing into right relationship. There are two aspects to atonement. 1. Propitiation- to turn one’s wrath away from the object of a just judgment (to pardon). 2. Expiation- to provide for the one under just judgment (to remove guilt). How does Jesus sacrifice on the cross and shedding of blood do this for us?
6. How is God’s glory revealed in verse 26? What does this verse tell us about God’s character?
7. Verse 27-31 offer a response to God. How do you see humility or pride in your response to God? Paul also begins to introduce in more detail the theme of faith in the book of Romans. The only right response to who God is and what Jesus has done is faith. How does humility lay the foundation for faith in our lives? How does the law expose our need for faith in Jesus?

Romans 4:1-25

Faith

In chapter 4, Paul continues the theme of righteousness and justification. He uses Abraham as an example to demonstrate that Abraham's right standing with God came through faith and trust - not through works. Verse 16 remind us that the promise of God "rests on grace". Because justification and righteousness were made available by the 'work' of Jesus in His death and resurrection, they are applied to our lives through receiving the gift - by trust...by faith. In regard to our justification, there is no longer a need for work. We get a wonderful definition and example of faith in verse 21, "[Abraham was] *fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised.*"

1. Paul introduces the importance of faith by introducing us to a man, Abraham. What is the significance of having a human example of faith? Who are some examples of faith in your life?
2. In verses 1-3 Paul argues that Abraham was Justified the same way we are in Jesus through faith. Paul is saying that the Righteousness of God has been given the same way all through human history, through faith in God. Why is this truth so important for us to understand? How does the faithfulness and unchanging nature of God give us confidence in our faith?
3. In verses 4-8 Paul makes a distinction between a gift and a reward that is earned. When you receive a gift you could never earn, what is your response? What is the radical truth found in verse 5? How is this message so radically different from all other religions or philosophies in our world?
4. Verses 9-15 address the conditions for receiving God's blessing and righteousness. Are there conditions? How does this message of faith alone make the good news good for all people despite culture or background?
5. In verses 16-25 Paul gives us the clearest definition of faith in the Bible. After reading these verses how would you define faith?
6. How does Abrahams example give us hope?
7. Read verse 21 and put it into your own words? How is this definition of faith helpful for your understanding of what faith in God is all about?
8. In verse 24-25 what is God's promise to us that we are called to believe and be fully persuaded of?