

ROMANS SEASON 1 THE GOSPEL. OUR NEED.

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What book or movie have you enjoyed that has a big, unexpected reveal in it?
 - Tell of a time when you tried to get out of something you did wrong. Did it work or not?
 - What's something from Romans that has stuck in your memory so far?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

These opening chapters of Romans are like a puzzle, and in today's passage, some big pieces come together. Paul has presented us with a tension that needs a resolution. If God promised to judge sin impartially, but he also promised Abraham to bless the whole world through him, it can be difficult to see how both those things can happen. But it can and it has.

How We Aren't Justified

READ: Romans 3:19-20

DISCUSS: Why do you think no human being can be made right by obeying the law?

The verdict is in, all people are under sin, and there's nothing we can say to deny it. At this point a solution is often posed—do more good than bad and you'll get a pass. However, it wouldn't be just. As an example, if you get caught in a theft and say, "Well officer, this month I spent 29 out of the 31 days not stealing," he wouldn't excuse your theft. The law was never meant to be a rubric so that if you get a B+ or higher, you escape judgment.

How We Are Justified

READ: Romans 3:21-24

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from these verses and why?

You can't be justified (go from unrighteous to righteous) through law obedience, but you are made right through faith in Jesus. This requires giving up control. If we could be justified by obeying rules, it'd be within our control to make God give us a pass. But our sin is against God, and that means it's up to him how he forgives. He's chosen to justify people through Jesus. It's up to us to either hang onto control or to trust him.

Why It's Just

READ: Romans 3:25-26

DISCUSS: What do you think a "propitiation" is?

For Jews, propitiation referred to the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle. It's the place where God's presence would come and he would cleanse them of their sin by the blood of animal sacrifices. For Gentiles, propitiation referred to the sacrifice you'd bring to a pagan altar to turn a pagan god's wrath away from you. Jesus is God's true place of mercy. It's where we're cleansed of our sin by his blood, and it's where his wrath turns away from us because it was poured out on Jesus. Sin is judged and sinners are justified.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

Boasting in Christ Alone

READ: Romans 3:27-31

The choice is whether to boast or to believe. Paul uses the word boasting to describe what the Jews were doing wrong—pointing to their national identity to excuse them from judgment. On judgment day, if we try pointing to anything we've done and say we deserve a pass from God, we'll come up short. But for those who put their faith in Jesus, the verdict of judgment day is already in. We're saved because God has made us righteous in Christ.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- Can you firmly say that you've put your faith in Jesus for your justification?
 - Worry and fear often come from us trusting other things to make our life worthwhile and not trusting Christ. Are there areas in your life where you see this pattern?
 - Belief happens in the heart. How does the willingness of Jesus to be a propitiation for you impact your heart?
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PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Pray over any areas where anxiety and worry are showing up, that our trust in Jesus would bring his peace.
- Pray for opportunities to share this good news of God's justification with others.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?