

# Justified by Faith Alone

## Romans 3:9-4:25

With a stunning chain of quotations from the Old Testament, Paul sums up his “law” case against the world in 3:9-3:20. All have sinned and fall far short of having earned God’s approval. He then returns to that sweet gospel with which he had begun his letter: there is a righteousness—a justified status of ‘not guilty’—that God gives to all people freely. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, our Substitute, all sins have been atoned for. This justification comes to us by faith, and by faith alone. It is not earned by keeping the law. Abraham is a perfect illustration of this truth. Scripture says, “He believed and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Circumcision added nothing to his righteousness. Neither did the law. It was rather his by faith alone in the promise of God, the God who gives life to the dead.

### 1. Read Romans 3:9-20

#### **The Point of the Law: All Have Sinned! None is Righteous!**

- ✓ Notice how Paul begins with a summary statement, “There is no one righteous, not even one.”
- ✓ He then lists sins against the first table of the law before moving on to sins against the second table of the law: all sin has its beginning in unbelief.
- ✓ No one does good + all are corrupt = total depravity.
- ✓ Study 3:19-20  
What can the law do?  
What can the law not do?
- ✓ A/D “Passing a law will not make people better.”

### 2. Study Romans 3:21-31

#### **The Heart of the Gospel: Justification by Grace Alone Through Faith**

- ✓ Three analogies
  - Law court
  - Slave market
  - O.T. Sacrifice on Day of Atonement
- ✓ Justification=justified status; the status of one who has been declared ‘not guilty’
- ✓ God’s motive: grace alone!

- ✓ A universal justification = unconditional gospel

- ✓ Redemption: set free from slavery by the payment of a ransom

- ✓ A located grace: in Christ alone!

- ✓ An atoning sacrifice....in his blood!

- ✓ God’s wrath...Jesus our substitute...blood sacrifice = the gospel Paul preaches

- ✓ Faith...not works = Faith alone

- ✓ This teaching upholds the law because...
  - i. No one takes the rigor of God’s demand more seriously than Paul
  - ii. The law exposes sin

### 3. Study Romans 4

#### **Justification Illustrated: our Father Abraham**

- ✓ vv. 1-5 Abraham was saved by faith alone just as we are:

Paul proves this by quoting and explaining Genesis 15:6.

He again shows how works/boasting and faith are mutually exclusive

- ✓ vv. 6--8 David's experience corroborates this truth:  
Paul quotes from Psalm 32:1-2
- ✓ vv. 9-12 Circumcision added nothing to Abraham's blessed state of forgiveness
- ✓ vv. 11-25 And this righteousness—along with the inheritance it brings—cannot be achieved by our keeping the law. It is a promise that can only be received by faith, **faith in the God who gives life to the dead and who calls things that are not as though they were.** That's what makes it certain for all Abraham's children, Jew and Gentile.
- ✓ vv.18-21 The nature of faith is to cling to the promise of God. To let the promise of God be true no matter what we see or feel or experience in life.
- ✓ vv. 25 By faith we trust in God who raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus was given over to death because we had sinned. He was raised to life again because we had been declared not guilty.

4. Closing thoughts:

Walther once wrote, "The gospel is a rare guest in a believer's heart, whereas the law is their daily and familiar companion." Would you agree?

How would you use these verses:

- With someone who doesn't feel forgiven?
- With someone who feels he hasn't done enough to please God in his life?
- With someone who is struggling with death?

We all live by different verdicts in life: the way our friends think about us; the way our peers evaluate us; the way our boss talks about us; the way our own heart speaks to us

What is the one verdict that matters?  
How can we "face facts" like father Abraham did?

Think of the lost son on his homeward journey after wasting his inheritance. How does he show a lack of understanding of the height and breadth and depth of his father's unconditional grace? (Luke 15:17-19)

Now think of the older son coming in from the fields. How does he show that he has no true understanding of why it is his father loves him? (Luke 15:29-30)

*For next time: read Romans 5-6 "The Joy and Power of Forgiveness"*