

Read: Romans 3:21-25a, 27-28

We Proclaim the Truth about Sin and Grace

Romans 3:22b-24

There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In so many ways, we are all different. We live in different places. We have different families. We have different gifts and abilities. We have different likes and dislikes. We like or dislike different foods. We have different backgrounds, different cultures, different schools. We even look different. But the apostle Paul begins our devotion like this, “There is no difference . . .”

Why would Paul say that if we are all different in so many ways? Paul explains, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .”? All have sinned? All have fallen short? Yes, all of us have disobeyed God. None of us have been perfect. None of us have perfectly listened to our parents or teachers. None of us have perfectly loved our brothers, sisters, friends, classmates, or neighbors. God tells us in his Word that we must be as perfect as he is. The problem is, we aren’t perfect all the time. All of us have fallen short, from the newest newborn to the oldest adult. No matter who we are, where we come from, or what we look like, none of us have been that perfect.

That means we all deserve punishment for our sins, eternal, forever punishment. Yet God loved us with a love that none of us deserved. We call that “grace”—God’s undeserved love that caused him to send Jesus to be our Savior. Paul describes it this way. We “are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

“Justified” and “redemption” are big words but really important. He “redeemed” us. He bought us back by facing our punishment in our place. By doing that, we are “justified.” Like a judge in a courtroom, God has declared us “not guilty” because Jesus suffered in our place. That becomes ours through faith in Jesus. Now God looks at you and me “just as if we had never sinned,” all because of Jesus.

We are all different in so many ways, but we are all more alike than we think. We have all sinned. We have all fallen short of being holy like God. Yet we are all loved by our God, who sent his Son to rescue us. We can all rejoice in this: Christ has paid for all the sins of all!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- How are we all different? How are we all alike?
- What is God's grace?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does it mean to be "justified freely by his grace"?
- Define redemption.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How does knowing that we have all sinned help you to understand yourself and other people around you?
- How does knowing that Jesus has paid for the sins of all people impact how you look at other people no matter who they are, where they come from, or what they look like?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, your love for me led you to take my place. Thank you for living perfectly for me. Thank you for dying for me. Help me to live each day as your redeemed child. Amen.

Hymn: CW 382:1,4 – My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare to make no other claim but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

When he shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,
Clothed in his righteousness alone, faultless to stand before his throne.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.