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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“Made Righteous in Christ”

Romans 3:21-31

VERSE DISCOVERY: Romans 3:21-31 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- Ask students to name different kinds of sins and write them on the board. Explain that sin has made its mark on humanity. But, the blood of Christ is like an eraser. It wipes away all the wrongs and transgressions that people have done and makes them righteous before God (start erasing each of the listed offences).
- Search online for object lessons about sin and salvation to help introduce the lesson for this week.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-11

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23). No matter who we are, where we come from, or what we have or have not done. All humanity is marked by the stain of sin. Every life throughout the history of this world is in need of a Savior.

From my devotion, *When Jesus Cleansed our Temple*, I wrote:

“One of the events most etched in people’s minds and history when recalling the events that occurred during this blessed time of the years was the cleansing of the temple (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46). It is during this time when Jesus had had enough! It was time to get the house of God cleaned up! Unashamedly and without regard for roving eyes and the tsk tsk tsking of the people’s lips, He flips tables over and starts throwing people out to get His Father’s house back in order. With holy force, He sought to reclaim what was rightfully God’s.

But, can I tell you, His fight didn’t stop there. He wanted more than a building to reclaim for God, He wanted people that rightfully belong to Him. He wouldn’t gain that by flipping over tables, rather He flipped over the gates of hell. He wouldn’t get there by driving people with wrong intents away, but with force, He drove the enemy of our soul away and crushed him under His feet. He wanted to win the temple of people’s heart for His Father and this fight could only be won on the cross.

The whips that were used against Him were nothing in comparison to the sting He was delivering to the enemy. The ridicule He experienced couldn’t overshadow the words of

comfort and the prayers of forgiveness He offered as He hung there. The thorns that were placed on Him and the sword that pierced His side couldn't contend with the piercing plea of souls searching for everlasting freedom the cross could provide. On the cross, He would remain until the victory to reclaim the lost and hurting world to His Father was won. On the cross, He would stay until the temple of the one who would believe in Him could be cleansed and made new that true worship and true fellowship with the Father could be restored.

When Jesus stepped in the place for us, He cleansed our temples with the only thing that could work: His Blood. His blood is the only thing that could turn the enemy of our soul upside down. His blood is the only thing that could deliver from the eternal death to come. His blood is the only way to reclaim the hearts of the people; the temple of their souls for the Father.

When Jesus cleaned our temple, He did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. More than a building was rightfully returned to God. You and I and everyone who believes were won by the cleansing power of the cross..." (WordForLifeSays.com)

And now, we are made righteous in Christ!

Activities

- What does Jesus' gift on the cross mean to you personally? Write and reflect on your responses using the **Journal Pages** provided on site. You can also use the **Blank Journal Pages** to bring out your own ideas and lesson points.
- Younger students can draw a picture of a cross and write their name on it in the **Draw the Scene** section found on site. Jesus personally covers each one of us on the cross who believe in Him and accepts His gift of salvation.
- Search online for games about redemption and salvation.
- Alternate activity such as **Word Search, Crossword, and more** are available on site for those who just want to work with printed materials

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Romans 3:24).***
- Find a Bible verse review game online.
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 12)

Life

Throughout this week, find a Bible verse or hymn that revolves around the blood of Christ. Rehearse it or sing it and get it in your spirit the wonderful gift we have received through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

TOPIC:

“Made Righteous in Christ”

Romans 3:21-31

VERSE DISCOVERY: Romans 3:21-31 (KJV, Public Domain)

Since “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23; discussed further in this lesson), then how can one ever be truly justified by a holy and righteous God?

The answer is a simple one although it is not always simply accepted: Jesus Christ. Through His sacrificial atoning of our sins, He changed our former status into one who now becomes righteous in the eyes of our righteous God, Paul explains in this lesson.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Romans 3:21-22 “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”

Although the Apostle Paul did not plant the Church in Rome as he had in other cities, he still took a fatherly-leadership role in helping this church to thrive to be all that God calls them to be.

He prayed for them and desired to visit them (1:1-15), but in the meantime, he wrote this letter to encourage and instruct them on the matter of salvation, God’s righteousness, and how we as sinners, can be made righteous in the eyes of God.

After establishing his fearless zeal in wanting to preach the gospel to them, for in it, he knows, “*the righteousness of God*” is revealed (1:15-17), which is really the main focus of this letter, Paul continues on discussing what all this means.

God’s righteousness can be described as everything just and right and holy. God is right, there is no other way to put it. What He does is right. Always. His ways are higher than ours

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and they are above reproach (Isaiah 55:8-9). Opposite that is the “ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Romans 1:18).

Since the Fall in the garden, mankind has been corrupted by sin. Since that day, when the age of innocence has passed off the scene, mankind has been subjected to the “*wrath of God*” (1:18), “*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God*” (1:21). They, mankind, are accused of changing the glory of God (1:23) and the truth of God (1:25) to follow after sinful ways. Although creation itself testifies to the power of God (1:20), Paul sums up the ungodly truth of sinful man by saying, “*Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*” (Romans 1:32).

God’s judgment is against ALL SIN and He will render to “*every man according to his deeds,*” (2:6). It doesn’t matter who they are, Jew or Gentile. It doesn’t matter if they have been raised in the Law or not (2:11-15). Anything that one can boast in outside of faith in Jesus Christ will profit nothing in that coming day (more on this later).

The law cannot justify one before God. The law, and it’s following the adherence thereof, cannot earn one true salvation. The law’s purpose was to bring about “*the knowledge of sin,*” (3:20), but it could never erase sin for good and make people righteous before God.

Then Paul introduces a “**but now**” moment that begins to explain how the “**righteousness of God**” is “**manifested.**” This “**but now**” introduces the wonderful realization that mankind is not left to drift in the world of sin without help; without an anchor to steady and save them. There is a way for them to receive “**the righteousness of God**” and it is “**by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.**”

In Christ, lies that hope to be justified before the Father, accomplishing something the law never could do. “*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,*” (Romans 8:3-4).

In the work of the cross of Christ, salvation is available for them that believe. Jesus Christ is the only answer to heal mankind from their dreaded sinfulness and to make them right before a holy and just God, “**upon all them that believe.**”

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It doesn't matter who they are, where they're from, or what they've done: **“there is not difference.”** Any and all who turn to Jesus Christ by faith can be saved. The answer to all our sins' woes is fulfilled in what Christ accomplished on the cross (compare Romans 10:12).

ALL HAVE SINNED AND NEED TO BE JUSTIFIED

Romans 3:23-26 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Just as there is no difference in who can receive the righteousness of God by faith in Christ, there is no difference in who can be categorized as a sinner in need of this grace, in need of redemption, **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”** Everyone who ever was and ever will be needs to be saved by the redemptive blood of Christ. No one measures up to God's standard on their own. We all need Jesus!

It is through Him, where one can be **“justified freely by his grace.”** The word **“justifies”** signals the “being made right before God” part, while **“grace”** speaks of the undeserving mercy we receive in that. Our guilt had us bound, but Jesus set us free through **“redemption,”** by redeeming us. He paid the cost. He *“gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,”* (1 Timothy 2:6). So that our eternity could be secured before the Father, He **“freely”** satisfied the demand against mankind's sin.

Jesus became our eternal sacrifice that atoned for our sins once and for all: **“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”** The Bible declares and attests to this truth in other areas, saying, *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,”* (1 John 4:10). The word **“propitiation”** in both of these verses speak of Christ's complete, atoning sacrifice. **“His blood”** was shed that we might be made free (compare Hebrews 10:4). Christ died for *our* sins. Our justification is not a human invention. God **“set forth”** Christ and the plan of salvation through Christ.

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“To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.” Not only today are our past sins taken care of, but the yesterday and the yesteryear sins of sinners are taken care of for all who believe, both before the cross and after the cross (compare Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:15)! Hallelujah! The **“past,”** and those in the past, have been covered by the cross, also! The cross, and what Jesus did on the cross, is enough to satisfy and uphold the demands of God’s **“righteousness”** against the sin and sinners of today, yesterday, and forevermore. Nothing else is needed. It has already been proven that nothing else will do (read Hebrews 9:12-14).

“Through the forbearance of God.” God’s own **“righteousness”** (above), which is the very “habitation of His throne” (Psalm 97:2), is shown in His willingness and longsuffering to withhold final actions upon mankind’s sin as a whole before the time of the cross. At the time of His death, all sin, past, present, and future, were placed upon our Savior as He hung on that cross. It’s what one does with the revelation of the cross for their own life that makes the difference. This is what one will be judged by.

God has always been fair in His actions toward humanity, sinful though they may be. He gives everyone time and space to repent: *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,”* (2 Peter 3:9). But, as we know, all will not come to repentance. The time of ignorance is over and there is an appointed day for the judgment for all, past, present, and future (Acts 17:30-31).

But, for the one that **“believeth in Jesus,”** God justifies. Because of what Christ did, and because of our belief and acceptance of what Christ did as our Savior, God credits that to our account as righteousness. God declares them/us right and justified! Mankind, any person in human history outside of Jesus Christ, is far from perfect and right in the eyes of God. But, when one believes in Jesus, for all He accomplished on the cross and accepts that sacrifice for their life; when God looks at that person, He no longer sees them and their wrongs. He sees Jesus and His right, and He is the one that declares them now to be righteous.

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BY FAITH, JESUS IS ENOUGH

Romans 3:27-31 “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

Because everything is based solely on what Christ has done, and because it is only God who is able to aptly justify one, what right does anyone have for “**boasting**”? They don’t! That’s the plain and simple truth. No one can make themselves righteous. No “**law**” could declare one righteous. Nor, could any “**works**” (compare Ephesians 2:9). Salvation is not something that can be earned. It is something we are blessed with through “**faith**.”

Instead of being a source of contention, this should be a relief, for salvation does not depend on what a person can do perfectly, it only depends on what Christ has already done perfectly. Only the self-righteous would find some kind of joy in trying to pat themselves on the back for a job well-done in trying to get to heaven for all eternity on their own accord or by their own works. But self-righteousness won’t get you or me there. Only those who are found Christ-righteous will enter in.

Therefore, “**boasting**” is kicked to the curb. “**Boasting**” is a symbol of pride. “**Boasting**” glorifies self and what self can accomplish on its own. But salvation, I repeat, is NOT something that people can accomplish on their own. Everyone needs forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ! “*No flesh shall glory in his presence,*” (1 Corinthians 1:29). National heritage, religious pride, or any other reason one may exalt themselves believing them worthy of this great gift by what they have done or do - all of that is made null and void before the perfect sacrifice of Christ. For it is ONLY “*by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,*” (Ephesians 2:8).

True salvation requires true “**faith**” in the right source, and we are not it, nor were the receivers of this letter in the Roman church. What self can do is not it. The gospel tells the story and the way of that right source who is Christ our Lord. He is it! Any other way outside of Christ is “**excluded.**”

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“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” Paul said. The reality of this truth permeates Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians. Prior to reaching the text of study in this lesson, in verse 20 of this same chapter, Paul writes, *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight...”* Later in Romans, he will write, *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* (Romans 5:1). Here, he is declaring exactly what Christ’s sacrifice on the cross accomplished for the sin-sick soul. He justified us and made us right with the Father (Romans 5:1). None of this was based on our own efforts or human goodness. Our new position in Christ was and is solely based on the sacrificial love of Christ that propelled Him through any hurt and pain He was personally feeling to think outside of Himself and see a world of humanity drowning in an ocean of wayward disobedience and rebellion leading them to a lost path of which there is no return unless their souls be saved!

Because of what He did, we now have “access by faith into this grace” and we have a reason to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” (Romans 5:2). With His blood, He bought the key that would give us an open door to our heavenly Father. And, with everything we face, our end reward is hope (Romans 5:3-5).

He, Jesus, did it all for us and our job is to whole-heartedly accept it, accept His work, accept His sacrifice **“by faith.”** Those words, **“by faith”**, *“through faith”*, *“the law of faith”*, and other references to faith appears no less than thirty-seven times in the book of Romans alone. The **“law”**, and the works of the law couldn’t do it (compare Acts 13:38-39). *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it written, The just shall live by faith,”* (Romans 1:17). It’s a faith thing!

And, this is God’s plan for all. It’s not just for the **“Jews”** or for the **“Gentiles.”** There is only **“one God”** with one plan of salvation for all to accept: faith in what Jesus Christ has already done.

Does this make the law **“void”**? Absolutely not! Through Christ, God fulfilled the law. The law was **“established”**. Before His death, Jesus plainly stated, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil,”* (Matthew 5:17). In Him, the requirements of the law were fully and completely satisfied. Therefore, God is just

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when He makes one righteous through Christ because, in Christ, all the law is fulfilled. By faith, Jesus is enough!

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TOPIC:

“Made Righteous in Christ”

Romans 3:21-31

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T** or **F**. Everyone needs to be saved.
2. What are two ways people may try to earn salvation on their own? (Romans 3:27)
A. Works **B.** Praying **C.** Law **D.** Circumcision
3. According to the lesson, what does it mean to be “**Justified by Faith**”? (Romans 3:28)

4. What does the word “**Propitiation**” mean? (Romans 3:25)

5. God is a _____ of him which believes in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

A. Judge **B.** Vindicator **C.** Justifier **D.** Opposer

6. **T** or **F**. All people are sinners before they accept Christ.
7. Why does the lesson tell us that no one has a reason to boast? Explain.

