



The Gospel Life

Part 2 God's gracious solution:

Jesus Christ

Romans 3:21-4:25



Winter Life Group Guide 2022

CONTENTS

About this Study	4
Prayer, Care, Share	5
1 Gift of Grace	6
2 Received by Faith	8
3 Justified through Faith	10
4 Faith to Forgiveness	12
5 Inadequacy of Religion	14
6 Saving Faith	16
7 Miracle of God	18
8 Personal Faith	20
Gospel: Saving Faith	22
Sharing Your Testimony	23
Notes & Prayers	24

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Romans 3:21-4:25 (part 2)

We have made our way through the first of five parts in our series in Romans and it is now time to begin part 2. In part one, Paul took the bulk of that section's 81 verses to help us understand better *mankind's greatest problem*. That problem of course is sin. Sin has invaded all mankind and God's wrath is against it. And since no one is excluded from this problem, then everyone needs God's remedy.

This leads us to part 2 which we have titled, **God's Gracious Solution**. Part 2 is 36 verses in length and it takes us to the end of chapter 4. It begins in 3:21 where Paul writes,

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested ... through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believes. - Romans 3:21-22

Everyone comes into this world lacking a righteousness that is required to be in relationship with God. And, there is no amount of effort that can bring about this righteousness. But, this righteousness can come to one through faith in Jesus Christ. It is, in fact, Jesus' righteousness that is gifted to the repentant. So yes, while it is true that all have a sin problem, it is also true that God, out of his great love, has acted to provide a remedy. Though we have sinned, we can be as Paul says in 3:24...

... justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus - Romans 3:24

In this potent second section, we will come to understand better what the Bible means with phrases like, *by faith* and *to believe* and how those words speak well to what our response should be to God's gracious provision of righteousness. We will see a powerfully helpful illustration of faith through the life of Abraham who ***by faith*** did not waver in his confidence in God, and it was ***counted to him as righteousness*** - Romans 3:22.

But, above all else, in this Part 2 of Romans, God, through the Holy Spirit inspired writing of the apostle Paul, invites us believe in His Son, Jesus. Our problem is sin but God's gracious provision is Jesus.

PRAYER | CARE | SHARE

PRAYER Leads to **CARE** Opening Ways to **SHARE** the Gospel.

The Prayer, Care and Share strategy is an evangelist tool that to equip Christians to pray for unbelievers, show acts of kindness and share their personal testimony and Gospel with the lost.

PRAYER |

When talking about sharing our faith, "Prayer" is asking God to prepare our hearts and the heart of the unbeliever. That our lives would be holy. That our hearts would long for the salvation of the people around us. That we would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and that the unbeliever's heart would be open to the truth of the gospel.

CARE |

"Care" can be described as "building relationships that clearly display a love for God and a love for the unbeliever." Our desire is that we would be a living example of Christ's love for them, and because of this they would be open to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As it has been said before, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

SHARE |

Our evangelism starts with Prayer, continues with Care, and finally arrives at Share. "Share" can be described as, being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading as we clearly explain the complete Gospel of Jesus Christ to an unbeliever who is open to receive it.

GIFT OF GRACE

Share Together

Through studying Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, how are you being challenged to grow in your relationship with the Lord?

Study Together

1. What role does the law have in revealing a person's need for salvation (3:19-21)?
2. Discuss common misunderstandings of the righteousness of God. What does Paul mean by it now "has been made manifest"? How is this distinct from the perceived righteousness of the law? How does Christ make righteousness with God a possibility for "all who believe"?
3. Consider the comparison of the "now" hopelessness of v 19-20 with the "but now" hope of v 21-22. What is Paul wanting to reinforce for the believer?
4. Why is it important for someone to understand the truths of vs 23-24 before committing their life to Christ? Can a person have a saving faith without understanding these truths?
5. Verses 22:b-24, consider the rich theological implications of these two verses. Discuss how the true gospel can become a false gospel when the text is ignored or misrepresented.



ROMANS 3:21-24

Notes

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

Is the good news from God and about God increasingly good news to you, news that you long to share with others?



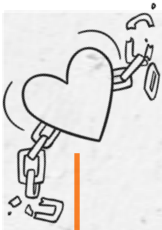
RECEIVED BY FAITH

Share Together

What kinds of responses do you think we would get if we asked a random sample of people in our city, "What is wrong with the world"?

Study Together

1. Consider what it means for something to be "put forward" [lit: a purposeful plan]. How was Christ "put forward" by God as a propitiation [lit: to make peace with] for our sins?
2. Reflect on Hebrews 9:22 and Ephesians 1:7 and how Christ's sacrifice (blood) is key to forgiveness and making peace with God. How do you explain to an unbeliever the purposeful and necessary sacrifice of Christ?
3. The good news is: there is forgiveness of sin and a resulting peace can be found with God. When Christ's propitiation is properly understood it leads to a response of faith. What does it look like to "receive by faith" the gospel of Christ and how is this different than counterfeit gospels the world presents today?
4. Why is the concept of God's wrath against sin essential to the gospel?
5. God's reputation was on the line; for many the righteousness of God had been grossly misunderstood and misrepresented through a wrong interpretation of scripture. How does Christ's sacrifice perfectly fulfill God's justice & righteousness?



ROMANS 3:25-26

Notes

25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

In what circumstances is it easy for you to share Christ with others? In what circumstances is it difficult?



JUSTIFIED THROUGH FAITH

Share Together

Do you ever tend to struggle with guilt over sin or with trying to work to pay God back? What counsel would you give someone with this struggle?

Study Together

1. Note the series of rhetorical questions that Paul asks the early church. What delineation does he make between the “law of works” and the “law of faith”? For the Christian where should their boasting be found?
2. Justified is a legal term meaning God declares the sinner not guilty. How does being declared not guilty change the Christian’s relationship with the law?
3. Consider what it means to “hold” to the truth? What does our applied theology look like when we hold to someone being “justified through faith” alone?
4. How does this passage explain the relationship between faith and works? Related to this, what are key insights that are important to pass along to the young or new believer?



ROMANS 3:27-31

Notes

27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Scripture Reference

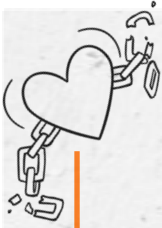
Sent Together

Has God placed someone in your life who needs to be encouraged to accept His righteousness rather than trying to earn it or live with guilt? How can you help them this week?



FAITH TO FORGIVENESS

Share Together



Have you ever received a gift that was difficult to accept because it was so valuable? Why did you feel unworthy of this gift? Why do you think that accepting salvation by grace instead of works can be so difficult?

Study Together

1. As a group discuss the sufficiency of scripture and the importance of frequently asking the question Paul asks in vs 3a.
2. Why is Abraham such a key example for the believer to consider when it comes to understanding the relationship between faith and works? How is this a crucial doctrine that is at the core of the gospel?
3. Consider that Abraham did not have the law (it would be given 420 years later) and that his belief in God would be what counted as righteousness. What did Abraham believe about God? And why did his belief lead God to credit him with righteousness?
4. What does the word "belief" mean? How is "belief" commonly misunderstood today? Discuss the dual application of belief in salvation and sanctification.
5. Paul shifts (v 6) and begins to tether righteousness and blessing together. While "blessing" can be a broad term applied generally by the believer, its origin stems from what key grace of God (v 7-8)?
6. What does scripture say about forgiveness? What tenets of forgiveness do we tend to over-emphasize and under-emphasize?



ROMANS 4:1-8

Notes

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;
8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

Who has God put in your life that needs to hear the good news that righteousness is about faith and now works?



INADEQUACY OF RELIGION

Share Together

What comes to mind when you think of the word "faith"? How does a biblical understanding of faith differ from how our culture thinks of faith?

Study Together

1. Consider the blessing of forgiveness (v 7-8) and who specifically will experience God's grace and salvation. How would you respond to Paul's question posed in v 9?
2. Faith means to fully rely on or have full confidence in. Discuss how and when faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness (v 10-11)? See Genesis 14 noting v 22-24 & 15:1.
3. Circumcision was intended to serve as a sign/symbol of faith and not a means of salvation (v 11). What purpose and place did circumcision have in the child and parents' life? What does it mean for Abraham to be the father of those who are not circumcised (v 11-12)?
4. How did Abraham "walk in the footsteps of the faith" and what does it look like for today's disciples? Related to the text what truth does a young disciple need to be careful to guard?



ROMANS 4:9-12

Notes

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

If we remember that anyone who believes can receive Christ's righteousness, how might that encourage us to share our faith with anyone we meet?



SAVING FAITH

Share Together

What is the most significant promise you have made? Were you able to keep that promise? Why or why not? What determines whether or not we believe a promise that is made to us?

Study Together

1. Read the promise God gave to Abraham in Gen 17:1-8 and discuss who the offspring/heir of God's promise are.
2. Consider the timeline of when God gave Abraham the promise compared to when He gave Moses and His people the Law (note Galatians 3:17). What implications does this have on the promise being received through faith?
3. Why is it impossible for someone who adheres only to the law to be an offspring or heir of the promise (v 14)? For someone who adheres only to the law, what do they inherit (v 15)?
4. What role does grace and faith have in salvation? How are they part of the "guarantee" in the promise of a saving faith (v 16)? Why is this a continual conversation the believer should be engaged in?



ROMANS 4:13-17

Notes

13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

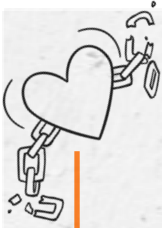
This quarter take turns sharing your testimony with one another. How does hearing someone else's experiences remind you that God is a God of grace? How do they bolster your faith?



MIRACLE OF GOD

Share Together

How would you define miracle? What makes an event or occurrence miraculous?



Study Together

1. Abraham believed that God is able to give “life to the dead” and to call “into existence the things that do not exist” (4:17). In Abraham and Sarah’s case, why was knowing “who God is” key to believing “what He was able to do”?
2. Did Abraham have a legitimate reason to doubt he would ever become a father (Gen 15:1-3)? The text tells us that despite the impossible, he had not given up hope. According to this verse what bolstered Abraham’s faith (v 18)?
3. What reasons or personal experiences did Abraham have to believe God’s promise? Consider why it was good for God to allow time before fulfilling His promise to Abraham (v 20).
4. Discuss how salvation is the greatest miracle someone will experience; why does God often allow time before bringing someone to salvation? How is this a testament to His character and an act of His goodness?



ROMANS 4:18-22

Notes

18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

How does knowing that God is always faithful to His Word help us when sharing the gospel with someone?



PERSONAL FAITH

Share Together

Which is easier for you to describe – what to believe or how to believe? Why is a time of difficulty an appropriate time to ask not only what to believe, but how to believe? Why is it important to believe not only in God's power, but also in God Himself?

Study Together

1. Reflect on the context and statement, "it was counted to him as righteousness." Why was it written not just for Abraham's sake, but also for the future believer (v 23-24)?
2. To have a genuine faith must it be the same as Abraham's? Consider Paul's emphasis on the continuity and similarity of Abraham's faith with ours. Note together 4:12 (we must "walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had") and 4:16 (we are to "share the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all").
3. This text and its context is designed to take the example of Abraham and to make it personal (applicable to the reader's life). How does the disciple know when they've properly applied the theology of this text?
4. Those with a saving faith personally apply what scripture reveals about God, sin, Christ, and redemption. Where do these tenets of doctrine show up in verses 24-25?



ROMANS 4:23-25

Notes

23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Scripture Reference

Sent Together

How can we, as a community of faith, encourage one another to share our faith with others?



GOSPEL: A SAVING FAITH

Being a Christian is more than identifying with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, humankind and salvation. Consider the following truths about God.

God is Creator. We were created by a personal God to love, serve and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals that it was Jesus Himself who created everything. Therefore, He owns everything and has authority over our lives (read John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

God is Holy. God is absolutely and perfectly holy; and therefore, He cannot commit or approve of any evil. God requires holiness of us as well (read Isaiah 6:3; James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:16).

Humankind is Sinful. God tells us that “there is no man who does not sin.” That does not mean we are incapable of acts of human kindness. But we are totally incapable of understanding, loving or pleasing God on our own (read Romans 3:10-12).

Sin Demands a Penalty. God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death. That is why simply changing our patterns of behavior cannot solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences (read Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23; Psalm 145:20).

Jesus is Lord and Savior. God tells us that “If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners (read 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26).

Saving faith is accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sin to Him, and making a choice to turn from sin and to follow Christ as your leader (read Luke 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; John 17:3).

SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

If you've never thought about preparing and communicating your story, that's fine (most Christians haven't). Here are simple principles to get you started.

Keep it short. Communicating too many details about your life can distract listeners from the central point: how you met Christ. Keeping it short can help with that. Three minutes is a good target. Remember that the purpose of telling your story is not about you; it's about God. Clearly and succinctly communicate what *he* has done in your life.

Have a before, how, and after. There should be a pretty clear timeline and logical flow to your story. Talk about what your life was like before Christ, how you met him, and what your life's like now. This timeline is different for everyone, of course, but it brings a sense of structure to what you're saying and helps keep your listener tracking.

For those who've been Christians since childhood, be vulnerable about your struggles as a growing Christian—the “how” may be a time when the gospel really sank in, and you understood it at a deeper level. Everyone's story is unique, and there's flexibility in how to share it, but thinking in terms of a timeline can be very helpful.

Clearly present the gospel. You want people to clearly grasp the source of your transformation: Jesus Christ. If people aren't pointed to Christ, they'll be pointed in another direction, which will (of course) ultimately fail them. We want people to come away from our story thinking, “Isn't Jesus amazing? I want him in my life, too.”

Your testimony should show people that God loves them, they're sinful, Jesus is the payment for the penalty of their sin, and they need to trust Christ as the payment for the penalty of their sins in order to have a personal relationship with God. If you haven't shared the gospel in your testimony, you haven't really shared your testimony.

Avoid 'Christianese.' Avoid Christian slang—those words believers use all the time in everyday Christian circles but make no sense to anyone else. We're trying to be clear about what we're communicating, and we need to understand the importance of speaking a language that can be easily understood. We want anyone and everyone to have intellectual access to what we're saying, so eliminate alienating language (or at least be willing to quickly define it).

Practice, practice, practice! You should know your testimony by heart without having any notecards or outline in front of you. If someone asks about your life at the public swimming pool, you won't be able to whip out a piece of paper for reference—so have your story memorized and ready at a moment's notice. It's a good idea to write it out or make an outline, then practice it aloud on your own or with a friend. Eventually you'll know it by heart.

The Gospel Collation: 6 Principles for Sharing your Testimony -2021



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