

LESSON 58

A Gift of Righteousness

ROMANS 3:10-22



BIBLE TRUTH

EVERYONE IS A SINNER IN NEED OF THE GOSPEL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Romans 3:9–31 from the Scriptures or read story 136, “A Gift of Righteousness,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Reach Higher

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ lollipops (enough for the entire class)
- ✓ tape
- ✓ a stepladder

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Good Works Won’t Work

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a box of sugar cubes
- ✓ fifteen one-dollar bills
- ✓ tape measure
- ✓ paper
- ✓ envelope
- ✓ prizes
- ✓ whiteboard, dry-erase marker

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 58—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Judgment Canyon

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ marker

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Everyone is under sin and condemned by the law—Our sin affects every part of our being. Paul pulls together a string of Old Testament texts in Romans 3 to make this point. “None is righteous” (Romans 3:10); “no one seeks for God” (Romans 3:11); “no one does good, not even one” (Romans 3:12); and “there is no fear of God” (Romans 3:18). Lest anyone think they are an exception, Paul calls us all worthless, full of cursing and bitterness, with the venom of poisonous snakes on our lips! The collective whole leaves a convincing argument for the total depravity of man. Paul concludes the argument with a clear statement of the lost condition of all men. No one will be declared righteous in the sight of God by his good works (Romans 3:20). To those so depraved, the best the law can do for us is to point out our sin and inform us where we have failed and deserve God’s wrath (Romans 3:19).

Our righteousness must come by faith in Christ—If Paul had ended his message at Romans 3:20, we would have no hope. But Paul doesn’t leave us lost in our sin. He goes on to describe the only path to righteousness: how a man can be made good in God’s sight. Our only hope is in a righteousness outside of ourselves, apart from our good works and the law. This righteousness, Paul explains, is through Jesus and comes to us as we place our trust in Christ by faith (Romans 3:22). In the next two verses Paul summarizes our problem and God’s solution. All men have sinned, but we can be saved by grace through the work of Jesus on the cross. The whole Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets) points forward to this most amazing truth. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to make a way for sinners to be saved is what God’s story is all about! Jesus died on the cross as a “propitiation by his blood” (Romans 3:25). That means that the blood of Christ spilled on the cross satisfied the anger of God for the sins of those who would believe. It is through trusting in what Jesus did on the cross that we are saved and can be given the righteousness of Christ as a free gift (Romans 3:24).

Our only boast is in Christ—If our right standing before God is based on what God has done in Christ and not upon anything we have done, then our only boast is in Christ. Apart from him, we have nothing to boast about (Romans 3:27). The only thing we can take credit for is our sin. All our salvation, from start to finish, is by God’s grace. Even the faith we have is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives giving us the gift of faith, we would remain enemies of God, lost in sin. That is why our only boast is in Christ. Paul lived his life this way, celebrating his weaknesses and admitting his sin (1 Timothy 1:15). He boasted in the Lord alone (Galatians 6:14).

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Romans 3 comprises Paul's defense of the gospel. Important components of God's plan appear in verses 24–26. First, God presented Jesus as a sacrifice. Next, Jesus' sacrifice was an acceptable payment, or atonement, for sin. Last, this sacrifice was required to ensure the justice of God, who had allowed sins to go unpunished.

Earlier in this passage Paul clearly wanted to help us see our total depravity and our utter inability to be righteous apart from God's grace. In quoting Isaiah he wrote, "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside" (Romans 3:10–12). He left absolutely no possibility that someone might be good apart from Christ.

After giving this convincing argument regarding our sin, Paul goes on to speak the gospel hope: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law...the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Romans 3:21–22). The prophets testified about it and now, Paul tells us, it has come to pass.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Romans 3:9–31 from the Scriptures or read story 136, "A Gift of Righteousness," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Reach Higher

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ lollipops (enough for the entire class)
- ✓ tape
- ✓ a stepladder

Use this illustration to show the class that we all fall short of God’s glory, but we can be freely justified by Jesus.

Prior to class, tape the lollipops to the ceiling (or as high as you can place them using the stepladder). Then hide the ladder.

Teach the lesson until someone notices the lollipops. Tell the class that anyone who can reach one can have one. Then continue with what you were doing.

At some point retrieve the ladder and set it up under one of the lollipops. Climb up and take the lollipop down. Hand it to one of the children and say, “You couldn’t get this by your own works, you were too short; but I freely give it to you.” Repeat this for everyone who wants a lollipop. Then talk about how this exercise illustrates Romans 3:23–24. Ask the children to tell you what part of the exercise demonstrates grace. What part did they need help doing to get a lollipop? The answer is that it all demonstrates grace. After all, how many classes have they gone into that have lollipops on the ceiling?

Continue the class, referring back to this illustration as appropriate.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 10 MIN

Good Works Won’t Work

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a box of sugar cubes
- ✓ fifteen one-dollar bills
- ✓ tape measure

- ✓ paper
- ✓ envelope
- ✓ prizes
- ✓ whiteboard, dry-erase marker

Before class, on a piece of paper write the following bonuses and rewards and seal them in an envelope: a tower up to the ceiling will earn the team one dollar each; a tower as high as a two-story house will earn the team two dollars each; and a tower as tall as a ten-story building will earn the team five dollars each.

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate that we could never be counted righteous before God by our good works.

Divide the class into two teams, A and B. Ask for three volunteers from each team. Tell the class that you are going to have a contest to see who can stack the most sugar cubes in a tower without it falling. Everyone on the winning team will get a prize. Also if participants are able to stack cubes high enough, the members of the team will get an added bonus. The first bonus is one dollar each, the second bonus is two dollars each, and the highest bonus prize is five dollars each.

The rules of the contest are as follows: One team will go first (flip a coin). They will stack as many sugar cubes as they can. They can stop at any time, but if their tower falls, they cannot win. For example, if Team A stacks ten cubes and their tower falls on the eleventh cube they cannot win. Therefore Team B could win by stacking two cubes because their tower of two stands higher than the other team's collapsed tower of eleven.

Tell the class that you will do three rounds. The team with the most wins will take the championship.

After each round measure the height of the tower and write it on the board for later use with the bonus prize. After three rounds announce the winning team, and then make a big deal out of the bonus prize. Remember, this is the whole purpose behind the lesson. You want them to think the distances for the bonus prize are possible to achieve.

Ask a volunteer to rip open the bonus prize envelope to see if you have a bonus prize winner. Show off the money while the envelope is being opened. After the volunteer reads the bonus distances, the class should be shocked and begin to complain that the distances are impossible.

Use this as an opportunity to talk about just how impossible it is for us to get to God by our own good works. Review Romans 3:20. Talk about how amazing it is that Jesus lived a perfect life for us. When we place our trust in Jesus and his death on the cross, our sins are forgiven. The added blessing is that we are declared righteous!

WORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 58—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Which of the people in the picture have a heart that God is changing?
(The people with a cross covering their sinful hearts are trusting in Jesus and what he did.)
- Why do some people not have a cross on their hearts?
(They trust in their own work to be good, not in the work that Jesus did on the cross.)
- How does a person’s heart change from being full of sin?
(If you want to have a changed heart, you need to turn away from your sinful behavior and place your trust in Jesus. This means that you need to believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again. When God changes our heart and we believe, his righteousness is given to us as a gift. We still make mistakes, but God forgives us because of what Jesus has done.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Judgment Canyon

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ marker

Prior to class place two parallel lines of tape on the classroom floor six feet apart.

Have each child stand with two feet on one of the lines and, keeping both feet together, try to jump from one line across to the next, pretending that the space in between is a bottomless pit called Judgment Canyon. As each child jumps, mark their spot with a piece of tape with their name on it. None of the children will be able to jump from one side to the other.

Then, while they are watching, use the tape to create a bridge from one side to the other in the shape of a huge cross. While you are making the tape cross, explain to the children that Jesus was the only person who never sinned even once. He died on the cross to take our punishment and he offers his perfect life as a free gift to anyone who places their faith in him. We can escape God's judgment by trusting in what Jesus did on the cross.

While you are saying this, walk over the cross bridge and invite the class to cross over behind you.

Explain to the class that if we trust in the good things we do in life, we might be better than the next guy (point out the tape of the person who jumped the furthest), but we will never be perfect. Encourage the children to talk about today's lesson with their parents when they get home.

