



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 58

A GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

All men are sinners in need of the gospel.



MONDAY

THE STORY: ROMANS 3:9-20

All men, Jews and Gentiles alike, are under sin and condemned by the law. Our sin affects every part of our being. Paul pulls together a string of Old Testament texts here to make his point. 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 (observing the law). The best the law does for us is to show us our sin and inform us where we have failed.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Who is Paul describing when he uses the description of throats like open graves, the poison of vipers on their lips, and mouths that are full of cursing? (Paul is describing you and me. Paul is describing all men and women apart from the saving grace of God.)

Is there any way for a person to become good in God's sight by what he does? (No. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves righteous or good before God.)

Do you see yourself like Paul describes us, or do you think of yourself as being pretty good? (Parents, help your children identify with the sinful description of man that Paul gives.)

What's wrong with thinking you're a pretty good person? (It is not until we see our real need for a Savior that we run to the Savior. Pride and self-righteousness deceive us by making us think we are good enough and, therefore, do not need a Savior. We make our sins seem small with this kind of thinking. In reality, these sins separate us from God - a much more serious condition.)

PRAY:

Ask God to pour out His grace upon your family members who are hopelessly lost in sin apart from Jesus.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: ROMANS 3:21-24

Our righteousness must come by faith in Christ. If Paul had ended his message at the end of verse 20, we would have no hope. But Paul doesn't leave us lost in our sin. He goes on to describe how a man can be made righteous, or good, in God's sight. We can receive righteousness from God when we have faith in Jesus Christ. Paul then, in verses 23 and 24, 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 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!

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean when it says that the Law and the Prophets testify about God's plan for righteousness? ("The Law and the Prophets" is the way Paul refers to the books of the Old Testament. When Paul says they testify, he means that you can

read about God’s plan there. The prophets foretold a day when God would save His people from their sin. When they talk about God’s plan for salvation, they are talking about Jesus and His death on the cross.)

How much do we have to pay or what do we have to do to be saved? (We don’t need to do anything except trust in what Jesus already did. God’s gift is freely given. That is what grace means.)

PRAY:

Thank God for His free gift of grace available to us through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: ROMANS 3:25,26

Paul is basically defending the gospel in Romans 3. In verse 25 and 26 we see some important components of God’s plan. First, it was God’s willing plan. He presented Jesus as a sacrifice. Secondly, Jesus’ sacrifice was an acceptable payment, or atonement, for our sin. Thirdly, 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 to see our total depravity and our utter inability to stand righteous apart from God’s grace. Paul said, “None is righteous, no, not one,” and “No one understands; no one seeks God,” and “All have turned aside.” He left absolutely no possibility that someone might be good apart from Christ.

After giving this convincing argument, Paul goes on to declare one of the best “buts” of Scripture: “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).

Faith is not in Jesus as a good teacher, but in Jesus as the Savior who died on the cross taking the penalty for our sin. We deserve death - yet, in exchange for our sin, Jesus Christ gives us His righteousness. Jesus was able to live the sinless life we could not live. He freely gives us His clean and righteous record when we place our trust in His sacrifice for us on the cross.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did God demonstrate His patience and forbearance until Jesus died? (God did not immediately judge men for their sin, but allowed the future sacrifice of Jesus to hold back His wrath for sin.)

How did God satisfy judgment for sin? (God poured out His judgment for sin upon Jesus on the cross. Our punishment was given to Jesus.)

PRAY:

Thank God for His amazing mercy. Thank Him for withholding complete judgment and sending His only son to take the penalty for our sin.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: ROMANS 3:27-31

Our only boast is in Christ. If everything we have is based on what God has done, and if we have nothing based on what we have done, then we have nothing to boast about. 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. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we would remain enemies of God. Paul lived his life this way. He celebrated his weaknesses and admitted his sin (1 Timothy 1:15), and he made his boast in the Lord (Galatians 6:14).

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to boast? (Boasting is a form of pride where one takes credit for what one does. If a person tells everyone how well he did in a race, he is boasting about the race.)

Why would it be wrong to boast about our salvation? (We did nothing to gain salvation. Jesus did it all. We have nothing to boast about because we added nothing to the salvation Jesus gained for us.)

What does it mean to boast in Jesus? (When we celebrate or tell others about what Jesus did for us, we are boasting in Jesus. When we tell them we are weak without His strength and we are lost without the cross, we are boasting about Jesus.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help each member of your family remember that hope is found in Christ alone, and we have no room to boast, because He did it all.



**FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

THE STORY: ISAIAH 52:14,15

These verses are found in the middle of Isaiah's description of the suffering servant. Jesus suffered greatly. Blood poured from wounds upon His face and head. The face of Jesus would have been bruised and swollen from being repeatedly struck by the soldiers' fists. The back of Christ would have been torn from the scourging. Clearly, people would have been appalled to look at Him. The blood shed upon the cross by Jesus would sprinkle many nations. The sprinkling of water was done as a rite of cleansing (Numbers 8:7 and 19:18,19). Blood sprinkled on those who were ceremonially unclean would sanctify them (Hebrews 9:13). The blood of Jesus sprinkled on the nations speaks of the cleansing of the nations by His sacrifice (Hebrews 10:22 and 12:24).

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is it helpful to think about the suffering of Jesus? (We never want to forget the great humiliation and suffering Jesus went through to take away our sins.)

How can remembering the suffering of Christ motivate us toward godly living? (When we realize that it was our sin that nailed Him to the cross and was the reason for Jesus' suffering, we hate sin all the more and look to live righteous lives by saying no to sin.)

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for His suffering so that we could be spared the penalty for our sin. Ask God to help you live for Christ. Pray that He would give each member of your family grace to avoid sin.