



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 45 How to be right with God

Romans 3:20-26, *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

²¹But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

How to Be Right with God?

This tells us how to be right with God.

How can a person be right with God?

The Philippian jailer put it another way. He said to the apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?"

The Jews hearing Peter preach of sin and the Saviour on Pentecost put the same question.

Acts 2:37, *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

Paul, lying on the ground struck blind, with his face in the dirt, stopped in his tracks in the middle of pursuing the persecution of Christians, looked up and asked the same question.

Acts 9:6, *So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"*

What do I do to get right with God?

Job's cry was: "How can a man be right with God?"

When the message of repentance was preached by John the Baptist, the people cried the same thing.

Luke 3:10, *So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"*

Luke 3:12, *Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"*

Luke 3:14, *Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?"*

When our Lord had fed the crowd at Galilee and they sought only the material fulfilment and ignored the eternal issues, He condemned them for their sin.

John 6:28, *Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*

All those times, places, and people are echoing the same question: What do you do to get right with God?

When Paul was in Philippi, Paul and Silas were followed by a demon-possessed girl. She followed them in her demon-possessed condition.

Acts 16:17, *This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."*

Micah 6:6-7, *With what shall I come before the Lord, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with*

burnt offerings, With calves a year old? ʹWill the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

What does God want to make me right with Him?
Even to the point of slaying my own son, or daughter?

The rich young ruler asked the very same question.

Matthew 19:16, *Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”*

Then a lawyer came to Jesus burdened with the issue of how to be right with God.

Luke 10:25, *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

Man throughout all his history has sought to be right with God and wondered how.

How can a person be right with God when God is holy, and we are sinful?

How can we overcome that disparity?

How can we who are sinful be made right with a God who is infinitely holy?

That is man's age-old longing.

1 Kings 8:46-53, *“When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near;⁴⁷ yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, ‘We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness’;⁴⁸ and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name:⁴⁹ then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause,⁵⁰ and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them⁵¹ (for they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace),⁵² that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You.⁵³ For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.”*

Solomon is saying on behalf of his people, God, when they come to You and they seek to be made right, make them right, respond to them.

When they are in the midst of their captivity and they look on their situation and they reach out to You, reach out to them, make them right. Solomon is affirming that it only can come from God's side.

A little girl that fell into the well. A reporter asked her how it was that her father was able to rescue her. The little four-year-old said it was easy, "I just reached up my arms as far as I could, and my Daddy did the rest." There's a very real sense in which that is what Solomon prays for, that when it comes to the point in time when the people reach their arms up as far as they can, may the heavenly Father do the rest, may God make them right.

Jeremiah 42:2-6, and said to Jeremiah the prophet, *"Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the Lord your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see),³ that the Lord your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do."*⁴ Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, *"I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the Lord your God according to*

your words, and it shall be, that whatever the Lord answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you.”

They said Jeremiah go to God and you say to God: How do we get right with God?

Whatever God says is the answer, you come and tell us and we will do it. We want to be right with God.

Jeremiah went before God.

Jeremiah 42:7, *And it happened after ten days that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.*

He got his answer, from God.

Jeremiah 42:20-22, *For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the Lord your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the Lord our God, and according to all that the Lord your God says, so declare to us and we will do it.’²¹ And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, or anything which He has sent you by me.²² Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell.”*

The people said, we want to know the way to God.

Jeremiah came back ten days later and said, here is the way.
God says, but the people said we don't want it.

Typical?

Even today this is still going on.

People around the world are saying that How do you get right
with God?

When you come along and tell them how to get right with
God, they turn around and walk away.

It isn't enough to know how to be right with God, it is only
enough to obey and to respond.

Men seek the answer, but they don't always want the answer
they get.

- Most of the Jews at Pentecost who said, "What shall we do?" when they found out, turned around and went away.
- Most of those who heard John the Baptist weren't really interested in responding when they got their answer.
- The crowd at Galilee hearing Jesus, when they said to Him, "What do we do to work the works of God?" and He said to them, "Here's what you do, eat My flesh and drink My blood," turned and went away.

All the people of Micah's day didn't respond either.

The rich young ruler didn't respond.

The lawyer didn't respond.
Jeremiah's people didn't respond.

We learn something very basic about man. He wants to know how to be right with God, but he doesn't always respond when he finds out the truth. But we must proclaim the truth continually.

Verse 21, "the righteousness of God," which is very different from the righteousness of man.
Apart from the law is manifested.

When we come to **Romans 3:21** God takes the armour off. He is not the warrior anymore of the first three chapters.
He is the loving Father.

He has been the judge,
He has been the executioner,
His fury has been poured out,

But now behind all that armour we find a God of love who reaches out with a righteousness and manifests it to men who on their own could never ever be righteous.

It is apart from legalism.
it is built on revelation.
It is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

It is acquired by faith.

V 22, *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;*
"This righteousness of God is by faith."

It doesn't come by works, but it comes by faith.

Those two are distinct.

- Works is something you do. It is an effort that you do embark on.
- Faith is something God does, and you believe it.

You accept it,

You trust in it.

It is done by Him.

You don't have to add anything to it.

Example:

On the cross Jesus said it is finished.

He had accomplished the work of salvation, it was done. The Bible simply says if you believe, you are redeemed. If you believe that He finished the work, if you believe in the significance of what He did, who He was and dying on the cross and rising from the dead, that's all that's necessary.

He did it all!

You need only believe it. It is acquired by faith.

Romans 10:9-10, *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, we hear this same thing.

Romans 1:17, *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

Hebrews chapters 11 & 12 we have all those heroes of faith.

"By faith,....,"

"By faith,....,"

All the way through the eleventh chapter.

Hebrews 12:1-2, *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Even your faith isn't yours.

Who authored it?

Who finishes it?

Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Even the faith is a gift from God.

Romans 10:17, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Faith is a gift of God. We depend utterly and totally on God even for the granting of saving faith, because a man could not even muster such faith on his own. It is all from God.

Isaiah 61:10, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

God did it.

So, the righteousness of God is manifest to us from heaven. It is apart from legalism. It is built on revelation. It is acquired by, faith.

1. Righteousness provided for all!

It is provided for all.

V 22, *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;*

The provision is made for anyone who believes.

It says in the fourth chapter of

Romans 4:11-12, *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,¹²and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.*

Abraham received the sign of circumcision.

A seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had received yet uncircumcised.

Abraham might be the father of all of them that believe.

Anyone can be saved who believes!

Acts 13:39, *and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

- It doesn't matter how bad they are?
- It doesn't matter how bad they are.
- It doesn't matter how irreligious they are?

What is the issue?

Do they believe?

No matter what the past is!

Galatians 2:16, *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

Anyone who believes.

The irreligious.

The God haters, the criminals, the murderers, the child molesters, the rapists, the brutal, the bitter, the religious hypocrites, the false teachers, the false prophets, anybody who believes.

John 6:37, *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

Anyone who believes.

V 22, *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;*

You may say I am a very moral person.

You are no different than a rapist.

That is right.

You say I am a good person, I give my money to poor people, I work hard, I am a good provider, I love my wife and kids.

No, you are just the same as a child molester and a rapist and a murderer and an irreligious, God-hating, Christ cursing, hell-bound sinner.

This is very hard for people to understand.

Because they think that good is relative. But good is not relative, it's absolute. But evil is relative.

I mean there are some people technically worse than others, but they are all so bad that they are infinitely far from God.

We are included too!

Before we come to Christ.

There is no difference.

Can God save anybody?

Sure, because there is no difference.

We were all wretched, vile, godless sinners. There may be a relative difference in the way we appear on the surface, but the fact is we are all in the same category.

V 23, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*,
Any human being on the face of the earth who comes short of
the glory of God is in the same boat as everybody else.

Example: Trying to do long jump!

Evil is evil and everybody is in the same boat, infinitely
separated from holy God.

So, salvation is provided for all because everybody is in the
same category. Not only does everybody need it but God is
able to save everybody who believes. Tremendous truth.

The best of the sinners in truth are the worst.
Looked at a person like Paul.

- I am very religious.
- I was circumcised on the eighth day.
- I am of the stock of Israel.
- I am of the tribe of Benjamin.
- I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews.
- I am a Pharisee.
- Concerning zeal, I persecute the heretical church.
- Touching the righteousness in the law, I am blameless.

What did Paul say about himself?

1 Timothy 1:15, *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

All have sinned and fallen short.

When someone comes along and says that he doesn't sin or he knows somebody that doesn't sin, that's contradicting the Word of God. But it says here they have come short of the glory of God.

God's glory is God's perfection and men come short of that. They fall short of the divine standard.

It refers to a condition where you don't have anything, no resources. Man fails to live up to God's glorious, holy standard. But God can redeem him because everybody's in that same boat.

If God can redeem anybody, He can redeem everybody who comes in faith.

Righteousness acquired by faith and provided for all

2. Righteousness given freely through grace.

V 24, *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

V 24 connects back with verse 22.

The righteousness of God is by faith in Jesus Christ to all and upon all of them that believe.

V 24, being justified freely by His grace.

The intervening is a parenthesis to describe how it is that everybody can be saved because they are all the same.

those who believe are made right with God freely by His grace.

We are made right with God, an actual acquittal, an actual imputation.

How?

Freely by His grace.

Gift.

Without human effort.

Isaiah 55:1, *“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.*

Galatians 2:21, *I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”*

We were justified without any price to pay on our part.

We are saved by grace in Christ plus keeping the Ten Commandments, that is a lie right out of the pit of hell. Because it discredits God's grace, and grace mingled with law isn't grace.

We are saved freely by grace and grace is undeserved love granted to the guilty.

If it's free and if it's given to us free and all we do is believe and God graciously gives us His salvation, then it's free.

Did not cost anything?

It didn't cost you anything.

It cost God a lot. God's loving, gracious act is granted to us freely, but it was extremely costly to Him.

V 24, *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

Somebody had to pay a price.

What does it mean to redeem?

Remember the car parking in Iceland?

Redemption is to ransom by the payment of a price. There was a price. You don't pay it.

Jesus Christ paid it.

The idea of buying a slave out of the slave market in order to set him free.

Like the idea of the kinsman redeemer in the wonderful story of Ruth and Boaz. Somebody paid a price.

Who paid it?

Christ Jesus paid it.

So, man's a slave to sin. Man cannot be righteous on his own. God provides a righteousness by faith. The only way God can do that is for Christ to pay the price to free that man.

The man is a prisoner. He is sentenced to die. Somebody's got to pay his penalty. That was the redeeming price paid by the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He paid the price to set us free.

1 Timothy 2:6, *who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

What was the price?

Himself!

He had to die in our place.

1 Peter 1:18-19, *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ but with the*

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

What did God say the price had to be?

The wage of sin is death.

The price was death, and Christ died that death, shed His blood. So, the righteousness of God is available apart from legalism, built on revelation, acquired by faith, provided for all, given freely through grace, accomplished by redemption.

V 25, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

God required death.

God required a sacrifice.

Jesus became that sacrifice.

God could not just forgive you and me and not deal with justice. Love could forgive but justice had to be met and justice required a penalty and the penalty had to be paid.

Jesus becomes the satisfaction, the propitiation. It means "a place where sins are blotted out." It was used to refer to the Mercy Seat.

When the priest went in the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, and sprinkled the blood on the Mercy Seat, that was the place where sins were blotted out.

Christ became the place where sins are blotted out. He became the **kappora**, the Mercy Seat. Jesus, by His blood, provided satisfaction.

So, we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, a lamb without spot and without blemish.

The cross is everything. God's righteousness couldn't come to us apart from the cross. Jesus died in our place.

You were hell bound!

The first three chapters of Romans describe you.

We are all the same and there is no difference.

We could not be right with God on our own and so God came down and He had a plan to make us right.

God gave us His righteousness.

How could He do that?

He had to deal with our sin first and the penalty had to be paid and it was paid in the death of Jesus Christ.

V 25, *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,*

Through faith.

Most important of all truths that we saw also in verse 22, that salvation comes by faith, by believing, not by anything we do.

Colossians 2-12, *buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

It is God who has done this for us.

It is buried with Him in baptism.

It is risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.

Faith is God operating.

This exchange of our unrighteousness for His righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Having said all of this, I don't understand it.

Because it's a supernatural, divine miracle, but I confess to you that I believe it and that's what God asks.

It's all of God.

We are not left in Romans 1, 2 and 3, but we are brought to Romans 3:21 and the righteousness of God is given to us by faith.

That's what it means to be saved.

It is not what we have done.

It is what He has done for us.