



# GRACE & JUSTICE

Romans  
3:21-4:3



## *This week's* **FOCUS**

The climax of a story is the highest point of tension or the most dramatic point. It refers to the time in the story when things start to change and the heroes begin to find a resolution to the conflict they've been engaged in. The passage we will look at today is the turning point in the story Paul has been telling in Romans up to this point. Paul has laid out how both Jews (Rom. 2) and Gentiles (Rom. 1:18-32) are under God's just wrath because of their willful rebellion against God. Things were not looking good. Thankfully, however, Paul begins Romans 3:23 with the words, "But now..." Today we are going to see how God has offered a solution to our sin problem and the separation it causes between us and Him. In our study of this passage we will see how Jesus' death and resurrection demonstrates both God's justice and His grace toward those who believe.

### *Central* **TRUTH**

Jesus is the answer to our sin problem—His sacrifice demonstrates both God's justice and grace.



# EXPLORATION

Romans 3:21-4:3

*Begin by reading  
through the  
passage.*

21 But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets. 22 The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. 23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 24 They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as an atoning sacrifice in his blood, received through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. 26 God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law of faith. 28 For we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

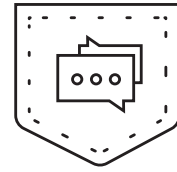
4:1 What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.

**.01 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE YOU HAVE READ OR WATCHED RECENTLY?**

*Talk it out*

**.02 WHAT WAS THE CLIMAX OR TURNING POINT OF THE STORY?**

# CONVERSATION



## Romans 3:21-26

**.03 WHAT HAD PAUL SAID ABOUT PEOPLE IN ROMANS 3:1-20 THAT MAKES THE WORDS “BUT NOW” IN VERSE 21 SUCH GOOD NEWS?**

**.04 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE RECOGNIZE THAT GOD’S SOLUTION TO OUR SIN PROBLEM CAME “APART FROM THE LAW”?**

**.05 THERE IS, HOWEVER, A CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS SOLUTION AND THE LAW—WHAT IS IT?**

**.06 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “JUSTIFIED”? HOW HAS GOD ACCOMPLISHED THIS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS?**



### THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

While many think of sin as breaking rules or making mistakes, it goes much deeper than that. The Bible’s definition of sin has to do with a lack of belief or trust in God. Our lack of trust in God is rooted in selfishness—we don’t want to submit to God as the center of our lives because we want to be in control. Sin is no small problem. It’s bigger than little mistakes here and there—it has to do with who is king in our lives. Paul claimed that through the gospel, God has declared Himself King over a world that has rejected Him. This is good news because our sin problem is too big for us to fix. Thankfully, our God graciously offers to fix it for us through the death and resurrection of His Son.

*Reflect and respond.*



# 04

## Romans 3:27-31

**.07 HOW DOES THE GOSPEL KEEP US FROM BOASTING? WHAT DID PAUL MEAN BY THAT?**

**.08 WHY WAS IT A BIG DEAL THAT PAUL SAID THAT GOD THE FATHER WAS THE GOD OF BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES? WHAT DOES THAT TELL US ABOUT OUR GOD?**

## Romans 4:1-3

**.09 WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ABRAHAM? HOW DOES ABRAHAM'S STORY EXCLUDE HIM FROM BOASTING?**

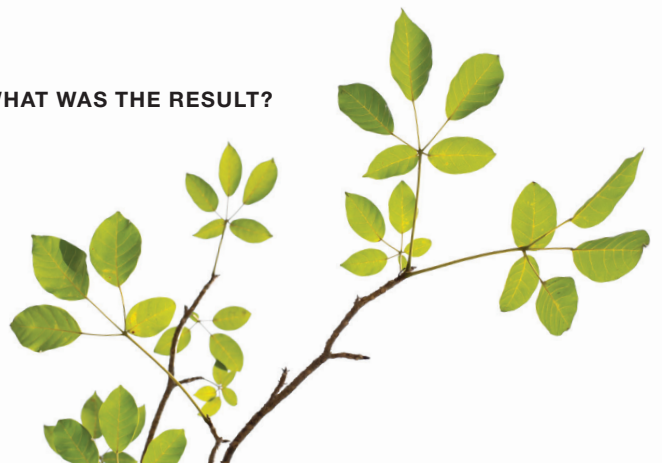
**.10 WHAT DID ABRAHAM BELIEVE ABOUT GOD? WHAT WAS THE RESULT?**



### CULTURAL CONTEXT

Some people today object to the idea of God presenting Jesus as an atoning sacrifice for sin (Rom. 3:25) because they see it as “divine child abuse.” The problem with such claims is that they neglect to understand that Jesus is fully God. It’s not just that God delivered Jesus to the cross. Jesus Himself willingly chose to go to the cross. In fact, Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus willfully endured the cross “for the joy set before him.” To call the cross divine child abuse is to deny Jesus the dignity of choosing to go to the cross out of love for God and love for us (John 13:34; 15:13).

*Journal your response here.*





# CENTRAL TRUTH

Jesus is the answer to our sin problem— His sacrifice demonstrates both God's justice and grace.

## NOW WHAT?



**.11 REVIEW: WHAT HAS GOD DONE ABOUT OUR SIN PROBLEM?**

**.12 WHY IS IT GOOD NEWS THAT GOD SAVES US BY HIS GRACE AND NOT ON THE BASIS OF OUR WORKS OR RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE?**

**.13 WHAT ARE YOU MOST TEMPTED TO BRAG ABOUT? HOW SHOULD THE GOSPEL KEEP US HUMBLE?**

**.14 WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE AS IF THE GOSPEL REALLY IS GOOD NEWS FOR ALL PEOPLE?**

*How does this apply to your life?*

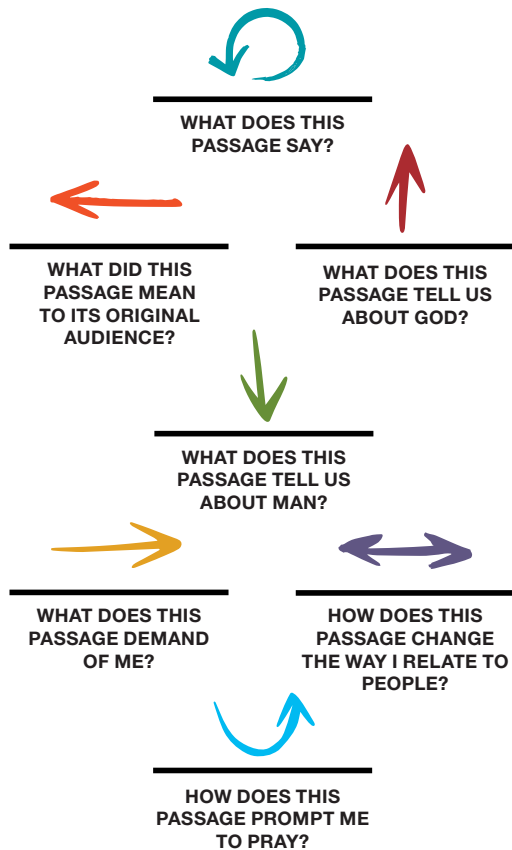




# Daily DEVOTIONS

Choose five days this week to set aside time to dig deeper into God's Word with these devotions. We hope you'll make this a priority and encourage others in your group to do so as well.

## 7 Arrows FOR BIBLE READING



# Day One ROMANS 3:21-31

## Dwell

For all of Paul's talk of sin and judgment in the first three chapters of Romans, it all changes with these verses: God offers His righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ to everyone who believes. We don't deserve it, but it is given by God's grace and for His glory. Jesus' sacrifice paved the way for our salvation; no one has the right to brag.

↑ .01 WHAT DO YOU LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE? HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU WANT TO RESPOND?

→ .02 HOW DO WE HANDLE THE COMMANDS OF GOD IF WE'RE SAVED BY GRACE (V. 31)?

## Memorize

Write each word from this week's verse on a different index card. Mix them up and then place them in order.

## Pray

Praise God for His grace that saved you.



# Day Two

## ROMANS 4:1-8

### Dwell

Paul uses Romans chapter 4 to explain that the Law was never the way to righteousness; it was always by faith. He uses the examples of Abraham and David to prove his point: Even those two heroes of the Old Testament were made righteous by faith, not by works and not by the law.



**.01 WHAT OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGE IS QUOTED IN VERSE 3? FLIP BACK AND READ IT IN CONTEXT.**



**.02 WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT PRESENTING THE GOSPEL TO OTHERS?**

### Memorize

Use a dry erase marker to write this week's verse on a mirror. Say it aloud. For a challenge, erase one word and say it again. Repeat!

### Pray

Thank God that your salvation was a gift and that you didn't have to work in order to earn.

# Day Three

## ROMANS 4:9-12

### Dwell

Which came first: righteousness by faith or the outward obedience? Just to make the answer clear, Paul points to the life of Abraham and reveals by Scripture that even Abraham was justified by faith before he chose to be circumcised. His outward expression was a reflection of the inward change that had happened through faith.



**.01 THE JEWS SAW ABRAHAM AS THEIR REVERED ANCESTOR. HOW CAN ALL BELIEVERS CLAIM ABRAHAM NOW?**



**.02 DO YOU FOCUS AS MUCH ON BELIEVING GOD AS YOU DO ON FOLLOWING HIM? HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?**

### Memorize

Write down just the important words from this week's verse (nouns, verbs, adjectives). Try to say the verse aloud by filling in the other words.

### Pray

Ask God to give you a renewed faith to believe His Word, His promises, and His character.



## Day Four

# ROMANS 4:13-17

## Dwell

Paul summarized what he previously stated: The Law was never meant to produce righteousness. Instead, it was given so that we would see how sinful we are. Righteousness came by faith, because we realized we could never earn it through obeying the Law. This makes Abraham the father of all who believe God and receive His grace.



**.01 HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE REVEAL GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISE IN GENESIS 12:1-3?**



**.02 WHAT TRAITS DOES PAUL ATTRIBUTE TO GOD IN VERSE 17? WHAT DO THESE DESCRIPTIONS MEAN?**

## Memorize

Make up motions for each short phrase in this week's verse. Practice saying it aloud as you do the motions.

## Pray

Thank God for allowing you to be a spiritual descendant of Abraham and a recipient of the promise of grace.

## Day Five

# ROMANS 4:18-25

## Dwell

Abraham had many reasons not to believe God's promise for a baby: he was incredibly old and Sarah was also old and had never had children. However, Abraham believed God's promises and that He would come through. That's faith: knowing God's promises and believing them, regardless of the things around you that would seem to prove otherwise. We can have the same faith.



**.01 HOW CAN YOU USE ABRAHAM'S STORY TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS IN THEIR FAITH (VV. 23-24)?**



**.02 HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE INSPIRE YOU TO PRAISE GOD FOR JESUS?**

## Memorize

Try to set this week's verse to a simple kids' song. Sing it aloud during your down time.

## Pray

Ask God to give you a deep understanding of His promises. Ask Him to strengthen your faith.