

Paul Writes About Faith

ROMANS 3:21-5:5

MEMORY VERSE

ROMANS 3:23-24

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Dry erase marker, a dry erase board, and an eraser.

Two pieces of paper: one large and one 8 1/2 "x11", markers, chalk, and a chair.

A pie pan, string, a ping-pong ball, funny sunglasses, and masking tape.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

List of How We've Missed

You will need dry erase maker, a dry erase board, and an eraser.

Draw a large "ginger bread" type man on the board with an open heart. Have each child tell something that could keep us out of the kingdom of God and write these things in the heart of the "gingerbread man." By reading the memory verse, demonstrate how we are justified by faith in God and He makes it as if we have never sinned. Each time you read the verse, erase one of the things written in the heart.

Explain that because of what Jesus has done for us, God looks at us just as if we had never sinned. **We are justified by faith.**

LESSON TIME!

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul is writing to the church in Rome. He has already spoken to them about many things and he is now writing to them about God's righteousness. He is explaining to the church that no one is righteous, except Jesus Christ. Righteous means to be "right on" or perfect. God is perfect and to be in His presence we must also be MADE perfect.

The Jews thought that obeying the law made them righteous, but Paul reminds them that they can't be righteous by obeying the law. The law is powerless to save them or make them righteous. God provided a right standing for us through His Son Jesus. It would be the same thing as us thinking that we will go to heaven because we do good things. Even if we do a lot of good things all day long it still won't get us into heaven. We will still sin or make mistakes. Only Jesus never sinned.

The word sin means to miss the mark. It is like when someone is shooting an arrow at a bull's eye target. Sin is when no matter how hard you try and how determined you are you still miss the bull's eye. That is missing the mark. No matter how hard we try we can never be perfect. God gave the Law to Moses and His people so they could see God's standard and learn that they could not live up to it. They needed help and we need help, God's help through Jesus!

The Jews wanted to boast that they were better than the Gentiles were because they obeyed the Law. Paul tells them that to God there is no difference and that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. He wanted them to know that God says **We are justified by faith.**

ROMANS 3:21-31

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

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

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

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

whom God set forth to be 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,

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

The word justified means, “just as if I have never sinned.” God wants us all to know that because of His Son Jesus, if we ask for forgiveness of our sins, He will justify us and make us “just as if we had never sinned” because of our faith in Jesus. And He will also give us a right standing (righteousness). We can sometimes be like the Jews and think we're better than someone else because of something we do or don't do, but what Paul is saying to the Jews is true for us too. We are all God's children, and He sees no difference.

Sometimes these things are hard to understand, but try to think of it like this. Sin has made us very dirty in our hearts. Everyone ever born in this world has this dirt on them. We can try to wash or scrub the dirt off as best we can, but it will never come off. But then we meet Jesus. He never had any dirt on His heart and He is perfect and clean. When He died on the cross He made a way for us to be clean and be accepted by God. His blood is what we need to be made clean. When we believe in Him, His blood cleanses our hearts and we are MADE clean. So to say I am “justified” or “righteous” just means that now I can go to heaven and stand before God with a heart that is as clean as Jesus’. Pretty amazing! But that is what salvation is all about!

Reach the Mark

You will need two pieces of paper; one large and one 8.5"x11", chalk, markers, and a chair.

Make a sign that says "Faith in God" and tape it to the seat of a chair. Put the large sheet of paper on a blank wall in your classroom. Place the center of it just a little higher than the kids in your class can reach. Put a black mark at the very top of the paper. This is the "goal." Using a piece of chalk, let each child jump and make a mark on the paper trying to reach the goal, hopefully no one will be able to reach it. Then bring out the chair for them to stand on to make the mark.

Explain that this illustrates that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but the chair represents what Jesus does for us when we believe in Him. He makes it possible for us to reach the mark that God wants. **We are justified by faith.**

ROMANS 4:1-17

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something of which to boast, but not before God.

For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

"blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."

Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

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,

and 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.

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,

because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did...

Paul is now talking about Abraham (referred to as the forefather or the father of us all) in the Old Testament. The Jews were very familiar with Abraham and that is why it was easy for Paul to relate to them concerning his life. He asks them a question; "Was Abraham justified by his works or by his faith?" The Scriptures say it was his faith in God.

God had promised Abraham he would be the father of many descendants; it was not through the Law that Abraham and his descendants received the promises of God, but it was through faith. Abraham lived many years before Moses even came to receive the Law from God. Abraham understood that **We are justified by faith.**

What this means is that people were actually saved in the same way before Jesus as we are today. God doesn't change. Abraham and everyone else from the Old Testament were saved through faith and believing and trusting in God.

There are many people who think they can get to heaven by just being good, or by doing good things. They may think that gives them some special privilege with God, but God doesn't promise that. What God does promise is that if we have faith in Him, He will make us righteous through His Son Jesus. Just as Abraham had faith in the promises of God, so should we. We want to do good things because Jesus has saved us, not so that we can be saved. **We are justified by faith.**

ROMANS 4:18-25

...who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,

but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham was 100 years old and his wife Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:16-19). This seems like an impossible thing, since they were both so old, but Abraham didn't waver in unbelief concerning the promises of God. He was strengthened by his faith and gave glory to God. He believed that God had the power to do what He promised (vs. 20-21). That is why he was considered righteous, and that righteousness is not for him only, but is extended to us. **We are justified by faith.**

We should be encouraged, knowing that God has the power to do all things, and that He keeps His promises. God wants to do things in our lives that to others would seem impossible. But it's important to remember that we are not justified before God because we are good, but by our faith in Jesus, who died to forgive us of our sins if we believe in Him.

ROMANS 5:1-5

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Because we are justified by faith, Paul reminds us that God not only makes us righteous, but that we also can have peace with Jesus Christ. It is because of Him that we have grace and a right standing. We can rejoice in our suffering, because suffering produces perseverance, character and hope. Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes when bad things happen to someone we know or to us, we might find it hard to want to rejoice, but Paul is reminding us that suffering produces character and character produces hope. Not just any hope, but a hope in God. Having a hope in God will not disappoint us. God's ultimate desire is to pour out His love into our hearts and to give us peace. **We are justified by faith.**

“Grace” Colored-Sunglasses

You will need a pie pan, string, a ping-pong ball, funny sunglasses, and masking tape. Suspend a pie pan from your ceiling on a string. Write "Grace" on two pieces of tape and tape on the inside of the sunglasses, leaving room to still see. Place a chair about six feet from the suspended pie pan and let the kids take turns trying to hit the pan with the ping-pong ball while standing behind the chair; give each child one throw per turn.

Wear the sunglasses while you watch the game. Move the game along quickly, then have everyone listen closely so they don't miss what you have to say. Tell them that you are so glad that they all were so great at throwing the ball; that no one ever missed! They will respond with “What ?” because they will know that some of them did miss. Respond with some surprise at the fact that some missed and show them that you were watching the game through your “Grace” colored sunglasses.

Explain that this is how God looks at us when we have faith in Jesus Christ. When we miss the mark and confess our sins, we are justified; just as if we'd never sinned. **We are justified by faith.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of faith, trusting God for His best in their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.