

# Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE  
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

**Romans 4:5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

Using a question and answer format, the apostle Paul records in Romans the most systematic presentation of the Christian faith in all the Bible.

But Romans is not just a book about doctrine to be believed. It is about a life to be lived – a life of righteousness befitting a person who can be described as **being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus** (3:24).

The theme of Romans can be found in 1:16-17 where we read,

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

**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."

It was the understanding of the phrase, **THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH**, that set the Reformers on the path to righting the church.

In chapters one through eight Paul reveals God's plan for salvation. In chapters nine, ten, and eleven he shows how Jews and Gentiles both fit into that plan. Chapters twelve through sixteen exhort believers to live righteously.

To break it down a little further:

- From 1:1 to 3:20 there is a discussion of sin and our need for God's righteousness.
- From 3:21 to 5:21 there is a discussion of justification telling us how we can be declared righteous by God.

- From 6:1 to 8:39 (chapter 6, 7, & 8) there is a discussion of what is called sanctification. It's how we can now live because of what God has done in declaring us righteous.
- From 9:1 to 11:36 there is a discussion of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the Church Age, but especially of God's past, present, and yet future plan for His chosen people, Israel.
- The rest of the book discusses your responsibilities and your liberties as believers on the earth.

We're going to concentrate on those three chapters – six, seven, and eight – that deal with sanctification. They are the Bible's central passage on how to walk in victory over sin and the flesh and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bruce Wilkinson said, "Many consider this to be the principle passage on conforming to the image of Jesus Christ."

Since justification by faith is so important as a foundation I want to discuss it for just a moment. Paul spends the first three chapters of Romans establishing that there are no godly people anywhere ever to be found among the human race.

He presents the pagan man; the moral man; and the religious man. His conclusion is **there is none righteous, no, not one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** (3:10, 23).

How you behave has nothing to do with God saving you! No behavior can ever make you godly; God says that all of your righteousness is still far short of His absolute perfection. If you trust in your own righteousness you cannot ever be saved. There is nothing you can do, no behavior, that can change your standing before God.

How, then, can anyone ever be saved?

**Romans 4:5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

Having excluded how you behave as a means of attaining salvation, Paul explains that how you believe is God's means of your obtaining salvation:

**Faith** and **believe** are used fifteen times in Romans four. It is the Bible's great chapter on salvation by grace through believing alone, apart from your behavior.

It's important what you believe. Or I should say, Who you believe on. You believe **on Him who justifies**... You believe in the God of the Bible as He is presented to you in the inspired word of God.

God only **justifies the ungodly**. No one can ever first cease to be ungodly, then believe. While yet ungodly, you believe and God justifies you.

Justification is the act of God by which He declares a believing sinner righteous on the basis of Jesus Christ's finished work on the Cross. Jesus kept the law for you, *and* He suffered the punishment of the law against you.

You are fully justified the moment you believe in Jesus. You do not start on a path towards final justification, towards the mere possibility of justification if you achieve and maintain a certain personal righteousness. If that were the case, no one would ever be in Heaven, for we all continue to sin! You are fully justified from the moment you believe God.

In justification, God doesn't declare you "godly" - He declares you "righteous." He accepts you because you stand in His imputed righteousness.

Under a system of works, everything depends on the sinner. Under grace, everything depends on the Savior. Under works, God gives us a fair trial and declares us "Guilty!" Under grace, God gives us a free pardon and declares us "Not guilty!"

Justification is for the sinner, not the saint. Your growth in grace and in the knowledge of God do not increase your justification. Neither do your failures decrease it.

When you believe on Him, **your faith is accounted for righteousness**. The word for **accounted** is *credited*. Theologians use the word imputed. God deposits righteousness in your Heavenly account and withdraws all the sin when you believe on Him.

Justification is an important part of what the Bible means by salvation. The other two important parts are **sanctification** and **glorification**.

- Justification means I have been saved from the *penalty* of sin. It has to do with my position before God. (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- Sanctification means I am being saved from the *power* of sin. It is my day-by-day, moment-by-moment dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- Glorification is the completion of the process. I shall be saved from the *presence* of sin at **the redemption of [my] body** (Romans 8:23).

Sanctification is where I live every day as I try to walk with the Lord. Having been delivered from sin's penalty; looking forward to being delivered from its very presence; I must learn to be free from its power as I remain in this body of sin and death tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In chapters six, seven, and eight Paul is not discussing being forgiven of our *sins* (plural), but being made free from *sin* (singular). When sin is discussed in the singular it is describing the principle in my flesh. We'll see that we are freed from the flesh that resides with us as long as we live on this earth in these bodies.

Some criticize the doctrine of justification because it sets us free to sin. Paul will say *God forbid you would even think such a thing!* It doesn't set us free *to* sin. It sets us free *from* sin.

The expression **free from sin** occurs three times in Romans Six. As we work through the verses in these three chapters we'll get God's perspective on who we are and on how we already have everything we need to walk in victory.

There are no steps – only understanding (called **reckoning**) what God has already accomplished for us.

