

## Gospel Community Study Guide

### Romans 3:19,20

#### Shona

19Zvino tinoziva kuti zvose zvinorehwa nomurayiro, unozvitauna kuna avo vari pasi pomurayiro, kuitira kuti miromo yose ishayiswe chokutaura uye kuti nyika yose ive nemhosva pamberi paMwari. 20Naizvozvo hapana achanzi akarurama pamberi pake nokuda kwokuchengeta murayiro; asi kuti, kubudikidza nomurayiro tichaziviswa chivi.

#### **Zulu**

19Kepha siyazi ukuthi lokhu okushoyo umthetho ukukhuluma kubo abasemthethweni ukuba yonke imilomo ivinjwe, izwe lonke libe necala kuNkulunkulu, 20ngokuba ngemisebenzi yomthetho akukho nyama eyakulungiswa phambi kwakhe; ngokuba ngomthetho kukhona ukwazi isono.

#### **Swahili**

19Basi twajua ya kuwa mambo yote inenayo torati huyanena kwa hao walio chini ya torati, ili kila kinywa kifumbwe, na ulimwengu wote uwe chini ya hukumu ya Mungu; 20kwa sababu hakuna mwenye mwili atakayehesabiwa haki mbele zake kwa matendo ya sheria; kwa maana kutambua dhambi huja kwa njia ya sheria.

#### **Tswana**

19Mme jaanong re itse gore dilo tsotlhe tse molao o di buang, o di bua le bone ba ba mo taolong ya molao gore molomo mongwe le mongwe o thijwe, mme lefatshe lotlhe le nne molato fa pele ga Modimo 20Ke ka moo go se nang motho ope yo o tla siamiswang fa pele ga ona ka ditiro tsa molao; gone molao o re naya kitso ya boleo.

#### **Afrikaans**

19Dit weet ons: alles wat Moses se wet sê, sê hy vir dié wat die wet het. Niemand sal hom dus kan verweer nie, en die hele wêreld is strafwaardig voor God. 20Daarom sal geen mens op grond van wetsonderhouding deur God vrygespreek word nie; intendeel, deur die wet leer 'n mens wat sonde is.

#### **Sermon Summary:**

We will never understand what the Bible teaches about justification until we have come to truly sense our need for it.

### **Review and Discussion Questions:**

1. The Bible is filled with words. Some of those words are unfamiliar to us. Many of the words that are unfamiliar to us are vital to understand. One of the words in the Bible that is unfamiliar and yet absolutely, vital is the word, justification. What's so important about justification?
2. One of the men God used to defend and proclaim what the Bible teaches about justification was Martin Luther. Listen to some of the ways he stressed the importance of knowing this truth:

"This doctrine [justification by faith] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour...."

"When the article of justification has fallen, everything has fallen."

"The article of justification must be learned diligently. It alone can support us in the face of these countless offenses and can console us in all temptations and persecutions.:

"If this article [of justification] stands, the church stands; if this article collapses, the church collapses."

3. That last statement is pretty intense. If a church gets justification right, it stands, if it doesn't it fails. Why? Because justification is the heart of the gospel. One place we see this very clearly is in the book of Romans where the apostle Paul is giving us his most thorough discussion of God's plan of salvation. At the very beginning of the book, he explains why he is not ashamed of the gospel, saying, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith." As you consider that verse, what reasons is Paul giving why he is not ashamed of the gospel?
4. One of the reasons Paul is not ashamed of the gospel is because it reveals the righteousness that God gives to those who place their faith in Christ. That's the doctrine of justification! There is more to the good news than just what it tells us about justification, but not less. When Paul thought about the gospel, he thought about justification. A big part of what makes the good news such good news is what it teaches us about justification, therefore it is very important, we seek to understand it.
5. The absolute most classic text on the doctrine of justification is found in Romans 3:21-31. But before we look at this text, we should learn something from Paul's methodology in presenting this truth. In chapter

1:16 and 17, he's told us he is excited about the gospel because it reveals this truth to us, but he waits to tell us what it reveals exactly for two whole chapters. Why? What exactly does he talk about in Romans 1:18-3:20 before he dives into his teaching on justification? What can you learn from that about your method of evangelism?

6. One reason Paul spends so much time proving our sinfulness is because it's so hard for us to believe it. We will never understand the doctrine of justification, until we believe we need it. As John Calvin once said, "We shall never be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, until we first know that we have no righteousness of our own."
7. Justification is a legal term. It has to do with a judge declaring a person innocent. It is the opposite of a judge condemning someone as guilty. Now, what does this picture have to do with God and with human beings? (Hint: Romans 2:5-10)
8. If you are going to understand the Bible and the way God works and the gospel and this world in which you live, you have to understand that God is a righteous judge and you are accountable to Him and you will stand before Him one day. This is sobering. And yet, there are many people who don't seem to have any great concern about it. Even though humans will stand before God and He will evaluate them and declare them innocent or guilty, many people aren't the least bit concerned about judgment day. What are some reasons why?
9. One reason why many of the people Paul was talking to weren't concerned about judgment day was because they were Jews, and they were trusting in the certain spiritual advantages they had received like circumcision and the law. They knew other people would be judged, but they were confident they wouldn't because of their religious background and activity. While many of the people we are talking to about the gospel aren't Jews, they often are making the same mistake. How do they make this mistake? What are some illustrations of the ways people make this mistake?
10. All throughout Romans 2 and 3, Paul is working at showing how foolish it is to trust in your own religious efforts for justification but in Romans 3:19,20 he comes to the climax of his argument. We see several reasons why trusting in our own efforts or religious activity to justify us before God is so foolish. Let's read this passage together.
11. There are four parts to Paul's argument. I will identify them for you, and then I want you to spend some time discussing and unpacking them. In other words, read through this paragraph and then go back, one statement at a time and explain what each sentence means, in your own words. First, the Bible makes it clear that in spite of all their privileges the Jews were unable to keep God's law. Second, if the Jews, who had the privilege of being God's chosen people could not keep the law, it follows, that

absolutely no one can. Thus, third we can mark it down as a principle. On judgment day, there's nothing any of us can point to in our lives, in terms of our religious activity, our obedience, that will enable us, to stand and not be judged, for by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight. And the reason for that fourth, is because it's not the purpose of the law. We can't be justified by our obedience to the law, since, through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

12. While it might seem heavy to see what the Bible teaches about our helplessness, it is also important. Why is it so valuable for us to understand that we can't be justified by our own efforts? What would be different about you if you really believed that? (In terms of your attitude towards others, your attitude towards God, your attitude towards religious activity?)
13. There are many reasons to obey God, but one of those reasons isn't to earn God's love or your salvation. If you are going to have a right relationship with God it is going to be on the basis of His love and grace in spite of you, not because of you.
14. Let's close our time by considering two quotes.

First, Sam Storms explains, "The first and possibly most fundamental characteristic of divine grace is that it presupposes sin and guilt. Grace has meaning only when men are seen as fallen, unworthy of salvation, and liable to eternal wrath...Grace does not contemplate sinners merely as undeserving, but as ill deserving....It is not simply that we do not deserve grace; we do deserve hell..."

What stands out to you from what he says?

Second, Abraham Booth writes, "The most shining deeds and valuable qualities that can be found among men, though highly useful and truly excellent, when set in their proper places, and referred to suitable ends, are, as to the grand article of justification treated as non-entities. For divine grace disdains to be assisted in the performance of that work which peculiarly belongs to itself, by the poor, imperfect performances of men. Attempts to complete what grace begins, betray our pride and offend our Lord, but cannot promote our spiritual interest. Let the reader, therefore, carefully remember that grace is either absolutely free, or it is not at all, and that he who professes to look for salvation by grace, either believes in his heart to be saved entirely by it, or he acts inconsistently in affairs of the greatest importance."

Is there anything that challenges you or encourages you from that?

15. As you go to preach the gospel, make sure you work at helping people understand their need for the gospel. And as you live your life, it is vital

you enjoy the doctrine of justification. To do that, you need to continually pray that God will not let you forget your absolute need for it.