

## Gospel Community Study Guide: Romans 3:21-31

### Shona

21Asi zvino kururama kwaMwari, kwakaradidzwa kunze kwomurayiro, kuchipupurirwa nomurayiro navaprofita. 22Kururama uku kunobva kuna Mwari kunouya kubudikidza nokutenda muna Jesu Kristu kuna vose vanotenda. Hapana musiyano, 23nokuti vose vakatadza uye vakasavika pakubwinya kwaMwari, 24uye vanoshayirwa mhosva nenyasha dzake kubudikidza nokudzikinura kuri muna Kristu Jesu. 25Mwari akamupa iye sechibayiro chokuyanana kubudikidza nokutenda muropa rake. Akaita izvi kuti aratidze kururamisira kwake, nokuti mukuita mwoyo murefu kwake akaregerera hake zvivi zvakaitwa kare. 26Akazviita kuti aratidze kururamisira kwake panguva ino, kuitira kuti ave akarurama uye anoshayira mhosva vaya vanotenda muna Jesu. 27Zvino kuzvikudza kuripiko? Kwabviswa. Nomurayiro upiko? Wokuchengetedza murayiro here? Kwete, asi nomurayiro wokutenda. 28Naizvozvo tinomira pakuti munhu anoshayirwa mhosva nokutenda kwete nokuchengeta murayiro. 29Ko, Mwari ndiMwari wavaJudha voga here? Ko, haazi Mwari wavaHedheniwo here? Hongu ndowavaHedheniwo, 30sezvo kuna Mwari mumwe chete uyo acharuramisira vakadzingiswa nokutenda uye vasina kudzingiswa kubudikidza nokutenda kumwe cheteko. 31Zvino tinobvisa murayiro nokutenda uku here? Kwete napaduku! Asi, tinosimbisa murayiro.

### Zulu

21Kepha manje kubonakalisiwe ukulunga okuvela kuNkulunkulu ngaphandle komthetho, kufakazelwa ngumthetho nabaprofethi, 22ngisho ukulunga kukaNkulunkulu ngokukholwa nguJesu Kristu kubo bonke abakhohwayo; ngokuba akukho mahluko; 23ngokuba bonke bonile, basilalelwe inkazimulo kaNkulunkulu; 24balungisisiwe ngesihle ngomusa wakhe ngokuhlengwa okukuKristu Jesu, 25ammisileyo uNkulunkulu abe yinhlawulo ngokukholwa egazini lakhe, kubonakalisiwe ukulunga kwakhe ngokuyekelwa kwezono ezenziwe ngaphambili 26ekubekezeleni kukaNkulunkulu, ukuba kubonakalisiwe ukulunga kwakhe esikhathini samanje, ukuze yena abe ngolungileyo, abe ngumlungisisi walowo okholwa nguJesu. 27Ngakho kuphi ukuzibonga na? Kuvalelwe phandle. Ngamthetho muni na? Ngowemisebenzi na? Qhabo, kodwa ngomthetho wokukholwa. 28Ngakho-ke sithi umuntu ulungisiswa ngokukholwa ngaphandle kwemisebenzi yomthetho. 29Kumbe uNkulunkulu ungowabaJuda kuphela na? Kasiye nowabezizwe na? Yebo, nowabezizwe, 30uma impela uNkulunkulu emunye oyakulungisisa abasokileyo ngokukholwa nabangasokile ngokukholwa. 31 Ngakho-ke umthetho siwenza ize ngenxa yokukholwa na? Qha nakanye, kodwa siyawuqinisa umthetho.

### Swahili

21Lakini sasa, haki ya Mungu imedhihirika pasipo sheria; inashuhudiwa na torati na manabii; 22ni haki ya Mungu iliyo kwa njia ya imani katika Yesu Kristo kwa wote waaminio. Maana hakuna tofauti; 23kwa sababu wote wamefanya dhambi, na kupungukiwa na utukufu wa Mungu; 24wanahesabiwa haki bure kwa neema yake, kwa njia ya ukombozi ulio katika Kristo Yesu; 25ambaye Mungu amekwisha kumweka awe upatanisho kwa njia ya imani katika damu yake, ili aonyeshe haki yake, kwa sababu ya kuziachilia katika ustahimili wa Mungu dhambi zote zilizotangulia kufanywa; 26apate kuonyesha haki yake wakati huu, ili awe mwenye haki na mwenye kumhesabu haki yeye amwaminiye Yesu. 27 Ku wapi, basi, kujisifu? Kumefungiwa nje. Kwa sheria ya namna gani? Kwa sheria ya matendo? La! Bali kwa sheria ya imani. 28Basi, twaona ya kuwa mwanadamu huhesabiwa haki kwa imani pasipo matendo ya sheria. 29Au je! Mungu ni Mungu wa Wayahudi tu? Siye Mungu wa Mataifa pia? Naam, ni Mungu wa Mataifa pia; 30kama kwa kweli Mungu ni mmoja, atakayewahesabia haki wale waliotahiriwa katika imani, nao wale wasiotahiriwa atawahesabia haki kwa njia ya imani iyo hiyo. 31Basi, je! Twaibatilisha sheria kwa imani hiyo? Hasha! Kinyume cha hayo twaithibitisha sheria.

## Tswana

21Mme jaanong tshiamo ya Modimo e senotswe kwa ntle ga molao, e supilwe ke molao le baporofeti, e bong tshiamo ya Modimo e e bonwang ka go dumela mo go Jesu Keresete, mme ke ya botlhe ba ba dumelang; gonne ga go na pharologanyo epe; 23gonne botlhe ba leofile, ba tlhoka tlotlo fa pele ga Modimo, mme ba ka siamisiwa fela ka boitshwarelo jwa ona ka kgololo e e mo go Keresete Jesu, yo Modimo o mmeileng go nna thuanano ka madi a gagwe e e bonwang ka tumelo, gore go supilwe tshiamo ya ona ka ntlha ya go tlhokomologa maleo a a dirilweng pele, Modimo o ntse o iphapaantse gore o tle o supe tshiamo ya ona mo sebakeng seno, e nne ona o o siameng, o o siamisang ene yo o dumelang mo go Jesu. 27Mme jaanong ipelafatso e kae? E latlhetswe kwa ntle. E le ka molao ofe? A ke wa ditiro? Nnyaya, ke ka molao wa tumelo. Ke ka moo re kayang gore motho o siamisiwa ka tumelo fela, e seng ka ditiro tsa molao. A kampo Modimo ke Modimo wa Bajuta fela? A ga se wa Baditšhaba le bone? Ee, ke wa Baditšhaba le bone, ka e le gore Modimo ke o le mongwe fela; ba ba rupileng o tla ba siamisa mo tumelong, le ba ba sa rupang o ba siamisa ka tumelo. Jaanong a ke go re, re dirolola molao ka tumelo? Le go ka; tota re tlhomamisa molao.

## Afrikaans

21Maar nou het die vryspraak deur God waarvan die wet en die profete getuig, in werking getree. Dit is die vryspraak wat nie verkry word deur die wet te onderhou nie, 22maar deur in Jesus Christus te glo. God gee dit sonder onderskeid aan almal wat glo. 23Almal het gesondig, en het nie deel aan die heerlikheid van God nie, 24maar hulle word, sonder dat hulle dit verdien, op grond van sy genade vrygespreek vanweë die verlossing deur Jesus Christus. 25-26Hom het God gegee as offer wat deur sy bloed versoening bewerk het vir dié wat glo. Hierdeur het God getoon wat sy vryspraak behels: Hy het die sondes wat Hy voorheen in sy verdraagsaamheid tydelik ongestraf laat bly het, vergewe. Maar Hy het ook getoon wat sy vryspraak in die teenswoordige tyd behels: Hy oordeel regverdig deurdát Hy elkeen vryspreek wat in Jesus glo. 27Het ons nou iets uit onself om op te roem? Nee, dit is uitgesluit. Deur watter wet? Dié van die werke? Nee, deur dié van die geloof. 28Ons betoog is tog dat 'n mens vrygespreek word omdat hy glo, nie omdat hy die wet onderhou nie. 29Of is God net God van die Jode, nie ook van die heidennasies nie? Ja, ook van die heidennasies, 30want daar is net een God. Hy sal die besnedenes deur die geloof en die onbesnedenes deur dieselfde geloof vryspreek. 31Hef ons dan deur die geloof die wet op? Beslis nie. Ons laat die wet juis tot sy reg kom.

### Sermon Summary:

How can a man be accepted by a holy God? This is life's most important question. If God is holy He must punish sin and honor righteousness. We are sinners and are not righteous. How then can wicked sinners ever hope to escape God's judgment and enjoy God's favor? This is the question what the Bible teaches about justification answers. As the Westminster Catechism explains, "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

### Review and Discussion Questions:

1. One of the problems we have in life is that we are often asking the wrong questions. It is hard to get the right answer after all, if you began with the wrong question. This certainly is true when it comes to the gospel and to Christianity. The gospel is God's solution to a problem. But what is the problem? On Sunday, we talked about one of the most important problems the gospel answers. What did we say that problem was?

2. Most people are very concerned about what other people's evaluation of them is, but they are not very concerned about what God's evaluation of them will be. What do you think are some reasons people are more concerned about man's judgment than God's judgment? How would you encourage someone to think more seriously about the coming judgment of God?
3. Once we understand what the Bible teaches about the holiness of God and our accountability to Him, once we begin to see the seriousness of our sin and its demand for punishment, we will begin to become very concerned with the question, how can I be right with God? This is a big moment. How we answer this question will influence the way we live our entire lives, and ultimately, where we spend our eternal future. As Charles Hodge once wrote, "To give a wrong answer, is to mistake the way to heaven, it is to err where error is fatal, because it cannot be corrected. If God require one thing and we present another, how can we be saved? If He has revealed a method in which He can be just and yet justify the sinner, and if we reject that method and insist upon pursuing a different way, how can we hope to be accepted?"
4. One reason Paul is excited about the gospel is because it gives us God's answer to this question. To stand before a righteous God, we need a perfect righteousness. And God has revealed that perfect righteousness and how to receive it through the gospel message. Let's read Romans 3:21-31 together and discuss what it teaches us about this righteousness.
5. The first thing Paul says is "**But now** the righteousness of God has been manifested." What does the but now tell us about this righteousness? (Hint: think about each word. What is the word but doing in this sentence? It is a contrast. What is Paul going to contrast? What about the word now? It is a word that has to do with a point in time. In contrast to .... at this point in time... what? This is important because it helps us understand what excited Paul so much about the gospel!)
6. Next Paul says, "But now **the righteousness of God** has been manifested..." What righteousness is he talking about? Let me quote James White here to help. "Paul does not speak of the general revelation that God, in himself, is righteous for the law's equity and holiness does witness this very thing. Instead, this is a righteousness defined in the next verse as that which is 'through faith' in Jesus Christ...Some have suggested that it is a righteousness from God (which is true, as far as it goes.) Others have said it is a righteousness that God approves of...and again this is true, to an extent. Others have suggested a righteousness that works in accomplishing salvation, and that is true as well. But none of these can, in and of itself, capture the fullness of the phrase. John Murray explains, 'It is so intimately related to God that it is a righteousness of divine property and characterized by divine qualities. It is a 'God-righteousness.' Because it is such, God is its author; it is a righteousness that must elicit the divine approval, it is a righteousness that meets all the demands of his justice and therefore avails before God...Man righteousness even though perfect and measuring up to all the demands of God's perfection would never be adequate to the situation created by our sins. This is the glory of the gospel; as it is God's power operative unto salvation so it is God's righteousness supervening upon our sin and ruin.'"
7. The gospel is exciting because it reveals this God-righteousness that can be ours. So let's look at what Paul says about it more closely. In verse 21, he tells us that it has been manifested apart from the law. What does this tell us about this righteousness? Another way to say this would be that justification is an act of God's free grace. How do people get this wrong?
8. Paul goes on to say that while this righteousness has been manifested apart from the law, the Law and Prophets bear witness to it. What does this teach us about the way God justifies sinners? What question does this answer that people often ask about

salvation in the Old Testament? What proof does Paul bring up that this is true in Romans 4?

9. If we don't achieve this righteousness through our efforts, how do we receive it? Paul tells us in verse 22. Through faith. Now this is very important. It is so important there was a whole REFORMATION over it. We need to make sure we get this right. To help you I am going to quote from a confession. Now, there may be some words here that you are not familiar with, but try to pay attention as these men were combating some heresies regarding faith's role in justification that people still are falling for today. I will put in bold print some of the statements you should consider in particular.

"Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous."

O.k. time out. I have to stop there. When you are justified God doesn't make you righteous, but declares you righteous, specifically forgiving your sins and counting you as righteous. When God saves you, certainly He begins a process of changing, but that's not justification, and that's not the basis of your acceptance in His sight. All right. Any questions? Now back to the confession's discussion of faith. He accepts their persons as righteous...

**"not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God."** Faith, thus **receiving and resting on Christ** and His righteousness, **is the alone instrument of justification**: yet **is it not alone** in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love."

Please look at those lines that are in bold print. What are they teaching us about justification by faith?

10. There's so much more, but I have made you work pretty hard already. Let's begin to wrap this up. The gospel reveals a righteousness that is apart from our efforts, talked about throughout the Scripture, ours through faith in Jesus Christ! The work of Jesus, which Paul goes on to talk about in verse 24 and 25, is the grounds of our justification. To help you see the significance of this, let me ask you three questions. When God justifies a man, is he just choosing to ignore their sin? When God accepts a believer as righteous, is he just pretending they are righteous? Why or why not?

(If you need help answering this question, you might look at 2 Corinthians 5:21. Also, you might discuss the following quote from the Westminster Confession. "Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to His Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, in as much as He was given by the Father for them; and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for any thing in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.")

11. In conclusion, practically, how does knowing Christ's work is the grounds of our justification help us when Satan and our consciences accuse us? How should this truth encourage and change us? You might read and discuss the following quotes from Martin Luther:

“The highest of all God’s commands is this, *that we ever hold up before our eyes the image of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He must daily be to our hearts the perfect mirror, in which we behold how much God loves us and how well, in his infinite goodness, as a faithful God, he has grandly cared for us in that he gave his dear Son for us. Do not let this mirror and throne of grace be torn away from before your eyes.*”

“*For who is able to express what a thing it is, when a man is assured in his heart that God neither is nor will be angry with him, but will be forever a merciful and loving Father to him for Christ’s sake? This is indeed a marvelous and incomprehensible liberty, to have the most high and sovereign Majesty so favorable to us. Wherefore, this is an inestimable liberty, that we are made free from the wrath of God forever; and is greater than heaven and earth and all other creature.*”

“The conscience, spurred by the devil, the flesh, and the fallen world; says, ‘God is your enemy. Give up in despair.’ God, in His own Fatherly love and through His Son’s grace and through His Word and through the witness of His people; says, ‘*I have no wrath. You are accepted in the beloved. I am not angry with you. We are reconciled!*’”

“The Christian says: *I believe and cling to him who is in heaven as a Savior.... Thus the Christian faith differs from other religions in this, that the Christian hopes even in the midst of evils and sins.* Without the Holy Spirit natural man can’t do this. He can only seek refuge in works. To say, ‘I am a child of God,’ is accordingly not to doubt even when good works are lacking, as they always are in all of us. *This is so great a thing that one is startled by it.*”

“And let not him that suffers this temptation be dismayed, in that the devil can so aggravate sin, that during the conflict he thinks himself to be utterly overthrown, and feels nothing else but the wrath of God and desperation. Let him not follow his own feelings. Comfort yourselves through faith in Christ and remind yourself that ye be not under the law. “*Hold up the mirror of grace to your tender conscience: So shall he have a strong buckler wherewith he may beat back all the fiery darts with which the wicked fiend assails him.* Therefore, when the emotions of the flesh rage, the only remedy is to take the sword of the Spirit, that is, the Word of salvation, and to fight against them. If we do this, we shall obtain the victory. *But if we do not use the Word, there is no counsel or help remaining.*”