



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

SERIES: FACING THE FUTURE

TITLE: FACING THE FUTURE ON MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 3:21-26

DATE: FEBRUARY 8, 2026

INTRODUCTION

We are on week 4 of our “Facing the Future” series. This week we focus on facing the future *on message*. Without a doubt, the message of our church should be the *gospel* message.

The word *gospel* means “good news.” It is a biblical word that summarizes that God saves sinners from His wrath through Jesus’ death and resurrection. And this salvation is received by faith in Jesus. This is truly good news! Indeed, there could be no greater news that our sins can be forgiven and that we can have eternal life through our faith in Jesus.

With such good news, we must as a church face the future with this message. Churches perhaps can be known for various things—perhaps a big budget, big building, friendly, welcoming, high-energy worship, active kids and youth programs, and etc... Of course, none of these things are wrong. Each of them is something any church would hope to do well. But the thing that the church is

to be known for most is that we have good news. We should strive to be a church that lovingly and boldly reminds itself of the gospel and proclaims the gospel to the city and the world.

Text

Romans 3:21–26

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Explanation

Context

When it comes to studying Scripture, we must recognize the surrounding context. And as we look at context, we must consider the chapter as whole. We must also look at the passage considering the entire letter, especially the previous chapters. Both contexts are very important for our passage today in Romans chapter 3.

In Romans 1, Paul explains that God shows His wrath against unrighteousness. All people are accountable to God because He has sufficiently made Himself known through creation. All people are without excuse (1:21). In response to God, people have suppressed the truth (1:18). God handed them over to their sinful ways (1:24, 26, 28). They demonstrated lives filled with unrighteousness (1:29–32).

In Romans 2, Paul addresses Jews specifically. He makes clear that Jews are also unrighteous. Just because they were God's chosen people who received the law, does not make them righteous. Being a hearer of the law does not make one righteous, only being doers of the law makes one righteous (2:13). Paul presents the case that despite having the law, Jews partook of the same sins that the Gentiles did (2:3). Gentiles were accountable to God since God

revealed Himself through creation. The Jews are even more accountable to God because God revealed Himself through the law, and they still disobeyed.

In Romans 3, Paul begins by answering a series of potential objections that Jews could have asked. The challenge for Paul to answer is why God would provide a law to the Jews if they were just as guilty as the rest of the world. Does their sin discredit God's righteousness? Paul answers that their disobedience does not nullify God's righteousness, instead it further establishes God's righteousness (3:3-4). The reason is because with the law God has established a righteous standard through which God will judge. Through the law, God has spoken a standard, and He will show Himself righteous by judging according to that standard. Thus, the disobedience of the Jews serves to demonstrate God's righteousness.

The follow up question then becomes, "If the Jews' unrighteousness serves to elevate God's righteousness, then why are the Jews held guilty?" If their sinfulness promotes God's righteousness, then why not sin even more to elevate His righteousness more? Should they be condemned for such a thing? In essence, the Jews are asking, "Why try to be obedient to the law at all?" If no one is righteous, and if no one can achieve righteousness through the law, why not just continue to sin all the more?

Paul writes his answer in Romans 3:21-26. All are sinners and no one can achieve righteousness by obeying the law, yet God has made another way to receive righteousness which aligns with the law that He gave the Jews. Paul explains how that righteousness has been *achieved* by Jesus as well as how it may be *received* by us.

But Now... Righteousness is Received by Faith

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law."

God previously demonstrated His righteousness in giving the law. But now, He has demonstrated His righteousness *apart from the law*. By *apart*, Paul does not mean that this new righteousness is completely separate from the law. Paul clarifies that the law itself pointed to this new righteousness. What Paul means is that we may *receive* righteousness rather than *achieve* it. We can receive a gift of righteousness by believing in Jesus who perfectly obeyed and fulfilled the requirements of the law on our behalf.

All Who Believe Despite All Being Sinners

Thus far in Romans, Paul has emphasized that Gentiles and Jews are condemned as sinners. Romans 3:9 says, “For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.” Our text today further confirms, “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” No one is righteous by their own merits. No one has met God’s righteous requirements to avoid His wrath towards sinners.

Yet, just as all are sinners, all may turn to faith in Jesus. Jews and Gentiles may come in faith. There is no distinction. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And all can be saved if they choose to believe.

Justified, Grace, Redemption, Propitiation

The righteousness we need is received by faith. Jesus accomplished it for us. Yet there is more going on than simply saying that God gives us righteousness. Several theological words capture for us additional aspects of our salvation.

First, we are *justified*. This means that we who were once guilty have not been declared righteous. In our salvation, God is not simply dismissing our sins as if they were not actually significant. Indeed, our sins were costly, and they required a payment for them. Yet, Jesus paid the penalty of our sins through His death. Our salvation is not based on God choosing to casually overlook our sins. Rather, our salvation is due to God taking sin so seriously, that He would put Jesus to death on our behalf. And in Jesus being crucified, He has justly paid for our sins. Therefore, we are justified—once guilty, now declared righteous.

Second, we are justified by His *grace*. Grace means that we received something as a gift. We did not earn our righteousness. God chose to act on our behalf out of His own love and will. Therefore, God gets all the glory for saving us. We cannot boast in ourselves in any way. Again, we do not earn our salvation, rather we receive it by faith as a gift. God extended to us by His grace.

Third, we experience God’s righteousness through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus. The word *redemption* means to buy back or to release from slavery. Prior to being saved, we were enslaved to sin. But now, because of Jesus’ death, we are no longer enslaved to sin. Our freedom to live obedient lives has been purchased through Jesus. We are free from the law’s demands

since they have been fulfilled for us in Jesus. We have been freed to live for God in a new way.

Fourth, God's righteousness is extended to us by Jesus being a *propitiation* for us. The word *propitiation* means "to satisfy the wrath" of God. As already mentioned, in achieving salvation for us, God is not simply overlooking sin as if it were not a big deal. Most likely, we fail to understand just how big of a deal sin is to God. God's response to sin is wrath. Because of our sin, we deserve God's judgment, His righteous anger, and His fierce wrath against us. We had become His enemies. Yet, the death of Jesus satisfied the wrath of God. Thus, we are no longer destined to experience His wrath, but we are loved as His children.

God is Just and the Justifier

God is not only just in extending salvation to us, but He gets credit for being the *justifier* also. Our salvation was not achieved for us by anyone else but God Himself. He justified us, we did not justify ourselves. And all the requirements needed for our salvation have been justly achieved.

Thus, all praise and honor and glory go to God alone for righteously saving us.

Discussion Questions

- If someone were to ask you, "How do I become a Christian?" Do you feel confident that you can explain to them how to do so?
- Would a few folks in our class mind sharing their testimony with the group. Maybe try to share it within 3-5 minutes?
- Sometimes it can seem like Christianity has a lot of big theological words. Do these words ever intimidate you or do you find it easy to get lost in the theological jargon? As a group, can we define the words: justified, grace, redemption, and propitiation? Other common words are adoption, reconciliation, and regeneration. Any idea what these words also mean?
- Why do you think using these theological words could be important?
- What stands out to you about God in this passage?
- Does this passage teach us anything about humans in general?

Conclusions or Application

FOR THE GOSPEL

Our mission as a church is to be “For the Gospel, for the city, and for the world.” When we say that we are “for the gospel,” we mean that we want to believe the gospel firmly and share it boldly.

We generally want to embrace the posture of 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 which says, “Now I would *remind* you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word, I preached to you...”

As a church we understand that the gospel is central to who we are. What makes us different from the world and other religions is that we received the gospel message. And we must never stray from the gospel message. We must hold dearly the truth that God saves sinners through Jesus. It is by grace that we are saved through faith and not of works (Eph. 2:8).

Since the gospel message is core to who we are, as a church we want to remind ourselves of the gospel. Indeed, the gospel message is not just for unbelievers who have never heard, it benefits the Christians who has believed.

To be “for the gospel” also means that we share the gospel message boldly. Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, “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.” As a church we are not ashamed to share the gospel with others. By and large our church makes a lot of efforts to share the gospel. In nearly every program or event, a gospel presentation is made with opportunity given for people to respond. From our children and youth basketball league, student retreats, and vacation bible schools to our food pantry, dental clinic, and Sunday worship services, the gospel is presented with clarity.

We must face the future with the gospel message. For with the gospel message, we will continue to thrive and exist for the glory of God.