

Intro:

We are now occupied in our study of Romans with the subject of the righteousness that comes from God – the ‘without-law’ kind of righteousness.

It is as if we have a precious jewel in our hands – one that is many-faceted. We are taking it out and holding it up to the light. We see glorious things in each of its faces.

- Our jewel is of such great value that every attempt by man to offer a comparable gem in its place is the same as offering up filthy rags as if they were diamonds.

Morality = the filth of sinfulness

Religious work = the empty value of garbage

- Our jewel is just now coming to light – it cannot be earned or deserved, it is the ‘without-law’ kind of righteousness.
- Our jewel is obtained simply through faith of Jesus Christ, for *any* and *every* person who believes.
- Our jewel is given even to those who are sinners by nature and by practice: they continually fall short of the glory of God – yet those who believe still are given the jewel.

Our understanding of the value of this great jewel, ‘without-law’ righteousness, will grow exponentially this week as we look at Rm 3.24 and consider this subject:

Free Justifying Grace through a Particular Redemption

Read Rm 3.24

What are we looking at in our text? Read Rm 3.21-24

We are looking at the priceless blessing of justification procured through the single most costly act in the history of the universe and made freely available to anyone who will believe.

We are looking at the *value* of ‘without-law’ righteousness.

I. Free justification: the only answer to human unrighteousness

A. Human unrighteousness is the universal condition

We have covered this ground over and over again in the last year...

1. We know by God's Law that all men are sinners (20b)
2. We know that no one can be justified by the works of the law (20a)
3. We know that no man has any defense at the judgement seat of God (19)

We are so thankful that God's revelation does not stop merely with Rm 3.20 – God would be entirely just to do so, all men deserve condemnation and wrath.

But God offers something else as an answer to man's condition...

For those who through faith in Jesus Christ believe in God's plan of salvation, God offers a perfect answer, one that puts believing man in a new position.

B. Justification is the believer's new legal position

“To begin with, justification is an *act*, not a process. There are no degrees of justification; each believer has the same right standing before God. Also, justification is something *God* does, not man. No sinner can justify himself before God. Most important, justification does not mean that God *makes* us righteous, but that He *declares* us righteous. Justification is a legal matter. God puts the righteousness of Christ on our record in the place of our own sinfulness. And nobody can change this record.”¹

1. A finished/completed act “an act, not a process”
 - a. You can't be ‘a little bit justified’ or ‘partly a Christian’
 - b. If you are a believer, you are declared righteous in God's sight – everything is finished with respect to *justifying* you

Jesus shouted on the cross: ‘Tetelestai’ — ‘It is finished!’

Nothing is lacking in justification (though there may yet be something lacking in your character and practice – sanctification)

¹ Warren W. Weirsbe, *Be Right*, p. 35.

2. A divine accomplishment “something God does, not man”

Can you imagine a prisoner in court telling the judge, “Well, I guess my story settles everything, I’ve enjoyed our little chat, but I think I’ll be seeing you later” and then just walking out?

- a. Justification is not a self-help plan; it is not self-administered
- b. Justification must be the act of an authority, a judge, because...

3. A judicial declaration [a legal position] “not ... that God *makes* us righteous, but that He *declares* us righteous”

“To be justified is to be declared righteous. It is the sentence of the judge in favor of the prisoner. It is not a state or condition of soul. We are not justified because we have become righteous in heart and life. God justifies first, then He enables the justified one to walk in practical righteousness.”²

- a. Justification in a court of law defined:

“(Law) The showing in court of a sufficient lawful reason why a party charged or accused did that for which he is called to answer.”³

“I didn’t murder him, it was self-defense.” That is a justification if the judge buys your defense.

- b. Justification is a legal term in the first century also
- c. Justification is a legal declaration
 - 1) I am a sinner
 - 2) I am declared righteous (by God – the only person who can make such a declaration worth anything)

“This action on God’s part derives its whole motivation, explanation, and determination from what God himself is and does in the exercise of free and sovereign grace.”⁴

² H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 50.

³ justification. Dictionary.com. *Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary*. MICRA, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/justification> (accessed: April 25, 2009).

⁴ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 115 (emphasis mine).

C. Justification answers unrighteousness as nothing else can

1. My religious rites cannot answer my unrighteousness because I still stand guilty of my unrighteousness
2. My moral deeds cannot answer my unrighteousness because I have plenty of unrighteous deeds to go around
3. But God's declaration of righteousness? Priceless!
 - a. Can't earn it
 - b. Don't deserve it
 - c. But by faith have it

This is where the believer is... being justified...

II. By grace: an unprompted gift to undeserving men

A. The nature of divine justification: it is a gift

Justification is free – lit., 'giftly' or 'gift-wise'

1. This word "signifies 'for nothing'".⁵
2. This word opposes that which is purchased
3. This word opposes that which is obtained by labour
4. This word opposes that which is a natural right

B. The unprompted means of justification: it's basis lies in God's grace, nothing in the believer

1. Free justification is by grace – unprompted
 - a. It is not that God sees some value in the saved sinner that sets him apart from others
 - b. It is not that God sees some value even in the faith of the sinner
2. God's/ declaration is *by grace*

"We are justified *dorean* — freely, gratis, gratuitously, giftwise, without a cause in us!"⁶

⁵ James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans" in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., p. 610.

⁶ William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*, p. 115.

“The grace of God is infinite love operating by an infinite means.”⁷

When we say unprompted, we mean unprompted by anything in man. But there is something that energizes God’s gracious declaration...

III. Through the redemption: the unparalleled act of infinite worth

Lit. trans. “being justified freely [gift-wise] by his grace through the redemption the one in Christ Jesus”

A. A real redemption

1. ‘redemption ...’ the price paid for release from captivity
2. Redemption “is always taken in the strict sense of ‘deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom.’”⁸
3. “The emphasis is on the *cost* of man’s redemption.”⁹

B. A particular redemption: ‘**the** redemption **the one** in Christ Jesus’

1. My literal translation follows the literal word order
2. The statement could have left out the article and not change essential meaning: “the redemption in Christ Jesus”
3. The repetition of the article has two uses
 - a. Emphasis
 - b. Clarity: this particular redemption and not any other is the one that purchases the declaration of righteousness

C. A costly redemption

1. How much did men value the price Jesus paid? — 30 pieces of silver...
2. How much did God value it?
 - a. For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son ... Jn 3.16

⁷ William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*, p. 115.

⁸ Charles Hodge, *Romans*, p. 87.

⁹ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 86.

b. My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Mt 27.46, Mk 15.34

D. An infinitely valuable redemption

1. When it comes to the name of Christ in the NT, we find many variations in the MSS
 - a. Christ Jesus
 - b. Jesus Christ
 - c. Jesus
 - d. Christ
2. One man observed that wherever the text is “in Christ” or “in Christ Jesus” there never is a variant reading
 - a. That means, every time the preposition “in” is followed by the name in one of the two forms
 - b. With other instances of the name, there is wide variation – that makes consistency here significant
 - c. (I haven’t attempted to check this out)
3. “It is also what we should expect, because ἐν Χριστῷ or ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ always relate to the glorified Christ, not to the historic Jesus.”¹⁰
 - a. The emphasis, then, points to Christ, dead, buried, resurrected *and* glorified
 - b. The redemption, the one that is in the glorified Christ, is of infinite value because he is infinite.

Conclusion:

I began our message talking about this doctrine of the ‘without-law’ kind of righteousness as a jewel. Paul has been holding it up and turning it around in the light for us to see.

I looked up how diamonds are valued. There are four main components to valuing diamonds.¹¹

¹⁰ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 86-87.

¹¹ These points gleaned from Natalie Inger, "Diamond Valuation - Easy Ways to Determine the Value of a Diamond" <http://ezinearticles.com/?Diamond-Valuation---Easy-Ways-to-Determine-the->

- Cut
- Clarity
- Color
- Carat weight

Cut: “A well-cut diamond will display maximum brilliance and fire. Considered one of the most important qualities of a diamond, a well-cut stone can compensate for low color or poor clarity.”¹²

Clarity: “Real diamonds generally tend to have small flaws such as tiny inclusions, air bubbles, or traces of other minerals inside the stone. While the presence of these tiny imperfections become the key factor in determining a real diamond from a fake, the quality and value of a diamond depends very much on a diamonds clarity. The best kinds of real diamonds have imperfections that can only be detected under a skilled diamond graders 10-power microscope.”¹³

Color: “A Diamonds ability to refract light is dependant on its degree of whiteness, making the whitest of white diamonds considerably more valuable than there lesser-white counterparts.”¹⁴

Carat weight: “One should understand that a 1-carat diamond is not half the price of a 2-carat diamond nor is a 2-carat diamond twice the price of a 1-carat stone. Since 2-carat diamonds are found less often in nature, they are worth more than 1-carat diamonds.”¹⁵

Let’s apply this to the *Free Justifying Grace through a Particular Redemption*:

- **Cut:** Consider the “five bleeding wounds he bore”, as well as the lacerated back and crown of thorns — his ‘cut’ displayed *maximum brilliance and fire*
- **Clarity:** What flaw can be found in our *impeccable* Saviour? No possibility of sin – no hint of a defect, a “perfect, bleeding sacrifice”
- **Color:** Consider the light seen in him on the mount of Transfiguration... consider the burnished feet and glowing face John saw on Patmos... consider the glorious Christ whose return will be like sheet lightning lighting up the sky, but lighting it up world-wide and forever

Value-of-a-Diamond&id=214620 (Accessed 4.25.09) and Bacci Diamonds, Diamond Valuation http://www.baccidiamonds.com/articles/diamond_valuation (Accessed 4.25.09).

¹² Bacci Diamonds article.

¹³ Natalie Inger.

¹⁴ Natalie Inger.

¹⁵ Bacci Diamonds article.

- **Carat weight:** The basic meaning of ‘glory’ in the Bible is ‘weightiness’ – who can compare to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ

What great value there is in this justification!

What great value in this redemption!

What great value in this righteousness!