

**Introduction:**

**Good morning...Thank** you for being here today...If you don't know, my name is Byron Bradshaw and I hope that you feel warmly greeted...If you are interested in membership or in joining one of our Sunday school classes, I invite you to see me following the service today...

**I am here...So...No baby yet...**But it will come soon enough...Laurel is 38 weeks pregnant so it should be any day now...We are excited to meet our daughter but are dreading those long nights ahead...

But it is all worth it...**Bow with me in a word of prayer...**

**ME:**

**Today, I'd like to** talk to you about the Righteousness of God...But I am going to start out by asking you a question...

**Yes or No...Is God Righteous?** YES.....You guys passed...A+ What does that even mean? What does the phrase the "righteousness of God" really even mean?

**Because ya know...**As I was reflecting on this central idea for today's passage...I realized something...I realized that I didn't really understand the righteousness of God...Oh sure I knew the Sunday school answer...But I really had no idea how the "righteousness of God" was defined, revealed or even demonstrated....

**But then In the midst** of my struggle, I had an epiphany...As a Christians...the "righteousness of God...".... is probably one of the most important concepts to understand...

**Why? Because the "righteousness of God"** informs almost every area of Christianity...It informs sin, the fall, hell, and death...It informs the Law, Prophets, the Psalms, the Gospels...it informs salvation, sovereignty, free will, grace, faith, Jesus, and even eschatology.....

**And Additionally, as we will see today...**The righteousness of God informs, magnifies, clarifies, accessorizes, exemplarizes the very process of justification and satisfaction...

**Transition: So, come with me to Romans 3...**and today we will be covering verses 21-26...As you turn there...

**I must say that I am excited about the passage today...**Because in it Paul gives us meat...I mean a real juicy ribeyes of truth...as he discusses the manifestation and demonstration of the righteousness of God...

**GOD:**

**And as you turn to Romans 3...I want to ask you another question...**If you could summarize Chapters 1-3 in one phrase...What would it be? **Mankind's brokenness...**

**Our brokenness proven through** general revelation and culture...Chapter 1

Our depravity proven through the struggle of judging and of keeping the law...Chapter 2

Then Last week...our depravity proven through the examination of the Old Testament...Chapter 3

**So imagine for just a moment...Imagine Paul's Jewish Audience** at the end of verse 3:20.....They are probably feeling discouraged, hopeless, helpless, destitute...Culturally speaking...They hit "Rock Bottom..."

**Transition: But then notice with me how** Paul begins the passage today...He begins with two beautiful words...

**Read verse 21** "***But now*** apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets..."

"***But Now...***" two of the most beautiful words in the Book of Romans...Why? Because with these two words...Paul flips the script from hopelessness to hopefulness...Paul switches the script from sin and shame to salvation and satisfaction...

**Paul is saying to His** Jewish audience and to us today...Yes...you are completely and totally sinful, hopeless to save yourself... "**But now**"...**Something has changed**...**What has changed?**

**Read verse 21-22a**, "***But now*** apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;"

**But now the righteousness of God has been manifested...**Literally, that word manifested is "revealed" and this Greek verb parsing tells me....**That God has** revealed His righteousness in the past and will continue to reveal His righteousness to every person and every generation...

**But How? How has God's righteousness been revealed?** In three ways...The first two are in verse 21... "***But now*** apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets..."

God's righteousness is revealed #1: Through the Law and #2: through the Prophets...

**But notice the third...How else is God's righteousness revealed? Verse 22a, "even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;"**

**God's righteousness has also been revealed through #3: Salvation...**Ladies and Gentlemen...our unrighteousness and God's salvation magnifies God's righteousness...

**We are completely, totally, and helplessly** unrighteous and now that we can be declared righteous through Jesus Christ...it informs, reveals... magnifies...exemplarizes....God's righteousness and God's greatness to everyone who has ever lived...

**And notice the last phrase of 22a...** "for all those who believe..." What does this tell me?

**That Salvation is not exclusive...**It is not just meant for the Jews...But is meant for every person who has ever lived...Salvation is given to all sinners and all people...And our faith in Jesus Christ magnifies God's greatness and righteousness all the more...

**Point #1: God's righteousness is revealed through the Law, Prophets and Salvation...**

Question to Answer: What is the righteousness of God?

**But we still have the original question to answer.....**What is the righteousness of God? What does that phrase even mean? What do we mean by this.....Greek phrase?

**As I mentioned earlier, this was** a question I did not fully understand...

**I didn't understand so** I put my Bible nerd hat on and went diving into books that were about this thick... Researching the righteousness of God felt like I was getting blasted in the face by a firehose while treading water...

**But I realized something...**I realized that many scholars don't really understand it...Because when I was trying to define "the righteousness of God" I found countless PhD dissertations trying to define it...

**\*So, what is the righteousness of God? \*Point #2: The righteousness** of God is simply put is two things...#1: The Status of God #2: the Activity of God...

**The righteousness of God...refers #1: to His status...**The Greek lexicon defines His righteous status as being "upright...fair,..just..." which He is...

**But I'd like to add a definition...** God is guiltless.....without tarnish...God's righteousness refers to His status as being "upright, fair, just but also His status as Guiltlessness and Pure..."

**The Righteousness of God refers to #1: His status and also to the #2: Activity of God...** the righteousness of God refers to His redemptive activity of declaring what is unrighteous (point to yourself) ..... righteous...

**Now which of** these two (the status and the activity) does verse 21-22a describe? Status right?  
 - God's righteous Status is revealed in the Law and Prophets...vs 21  
 - God's righteous Status is revealed through the non-exclusive Gospel...vs 22a

**Transition: So the first definition is in** verses 21-22a...But then notice how the second definition plays out in verses 22b-26.....Notice with me how it describes the activity of God's righteousness...

**Read verses 22b-26...** *"for there is no distinction; 23 for all <sup>a</sup>have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation <sup>b</sup>in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*

**Point #3: God's righteousness is demonstrated through justification and satisfaction...**

**This passage seems quite** complicated and overwhelming...But I find it often helpful to separate a difficult passage into its major parts or divisions...

**Now Notice with me verses 22b-26...** What is its main division...? If you could split this passage into two parts...Where would it break? (Long Pause)

**Notice...What is** the difference between 22b-24 and 25-26...? They are essentially describing the same thing, right...But what is the difference?

**I asked this exact question in staff meeting this week...**and someone said perfectly... "From verses 22b-24 and 25-26...there is a change in perspective..."

**That's exactly right...Both sections (22b-24) and (25-26)** are describing the same thing but from two different vantage points...Essentially, it is two sides of the same coin...

**Transition: All of verses 22b-26** describes the righteous activity of God...But verses 22b-24

describes God's activity or God's righteous process of justification ...and verses 25-26 describes God's righteous process of satisfaction....

### **\*\*God's Righteous Process of Justification...**

**In the effort to understand** God's righteous process of justification let us first examine the condition...

**Read verses 22b**, *“for there is no distinction; 23 for all <sup>a</sup>have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”*

**Notice the first phrase...** *“For there is no distinction or difference...”* In my opinion, this is the main highlighted phrase of verses 22b-24 which is then explained with two modifying phrases...vs 23 and the second in verse 24...

**“For there is no distinction”...What does that mean?** Well...Verse 23...*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”*

**“For there is no distinction” means** that there is no difference in sinners...All are sinners...All Jews or Gentiles are sinners, all drug addicts and self-righteous saints are sinners...There is no sinful difference between women and men, nor is there a difference between preachers and lay men...

**Why? Verse 23...**For ALL have sinned and ALL fall short of His glory... **In other words, Verse 23 describes #1: Mankind's Condition**.....All are unworthy of being saved...No matter how good you are...we all fall short...

**In a way...verse 23 summarizes Chapters 1, 2 and 3...**This verse in a nutshell explains **the need** for the Gospel...There is no distinction...Each and every person who has ever lived have sinned and need the Gospel... “For all Have sinned...” Aorist tense....Punctiliar...All have sinned...

**And then secondly “all people fall short...”** the second verb “fall short” is Present tense...which tells me that we sin and fall short over and over again of God's glory...

**\*What is our condition?** #1: We each have sinned...and we each continue to fall short...God's glory...

**But then notice the second part of the mankind's justification...**

**Read verse 24, “being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”**

### **The Process of Man’s of Justification**

**Notice we first have the declaration of justification**

**#2: Declaration: Despite** our sin, despite falling short...Despite our all our unrighteousness, we can be “justified...” before God “justified” is a legal term meaning to “be declared innocent...”

**Transition: But what is the means of being** declared innocent in the face of guilt?

**Notice again verse 24...” #1: being justified as a gift or freely #2: Means: by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”**

**What is the means of our justification? His grace...**

**#3: Means: The means by which we are saved is by God’s grace...** Grace meaning God’s Unmerited, undeserved favor...In other words, we’ve done nothing to earn it...We’ve done nothing to deserve it...But God scooped down into this world and gave it to us freely...

Transition: So we see the declaration “being justified”, the Means of justification is His grace...

**Now, what is the instrument to justify us? #4: Instrument:**

**The instrument of our justification is Payment...** “through the redemption”...Redemption here literally meaning **atonement**...or the “release from a painful interrogation...Release from a captive condition”...and that payment was Jesus’ blood...

The instrument of our justification is our release or the purchase of our condemned fallen soul...

**But who is the Purchaser? Who is the Buyer?** Who paid for my release from the captivity and damnation of my sin?

*“Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption **which is in Christ Jesus;**”*

**#5: The Buyer: was Christ Jesus;”**

**Our purchaser...Our substitute...**Our buyer, our redeemer...The one that slammed his wallet down and paid in full our debt of sin and the eternal destituteness of our soul was Jesus Christ through his atoning blood...

**Ladies and Gentlemen...**Let this sink in...Our condition is Sinners who continue to sin

deserving of death with no hope of earning heaven...

**But God reached down from heaven...** Saw our plight... And declared us innocent of the sin we commit) by means of His grace.... Through the instrument of the Purchasing with blood from our buyer Jesus Christ...

**Transition: Now... This on** a theological level can be a bit difficult to get your head around so allow me to hopefully clarify it with an illustration...

**Illustration:**

**Allow me to put in perspective the God's process of man's justification...** All illustrations break down at some point but go with me...

**Let's say you stretched a bit... Let's say your** eyes were too big for your stomach... So, you back in 2007 you reached a bit and bought with debt home that you could not afford... Then a year later... the bubble burst and the Great Recession hit...

**So, now you have this bloated mortgage payment...** that you can't afford... and with a huge debt that you hope to keep afloat...

**But the news gets worse... On top of** the bloated mortgage... you go to work one day and your boss walks in and lays you off... **So now, you are destitute... You are stuck...** Hopeless of ever paying your debt...

**So there is only one inevitable conclusion... Bankruptcy...** Losing your house... Getting kicked out the street...

**And let's say, you see the writing** on the wall and before you collapse financially... You walk into the loan officer's office to beg forgiveness of your debt knowing full well you have no hope of payment...

**You sit at loan officer's desk and you weep... Explaining your situation and explaining** how extremely destitute you are... of How you have no way of paying for it... and of How you lost your job...

**And the cold-hearted banker across the** desk listens but inevitably says that you are responsible for your actions and must pay your mortgage or you face financial bankruptcy...

**So now you have no hope..... You are stuck... And As you realize the inevitable...** As the banker's words come as needles into your chest... As his words crush every ounce of hope...

**And as you bow your head and bury them deep into your tears.....An unknown man walks up behind you into the office and says “How much does he owe?”**

**He then takes out his checkbook and pen (Tear off a check and write)...and Pays for your debt in full....giving you a free gift...and then the bank confirms the satisfaction of debt, declares you innocent and hands you the deed stamped...“Paid in full”.....**

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**That’s a picture of justification.... Now listen to me...Catch this...**

**#1: Our condition: We are destitute....** hopeless of ever paying our debt of sin...

**#2: Then we are declared “paid in full” “justified” #2: By means of God’s grace...**

**#3: God’s instrument of purchase was not a check... but rather the instrument of payment was blood.....**

**#4: Given willfully by our Buyer Jesus Christ...**

**And We stand justified through this process** when we receive his gift of eternal life by faith...And only when we believe in Jesus Christ as the gift by faith, God the Father then stamps your deed to eternal life “Paid in Full...” “Justified”

WOW...That’s it...That is the perspective of mankind’s salvation...

**Ladies and Gentlemen, if you are** sitting in that office realizing your hopelessness...Jesus is right behind you...He has paid your debt and you receive his gift by faith...Salvation is freely received by faith.....If you have never believed in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, I encourage you to believe

**Transition:** Yes salvation is free...Salvation is free to us...But was costly...costly to God...

**Transition: Notice with me** verses 25-26...Notice the opposite side of the coin...Notice it describes the wonderful process of **The Process of God’s Satisfaction...** And it comes in three parts...

**The Process of God’s Satisfaction...\*\***

**Read verses 25-26, “whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation<sup>b</sup> in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed**

**over the sins previously committed;** for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who <sup>[9]</sup>has faith in Jesus.

**What was God's cost?** Someone had to pay...Right? The propitiation, satisfaction or the payment...was The blood of Christ...Of God's only begotten son... *“whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation <sup>b</sup>in His blood through faith.”*

In order to satisfy there must be a payment...

**#1: Payment** - The payment was not a check.... but the blood and death of God's only son ...As I heard recently God views Christians through blood covered glasses...

**Ladies and Gentlemen**.... Salvation is free to us...But was costly to God...The payment was the death of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ...In order to declare our debt “paid in full” someone had to pay...And that payment was blood and the check writer was Jesus...

**But then notice the second** part of the actual process of satisfaction

**#2: Satisfaction with Payment....Notice with me**...Because of Jesus' Payment there is now satisfaction....

*Read verse 26... “because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;”*

**What is actual process? Because of Jesus' blood payment**...God's shows His satisfaction with Jesus' payment by “passing over” our sins previously committed...

**But Wait a second...And it's not just** previous sin committed...But the Greek tells... for those that believe in Jesus Christ...That God passes over previous sins, current sin, future sins and all sins...That Jesus' payment was sufficient to satisfy God's wrath for ALL our sins...

**But I'm not done...there is beautiful imagery here in verse 25...And it is found with the words “pass over”**...What does that remind you of? Now this Greek word is absolutely beautiful...And is also a bit troubling...

**It's is beautiful due to its** imagery but troubling because it is a “hapax legomenon...” This is the only time this word is used in the entire New Testament...Now, when that happens a word is notoriously difficult to define and understand...

**However, what does those words “He passed over”** remind you of...Hmm...It reminded me also about the original Passover in Exodus so I began to wonder if there was a connection

between Romans 3:25 and Exodus 12...

So again I put on my Bible nerd hat and went digging...**This word got me thinking about the Septuagint...**What is the Septuagint? The Septuagint was an Old Testament translation from the original Hebrew to Koine Greek...which is the same language as the NT...

**The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was widely known and used by New Testament writers....**So I wondered if Paul was purposefully trying to make a connection...Between Exodus 12 and Romans 3:25...So, Listen to Exodus 12:23 in the passage on the original Passover...

*“For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will **pass over** the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.”*

**Those two words “pass over”** in Exodus 12 has the same root word as the word in Romans 3:25...In other words, as the Lord purposefully passed over all the Israelite doors with the atoning blood of a Lamb...So, also God purposefully passes over our sin when he sees the atoning blood of THE LAMB... (Repeat)

**Our ultimate debt of sin...**is satisfied through Jesus' death and God's satisfaction is proven through God's passing over our sins that we forever commit...

### **YOU:**

However, as God held the Egyptians culpable without the blood...So, also God holds all of us culpable without the blood of Christ on our soul...If you do not have the blood of Christ written on the doorposts to your soul...

**How then do you place the blood of Christ** over the doorpost of your soul?

Read verse 22, *“even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe...”*

**You receive his gift by faith...**If you have not ever believed in Jesus Christ, then he and I invite you to believe today right where you are...

**As God passed over the** doors of the Israelites so also God passes over our sin through Jesus blood which we receive by faith...

**And as I stand toward the end of this wonderful passage....**I then stare at the road ahead of

today and tomorrow and I ask the question, “How do I, how do you, take this wonderful truth with me today and tomorrow...How does this passage apply it to my life?” The application is different to different groups...

**YOU:**

**For all you Christians out there...I give you application point #1: Appreciate justification and satisfaction...**

**Transition:** Yet in order to drive this home today...I want to close today with a close thought and application point #2....

**My application point #2 is to Reflect upon God’s gift and cost**

**Ya know we love this...(Pick up the gift)...We love to think about this...We love to only think about the free gift of salvation and how it was purchased by Jesus and given to us freely...and we open this gift by faith...And this is a wonderful truth...**

**Transition:** And many of us only think about the gift and not the cost...And If we only think of the gift and not the cost then we will have a very “anthropological soteriology” we have a VERY man centered Gospel...

**But where my life changed** because of this passage was an understanding and appreciation the opposite side of the coin...It was finally understood the process of God’s satisfaction due to Jesus’ payment....

**Transition: The other side is this...the cost...** (Hold up the man hole cover)...What is this? Man hole “cover”... Watch out for the “pot hole on Whitesburg drive” just kidding...

**But this one says sewer...Our sin is sewage to God...My sin and your sin is disgusting and filthy in the sight of God...And we all continue to fall short adding to the filthy sewer of sin daily...**

But because of Jesus’ payment...God passes over our sin...Over and over again...He passes over each of our sin if we have faith in Christ...

**For this week:** I want to forever warp you...I want you to reflect upon God’s continual satisfaction over your sin...**So...this week...As you drive...**As you pass over man hole after man hole...again and again ...As you drive over them...Reflect and appreciate the thought that God continually passes over our sin if we believe in Jesus Christ...

**Close in Prayer**