

The Good News
Dr. Jerry Nelson
Romans 3:21-26

Romans begins with the bad news that all people are under the wrath of God because God is holy and we are sinners (3:23). “**But now** a righteousness from God...has been made known...” If all of Christianity were boiled down to its essence, Romans 3:21-26 would be it. This is the "Good news" the "Gospel!"

This text will answer five questions:

What is “the righteousness from God?” The “righteousness from God” is God’s own holiness, God’s moral perfection, as lived out in the perfect life of God the Son, Jesus. The “currency” of heaven is righteousness. Access to a holy God requires holiness and we need that holiness/righteousness.

By this righteousness from God, we “are justified.” But what does it mean to be justified? To be justified means that we stand acquitted before God – not guilty. But God doesn’t just put us back in some neutral position with him so that we can try again to get it right. In addition to declaring us “not guilty” because Jesus paid for our sins, He also marvelously credits to us God’s (Christ’s) righteousness.

Why does God do this? Look again at verse 24. We “are justified freely by his (God’s) grace.” The word "freely" is the adverbial form of the word "gift" – we are justified as a gift. This righteousness from God comes not as a reward or payment but solely because of God's gracious/loving choice.

How is it possible for us to have this righteousness? Where is justice if God freely acquits the guilty? Because we are destined for wrath, God used the only way possible to justify us, to acquit us, **and still remain a just God who punishes sin** - he poured out his just wrath on himself. And in so doing God remains just and at the same time justifies us (verse 26).

And how does it become ours? Verse 22, “This righteousness...comes **through faith** in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” Faith in Jesus means placing no confidence whatsoever in ourselves, our goodness, our efforts, or our standing in the church or community and instead placing full **CONFIDENCE ONLY IN JESUS** and what he did in his perfectly holy life and sacrificial death as our way to God. By grace we are saved!