

Gospel for all

Romans 3:1-20

3 reasons why we need the gospel

I. Because of the perfect character of God

A. Including His faithfulness

Romans 2:27—*And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?*

Romans 3:1—*Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?*

Romans 3:2—*Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.*

1. God entrusted His word to the Israelites first

Luke 24:27—*Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

2. God is faithful even in their unfaithfulness

Romans 3:3—*What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?*

Romans 3:4—*May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "That You may be justified in Your words, and prevail when You are judged."*

2 Timothy 2:13—*If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.*

B. Including His righteousness

II. Because of the desperate need of man

Righteousness is a major theme of the book of Romans, appearing in one form or another more than thirty times. Other terms from the same Greek root are usually translated 'justified,' 'justification,' or the like. Together they are used more than sixty times in the book of Romans.¹

Matthew 5:48—*Therefore you shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

A. There is none righteous

Romans 3:10-12—*as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, Together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."*

v. 10b – none

v. 10c – not even one

v. 11a – none

v. 11b – none

v. v12 c – none

v. 12d – not even one

B. Man's tongue is full of cursing

Romans 3:13-14—*Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep Deceiving, The poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness...*

James 3:2,6—*For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well...And the tongue is a fire, the very world of unrighteousness; the tongue is set among our body's parts as that which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.*

C. Man's actions are misery and destruction

¹ The MacArthur Study Bible, John MacArthur, p. 182

Romans 3:15–17—*Their feet are swift to shed blood, Destruction and misery are in their paths, And the path of peace they have not known.*

If you know God loves you in Christ, and that there is nothing you can do or need to do but accept His perfect righteousness, then you can feed the hungry, visit the sick, and clothe the naked, and all of it will be done as a gift to God. But if you think you are going to get or keep your salvation by doing these good deeds, it is really yourself you are feeding, yourself you are clothing, yourself you are visiting. It is who we are serving in our hearts that matter, not how we are serving with our hands. Without faith in Christ, good deeds are not truly done for God, but for ourselves—and thus are not truly good. This is why any goodness we have becomes sour. If we do good to gain God's favor, blessing and salvation, and do well, we will be smug, superior, and complacent; if we do badly, we will be anxious, self-pitying, and angry. The 'good-deeds' done outside trusting the gospel will make a soul go sour. All of us have to understand this to be saved Christians, rather than unsaved-but-religious people. The main difference between a Christian and a religious person is not so much their attitudes to their sins, but toward their 'good-deeds.' Both will repent of their sins; but only the Christian will repent of wrongly-motivated good works, while the religious person will rely on them.²

Romans 1:16-17—*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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."*

D. All because we don't fear God

Romans 3:18—*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

² Tim Keller, *Romans 1 - 7 For You (God's Word For You)*, Tim Keller, pp. 73-74

Psalm 111:10—*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.*

Psalm 130:3-4—*If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.*

III. Because without God's salvation, man is damned

Romans 3:19—*Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God*

The law is not given to us so that, in observing it, we can 'be declared righteous' (v. 20) because we are all sinful. The law is not a checklist we keep; it is a benchmark we fail.³

Romans 3:20—*because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*

³ Ibid, p. 75