

The Great Fix

- I. Righteousness Needed Because of Sin and Condemnation
 - A. The Condemnation of the PreChristian (1:18-32)
 1. The Cause of Condemnation: willful ignorance (1:18-23)
 2. The Consequence of Condemnation: divine abandonment (1:24-32)
 - B. The Condemnation of the Moral PC (2:1-11)
 - C. The Condemnation of the Unenlightened PC (2:12-16)
 - D. The Condemnation of the Jew (*religious churchgoer*) (2:17-3:8)
 1. They did not keep the law of God (2:17-29)
 2. They did not believe the promises of God (3:1-8)
 - E. The Condemnation of **All Mankind** (3:9-20)

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- D. **The Condemnation of the Jew** (*religious church member—Mormon, Baptist, JW, Nazarene—anyone relying on any ritual or rite for anything*)
 2. They did not believe the promises of God (3:1-8)
- Paul foresees three questions in protest from the religious:
1. v.1-2: *What advantage then is there in being a Jew? Does circumcision mean nothing? But God chose us and gave us circumcision as a sign!*
 - Much in every respect, for you were entrusted with the written Word of God.
 - They were given special revelation by God Himself, but didn't put it to its proper use.

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- D. **The Condemnation of the Jew** (*religious church member—Mormon, Baptist, JW, Nazarene—anyone relying on any ritual or rite for anything*)
 2. They did not believe the promises of God (3:1-8)
- Paul foresees three questions in protest from the religious:
2. v.3-4: *Paul, are you saying that just because some of us don't measure up to what God required in the law, everyone in Israel has lost the promise God gave them? You seem to suggest that God isn't interested in the very rituals he himself instituted. Are you saying that all these things mean nothing to God?*
 - ABSOLUTELY NOT!
 - God will still fulfill His promises, but remember, those promises are based only on faith, never on rituals or symbols.

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The Great Fix

- D. **The Condemnation of the Jew** (*religious church member—Mormon, Baptist, JW, Nazarene—anyone relying on any ritual or rite for anything*)
 2. They did not believe the promises of God (3:1-8)
- Paul foresees three questions in protest from the religious:
3. v.5-8: *If God is glorified by human sin and failure, as the Scriptures say, then let's sin all the more...*
 - ABSOLUTELY NOT!
 - God could not act as a judge if He actually arranged things so that sin would glorify Himself.
 - This is, therefore, a ridiculous argument.
 - Sin never glorifies God. Never. (*Gal. 6:8*)

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- E. **The Condemnation of All Mankind**
- Fourteen horrible things about the human condition as it is by nature: (3:9-20)
- We see God speaking from three different perspectives:
- **As a Judge: verses 10 to 12**
 1. No one is righteous (of value) in God's sight
 2. No one understands anything concerning God
 3. No one seeks for God (1 *Cor. 10:20*)
 4. All have turned aside (turned away)
 5. And thus, have become useless (unprofitable)
 6. No one does good, not even one!

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- E. **The Condemnation of All Mankind**
- Fourteen horrible things about the human condition as it is by nature: (3:9-20)
- We see God speaking from three different perspectives:
- **As a Physician: verses 13 to 15**
 7. Their throat is an open grave (As Bishop Howe says: "Emitting the noisome exhalations of a putrid heart.")
 8. With their tongues they continually deceive
 9. They are poisonous just below the surface
 10. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness (wrong someone)
 11. Their feet run to violence

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E. The Condemnation of All Mankind

Fourteen horrible things about the human condition as it is by nature: (3:9-20)

We see God speaking from three different perspectives:

- **As a Divine Historian: verses 16 to 18**
 12. Destruction and misery are in their paths
 13. They do not know how to find peace
 14. There is no fear of God in them

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E. The Condemnation of All Mankind

Fourteen horrible things about the human condition as it is by nature: (3:9-20)

- God's assessment of the human condition: **There is none righteous, not even one!**
- If all God sees is wretchedness, evil, deceit, hypocrisy, vulgarity, profanity, slander—in every heart, every one without exception—our natural instinct is to conclude that God doesn't want us.
- But God wants us to understand that all humankind is **accountable to Him** and that **every objection must be silenced** (v.19; 9:20)

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Paul ends this section with a key insight to understanding how God has dealt with the wretchedness of the human condition.

- v.20 – Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin
 - The Law was not given to remove sin or even to keep people from sinning.
 - **It was given to point out what sin is.**
 - What then is "sin"?
 - v.12 – "all have turned aside"
 - The root of the word for sin (*hamart*) means "**to miss the mark**"
 - So through the Law, we know that we all have missed God's mark or have turned aside from God's mark of perfection. (v.23)

The Great Fix

In verse 21-26 we now come to the very heart of God's perfect answer to the wretched human condition – this is the very heart and essence of the gospel – **the great fix.**

II. Righteousness Imputed; Justification, Salvation

A. The Description of Righteousness (9:21-31)

v.21 – "But now"

- "God having brought the whole world into His courtroom and pronounced them guilty, 'under sin,' now exhibits Himself in absolute sovereign grace towards the guilty." (Newell)
- "...apart from the Law the *righteousness* of God has been manifested"
- What is "righteousness"? (*dikaiousunā*)
 - Often it is associated with behavior: "observing divine laws"
 - But in this part of Romans, "righteousness" does not directly touch on behavior – **it does not refer to what you do, but to what you are**
 - I miss the mark so badly and so often, I must be **worthless** to God

The Great Fix

In verse 21-26 we now come to the very heart of God's perfect answer to the wretched human condition – this is the very heart and essence of the gospel – **the great fix.**

- What is "righteousness"? (*dikaiousunā*)
 - "acceptable of God"
 - Of value, or **worth** – a helpful word in understanding what it means to be "righteous"
- v.10-12 is key to understanding the great fix.
- This is a great summary of the human condition: sin leads to unrighteousness – because I am of Adam, I have missed the mark and have become altogether useless (worthless).
- **The problem is not what we do, it's what we are.**
 - Through the amazing Gospel, the power of God has been revealed and it has directly dealt with what we are.

The Great Fix

"Anyone who can see the needs of people today must recognize that the malaise of our time is an epidemic of self-doubt and self-depreciation. Those whose job it is to heal people's spiritual problems know that the overwhelming majority of people who seek help are people who are sick from abhorring themselves. A prevailing sense of being **without worth** is the pervasive sickness of our age."

(Dr. Lewis Smedes, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary; from the 1973 article "God's Noble Lad" in *The Reformed Journal*)

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v.22 – “through **faith** in Jesus Christ”

Faith – what is it and why is it important?

- “Faith is not trust, and must be carefully distinguished therefrom, if we would have a clear conception of the gospel. Faith is simply the acceptance for ourselves of the testimony of God as true.” (Newell)
- Faith acts on (substantiates) what God says has been done (historical fact) through the finished work of Christ
- “...faith is occupied with the Object upon which it rests and pays no attention to itself at all. While we are looking to God we do not see ourselves ... Faith is a redirecting of our sight, a getting out of the focus of our own vision and getting God into focus. Sin has twisted our vision inward and made us self-regarding. Unbelief has put self where God should be...” (Tozer, POG)
- It is substantiating the finished work of Christ.
- *It is a continuous looking away unto the finished work of Christ*

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v.24 – “being **justified** as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

Justification – what is it and why is it important?

- A legal term meaning to secure a favorable verdict.
- There are two elements of justification:
 1. Forgiveness of Sins (Rom. 4:5-8).
 2. The Declaration of Righteous
- “imputed righteousness” “the gift of righteousness”
 - “Justification is God’s reckoning a man righteous who has no righteousness—because God is operating wholly upon another basis, even the work of Christ. If Christ fully bore sin for man, and has been raised up by God, a believing man has reckoned to him by God all that infinite work of Christ!” (Newell)
- *The sinner who believes in Christ receives God’s gift of righteousness, which then enables God to pronounce him righteous—declared of worth.*

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v.24 – “being justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus.”

Redemption (*apolutrōsis*) – what is it and why is it important?

- There are three main elements in redemption:
 1. Paying the ransom with the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 6:20; Rev. 5:9)
 2. Removal from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13; 4:5)
 3. Release from the bondage of sin into the freedom of grace (1 Pet. 1:18)
- Eph. 1:7 – redemption
- “Everywhere in the New Testament this word is used to denote deliverance effected through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God and the merited penalty of sin.” (Thayer)
- *release on payment of ransom (Mk. 10:45)*

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v.25 – “whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through faith.”

Propitiation (*hilastērion*) – what is it and why is it important?

- Some translation use “sacrifice of atonement” or “expiation”
- *Expiation* – emphasizes the removal of sin by the sacrifice which satisfied God – justice has been satisfied
- *Propitiation* – refers to God’s wrath being satisfied by the death of Christ and thus awakening His love towards us (Rom 5:8)

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“Our sin has hurt and injured God, and justice demands that we be punished for that sin. In the death of Jesus this punishment was accomplished so that God’s justice was satisfied. If you read this as expiation, that is all the cross means. In a way, it means that God was paid off, so that He no longer holds us to blame. But that is not all Paul is saying here. The word means also that God’s love has been awakened toward us; He reaches out to love us, and grants us the feeling of worth, acceptance, and value in his sight. This is what propitiation means, and it is what the death of Jesus does. It satisfied God’s justice, but it went further; it released his love, and now He is ready to pour out love upon us.” (Stedman)

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- *the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift, thus restoring the love of the wronged.*

v.26 – the propitiatory death and sacrifice of Christ becomes effectual only for those who believe, who rest upon it – or look away unto it as fact.

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v.27-31 – Paul now concludes the chapter with three basic questions to show us the natural result of God's merciful acceptance of us through faith in Jesus.

1. Who can boast?
 - No one.
 - How can you boast when you've received the gift of grace without any merit on your part?
 - All ground for self-righteousness is wiped out.
 - No "us" and "them."
 - All boasting is silenced.
2. Is God the God of Jews or Gentiles?
 - All mankind is equal before Him.
 - All are of sin and no one is excluded from grace.
 - No one can stand on any other basis than the work of Jesus Christ on his/her behalf.

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The Great Fix

v.27-31 – Paul now concludes the chapter with three basic questions to show us the natural result of God's merciful acceptance of us through faith in Jesus.

3. Does faith then cancel out the Law?
 - No, faith in Jesus fulfills the Law
 - The righteousness which the Law demands is the same righteousness that is given to us in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21)
 - Since we have the righteousness from God as a gift, then we no longer need to fear the Law, because its demands—nothing less than absolute perfection—have been met through Christ.

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If God announces the gift of righteousness apart from works, why do you keep mourning over your bad works, your failures? Do you not see that it is because you still have hopes in these works of yours that you are depressed and discouraged by their failure? If you truly saw and believed that God is pronouncing righteous the ungodly who believe on Him, you would hate your struggles to be "better"; for you would see that your dreams of good works have not changed at all your standing with God, and that your bad works do not at all hinder you from believing on Him,—that justifieth the ungodly!

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Therefore, on seeing your failures, you should say, I am nothing but a failure; but God is dealing with me on another principle altogether than my works, good or bad,—a principle not involving my works, but based only on the work of Christ for me. I am anxious, indeed, to be pleasing to God and to be filled with His Spirit; but I am not at all justified, or accounted righteous, by these things. God, in justifying me, acted wholly and only on Christ's blood shedding on my behalf.

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God has declared me of worth and value without any cause or effort by me, by His grace alone, through the release from sin's penalty and even more, He pours His love on me, but it's only available to me if I continually look away to the finished work of Jesus.

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