





Lenten Series Week 4

**The Righteous Live by Faith:  
Divine Forbearance**

*Romans 3:21-31 | March 31, 2019*

**Pray:** Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, we stand in awe of You. Your goodness is unsearchable; Your forgiveness brings us to our knees. Open our hearts to Your word and by Your Spirit's power, enable us to live in the righteousness which You have given to us through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Read:** Romans 3:21-31 (As you read through the text, write down any words that are repeated and make a note of any other words you think are particularly important.)

**Discussion:** What does Paul mean by the repeated phrase, 'The righteousness of God?'

1. Why is Paul so insistent that God's righteousness has now been revealed apart from the law? How do the law and the prophets "bear witness?"
2. What does Paul tell us about God in this passage? (What God has done, who God is, His nature, etc.)
3. What does Paul tell us about ourselves?
4. Paul says that we have been 'justified' by God. What is the difference between being justified and being pardoned? Why is this distinction important? What is the relationship between being justified and being righteous?
5. In this passage, Paul uses legal terminology (justified), the language of slavery (redemption), and sacrificial language (atonement). Explore these three ideas. What do each of these terms tell us uniquely about what God has done in Christ? How do these three ideas fit together and what do they tell us about God's action as a whole
6. What aspects of God's forgiveness and redemption do you find challenging?
7. How does the death of Jesus demonstrate God's justice (v. 25, 26)? Why couldn't God simply have forgiven us our sin without Christ having to die? In our world, it is not uncommon to hear the question, "how could a just God send people to hell?" How do you think Paul might respond to that question?
8. What is the role of faith in Paul's thought?
9. What happens to boasting when we understand what God has done in Christ? In what ways are we still tempted to "boast?"

**Application:** At the end of *Saving Private Ryan*, an elderly Ryan stands at the graveside of Captain Miller, who led a squad to rescue him from behind enemy lines, and says "I tried to live my life the best that I could. I hope that was enough. I hope that, at least in your eyes, I've earned what all of you have done for me." He then turns to his wife: "Tell me I have led a good life...Tell me I'm a good man." It is easy to have this mindset when we think about what God has done for us. We feel that we have to earn it. Maybe, like Ryan, we never quite feel good enough. This is not the gospel. As Paul reminds us, the gospel is grace from first to last. We do not deserve it. We did not earn it. And we don't need to earn it. It is a free gift. God has done the heavy lifting. The point is not to live a good life so that we can someday deserve or earn what Christ has done. The point is to receive Christ by faith, to live by faith, and to trust the work of God to transform us by the Spirit to become more like Christ.

**Closing Prayer:** Almighty God our Heavenly Father, we worship and adore You. In You, justice and love come together in perfect harmony. In faith, may we receive the gift of redemption that You offer us so freely in Jesus Christ, and may we never boast save in His cross. Hold us close to Yourself and guard us from sin until that day when we become in fullness that which You have declared us to be. Through Christ our Lord we pray, Amen.