

Time Audit Chronicles: Justification by Faith (Romans 3:21-31)

Prologue: A Life-Changing Truth

The Presswood family gathered for another adventure through Scripture. They were reading **Romans 3:21-31**, where Paul explains the profound truth of **justification by faith**—a cornerstone of the Christian gospel. Ariel, the ever-curious student, was scribbling notes in her journal, while Alice sat cross-legged, giving Mr. Fluffernutter an intense lecture about the importance of faith.

“Daddy,” Ariel began, looking up, “I know Paul says we’re justified by **faith**, but what does that really mean? Why isn’t it about keeping the **law**?”

Ryan leaned forward, sensing the importance of this discussion. “That’s a great question, Ariel. Paul is teaching that **righteousness**—being made right with God—doesn’t come from obeying the law, because no one can obey it perfectly. Instead, God offers **justification** as a gift, through faith in Jesus. It’s not something we can earn; it’s something God gives us by His **grace**.”

“So,” Ariel said slowly, “justification means being made right with God, and it happens because of what Jesus did for us, not because of what we do?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Let’s use the **Time Audit Machine** to explore Paul’s message and see how he explains this amazing truth. We’ll visit moments in history that show how **faith** in Jesus changes everything.”

The Journey Begins: The Righteousness of God Revealed (*Romans 3:21-22*)

The family found themselves in **ancient Rome**, where Paul’s letter was being read aloud to a group of believers. The air was thick with anticipation as the reader declared, “**But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.**”

Ryan gestured toward the gathering. “Paul is saying that the righteousness of God—His perfect standard—has been revealed apart from the law. This righteousness is **available to everyone** who believes in Jesus.”

Ariel listened intently. “So, Paul is saying that the **law** isn’t the way to be righteous? It’s through **faith** in Jesus instead?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “The law shows us what’s right and wrong, but it can’t make us righteous because we all fall short. Paul is introducing a new way—a way of **faith**—that’s rooted in what Jesus has done for us, not in our ability to keep the law.”

All Have Sinned, but Grace Abounds (*Romans 3:23-24*)

The reader continued, “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**”

Ariel’s face grew serious as she thought about the verse. “Everyone has sinned. So, no one can earn their way to God?”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Paul makes it clear that **everyone**—Jew and Gentile alike—has fallen short of God’s standard. But here’s the good news: God doesn’t leave us in our sin. He justifies us—makes us right with Him—**freely**, as a gift. And it’s all because of what Jesus did for us on the cross.”

Alice, hugging Mr. Fluffernutter tightly, chimed in, “So, Jesus paid for our sins, and that’s how we’re made right with God?”

“Yes,” Ryan said with a smile. “That’s called **redemption**—Jesus paid the price for our sin, setting us free. And because of that, we’re justified, not by what we do, but by God’s **grace**.”

Jesus as the Atoning Sacrifice (*Romans 3:25-26*)

The reader’s voice grew steady as he continued, “**Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.**”

Ryan paused the family’s observations. “This is one of the most important verses in this passage. Paul is saying that God sent Jesus to be a **propitiation**—a sacrifice that satisfies God’s justice and turns away His wrath. Jesus’ death on the cross wasn’t just an example of love—it was the payment for our sins.”

Ariel’s eyes widened. “So, Jesus’ blood is what makes it possible for us to be forgiven?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Through **faith in His blood**, we’re justified. Jesus’ sacrifice demonstrates both God’s **justice**—because He dealt with sin—and His **mercy**, because He forgives those who trust in Jesus.”

Alice tilted her head. “God’s justice and mercy are like two parts of the same thing?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “God is perfectly **just**, so He can’t ignore sin. But He’s also full of **mercy**, so He provided a way for sin to be dealt with—through Jesus. That’s why justification is such an incredible gift.”

Boasting Excluded: Justification by Faith (*Romans 3:27-31*)

As the reader finished the passage, he declared, “**Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.**”

Ryan pointed out the significance of Paul's words. "Paul is saying that there's no room for **boasting** in salvation. If we're justified by faith, not by works, then none of us can brag about earning our way to God. It's all about what **Jesus** has done, not about what we've done."

Ariel nodded thoughtfully. "So, faith is the only way to be justified, because our works could never be enough?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Paul also says that this applies to **everyone**—Jews and Gentiles alike. Justification by faith shows that God is not only the God of Israel, but the God of the whole world. His plan of salvation is for **all people** who believe in Jesus."

Alice grinned. "So, it's like God opened the door for everyone to come to Him, as long as they trust in Jesus!"

"Yes," Ryan said. "And that's the beauty of the gospel—it's **inclusive** in its offer, but it requires **faith** in Jesus as the one and only way to be made right with God."

Takeaway: Justification Is a Gift of Grace

As the **Time Audit Machine** powered down, the family reflected on what they had learned. Ariel turned to her father, her face glowing with understanding. "So, justification isn't about what we do—it's about what Jesus has already done for us. It's a gift of **grace**, and all we have to do is believe in Him."

"That's exactly right, Ariel," Ryan said. "Paul's message in **Romans 3** is one of the most important truths in the Bible. It reminds us that we're all sinners who fall short of God's glory, but through Jesus, we're offered **redemption** and **justification**—not because of our works, but because of God's grace. This is the heart of the gospel."

Alice looked thoughtful. "So, we can't earn our way to God. But Jesus already made the way for us."

"Yes," Ryan said, his voice filled with warmth. "And that's why we can live with **joy** and **freedom**, knowing that we're made right with God—not because of what we've done, but because of what **Jesus** has done for us."

Key Teaching: Justification by Faith in Jesus

In **Romans 3:21-31**, Paul explains that **justification**—being made right with God—comes not through works of the law but through **faith in Jesus Christ**. This passage emphasizes that all have sinned and fall short of God's glory, but we are justified freely by His **grace** through the **redemption** that is in Jesus. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the atoning payment for our sins, satisfying God's justice and extending His mercy.

Paul also teaches that justification by faith excludes boasting, as it is entirely the work of God, not of human effort. This truth reminds us that salvation is a **gift**, offered to everyone who believes, and that our response should be one of humble **faith** and deep gratitude. Through this passage, we learn that the

gospel is the great equalizer, offering **righteousness** and **forgiveness** to all who trust in Jesus, apart from the works of the law.