

The purpose of these supplementary notes are first to provide a summary of key points from the Moore College PTC Course Notes, and second to provide some extra information that may fill out your understanding of the subject in question.

Introduction

- In Romans 1:16-17, as discussed last week, we saw how Paul presents the righteousness of God as revealed to all nations through the preaching of the gospel. Salvation through Jesus shows God to be faithful to his promises and the believer receives this 'righteousness' from God through faith.
- God's righteousness is revealed in the gospel offer of justification by faith. It is this idea that is expounded in 3:21-4:25.

Righteousness by the death of Christ

Group Exercise:

- Read through Romans 3:21-31 (*Handout #1*)
- a) Underline the key concept / words
- b) Separate the main ideas by inserting Sentence (II) or Phrase (I) breaks.
- c) *Circle* the recipients (who benefits)

- God has acted 'at the present time' (3:26) to put *all* people in a right relationship with himself. (Follow the *Appendix* as you read through the following points)

- *Apart from the Law (21)*

- No human being is 'declared righteous' (20) according to their own efforts of keeping a law – they are justified by works.
- Salvation has nothing to do with obedience of the law.
- Furthermore this righteousness (apart from the law) has been made known – in the Old Testament (by the law and the Prophets (21))
- God's salvation of people through Christ as detailed in the New Testament is the fulfillment of what was testified to in the Old Testament. Paul will fill this idea out further in Chapter 4 and 9-11.

**Christ
Alone**

- *Through Faith (22-23)*

- God has acted to save humankind through Jesus – it was his faithfulness and obedience that led him to die for us.
- Note that there is considerable debate over the exact meaning of this verse 22 – should it be translated 'righteousness from God comes through faith *in* Jesus Christ' (here the '*in*' is used as an *objective* genitive), or as the 'righteousness from God comes through faith *of* Jesus Christ' (here the '*of*' is used as a *subjective* genitive)? As the faith of human beings cannot reveal God's righteousness, I favour the later showing how the

**Faith
Alone**

**Grace
Alone**

righteousness of God revealed through the faithfulness of Christ and the faithfulness of Christ creating human faith (c.f. 3:26).¹

- The benefits then of this victory are for all those who believe (c.f. 10:9-13) – a gift from God (5:17; 10:3; Phil 3:9)
- All have sinned and must be justified by faith alone.
- *By God's Grace (Rom 3:24-26)*
 - This 'righteousness' comes to humankind through God's grace alone – the origin is the undeserving love and grace of God
 - His means – the liberation of sinners. God 'presented' Jesus as the atoning sacrifice in which his righteous wrath is directed therefore allowing those in faith to come to him in mercy.²
 - And so we can see that God 'demonstrated his justice' in a remarkable way – leaving the sins committed before the death of Christ unpunished and then justifying those who have faith in Christ in the present (and therefore future time).
 - It is in this way then, that God demonstrates his righteousness – he has vindicated his own character and at the same time bestowed a righteous status on sinners.

Exercise:

- Consider the pattern of atonement set up for us in the Old Testament:

Event	Involved the death of...	The result...
The Passover (Ex 12:21-23)	The Passover Lamb	Israel saved from slavery (redeemed, the exodus happens) and freed to serve God in the Promised Land.
The Day of Atonement (Lev 16)	A Bull and a goat (note what happens to the scapegoat v.16:8-10)	Israel saved from their sin (justified) and freed to come before Yahweh.
Crucifixion (Rom 3:24-26)	of Jesus	Those who have faith in Jesus: saved from... freed to...

- There is an obvious tension within the idea of *Christ Alone*, *Faith Alone* and *Grace Alone* – how does the believer locate how they are in fact saved? This dilemma this one of the reasons that Romans 3:21-26 has commanded so much debate over the centuries of theological debate. There are some mysteries however that are so majestic in the way God has dealt with his creation, that reconciled or not, we are bound to hold them equally and fervently.
- It might be helpful to note that the tension we feel with these truths is similar to the tension we find in the earthly life of Jesus. Could Jesus have sinned? Surely the fact that he was tempted (Mt 4:1-17; Mk 1:12; Lk 4:1-13) is

¹ If you want an opposing view see T. R. Schreiner, *Romans* (ECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.), 182-86.

² Old Testament Sacrificial system (c.f. Lev 16) only every foreshadowed the coming work of Christ. The sacrifices of the Old Testament, as explained in Hebrews 10:1-4, were inadequate - they had to be offered repeatedly and endlessly year after year (1), the worshippers continued to feel guilty for their sins (2), and the sacrifices were only serving as annual reminder of their sins (3).

evidence that he must have been able to sin, but with the weight of all the promises of God concerning his victory over sin it would seem impossible that he would. There is a tension!³

Exercise:

- What does Paul mean by 'salvation'? Use the early Chapters of Romans to illustrate your answer. (Tip: There is only one use of the word 'salvation' in these early chapters (see 1:16), yet these early chapters are describing the implications of this salvation).

Righteousness through Faith in Christ

- With the force of Romans 3:20 and the confirmation of 3:27 it is asserted that any human attempt to gain salvation has been rejected – it is only in faith that this becomes possible.
- At this point, read through Romans 3:27-4:25.
- Not only the gospel, but the Old Testament makes faith the basis of a right relationship with God. Israel as the chosen people could not rely on their works (even though they held a special place in the plan of God) and so in the same way, the Jews should expect no different. Salvation was open to both Jew and Gentile in faith.
- With this, Paul turns to the example of Abraham in chapter 4. Abraham made no claim on God on the basis of his works – notice in 4:5 he trusts God who justifies the wicked and for his faith he is credited as righteous.
- To cite Abraham at this point in the argument is a wise rhetorical choice because Abraham's righteousness was credited him far before the law was even introduced (Gen 15:6 c.f. Gen 17:11; Ex 20; Deut 5). For the Jews of the day, Paul's argument would have exposed some severe holes – if they thought that were saved by their obedience to the law, yet their spiritual father Abraham was not, then the very basis of their salvation understanding needed examination!
- It is God's promises that became fundamental to a life of faith – his promise was not given through the law, but through the relationship of faith that Abraham had with God.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the Father of us all. (Rom 4:16)

³ A. Heard, 'Can Christians fall away?', *The Briefing*, Issue 299 (Aug 2003): 7.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Unit 3 – How God meets our Need

- Cranfield rephrases: 'God has made his plan of salvation to depend, on man's side, not on fulfillment of the law but solely on faith, in order that, on his side, it might be a matter of grace'⁴

Food for thought:

- On the question of faith, Paul has already quoted from the prophets (Hab 2:4b) in 1:17 and now he appeals to text from the Law (Gen 15:6) in 4:3 and to text from the Writings (Ps 32:1-2) in 4:7-8. God's way of righteousness through faith is attested in all three divisions of the Hebrew Bible.
- The Jews would probably have found this hard to argue against!!

Reflection:

- How does Paul relate the issues from the life of Abraham (Rom 4 c.f. Rom 9-11) to the saving work of Christ?

- So the logic of the argument...
 - We can not appeal to God on the basis of our work (they are wanting)
 - So God justifies the ungodly (us) through Christ (the godly)
 - Therefore...it is by faith (believing in Jesus) that we are saved.
- Paul's main agenda is to demonstrate that Abraham's faith is the pattern that all Christians show follow (4:24-25).
- It is on this note that he finishes Chapter 4 and moves on to Chapter 5 where he demonstrates what the Christian life should look like.⁵

Application:

- On what basis have you considered yourself saved? What is the relationship between your faith and your actions?

For next Week:

- Read Unit 4 (for next week).
- Read Romans 5 (and further if you can – both before and after!)

References (for possible further reading)

Packer, J. I., 'Justification' in *New Bible Dictionary*. Leicester: IVP; 2nd ed. 1992, 646-49.

Milne, B. A., 'Righteousness' in *New Bible Dictionary*. Leicester: IVP; 2nd ed. 1992, pp1030-31.

⁴ Quoted in the Moore College 'Paul's Letter to the Romans' *PTC Notes*, page 42.

⁵ Not that Paul inserted the Chapter breaks!!

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Unit 3 – How God meets our Need

Glossary (taken from the New Bible Dictionary)

Grace.	It is a two-way word, used of both God and Man. Of God, it speaks of the free gift that God offers the guilty when he treats them as if they have never sinned (Eph 2:8-9). Of Man, it implies steadfast love to another human being or to God.
Justification.	'Justification' for Paul is a key doctrine – to Paul it means <i>'God's act of remitting the sins of guilty men, and accounting them righteous, freely by his grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative law-keeping and redemptive blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf'</i> (Rom 3:23-26; 4:5-8; 5:18ff).

Handout # 1 (copy on to A3 for session)

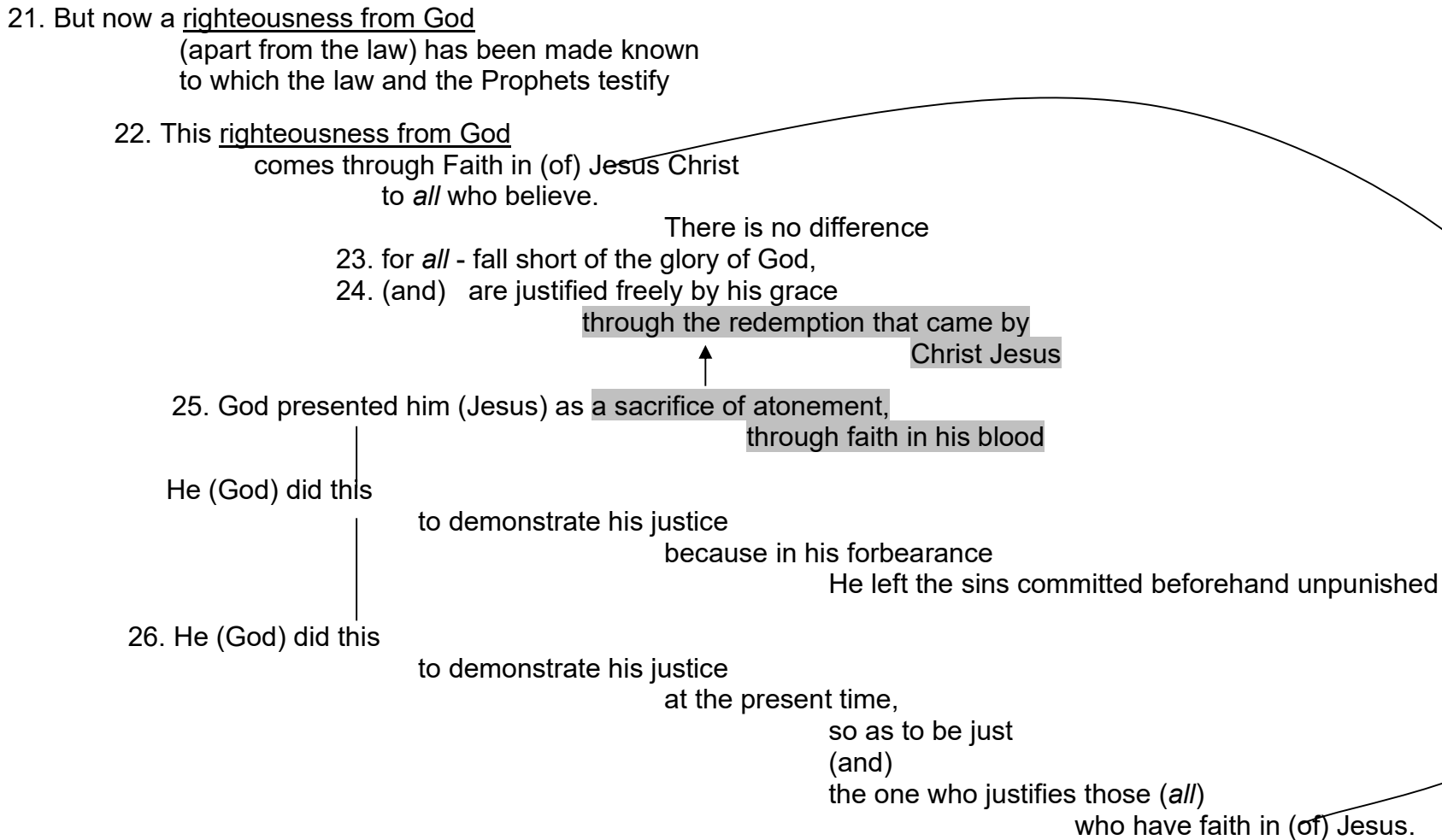
Romans 3:21-26 (NIV)

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

School of Ministry
Unit 3 – How God meets our need

Appendix

What follows is a syntactical diagram of Romans 3:21-26 – it helps us see the flow of the passage emphasizing the important connections between words and concepts.⁶



⁶ Please note, this diagram has been worked out from the English, not the Greek.