

## Best Story Ever: 24. Righteous in Christ (Romans 3:21-26)

### Text questions

1. According to 1:18-23, how did the human race fall away from God? Name as many specifics from the text as you can.
2. According to 2:17-29, why were the Jews in need of God’s righteousness?
3. What does Paul conclude about both Jews and Gentiles in 3:9-12?
4. Paraphrase in your own words what Paul is saying in 3:21-26, going one verse at a time. Be sure to look up the meaning of any words you don’t know.
5. According to 3:25-26, why was Jesus’ sacrifice necessary for God to forgive us?

### Life questions

1. What do you look to for your sense of “enoughness”?
2. Take some time to read through the following comparisons between a “religion identity” and a “gospel identity.”<sup>1</sup> Where in your life are you still living out of a religion identity instead of a gospel identity?

	<b>Religion identity</b> ( <i>Righteousness is achieved</i> )	<b>Gospel identity</b> ( <i>Righteousness is received</i> )
<i>Primary message</i>	Righteousness is <i>achieved</i> through what you do.	Righteousness is <i>received</i> through what God has already done for you.
<i>Relationship with God</i>	I am always uncertain about my right standing before God because I never know if I have done enough to please God. The result is <i>anxiety</i> and <i>insecurity</i> . I fear God.	I have a deep sense of assurance of my right standing before God because Jesus has already done everything for God to be pleased with me. The result is <i>peace</i> and <i>security</i> . I love God.
<i>Obedience</i>	I <i> begrudgingly</i> obey God because I have to earn his acceptance. I <i>resent</i> God.	I <i>gladly</i> obey God because I am overjoyed at how good He has been to me. I <i>delight</i> to honor God as a way of saying thank-you for how much he has done for me.
<i>View of self</i>	My view of myself is always shaky and unsteady, because it is based on how well I am doing at any given moment. When I feel like I’ve failed, I become despondent. When I feel like I’ve succeeded, I become prideful.	My view of myself is stable, grounded, and healthy, because it is based on what Jesus has already done for me. When I feel like I’ve failed, I am humbled because I’m reminded of my need for a savior, but I am not despondent because I know I can never lose Jesus’ love. When I feel like I’ve succeeded, I am grateful, but I am not prideful because it is more God’s work than my work.
<i>View of others</i>	Since my identity is based on what I accomplish and how moral I am, I judge people who are ‘worse’ than me so that I can feel better about myself, and I am jealous and resentful of people who are ‘better’ than me.	Since my identity is based on what Jesus accomplished for me and how moral he was, I sympathize with people who are ‘worse’ than me because I need a savior just as much as they do, and I celebrate those who are ‘better’ than me since I no longer look at them as rivals.
<i>How people see me</i>	I’m constantly insecure about how people see me. I’m obsessed with curating my own image. I try to control people’s reactions to me.	I know that the only eyes that matter have seen me with all my flaws—and loved me anyway. So I’m free to be myself, because my identity isn’t based on how others see me.
<i>How I use social media</i>	I’m addicted to social media. I carefully control what I post so that people think my life is happier than it really is. Or I get insecure when I see how much better other people’s lives seem than mine.	Social media’s a great tool, but I’m not enslaved to it, nor am I obsessed with what my online presence looks like.

<sup>1</sup>Some material from “Gospel Basics” by Soma Spokane, <https://www.somaspokane.org/gospelbasics>. Used under the CC BY-NC 3.0 license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>.

<i>Life in community</i>	I have a hard time trusting anyone, because I'm constantly afraid they won't accept me because of who I am or what I've done. This leads me either to <i>undershare</i> , never letting anyone in to what my life is really like, or to <i>overshare</i> , gushing about my problems in search of external affirmation without proper boundaries.	Because I know that my acceptance is based on what Jesus has done for me, I am able to be vulnerable with a trustworthy circle of friends. I let them in to my struggles, allowing them to point me back to the Savior who can meet my deepest needs.
<i>Trusting God when things don't make sense</i>	When God allows pain and confusion into my life, I lose all hope. I fear that He is punishing me, so I pull away from Him in rage or despair, or I try to take over control from God.	When God allows pain and confusion into my life, I am deeply hurt but not crushed. Because I know Jesus laid down His life for me, I somehow know that even I lose my grip on Him, He will never lose His grip on me, and that He invites me to take my grief to Him.
<i>Reading the news</i>	Reading so many negative headlines fills me with fear of the future. Because I have a "scarcity mindset" when it comes to the goodness of God, I doubt His providential control of the world.	I read the news with a fair and sober mind, but no matter what the headlines say, my heart rests secure, knowing that at the helm of the universe is one who works all things for my good and His glory.