

Justified by Faith Alone in Christ Alone  
Romans 3:21-31

**I. Big significance of little words**

**A. "But now"**

1. **Romans 3:21 (ESV)** *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—*
2. **Romans 6:22 (ESV)** *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*
3. **Romans 7:6 (ESV)** *But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*
4. **Romans 11:30 (ESV)** *For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,*

**B. "But now" changes everything**

1. Sets a new direction
2. Describes a changed condition
3. Offers a new hope
4. Calls for a new commitment

**II. Romans 3:21**

**A. What was**

1. Sin/guilt/condemnation
  - a. **Ephesians 2:12-13 (ESV)** <sup>12</sup> *remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*
2. We could not get ourselves into heaven or keep ourselves out of hell
  - a. The wrath of God was coming
  - b. We were guilty and justice was headed our way
3. **But now**

**B. What is**

1. The righteousness of God
  - a. The righteousness that is God
  - b. The righteousness that God requires
  - c. The righteousness we need but cannot produce on our own
2. The righteousness of God
  - a. has been revealed,
    - (1) made known,
    - (2) made available
    - (3) made accessible
  - b. not through the Law, which would require more failed effort

- c. **Romans 3:21-26 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—* <sup>22</sup> *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.*
- 3. Once, we could not be reconciled to God, **but now**, we can be justified through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - a. How?
    - (1) Justified by His grace as a gift
      - (a) Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
      - (b) Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood
      - (c) To be received by faith
    - (2) Before, God passed over former sins
      - (a) He did not excuse sin
      - (b) He delayed judgment anticipating an adequate and worthy resolution
        - i) God allowed the blood of bulls and lambs to be a stand in until the once and for all sacrifice was made
        - ii) God allowed another system to suffice until Jesus came and lived and died in our place for our benefit once and for all
  - b. **But now**,
    - (1) to prove that He is just He has dealt with sin in the death of Jesus
    - (2) to demonstrate His mercy, He justifies, He reconciles to Himself the one who has faith in Jesus.
- 4. To put it another way
  - a. **Romans 3:28 (ESV)** *For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*
  - b. **Romans 3:30 (ESV)** *since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.*

### III. Faith

#### A. Faith is the key

- 1. God has done the work
- 2. God makes available the benefit of His saving work in Christ to those who put their faith in Christ

#### B. The benefits of faith

- 1. Through faith we are born again to a new and living hope
- 2. Through faith we are filled with the Spirit of Christ
- 3. Through faith we have the mind of Christ and take on the likeness of Christ
- 4. Through faith we are reconciled to God, sin is forgiven
- 5. Through faith we undergo a spiritual transformation
  - a. **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is*

*a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

6. Through faith we gain a new spiritual capacity
  - a. The blind man's testimony
    - (1) **John 9:25 (ESV)** *He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, **now** I see."*
  - b. Paul's personal testimony
    - (1) **Philippians 3:4-8 (ESV)** *<sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> **But** whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ*

### **C. Consequences of faith**

1. No matter
  - a. What we have been
  - b. What we have done
2. God offers new life and new hope on the other side of **"but now"**
  - a. That new life
  - b. That justified, reconciled, redeemed, free, hopeful, powerful, Christ-like, Spirit-filled, God-honoring life
  - c. Comes solely through faith alone in Christ alone to all who believe