

Romans
Not Just, But Just- Week #2
Small Group Notes
February 13 and 16

Main Point: God's grace through Christ will undo the curse of Adam's sin for everyone who believes.

Introduction: In the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, at the ending scene the statement is made by Private Ryan, "I hope that I have earned what you all have done for me." In this moment, Ryan reflected upon those that paid the ultimate sacrifice for his life to continue on and his life since then. When it comes to our understanding of salvation, we often want to justify ourselves as being someone good enough that Jesus died for. Yet we are going to see that Christ doesn't look at our deeds as the reason for what He did on the cross, the gift of eternal life is offered freely.

Have you ever received an unexpected gift? If someone you didn't know offered you a very lavish gift, what might you suspect?

Has a friend ever offered to pick up your lunch or dinner tab? Did you argue with them about it?

Why is it sometimes difficult to accept generosity and grace from others?

What are ways that we can question the reasons others love us?

We often refuse grace because we don't want to owe anyone anything. It hurts our pride when we need the help of others. Apart from God's grace, we are helpless and hopeless. We must accept that we are beggars in need of God's grace and forgiveness before we can enjoy the lavish grace that God gives us.

Context: Romans 1-4 is understood to focus on the need for salvation for everyone while chapters 6-8 focuses on our lives as believers. The key that stands in the middle is the recognition of justification in chapter 5. Therefore, justification is a part of salvation just like repentance and being born again. Furthermore, justification speaks to our sound legal status before God while reconciliation describes our repaired relationship to God in more personal terms.

Discuss:

1. Read Romans 5:1-2

- Justification can be defined as
 - We are just as if we never sinned
 - We are just as if we always obeyed.

Explain: Before we placed our faith in Christ, we were at war with God, relationally alienated from Him. This peace in verse 1 is an objective, settled fact because Jesus has accomplished it once and for all. Therefore, access to God's grace is the privilege of all believers. We have the freedom to enter His presence at all times through faith.

What could it look like then for someone to be at war with God? Read James 4:4-6.

How does understanding justification help us to understand what it means to have the peace of God?

How does it impact your fellowship with God to know that once you are saved, you have full access to God? Read Ephesians 3:12

2. Read Romans 5:3-11

- We can't earn grace, we only can receive it.
- Worship is a fitting response to being justified.

Explain: The Christian's hope is certain because God's love is assured to us by the presence of the Holy Spirit when we believe. Thus, believers can rejoice in tough circumstances and afflictions (Read James 1:2-4 or Hebrews 12:10). Furthermore, we can be sure of God's love since He did so much for us when we were helpless sinners (verses 6, 8). And there is no more wrath that remains for those who have been declared righteous through faith in Christ. Therefore, the reconciliation, "change" we experience is all because of Jesus, and this is something we celebrate!

How do these verses show that the love of God was not for a select few or just a nation, but rather for everyone? How does that impact how you should share the love of Christ with others?

When have you found it the most difficult time to worship God? How does understanding the work of Jesus on the cross help us to rejoice in suffering? Read Hebrews 12:1-2.

How then, can your worship, be an example to your family, friends, or co-workers?

3. Read Romans 5:12-21.

- Sin is the reason that we need to be justified.
- Jesus represents you, Him being just, allows us to be justified.
- We have been extended an invitation, but we have to RSVP.

Explain: In verses 12-17, God's gift is different from Adam's sin because sin deserves death, and we have all copied Adam's sin by sinning on our own anyways. Jesus, by contrast, died for us and gives us the gift of His own righteousness. Adam's sin resulted in our condemnation. Jesus' obedience results in our being justified before God, not as the sinners that we are. In verses 18-21, Paul simply teaches that no matter how bad a person's sins are, the grace of God for sinners is even greater. God is able to save the most wretched and willful sinner because Christ's grace on behalf of sinners is inexhaustible and sufficient.

What do you most remember about the story of Adam and the fall of man (Gen. 3:1-24)? How has the sin of Adam affected us today?

What must one do to benefit from what Christ did? According to verse 17, what is the result of receiving God's gifts of grace and righteousness? What do you understand this to mean?

Why is sin no match for God's grace? What does it mean for God's grace, not sin, to have the last word in our lives?

Do:

An illustration of the impact of justification has on our lives is in math.

Old Math: Doing + Having= Being

- We try to do enough to pay our debt
- Based on what we have done, we hope it is enough to earn what we desired
- Based on what we did, we now finally have arrived and are right.

New Math: Being + Having= Doing

- Through what Christ has done we are just
- We have all that we need in Christ
- We walk in step with whom he made us to be

What are some ways that today's discussion can help you to live out the new math in Christ?

What may be some ways that you are still trying to earn the grace of God, even after salvation?
What would total surrender look like?

Spend some time in prayer and reflection about action steps that you need to take this week to be someone that rejoices in the Lord at all times?

Resource: smallgroup.com