

Romans 3:21-26 “Reformation Sunday: The Doctrine Upon Which the Church Still Stands or Falls”^{**1}

Main Idea: To appreciate the doctrine of justification, we must understand two truths explained for us in Romans 3:21-26.

- I. Truth #1: We have a problem (21-23).
 - A. We lack righteousness (21-22).
 - B. We have sinned (23a).
 - C. We are separated from God (23b).
 - 1. We don't have a relationship with God.
 - 2. We keep missing God's standard.
- II. Truth #2: At the cross, God solved our problem (24-26).
 - A. Here's what God did (24-25).
 - 1. At the cross He provided justification.
 - 2. At the cross He provided redemption.
 - 3. At the cross He provided propitiation.
 - 4. At the cross He provided remission.
 - B. Here's what we must do (26).
 - 1. We must admit we can't make ourselves right with God.
 - 2. We must be made right with God, through faith alone in Jesus alone.

Make It Personal: Where are you standing today?

- 1. Believe it.
- 2. Defend it.
- 3. Share it.

Today we join churches all over the world in observing Reformation Sunday. It was almost 500 years ago, on October 31, 1517, that a Roman Catholic monk by the name of Martin Luther, nailed 95 theses or objections to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. He was protesting several unbiblical practices of the church, particularly the sale of indulgences, a church-sanctioned activity that basically offered forgiveness for money.

In short time, Luther's protests were translated, copied, and sent to other countries, and a host of others joined him in the protest (John Calvin in Geneva, and Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich, the most notable voices in the protest). Hence, the *protestant* reformation.

I was reading recently Carl Trueman's book, *Reformation: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, and ran across this observation. Trueman says there were other reformers before Martin Luther, such as John Wyclif and John Hus. But there's something that set Luther apart, by Luther's own admission.

“They, he said, attacked the morals of the papacy, but he attacked its theology. It's vital to grasp this: Luther's crusade was not ultimately a moral one; it was theological. Of course, the two are intimately related. His attack on indulgences in 1517 was in large part an attack on abusive pastoral practice driven by church greed; but it was also rooted in his changing theology which saw the sale of indulgences as cheapening God's grace, trivializing sin and misleading the laity. He did not attack the practice simply because it was abusive in its practical outworkings but because it rested upon a false view of God and of humanity's status before God.”²

Theology mattered to the reformers. Doctrine was worth dying for. And many of them did just that. Die, that is. For what they believed.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For an earlier development of this text, see the series preached at WBC in 2004, “What Really Happened on the Cross?”

² Carl R. Trueman, *Reformation: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, p. 20.

What did the reformers believe? What truth did they consider so important that they were willing to give their lives in its defense? Granted they believed many things. But at the core was one particular, no compromise possible doctrine. Martin Luther said it was the doctrine upon which the church stands or falls.

I want us to consider it carefully this morning. It's called the doctrine of *justification*.

Justification. Sounds sort of technical, doesn't it? For the brainiacs, right? Actually, there's good reason this doctrine brought about a reformation. This doctrine addresses the most important of all questions, and that's no exaggeration.

How does a person who enters the world with a sin nature and therefore under God's condemnation become right with God? The question is, how is a person *justified*?

I love the third verse of the well known hymn by Charles Wesley, "And Can It Be?" "Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I woke--the dungeon flamed with light! My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee. Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!"

The question before us is *how does THAT happen?* How can an enemy of God, a prisoner in sin, be made right with the holy Creator God? How can God who is just uphold His just and holy standard and yet let that sinner live in His presence?

You say, "He forgives the sinner. That's how."

But wait. Can God just forgive a sinner? To forgive means to not hold against, and a holy God must hold sin accountable, or He's not just.

So how can a holy God forgive? How can He do so and still remain just?

The answer is the wonderful, biblical doctrine of justification. If you've never experienced the reality of it, I'm praying you will. If you have, I want you to know precisely what happened so that you might glorify God fully for it. And no text in all of Scripture can accomplish that more powerfully than the one before us, Romans 3:21-26.

The doctrine upon which the church stands or fall, upon which you will stand or fall personally, involves two fundamental truths explained for us in Romans 3:21-26.

I. Truth #1: We have a problem (21-23).

In fact, the book of Romans is all about this problem, and God's solution for it. According to verses 21-23, we are plagued by three related indictments.

A. We lack righteousness (21-22). "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference."

Verse 21 begins the second major section of Romans. In section one—that's the first two and one half chapters of the book—the focus is on *who* it is that needs to be made right with God. The answer, of course, is *everyone does*. "There is no one righteous, not even one (3:10)." We lack what we need, *righteousness*.

How do we know we lack righteousness? God's law tells us. The law and prophets testify to this righteousness that is foreign to us. The law reminds us of what we don't have and can't attain on our own merit.

Many people have the notion, "Well, I may not be perfect, but I'm a pretty good person, and surely God will accept me because of my good deeds."

But is that true? Notice what verse 21 says. God's righteousness comes "apart from the law." Think of the implications of that phrase. If righteousness comes apart from the law, how then is a person made right with God? By keeping the law? By good works? By religious activity? By good deeds? By being baptized? By joining a church? No. No. No. No.

We can't attain God's righteousness by doing something. It's apart from law. So if we want it, we must admit that we are powerless to do anything to get it.

How then, you ask, can we who lack righteousness be made right with God? We'll see in a moment. But first, there's another element to our problem that we must consider. The first indictment pertains to what we lack. The second pertains to something we've done.

B. We have sinned (23a). Notice how verse 23 begins, "For all have sinned." Literally, the phrase reads, "For all sinned." The verb "sin" means "to miss the mark." That's what we've done. We have "missed the mark" for which God created us. We, the entire human race, plunged into sin when the first man, Adam, transgressed God's command.

How did this happen? Later we read in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

Where did sin come from? *By one man.* Who is this man? Adam. See Adam standing by that tree in the perfect world. Adam acted as our representative, our federal head (as theologians often refer to him). When he sinned, it's as if we (as his descendants) were there. But don't blame Adam. We've inherited his sin nature, for sure, but we have all freely chosen to do as he did.

For *all* have sinned, says Romans 3:23.

Years ago, a woman was caught in the very act of adultery. In fact, she was caught by several religious leaders. They brought her to a trial of sorts. The evidence was clear. Jesus was there, and they asked Him, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned; but what do you say? (John 8:4-5)"

Of course, it was a set-up. The leaders were trying to frame the Savior. If He said, "Stone her," He would be in violation of Roman law, for the Jews did not have the authorization to issue the death penalty. If He said, "Don't stone her," He would be in violation of Mosaic law.

Do you remember what Jesus did? He stooped down, wrote something on the ground with His finger, and for several minutes said nothing. Then finally, He broke the silence with these words, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her (John 8:7)."

That's an incredible statement, yet something just as amazing is the effect those words had on the crowd. Verse 9 records, "At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there (9)."

All her accusers left. Every one of them. But who left first? The oldest did. Why the oldest? Because as they took inventory of their lives, they knew that they were not without sin.

Perhaps in our youth, we are naive about our standing with God, our "uprightness." But after walking through this sin-cursed world for a few years, we soon learn the undeniable truth about ourselves. We are sinners, every one of us.

But that's not all. There's a third indictment we must face.

C. We are separated from God (23b). There's more to verse 23. Notice the conclusion, "And fall short of the glory of God." To fall short implies there is a standard, and we've missed it. The standard? God says of man in Isaiah 43:7, "I have created him for my glory."

That's why we exist. God gave us life so we could bring glory to Him.

But we don't do that, not one of us. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. In other words, we have missed the intent God had in mind when He made us.

Yet the problem is even worse, for the tense of the verb is present, which indicates continuous action. The thought is that we "keep coming short" of the glory of God. The LB paraphrases, "All fall short of God's glorious ideal." The TEV says, "All men have sinned and are far away from God's saving presence."

So we're separated from God. Continuously so. Universally so. From birth. It's the human predicament and none is exempt. On our own merit...

1. *We don't have a relationship with God.* Oh, we may try to establish one, but...
2. *We keep missing God's standard.*

Let this sink in. When we enter this world, we don't have what we were created to have, a relationship with God. We were fashioned in God's image, but we keep missing God's standard. Therefore, we have been condemned to experience the judgment reserved for those who commit treason in God's world, *eternal separation from God*.

Unthinkable. But we must think about it, for it's our inescapable problem.³ We lack righteousness, we are sinners, and we are separated from God.

I'd like to share an observation at this point. I've noticed that most people don't have a problem with the first part of verse 23. They know they are sinners. That's obvious. So why then don't they get serious about their need for Christ? There are two common reasons.

The first is that they don't know they need to. They haven't heard. The world is full of such people who have yet to hear the good news of Christ. Which is why we must tell them. Our neighbors. The people we work with, and go to school with.

But there's a second reason many people don't trust Christ. They really don't believe the last part of verse 23. They don't agree with the assertion that they have "*fallen short*." They're not convinced that they are that bad off, that they are incapable of reaching God. And why not? In essence, it's because they underestimate the greatness of God's standard and overestimate their own ability to patch things up with God.

But I'm a good person. I mean, no I'm not perfect, but doing your best matters for something, doesn't it?

The world is filled with people who believe a version of that. Martin Luther faced an entire religious system that taught a version of that kind of thinking. *If you do the right things (like give the church money, etc), you can patch things up with God.*

But Luther saw, and then helped others see, that righteousness is not something that man achieves for God. He doesn't perform it. He doesn't even contribute to it. He just falls short of it, again, and again, and again.

Friends, we have a problem. That's terrible news. But the recognition of it is the beginning of the most incredible news the world has ever heard. It brings us to truth #2.

II. Truth #2: At the cross, God solved our problem (24-26).

Verse 24 actually begins with a participle, "Being justified freely by His grace [as the KJV puts it]." God made a provision to take care of our problem. The provision is the person of Jesus Christ.

By the way, if you don't believe verse 23, verse 24 will make absolutely no sense. Indeed, if verse 23 isn't true, then Jesus Christ was the greatest fool who ever walked on this planet, for He shed His blood to save people who were already okay to begin with. But the fact of the matter is this. At the cross God did for us what we could not do on our own.

³ This is what makes the gospel so amazing. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:14, "He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." God's aim is that we who have fallen short of His glory would begin to reflect His glory.

A. Here's what God did (24-25). By dying on the cross Jesus Christ provided four benefits for undeserving sinners.

Definitions are so important in life. It's vital that we define our terms, especially here. In verse 24-25 Paul uses some very precise language, four words in fact. And if we want to grasp what God has done, we need to grasp what these four terms mean. Here's the first.

1. *At the cross He provided justification.* Verse 24, "And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

What does it mean to be justified? Justification is actually a legal term (the noun, *dikaiosis*, the verb *dikaoo*). It is an act, not a process, meaning "to declare righteous." Its root is the same as the root in the word translated "righteousness" throughout Romans.

What is a good definition for justification? A popular one is "just as if I'd never sinned." That's okay, but it tells only half the story. When God justifies a sinner, He not only takes away sin, but He also imputes righteousness. He declares that sinner to be just as righteous as His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says justification is: "an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight."⁴

As a good, working definition, I'll offer this one. Justification is "the act of God whereby He declares a sinner to be righteous based on the merit of Christ."

Please note that justification does not mean "to *make* righteous," but "to *declare* righteous." That's why if you are a Christian you still struggle with sin. God did not *make* you completely righteous—that will happen in glory. Rather, He *declared* you to be righteous.

How did God do it? How does He justify a sinner? Notice three modifiers in verse 24 that explain the basis for our justification.

a. First, we have been justified "**freely**." It's a gift, not a wage. We don't earn it. Freely certainly doesn't mean "cheap," for justification was very costly for Him. The point is that since it's a gift, we need add nothing to it. Our part is to receive it.

b. Second, we are justified "**by His grace**." The word "grace" appears 24 times in Romans. We are declared right with God on the basis of the sheer kindness of God. God did not justify us because we are "worthy." It has nothing to do with "worth" but everything to do with grace.

c. Third, justification is accomplished "**through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus**." It's something God does, not man. The reason God can justify a sinner is because His Son took the sinner's place on the cross. In the words of Isaiah 53:6, "He laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Commenting on the latter verse Martin Luther wrote: "All the prophets did foresee in Spirit that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemer, etc., that ever was or could be in all the world. For he, being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world is not now an innocent person and without sins...but a sinner." He was, of course, talking about the *imputing of our wrongdoing* [italics added for emphasis] to Christ as our substitute."

Luther continues: "Our most merciful Father...sent his only Son into the world and laid upon him...the sins of all men saying: Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them. Here now comes the law and saith: I find him a sinner...therefore let him die upon the cross.

⁴ Bruce, p. 103.

And so he setteth upon him and killeth him. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins.”

There’s the basis for our justification. It’s the work that the perfect substitute did when He took our place on the cross.

Luther once wrote to a friend: “Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to sing to him, and say, 'Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me what is yours. You became what you were not, so that I might become what I was not.’”⁵

In the words of Romans 3:24, we “are justified through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

This is amazing. On the basis of what Jesus did and endured, God justifies the sinner. He did that for me when I was an eleven year old boy. Has He done it for you? Has He declared, “You are no longer guilty. You now possess the righteous standing that My Son merited for you.”

But there’s more! Paul uses a second key word.

2. *At the cross He provided redemption.* God "couldn't" justify a sinner without an objective basis. A holy God can't just overlook sin. His justice demands that sin be dealt with. And it was. Redemption is the basis of justification.

In Paul's day, the infamous slave market was a tragic, common sight. A defenseless person was forced to stand before his prospective buyers on the slave block. The bidding began. The auction concluded with the highest bid. The new owner paid the "*lutron*." That's the Greek word for "ransom price."

There is a scene in the movie "Ben Hur" which illustrates. The hero, Judah Ben Hur was raised in privilege in Jerusalem, but then suffered a series of misfortunes. He was arrested by the Romans, judged, and condemned to serve out his life in the Roman galleys. His prestige gone, Ben Hur was forced to row his life away in the depths of a ship. The meaninglessness of his existence was brought home by the cruel admiral who said, "We keep you alive to serve this ship." That's what slavery is, not living, but existing in sheer bondage.

As the story unfolds, there is a battle and the slaves on the ship are set free. Judah Ben Hur rescued the admiral. He is adopted as the admiral's son, and is given a position of power and authority again.

That's what redemption is, to be delivered from bondage.⁶ The English word redemption comes from two Latin words: "again" and "to acquire;" hence, "to acquire again," or "to buy back."

Thus, redemption is "the payment God made to set sinners free from sin." It was a costly payment, for it required the very life-blood of God's own Son.

Notice the relationship between the first two words. Verse 24 says, “We are *justified* freely...through the *redemption* that came by Christ Jesus.”

But there’s more. A third word and a third benefit...

3. *At the cross He provided propitiation.* That's the word used in the KJV of verse 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." In the NIV it says, "God presented him as a *sacrifice of atonement*."

This is a confusing word in English, and equally so in Greek. Scholars debate its meaning. One lexicon defined the word, "that which expiates or propitiates" (doesn't clarify very much). In secular Greek, it referred to the sacrifices to pagan deities in an

⁵ James Packer, [Your Father Loves You](#), Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986.

⁶Boice, *Our Savior God*, 140.

attempt to appease them, and pacify their anger.⁷ In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the term is used to refer to the "mercy seat."

The mercy seat was in the Jewish tabernacle, and later the temple. The High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies and stand before the Ark of the Covenant. Inside the Ark were the stone tablets of the Law. On top of the Ark was a golden lid. On that lid the priest sprinkled blood from a sacrificed animal. That was called the "mercy seat."

Frederick Faber penned these words over a century ago in a hymn:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;

There's a kindness in His justice which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner and more graces for the good;

There is mercy with the Savior, there is healing in His blood.

For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind,

and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple, we should take Him at His word,

and our lives would be all sun-shine in the sweetness of our Lord."⁸

Here we have what John Calvin called "the very marrow of theology."⁹ God "set forth" His Son to be a propitiation. God is the sole architect of salvation.¹⁰

I hesitate to put it this way, but in a sense, God had what to us is a dilemma. He had to satisfy the demands of His holiness, which meant He had to deal justly with sin and the sinner. Yet He likewise had to act consistently with His grace, by which He delights in saving the sinner. How could He do both?

Here's how. He sent His own Son to become our "mercy seat." He purposed that His beloved Son would make a propitiation for us, that is, that He would shed His own precious blood to satisfy divine justice in our behalf.

That's what propitiation is, "the giving of a sacrifice to provide cleansing for sin."

And the result of propitiation is the fourth benefit, *remission*.

4. *At the cross He provided remission.* Here's how verse 25 concludes in the KJV, "To declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." In the NIV it reads, "He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished."

Remission means "to let go, to pass over." Because of the shedding of the blood of Christ, God passed over sins that are past. That refers to sins committed by people who lived before the Cross.

In the Old Testament, people had to bring a lamb to the altar. That lamb's blood was shed. Did it take away sin? No. It pointed ahead to the coming Lamb of God. As J. Vernon McGee says, "Suppose you'd been there when Abel brought a little lamb to God, 'Abel, do you think this little lamb is going to take away your sin?' He would have said no. And you would have said, 'Then why did you bring it?' His answer would have been, 'God required it. God commanded us to bring it.'"

Bringing a sacrifice didn't save Abel. Looking ahead by faith to the coming Lamb of God saved Abel (Heb 11:4). You see, when Christ came and shed His blood, He paid for all the sins committed prior to the cross.

You say, "Well, what about us this side of the cross?" Verse 26 records, "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."¹¹

⁷ Briscoe, 93.

⁸ *Great Hymns of the Faith*, 445.

⁹ McGee, 70.

¹⁰ McGee, 71.

We don't bring sacrifices to altars anymore. We look to the cross for the remission of sins. Remissions, then, is "the removal of the penalty for sin."

Now let's tie these four words together. *Justification*—God declares a sinner to be righteous based on the merit of His Son. How? Through the *redemption* He provided at the cross—He paid the ransom for our freedom. What was that price? The *propitiation*—the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for our cleansing. Consequently, we experience *remission*—our sins have been removed.

That leads to a question. Why? Why did God go to such lengths to provide this salvation for us? Paul gives an interesting answer, not perhaps the one you might first think.

According to verse 26, "He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time." Or to put it another way, He did it that He might be "just." Again, a holy God can't say, "Ah, let's just forget it. Sin's no big deal."

That's what it looked like in the garden, didn't it? God told Adam, "On the day you eat you will surely die." But Adam kept living. So did Eve. And they had children. And the world kept right on turning.

You don't see the kind of justice you'd expect for the atrocious treason man just committed in that garden.

But now we see it. In another garden, as the Last Adam falls to the ground sweating drops of blood. And then on the tree as He experiences the horrid wages of sin in the place of those He loves.

"He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, *so as to be just and the one who justifies.*" That's what we see at the cross. Both. He is just, and though He postpones judgment, He eventually pours it out fully. But the Just One is also *the One who justifies*. Motivated by love we cannot comprehend, He declares unworthy sinners to be right with Him.

Which sinners? All? No. "Those who have faith in Jesus," concludes Paul in verse 26.

This is truth that can set you free, literally. It did John Bunyan. Bunyan, who lived centuries ago and who penned *Pilgrim's Progress*, was a man who was overwhelmed by the burden of his guilt and sin. Ponder his own testimony:

"As I was walking up and down in the house, as a man in a most woeful state, that word of God took hold of my heart, Ye are 'justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom 3:24). But oh, what a turn it made upon me! Now was I as one awakened out of some troublesome sleep and dream, and listening to this heavenly sentence, I was as if I had heard it thus expounded to me: Sinner, thou thinkest that because of thy sins and infirmities I cannot save thy soul, but behold my Son is by me, and upon him I look, and not on thee, and will deal with thee according as I am pleased with him."¹²

That's it. We've seen what God did. These are all actions that God has accomplished. God is the author of justification, redemption, propitiation, and remission. These are His accomplishments, and we contribute nothing to them.

That brings us to some implications. If this is what God has done (and He has)...

B. Here's what we must do (26). According to God's Word, two things...

1. *We must admit we can't make ourselves right with God.* That's a blow to our ego and pride, but it's true. We cannot make ourselves right with God.

¹¹In the KJV, "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of Him who believeth in Jesus."

¹²in Bruce, 104.

2. *We must be made right with God, through faith alone in Jesus alone.* The person that God sets free is the person who, according to verse 26, "believes in Jesus," or has "faith in Jesus." We can't free ourselves. We are saved *by faith*.

Let me illustrate. Suppose there was a "righteousness checkbook." And suppose I got a letter from my bank that informed me that my "righteousness checkbook" was overdrawn, not a little overdrawn, but *a lot* overdrawn--I owed a million dollars. The letter said, "Either pay up, or you will go to prison until you do."

Now imagine that the next day the policemen came and took me to court. There I stood before the judge, guilty, indebted, and helpless. I waited to hear the sentence.

But then something amazing happened. The judge took out his pen and brought out a book. It was another "righteousness checkbook," not mine, but his son's. He nodded to his son, and to my astonishment, the son wrote out a check, not for a million dollars, but for a billion dollars—far greater than my need! He took the money out of his own account, put my name on the check, and handed it to his father. When his father—the judge—saw the check he declared, "Your debt is gone. It has been paid in full."

That doesn't even begin to compute what happened for you, my fellow believer in Christ. The payment for every sin you have or ever will commit was made at the cross. Every bit of righteousness that you need to stand before a holy God was secured for you in Jesus' resurrection.

*And when before the throne I stand in Him complete,
Jesus died my soul to save my lips shall still repeat.
Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*

So let me ask you this morning...

Make It Personal: Where are you standing today?

Martin Luther said that church stands and falls on the doctrine of justification. Where are *you* standing? I challenge you to do three things with this wonderful doctrine.

1. *Believe it.* You say, "I can't explain it. Why would God declare me righteous simply for believing in His Son?" My friend, it doesn't make sense. But you don't need to explain it to experience it. Just believe it.

I don't mean *just* as in that's all you'll do. When faith is real, it leads to a changed life. That's the message of the rest of Romans. But the changed life that His grace produces begins right here.

Verse 22 again, "This righteousness from God comes *through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*"

So believe it. Then...

2. *Defend it.* As did Martin Luther. Know what you believe, my friend. Get a good systematic theology book and study these precious theological terms. Jude calls us to contend for the faith that we have received.

3. *Share it.* There are people all around us, and certainly around the world, who do not know what we've been privileged to hear. There is a righteousness from God. And they may be justified by grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.