

Romans: A Study on Reformation  
Lesson 8 “Justification by Faith”

I. Introduction - We are continuing our series on the book of Romans today. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth to the church in Rome to bring reformation to this church in 57 A.D. We are studying verse by verse through the book with our focus being on “Reformation.”

A. Reform is a compound word. Re means to do again and form means to make or create. Reform does not mean to add to. God wants to go deeper than just bring revival to our nation. He wants to reform it. **Explain the difference between reformation and revival. This is about a new culture - way of doing life (return of Jesus to the center, parents more involved in kids lives, an understanding of identity, etc.**

B. The main problem Paul wanted to reform with the church in Rome was the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews believed they were God’s chosen people and they should be in charge and the Gentiles should adopt their customs. The Gentiles believed God had moved on from the Jews because they rejected Jesus so they thought they should be in charge and the Jews should adapt Gentile customs.

C. From the end of *Romans 1* and into the middle of *Romans 3*, Paul showed both the gentiles and Jews needed a savior. The ground is level at the foot of the cross for all.

1. As Paul showed the Jewish need for a savior he began to talk about the law and circumcision were only good if a person kept all of the law. It wasn’t just enough to know it, but we have to do it all 100% to be right with God. The purpose of his teaching was to get the religious person to quit trusting their works to receive.
2. Today we are going to continue looking at that topic as we study justification by faith. We are also going to answer the question of why does *James* teach we are justified by our works?

II. Justification by Faith

A. **Romans 3:9-20 - All Have Sinned**

1. *Verse 9* Paul makes the point all have sinned (Jew and Gentile - religious and non-religious. All need a savior. He then quotes from several Old Testament passages to demonstrate how we could never save ourselves.
2. *Verses 10-12* quote *Psalms 14-1-3, 53-13*, and *Ecclesiastes 7:20*.
3. *Verse 13* quotes *Psalms 5:9*. It is also very similar to *Matthew 23:27* *whitewashed tombs full of dead men’s bones*.
4. *Verse 14* quotes *Psalms 10:7*.
5. *Verse 17* quotes *Isaiah 59:7-8*.
6. *Verse 18* quotes *Psalms 36:1*.

7. **Verses 19-20** explain the purpose of the law. It was given to condemn, not make righteous. It was also given to point us to a savior.

## B. Romans 3:21-31 - Righteousness by Faith

1. **Verse 22-23** The righteousness of God the law and prophets pointed to was Jesus. The entire Old Testament always pointed to Jesus.
2. **Verse 23** Once again we see all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.
3. **Verses 24-26** These verses say Jesus was our atoning sacrifice (at Calvary) and He justifies (makes innocent) those who believe.
4. **Verses 27-28** Our boasting is excluded because Jesus justifies apart from the works of the law.

C. What about **James 2:24** then? Do our works matter, at least some of them, some of the time, maybe occasionally? Or is God schizophrenic? Or is the Bible just full of contradictions and wrong?

1. The key to understanding this statement is context. Why did James write **James**. He wrote in the year 46 A.D. to the church that had been dispersed abroad because of persecution (about 10 years after the stoning of Steven).
2. The early church lived through a season of revival (Pentecost - 3,000 saved, Peter and John healing the paralyzed man - 5,000 saved, people getting healed off of Peter's shadow and all of Jerusalem filled with doctrine of Christ. They saw these events and many believed the kingdom of God was about to be set up in fullness eminently.
3. When persecution hit and they were dispersed (**Acts 8**) many became discouraged. This is why James talked to them about the testing of their faith in **James 1**. Unfortunately many began to go through the motions of Christianity and stopped being doers and were hearers only deceiving themselves. This manifested in **James 2** as mistreatment of people:
  - a. **James 2:2-6** Treating rich people better than poor people when they came to church in order to obtain favor.
  - b. **James 2:14-16** Not providing people with food and clothing when they had it to give.
4. **James 2:17-24**
  - a. Faith without works is dead.
  - b. Abraham was originally justified by God in **Genesis 15:6** before Isaac was born or offered as a sacrifice. So how was Abraham justified in **Genesis 22**? He was justified (found faithful/innocent) by people. He took men with him to sacrifice Isaac and when they **saw Abraham's faith** and willingness to obey it impacted them.
  - c. When **James** says we are justified by works he's talking about before people. Our good works don't gain us influence with God, but they do

gain us influence with people. ex: If you came to my house and asked me for money to feed your family and I didn't give it to you, would that send me to hell? No. But I would lose influence with you.

E. **Romans 3:29-31** The chapter is concluded by God justifies the religious and irreligious by faith.

III. Conclusion - The purpose today was to help you discover how innocent you are apart from the works of the law.

A. When we believe in Jesus we are innocent before God no matter what we do.

B. As believers in Jesus, we should live right to demonstrate our innocence before the world and to attract them to faith in Christ.

C. Call Up Prayer Team and Pray Closing Prayer