

Romans 3

God Remains Faithful

Theme

Let our confidence rest in what Jesus has done, not in what we have done or can accomplish.

— *Brother Jason Jackson*

Opening Thought

Romans 3 brings both the Jew and the Gentile to the same place: under the power and bondage of sin. In Romans 1, Paul exposed the bondage of the Gentile through paganism and the suppression of God's truth. In Romans 2, he exposed the bondage of the Jew through religious confidence and self-righteousness. Now, in Romans 3, Paul removes every distinction and declares that **all humanity stands guilty before God**.

At first glance, the chapter appears to emphasize humanity's failure. But Paul's purpose is much greater. The darkness of humanity simply becomes the backdrop against which the righteousness and faithfulness of God shine even brighter.

The focus of Romans 3 is not ultimately the sinfulness of mankind—it is the faithfulness of God.

Key Thought:

From the very beginning, God desired a relationship with His creation. Rather than abandoning humanity in its sinful condition, He established a righteous plan of redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ, who is God in the flesh, perfectly fulfilled the righteousness that humanity could never achieve. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He conquered sin, satisfied the Father's righteous justice, and made it possible for all who believe to be declared righteous before God.

Therefore **our confidence rests entirely in the faithfulness of God and the finished work of Jesus Christ**.

Overview: Romans 3:1–9

Paul opens this chapter using a teaching method known as **diatribe**—a question-and-answer style of argument in which he raises objections, responds to imagined opponents, and persuades his audience through lively, conversational dialogue. He first introduced this method at the beginning of Romans 2 and now continues it by addressing some of the most challenging questions concerning **God's faithfulness, righteousness, and judgment**.

Through these questions, Paul dismantles every false confidence people place in themselves. He defends the faithfulness of God despite humanity's failure, rejects the idea that God's grace

permits continued sin, and ultimately reminds both Jew and Gentile that **everyone stands in need of God's righteousness, which is received through faith in Jesus Christ.**

No One Is Righteous...But Everyone Who Believes Can Be: Chapter 3:10-22

Paul now supports his argument by weaving together several Old Testament passages (Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes) to prove one central truth:

No one is righteous on their own.

Whether Jew or Gentile, all stand guilty before God. The Law was never given to make us righteous; it was given to reveal God's righteous standard, expose our sin, remove every excuse, and point us to our need for a Savior.

Paul's purpose is not to condemn one group over another but to show that **everyone has been affected by sin**. The Law reveals God's holy standard, exposes our sinful condition, removes every excuse, and leaves the whole world accountable before God. No amount of religious effort, moral behavior, or law-keeping can make a person righteous before Him.

Then comes the great turning point:

"But now the righteousness of God..." (Romans 3:21)

The section that begins with **"No one is righteous"** ends with the glorious announcement that **God has revealed a way for everyone to be made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.**

"We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are." (Romans 3:22, NLT)

Paul moves us from the reality of humanity's unrighteousness to the revelation of God's righteousness. The answer to our condition is not trying harder but trusting Christ. **Faith is not the end of the journey—it is the beginning of a restored relationship with God, where we continue to walk in His righteousness and experience His faithfulness every day.**

Key Transition

The Law exposes our need, but the Gospel reveals God's provision. What no one could accomplish through human effort, God accomplished through Jesus Christ for everyone who believes.

The Righteousness of God Revealed

Romans 3:21–22

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets."

The words **"But now"** announce one of the greatest turning points in Romans. Humanity could never attain God's righteousness through its own efforts, yet God remained faithful and revealed His righteous plan through Jesus Christ. The problem was never God's Law but humanity's inability to fulfill His righteous standard because of sin. Rather than abandoning His covenant or

lowering His standard, God provided a better way—**faith in Jesus Christ**. This righteousness was not a new idea but was "**witnessed by the Law and the Prophets**." From Abraham to Moses, David, and the prophets, God's people experienced relationship with Him through faith. What they anticipated has now been fully revealed in Christ and is available "**to all and on all who believe**."

Romans 3:23–24

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Verse 23 is often quoted by itself, but Paul never intended it to end there. The focus quickly shifts from humanity's failure to God's grace. Yes, all have sinned, **but** all who believe may be **justified**—declared righteous, acquitted, and released from every charge—not because of their works, but because of Christ. God does not merely overlook sin; He declares believers righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:25–26

Christ Became Our Propitiation

Paul now introduces one of the richest words in Scripture: **propitiation** (*hilastērion*), meaning **Mercy Seat, Place of Atonement**, or **the place where justice and mercy meet**. For the Jew, this recalled the Day of Atonement, where the High Priest sprinkled blood upon the Mercy Seat. For the Greek, it challenged the idea that people must appease angry gods through sacrifices. Paul declares something far greater: **God Himself provided the sacrifice**. Jesus became our High Priest, our Mercy Seat, and the perfect sacrifice, fully satisfying God's righteous justice.

This was never God's backup plan. Before the foundation of the world, Christ was the Lamb prepared for our redemption. God patiently passed over former sins until the cross, where His justice was fully satisfied. Through Jesus, God remained perfectly **righteous**, perfectly **just**, and at the same time became **the Justifier** of everyone who places their faith in Christ.

The beauty of the Gospel is this: God did not lower His standard to save us—He fulfilled His standard through Jesus Christ so that sinners could be declared righteous and restored into relationship with Him.

Key Truths of Romans 3:21–26

- The Law revealed God's standard.
- Faith has always been God's pathway.
- Grace is greater than our failure.
- Christ became our Mercy Seat.

- God's plan never changed.
 - God's righteousness was fully displayed through Jesus Christ.
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Closing Thought

Romans 3 shifts our attention away from ourselves and places it entirely upon God.

The Gospel is not primarily the story of sinful people trying harder.

It is the story of a faithful God who fulfilled His own righteous standard through His Son so that sinful people could be restored into relationship with Him.

God did not lower His standard to save us. He fulfilled His standard through Jesus Christ so that everyone who believes might walk with Him in righteousness.