

But Now
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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Romans 3:21-31.

B. Here, we find God's answer to man's total failure.

II. All have turned away and have become worthless according to God's appraisal.

III. Righteousness apart from the law is God's great "nevertheless" in the face of failure.

A. The concern is not what you do, but what you are—you behave as you are.

B. The gift that God gives you is a righteous standing.

1. Without a sense of worth, you cannot function.

2. The malaise of our time is self-depreciation.

3. Part of us needs to find worth from God—without it, life is not settled.

4. God offers us His own worth through the gift of righteousness.

C. Righteousness is a gift and cannot be earned.

D. This gift is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

1. The law provided a picture of the death of Jesus foreshadowed through sacrifices.

2. The Old Testament prophesied this gift.

IV. Obtaining the righteousness.

A. This gift comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

B. It involves a relationship to a living person.

C. It is God who does this and not man—man can bring nothing.

D. It is Christ who accomplishes something that does the work.

V. Why.

A. God did this to demonstrate His justice.

B. Propitiation is a better translation than expiation in the text—God presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement.

1. Expiation satisfies Jesus.
2. Propitiation satisfies love.
3. Both expiation and propitiation are in the text, but expiation alone does not go far enough.

C. God's justice is demonstrated in spite of some of the apparent neglect because the entire wrath that man deserved was poured out on His only Son.

VI. The results.

A. No one can boast.

1. Self-righteousness is the ugliest sin among Christians.
2. We deny what God does when we think we are better than people who disobey outwardly.
3. The gospel levels all mankind.

B. The righteousness of God fulfills the law. (I John 1:9)

1. We have no need to fear God.
2. We have been accepted in God.

Application questions:

1. How does God provide for our great failure?

2. What is God's reasoning behind this great act?

3. Why is self-righteousness so opposed to God's justification? How have you wrongly been self-righteous?
