

Read Romans 1:16-17; Romans 3:21-26

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Background

On October 31, 1517, a German monk named Martin Luther sparked what became known as the Protestant Reformation by nailing a list of ninety-five statements on the door to the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther was dismayed over the Roman Catholic Church's practice of asking for excessive payment (indulgences) for the forgiveness of sins. But Luther's journey to that day in Wittenberg began with asking the question “how can a sinful person ever be righteous in God's eyes?” His question led him through the word of God where his eyes were opened anew to God's gift of grace. He determined that the only way any person could ever be ‘right’ in God's eyes would be through God's grace through faith in Jesus. This week we launch a new series on God's grace – what God has done for us and what His grace does in us and through us. Today, Pastor David will encourage us to see what exactly is so amazing about God's grace.

Service Notes

What is your biggest takeaway from today's message?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Instructions

This discussion guide is to help you facilitate a conversation with your small group. The "Getting Started" section serves as a quick opener and introduction to the group conversation. In the "Talk it Over" section, feel free to use all or only some of the questions. Again, our hope is to have meaningful and encouraging conversations around the passage used in the sermon, not simply answer all the questions. Give each member of your group opportunity to respond. Take your time. Finally, the "Live it Out" section is to help identify a specific next step. Use these questions as a guide to find practical ways to apply the passage to our everyday life.

Getting Started

- ▼ What is one thing that stood out the most to you in this week's message? What has God been teaching you lately? How can we pray for you this week?

Talk it Over

- ▼ How would you define grace? How is God's grace different from God's mercy? Why do you think the concept (and reality) of 'grace' can be difficult to accept at times? Why can we be so quick to receive grace from someone else (including God) but struggle to give grace to other people?
- ▼ **Read Romans 3:21-26.** What are some of the key words in this passage that reveal God's grace? How does someone receive the "righteousness of God" (vs. 21-22)? Why is Romans 3:23 so important to understand who we are and what God has done for us? How does verse 24 help us understand the "bad news" and the "good news" of salvation? What is so important about Jesus being a 'propitiation' or 'atoning sacrifice' for our sins? How can God be both "just" (punishing sin) and "justifier" (make sinners righteous)? How should this understanding of God (and His grace) shape the way we live?
- ▼ **Read Ephesians 2:1-10** What are some of the parallels between this passage and Romans 3? How does Paul describe our spiritual condition? What's your favorite verse in this passage? According to this passage, what does God's grace produce through us? In what fresh ways can you apply this passage to your life?

Live it Out

- ▼ In what areas of your life do you need to 'receive' more of God's grace today? To whom do you need to extend God's grace this week?

