

# Romans 3:24-25

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-3/romans-324-25/>

*We are justified by faith in Christ as a free gift and we receive that gift of grace by faith.*

How do we become “right?” How do we get straightened out, where sin no longer twists us in a way that we are unable to be who we were made to be, and live in a harmonious and constructive manner? The starting place is to be *justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus* (v 24). This comes only one way: to believe in Jesus. Through faith in Jesus comes *redemption*, redemption from the penalty of sin.

The word translated *justified* here is the Greek word “*dikaioō*.” “*Dikaioo*” is the verb form of “*dikaiosune*,” a noun, translated *righteousness*. To get to a state of being righteous before God (noun) we must first be justified (verb), which requires action. Being justified cannot be accomplished by any human, including the Apostle Paul, as he made very clear in Romans 3:9. That action can only be accomplished by Jesus Christ, who then gives to us that accomplishment (which He accomplished) as a free gift, because He wants to (*grace*). The *gift* is completely free.

The language Paul uses here is adamant that this gift is freely given, with nothing expected in return. Jesus Christ redeems us from slavery to sin and all the negative consequences associated with being separated from Him by sin, just because He wants to (*grace*, “favor”). He makes no demands for reciprocity. Jesus demands nothing in return for the favor, the free gift of being justified in His sight. We have only to receive it.

The free *gift of grace*, apart from law, is the primary part of Paul’s message, his “good news” or “gospel,” that the competing Jewish “authorities” are slandering (v 8). They hate the idea that any person can be justified before God without having to “do” something, such as obey the law. But Paul makes it clear that no one is capable of obeying the law, so God had to do something “apart from the law” (v 21) in order to redeem us. All we have to do to possess this *gift* of being justified in His sight is to receive it by faith.

As we will see, although there is nothing required in return for being justified by faith, the choices we make still have immense consequences. Jesus does justify us by *grace* through faith, but He does not suspend the laws of cause and effect for our actions. In addition to justifying us in His sight by *grace*, God also gives us the power to overcome sin (Romans 1:16). However, we still have a daily choice whether to exercise that power.

In verse 25, we see the word *propitiation*, one that we don’t use much, if at all, in English: *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This act was to demonstrate God’s righteousness*. Paul explains that because of the *propitiation* of Jesus’s *publicly displayed* death, the spilling of His *blood*, this allowed *the forbearance of God*, the act of refraining from calling in our debt, not holding us punishable for our sins, such that He now *passed over the sins previously committed* (v 25). The Greek word translated as *propitiation* only appears twice in the New Testament—the other time it is translated “mercy seat.”

The mercy seat was the place on the Ark of the Covenant where the High Priest sprinkled *blood* as a symbol that God had forgiven the *sins* of the people of Israel for that year (Leviticus 16:3). God *passed over* the sins of that year in anticipation of the annual mercy seat sprinkling, just as God *passed over* all the *sins committed* prior to Jesus's perfect atonement for the sins of the world.

So the picture here is of Jesus as the mercy seat. The *blood* of Jesus was shed on our behalf to cover the sins of all humanity—not just annually, but once for all (Hebrews 9:12). *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed* (v 25). God offers this to us as a free gift, and there is only one way to receive that *gift*: by faith. Just as the sprinkling of the mercy seat was to pay for the *sins* of Israel (Leviticus 16:14–16), the shed *blood* of Jesus pays the penalty for our *sins* when we receive the gift of God's forgiveness.

To learn more, read our article, "[What is Eternal Life? How to Gain the Gift of Eternal Life.](#)"

### **Biblical Text**

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