

**Monday, August 31, 2020**  
**Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...**

**"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."**

*Romans 3: 23-24*

How important to you are these words from the Book of Romans? Do they transform your view of God? Do they put your life in a whole new light? There is no message that is more important to mankind than the message found in the words of this passage from Romans, and yet it is so easy to pass it by or to read it too quickly to really understand the depth of its impact on our lives, and even more so, on our eternities.

This passage tells us, when it comes to living a life that measures up to God's expectations, that NO ONE has anything they can point to regarding their own "performance" in this life that is good enough in the eyes of God. He has demanded perfection from us. This means that God is a holy God and that He created us to be holy as well, but we have fallen short of this expectation. We have "missed the mark" which is what the word, "sin," literally means.

So, that's the bad news. Are you ready for the Good News? It's really the best news you will hear (or read about) today! The Good News is that God "justifies" us through faith in Jesus. To be "justified" by God is not to be excused or just simply "let off the hook." To be "justified" by God is to be PROCLAIMED RIGHTEOUS, in spite of our sin. We are proclaimed (declared) to be as holy and righteous as God is. He places His own perfection onto us and lets us wear it for all eternity. As far as our sin is concerned, He has removed it from us by placing it onto Jesus when He was nailed to the cross. A "Great Exchange" took place!

God has done this, not because we have deserved it, but simply because He has chosen to do it solely on the basis of His unexplainable love for us. It is a GIFT! We can certainly decline this gift if we should so choose. Some might decline this gift because they don't believe that they have sinned. Or they may not want to believe that God has expected perfection from them. Some decline this gift because they think that their goodness outweighs their "badness," that is, their sinfulness.

Faith is what accepts this gift. Faith believes God when He says that we have fallen short of His expectations. But faith also believes God when He tells us that Jesus has taken the "rap" in our place. This is Christianity. So, based on this description of Christianity, are you a Christian? Are you aware of your sinful failings? Do you agree with God that you have fallen short of His expectations? But, even more importantly, have you believed God that your sins have been forgiven because of Jesus' death and resurrection?

Nothing is as important as this truth. You have a Savior, who has paid your debt for sin. Christianity is all about believing it's a "Done Deal." This is why a Christian can say, without hesitation, "I know that I will one day go to heaven. There's no question about it!"

God's Peace!  
Pastor Jim