
Overview

Biblical Passage Romans 3:21-24

Supporting Passages Romans 3:9-20

Memory Verse Romans 3:23

Biblical Truth All people have sinned and broken their relationship with God but can be saved through faith in Jesus.

Context This second lesson in Crux reveals the problem that people have in their relationship with God and the solution that He offers through faith in Jesus. Some people might believe that they are good enough on their own merit to be right with God. Others might believe that they can never be right because of what they've done. In this lesson, the opportunity is provided to learn how to respond to these arguments and give a clear testimony about the true path to a relationship with God. Sin is the problem that must be faced by all of humanity. The first step on the path toward salvation is recognition of our sin.

Learning Goals

- **Explore:** Your students will understand that apart from faith expressed in Jesus Christ, no one can be saved.
- **Transform:** Your students will practice the skill of sharing how one may enter into a relationship with Christ through faith.

Prayer Suggestions

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will understand that they are sinners who stand under the judgment of God and need the salvation that Jesus provides by His death and resurrection.
- Pray that your students will open themselves to the gospel message and trust Jesus for salvation.
- Pray that your students will recognize that everyone has a need for salvation.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

This letter was Paul's most systematic and logical explanation of the gospel. The way that he constructed his explanation probably arose out of conversations, discussions, and debates that he had with people as he traveled throughout the Roman Empire. As though he were an attorney building his case, Paul explained step-by-step why people need a right relationship with God and how to express that relationship (Rom. 1-8).

Paul wrote concerning people's need for a right relationship with God. The need arises because people are sinners and stand under the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18). But God has intervened and provided a plan of rescue: He gives believing sinners His own kind of righteousness.

Importance

This passage teaches that **Salvation is by Faith Alone**. All human beings are born with a sin nature, separated from God and in need of a Savior. This lesson highlights this grim fact of human existence. Humanity's need is extensive, setting every individual at odds with God and placing him or her under the **Wrath** of God. Only a faith relationship with Jesus Christ provides forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. This salvation is a rescue entirely accomplished by Jesus' death on the cross and not by means of human merit or performance.

Interpretation

Romans 3:21 Paul wrote extensively (Rom. 1:18-3:20), making the case that the entire human race is under sin, guilty before God, and, as a consequence, deserving of divine condemnation. Verse 21 includes the phrase "but now," which Paul used to explain God's work of putting people right with Himself. "Righteousness from God apart from the law" is a right standing with God that is separate and different from trying to live a good life by keeping some moral code. Righteousness apart from the Law is completely different from righteousness by performance. In other words, keeping the Ten Commandments (or any other moral code) is in no way connected with standing right before God. Abraham (Gen. 15:6) and David (Ps. 32:1-2) are particularly clear examples of right standing with God by faith and not by works (Rom. 4:1-10).

Romans 3:22-23 Paul explained how this different way to be put right with God works. It is right standing with God that is received by trusting Jesus Christ. Those people who do trust Christ are put right with God. To trust Christ means to actively depend upon Him. Faith in Christ is not a feeling or merely an intellectual agreement. **faith** is a decision of the will. It is an attitude of dependence upon Jesus of Nazareth based on the Word of God and growing out of an exercise of the human will. Faith in Jesus Christ is the agent by which people who trust

Christ are saved. This faith is not a fuzzy, nebulous faith in God—rather, it is a specific act of a person’s will to depend upon Jesus. The reason that right standing with God by faith in Christ is open to all people (both Jews and Gentiles) is that all are sinners. Since all people are sinners, all need to trust Christ.

The verb *sinned* indicates that all people have willfully acted against the righteousness of God and cannot reconcile with Him based on their own efforts. To “fall short” means “keep on falling short;” all people continually fall short of God’s standards. The picture is of an archer shooting his arrows at a target, but the arrows keep falling short of the target. The “**glory of God**” refers to the brilliant evidence of God’s presence—the revealing of Himself. Sharing His glory involves being conformed to the character of God (Rom. 8:29-30). We were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) in order to share in the glory of God by glorifying Him. However, all people have missed the mark of His glory, and as such they display anything but Him and His righteousness.

Romans 3:24 Right standing before God by faith in Christ occurs only by means of God’s **grace**, God’s undeserved favor, love, and mercy. As a gift, without cost to us, God’s grace is available to everyone. When a person expresses faith in Jesus as Savior, God freely forgives and accepts him or her no matter what he or she has done. Apart from faith in Christ, no one can be saved (Acts 4:12).

God offers a remedy for all who have sinned and are continually falling short. God Himself provides salvation. He came into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and suffered for us on the cross. He took our sins upon Himself so that we could be justified and put right before God.

The entire work of salvation by grace through faith in Christ is called **redemption**. Redemption involves a payment. Redemption also involves being released from slavery by the payment of a price. The payment for our sinfulness was made when Jesus died on the cross to release us from the slavery of sin.

Implications

We live in a day and time in which narcissistic behavior runs rampant. Notable athletes, actors, music artists, and politicians seem to think that they have an entitlement to do anything they wish to do and not be caught. When they are caught, many simply do not own up to the responsibility, always choosing to lay the blame on someone else.

The fact is that God’s Word declares that all have sinned. We are all sinners, deserving of death, which is rejection and condemnation of God. The best that any of us can hope to do is to fall on our knees in repentant humility, profess the lordship of Jesus Christ, and express faith in Him. The wonder is that He then covers us with the salvation that He has secured for us. This message is needed as much today as ever before.

Students growing up in a narcissistic world have a difficult time realizing their own sin and guilt when society throws off any responsibility for its sinfulness. Students need to come face-to-face with the Word of God to realize that they stand condemned but that He offers His salvation. Students need to know that their lives can be transformed and that they can live their lives in humble service that points others to Christ and glorifies Him. That is the wonder of His great salvation.

Teaching Plan

Connect Activity

Drama: Nobody's Perfect

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will watch a drama that illustrates that nobody's perfect.

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist four students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, ask: **So what did all of these girls have in common? Did any of them have the right to judge and accuse the others?** Say: **The fact is that when we get right down to it, we've all blown it. The apostle Paul makes this clear in today's lesson. The sooner we accept this fact, the sooner God can rescue us.**

Media Option: Do Not Touch

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

Your students will watch a video illustrating the consequences of doing wrong.

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the "Do Not Touch" video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the "Media" tab.)

Show the "Do Not Touch" video to your students. When you have finished, have someone summarize the video for you. Then ask students for their reactions.

Explain that this lesson is a pretty good look at a guy who doing wrong. Say: **In the end what happened? He paid the consequences for doing wrong, didn't he?** Explain that all sin has consequences, but there is hope. Say: **Today we will look at the hope offered to sinners through a relationship with Christ.**

Explore Activity

Master Teacher Key Study: Everyone Blows It

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Romans 3:21-24 to understand that everyone is guilty of sin but that God offers eternal life.

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Romans 3:21-24.

Transform Activity

Deeper Discussion

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss how sin has affected people.

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Use the following to open a discussion about sin and salvation:

- **How has sin affected man's ability to follow the law?**
- **How do we recognize sin in our lives?**
- **When we say that we have missed the mark because of sin, what was God's mark or standard or goal for us?**
- **Can you imagine if Jesus had not come, how would our lives be different?**
- **How can you tell others how to enter into a relationship with Christ through faith?**

Creative Prayer

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will pray about opportunities to share the gospel.

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide paper and pens.

Pass out paper and pens. Then ask students to each write the names of five to ten people they know who do not have a relationship with God. Encourage students to pray for those people for the next week or ten days.

Next, ask them to think about the main points of the lesson: God made a way to peace with Himself, everyone has messed up, and through Christ we are made free. Ask students to pray specifically for those five to ten people to understand that apart from faith expressed through Jesus Christ they cannot be saved. Ask them to pray specifically for themselves and for opportunities to share how one may enter into a relationship with Christ through faith with the people they have identified.

To conclude, encourage students to pray with a partner or by themselves.

Reverb Student Book: There's Hope

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

Students will complete an activity about the hope that God offers to people who have blown it.

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb student book, preview the activity on page 210. If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.

As students work through pages 208-213 in the *Reverb* student book this week, challenge them to take about 10-15 minutes and read through the "There's Hope" activity in the *Reverb* student book on page 210. Then say: **We've all blown it at times. We've missed God's mark through our own sin. But as you can see from each of these testimonies, a relationship with God through Christ has the ability to transform our lives over time.**

Crux 2, "Everyone Blows It"
Drama

Nobody's Perfect

Characters:

Sarah
Lizzy
Rachel
Becca

Props: girl's jacket

Costumes: They can all be dressed in normal clothing.

Creative Note: This drama should move along at a quick pace and with snappy dialogue.

(A girl, SARAH, nervously paces on stage. Another girl, LIZZY, enters. She is not happy with SARAH.)

LIZZY: Are you kidding me?

SARAH: Lizzy, I am so sorry.

LIZZY: I don't want to hear it, Sarah. How many times is this?

SARAH: Look, I just got caught up with everything . . .

LIZZY: Six! This makes six times you've not come through for me.

SARAH: What can I say? I forgot.

LIZZY: You forgot? You forgot?!

SARAH: Yeah.

LIZZY: You're unbelievable, Sarah. Absolutely unbelievable! I mean I literally cannot believe you're standing here after letting me down for the sixth time and the best you can come up with is, "I forgot?"

SARAH: Well, I did.

LIZZY: That's just not good enough.

SARAH: I don't know what you want me to do.

LIZZY: I want you to remember.

SARAH: Okay. Okay. I'll try not to do it again. I mean, nobody's perfect.

LIZZY: You got that right.

(SARAH exits, passing another girl, RACHEL, who is entering. RACHEL marches straight up to LIZZY.)

RACHEL: Lizzy?

LIZZY: Yeah?

(RACHEL holds up a jacket.)

RACHEL: Is this yours?

LIZZY: *(playing innocent)* I don't know. Maybe. It looks like mine.

RACHEL: Uh huh. And it's got a receipt of yours in the pocket.

LIZZY: Okay. I guess it's mine. Where'd you get it?

RACHEL: Where'd I get it? I think you know good and well where I got it. It was in Craig's car.

LIZZY: Really? That's weird.

RACHEL: Yeah. It is weird. Especially since Craig is my boyfriend. I don't know why your jacket would be in his car.

LIZZY: I don't know.

RACHEL: You've got to be kidding me, Lizzy. That's the best you've got? I don't know?

LIZZY: Okay. So, I went out with Craig when you were gone last weekend. He asked me.

RACHEL: That doesn't mean you say "yes."

LIZZY: I wanted to go. So what?

RACHEL: So, we're friends, Lizzy.

LIZZY: Oh, calm down. I mean, nobody's perfect.

RACHEL: You got that right.

(LIZZY exits, passing another girl, BECCA, who is entering. BECCA approaches RACHEL.)

BECCA: Hey, Rachel.

RACHEL: Hey, Becca.

BECCA: Guess where I've been.

RACHEL: Where?

BECCA: Detention.

RACHEL: Detention?

BECCA: Yeah.

RACHEL: What for?

BECCA: What for? I'll tell you what for. Seems Mrs. Anderson is under the impression that I plagiarized my book report.

RACHEL: Oh.

BECCA: Yeah. Oh. You wouldn't have happened to copy my report and turned it in as your own, now would you?

RACHEL: Umm . . . I meant to just use it to help me write mine, but it was so good.

BECCA: So good, huh? Well, now we're both going to be paying for it. We both got F's.

RACHEL: An F? My mom's going to kill me!

BECCA: Do you know how bad this is going to look on my permanent record?

RACHEL: Is that all you ever think about, Becca? Lighten up. I mean, nobody's perfect.

BECCA: You got that right.

(RACHEL exits, passing SARAH on her way back in. SARAH walks up to Becca.)

SARAH: I know it was you.

BECCA: Me?

SARAH: Yeah. I know it was you. And don't try to play innocent with me. I didn't tell anyone else.

BECCA: What are you talking about?

SARAH: You know. That . . . thing . . . I told you about last Saturday. You're the only person I told, and now everyone knows.

BECCA: No, they don't. I only mentioned it to one person, and they promised to keep a secret.

SARAH: Well, they didn't, and you promised. Now it's all over the school. My brother just got a text about it.

BECCA: Really?

SARAH: Yeah. Really.

BECCA: Well, what do you want me to do about it?

SARAH: I want you to fix it!

BECCA: How?

SARAH: I don't know how, Becca. But this is my life we're talking about here.

BECCA: Then you just shouldn't have done it in the first place.

SARAH: That's not the point.

BECCA: I think it is the point. I mean,
nobody's perfect.

SARAH: You got that right.

(The End)

Master Teacher Key Study **WE HAVE THE POWER**

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Intro: Who is a sinner?

Description: Paul boldly stated that everyone is a sinner standing in need of salvation. Since we have missed God's mark, only God can save us. Because people are unable to follow the Law (the "mark"), God sent Jesus, who fulfilled the Law and took the punishment of sin for us.

Illustration: In one college fraternity at an Oklahoma university, the guys who were pledging had to have so many pledge points by the time that their rush week was over in order to be inducted into the fraternity. If that hadn't happened by the end of the week, rather than making the pledges pay a pretty big penalty, the fraternity brothers stepped in and did a hundred push-ups for every point missed by the pledges. This act settled their account.

1. The Old Testament told us that we need a Savior (Rom. 3:21–22).

Description: Paul indicated in the preceding verse that the purpose of the Law was to point out our sinfulness. The prophets of the Old Testament pointed to a day when God would send a Savior to save us from our sinfulness.

Illustration: Display a mirror. Stand in front of the mirror and tie a tie, comb your hair, straighten your collar, or check your makeup. Then ask students: **How would I have known if something was not right if I didn't have the mirror?** Explain that the Law is like a mirror. When people look at the Law, they see their sinfulness.

Application: Once we come face-to-face with our own sin, we have to admit that only God is able to fix it. He has made a way through His Son. His Son becomes our Savior when we express our faith in Him.

2. Through Christ we are made free (Rom. 3:23–24).

Description: We are all guilty. God sent Jesus to do for us what we were unable to do for ourselves. Not that we deserved it—God did this because He loved us. Jesus took the punishment of sin for us. When we believe in faith, God makes us righteous.

Illustration: Every month we hear through the news about more fallen soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. People always say, "Soldiers lay down their lives in places like Iraq and Afghanistan so that we can experience freedom." That's a true statement, but one that we often take for granted. Yet there is one sacrifice that secured our freedom forever, and because of that sacrifice no others are needed.

Application: Because everyone has sinned, everyone can be made righteous. Jesus sacrificed His life so that we can be made right with God.

Conclusion: We are all sinners, and without faith in Jesus Christ no one can be saved.

Description: The word *condemnation* is a harsh word. It would be a reality for all of us had Christ never come. But God's love for us is so great that He didn't just ignore us in our shame. He gave His one and only Son.

Application: How can we make the gospel one of our favorite things to talk about?

REVERB::CRUX::lesson two**EVERYONE BLOWS IT****biblical passage:** Romans 1:14–17**memory verse: Romans 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.**EVERYONE BLOWS IT**

1. The _____ told us that we need a _____ (Rom. 3:21–22).

2. Through _____ we are made _____ (Rom. 3:23–24).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How has sin affected man's ability to follow the law?
- How do we recognize sin in our lives?
- When we say that we have missed the mark because of sin, what was God's mark or standard or goal for us?
- Can you imagine if Jesus had not come, how would our lives be different?
- How can you tell others how to enter into a relationship with Christ through faith?