

NEW TESTAMENT



GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Lesson 36: "Beloved of God, Called to Be Saints" (Romans)

- We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.
- We can be reborn and become joint-heirs with Christ.
- We should live as becomes Saints.

A study of this lesson will remind us that we are children of God and encourage us to live worthy of our divine inheritance.

Introduction

Read **Romans 3:10**. In this verse, Paul was not suggesting that no one ever does righteous acts; instead, he was pointing out that no one on earth is perfectly righteous. Christ was the only person who ever lived a completely sinless life. Everyone else has committed some sin (see also Romans 3:23).

When we have sinned, we must exercise faith in Christ and repent of our sins so we may receive the cleansing power of his Atonement to become clean again. Once we commit sin, we cannot become completely clean again on our own.

This lesson discusses how we can become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, a process that Paul called justification.



We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 2-5)

Paul had been writing to Church members in several areas who had returned to practicing the law of Moses, believing that strict observance of this law was necessary for salvation. Although the Saints in Rome were strong in the gospel (Romans 1:8), Paul wrote this epistle to emphasize that justification and salvation come through faith in Christ, not through the works of the law of Moses. In his letter, Paul tried to help the Roman Saints understand the doctrine of justification. To be justified means to be reconciled to God, pardoned from punishment for sin, and declared righteous and guiltless.

Romans 3:10-12, 23; see also **Alma 7:21** We need to be justified because we have all offended God and become unclean through sin. Since no unclean thing can dwell with God, we must be justified in order

to return to him.

Romans 3:24, 28; **Romans 5:1-2**; see also **2 Nephi 2:6** Paul taught about how we are justified—by the grace of Jesus Christ and our faith in him. Grace is divine help or strength. (See Bible Dictionary, "Grace," 697.)

Romans 5:8-11; **2 Nephi 2:7-8** This divine help is made available to us through the Atonement of Christ.

Romans 3:20, 24, 28 Paul explained that justification comes through the grace of Jesus Christ, not through "the deeds of the law".

Mosiah 2:20-21; **Alma 22:14** We can't earn justification and salvation exclusively through our works because we are always dependent upon the Lord for our very lives. Many people have interpreted Paul's writings to mean that we can be justified through faith alone

without good works.

Romans 3:31; **James 2:14-18, 24**; **2 Nephi 25:23**; **D&C 88:38-39** These passages help clarify the relationship between our actions (or works) and justification through the grace of Christ. The two are both necessary—grace does not negate the need for works and works cannot save us alone.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "*To be justified before God we must love one another: we must overcome evil; we must visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world:*

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#37 Jesus Christ: "The Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (Hebrews)

for such virtues flow from the great fountain of pure religion, strengthening our faith by adding every good quality that adorns the children of the blessed Jesus. We can pray in the season of

prayer; we can love our neighbor as ourselves, and be faithful in tribulation, knowing that the reward of such is greater in the kingdom of heaven. What a consolation! What a joy!” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 76).

We can be reborn and become joint-heirs with Christ. (Romans 6 and 8)

Romans 6:3-4; D&C 76:50-52 Paul compared baptism to death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism by immersion is a symbol of our spiritual rebirth. When we go under the water, it is a symbol that we are burying our old self in a grave. When we come out of the water, we are symbolically washed clean. We have become a new person who has covenanted to follow Christ.

Romans 6:4 Maintaining the cleanliness and “newness of life” that we experienced at baptism may be accomplished by renewing our baptismal covenants as we partake of the sacrament each week, by repenting and seeking forgiveness from the Lord, and by beginning each day with a renewed determination to serve God.

Romans 8:5-6 teaches that the “carnally minded” are consumed by the things of the world.

Romans 8:6-8, 13 The consequence of being carnally minded is spiritual death. Consider how you can eliminate the carnal from your mind and heart. Also, try to remember how you have been blessed when you have chosen to be spiritually minded.

Romans 8:16 Paul testified “that we are the children of God”. Of course, each of us should be significantly affected by the knowledge that we are each a child of God. That relationship also implies a great deal about your capacities and potential.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: *“Consider the power of the idea taught in our beloved song ‘I Am a Child of God’ (Hymns, 301). ... Here is the answer to one of life’s great questions, ‘Who am I?’ I am a child of God with a spirit lineage to heavenly parents. That parentage defines our eternal potential. That powerful idea is a potent antidepressant. It can strengthen each of us to make righteous choices and to seek the best that is within us. Establish in the mind of a young person the powerful idea that he or she is a child of God, and you have given self-respect and motivation to move against the problems of life”* (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 25).

Romans 8:17 Paul gave a great promise to the children of God—that we will share glory with Christ.

D&C 76:50, 54-70 To be a joint-heir with Christ is to receive all that the Father has.

D&C 76:51-53 To receive this great inheritance, we must have a testimony of Christ, make and keep our baptismal covenants, merit and receive forgiveness through repentance, receive the Holy Ghost, overcome the world by faith, and be just and true.

Romans 8:18, 28, 31; see also **Romans 5:3-5** Knowing that we are children of God and potential joint-heirs with Christ can help us endure the trials of this world because it can help us remember that the reward is far greater than the cost.

Romans 8:28 Consider how you have seen that “all things work together for good to them that love God”.

Romans 8:35-39 Paul taught in these verses that nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. Think seriously about how you have felt the Savior’s love in your life and what a difference his love has made in your life.

We should live as becomes Saints. (Romans 12-13; 15:1-7)

Romans 12:1 Paul exhorted the Roman Saints to present themselves as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God”.

3 Nephi 9:20; D&C 59:8 These passages help us see how we can present ourselves as living sacrifices to God just as **Elder Bruce R.**

McConkie explained, *“To present [oneself] as a living sacrifice is to*

come forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit through obedience” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1966-73], 2:292).

Romans 12:2 Paul counseled the Roman Saints to “be not conformed to this world”. That counsel still applies today, warning us about trying to conform to the way of the

world. We overcome this tendency by being led by the Spirit and being faithful to God.

Romans 12 and Romans 13 list many attributes of true Saints. Take your scriptures and identify these attributes. Then think about these attributes while considering these questions: Why is this attribute important to develop? What can I do

this week to further develop this attribute?

Romans 12:19-21 Paul instructed us to treat our enemies well so that we might overcome evil with good.

Romans 13:8-9 Paul said that the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves includes all other commandments.

Romans 13:10 This commandment includes all others as Paul explains here.

Romans 15:1-7 Paul taught us how members who are strong in the faith should respond to members who are weak in the faith.

Conclusion

It is through faith in Jesus Christ and righteous living that we can be justified—declared righteous and reconciled to God. We are children of God and have the potential to become joint-heirs with Christ if we have faith in him and live as he has commanded us.

