

Title: Exam Results – Romans 3 21-31

Read:

²¹⁻²⁴But in our time something new has been added. What Moses and the prophets witnessed to all those years has happened. The God-setting-things-right that we read about has become Jesus-setting-things-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this. Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. ²⁵⁻²⁶God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it's now—this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness. ²⁷⁻²⁸So where does that leave our proud Jewish insider claims and counter-claims? Cancelled? Yes, canceled. What we've learned is this: God does not respond to what we do; we respond to what God does. We've finally figured it out. Our lives get in step with God and all others by letting him set the pace, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade. ²⁹⁻³⁰And where does that leave our proud Jewish claim of having a corner on God? Also canceled. God is the God of outsider non-Jews as well as insider Jews. How could it be otherwise since there is only one God? God sets right all who welcome his action and enter into it, both those who follow our religious system and those who have never heard of our religion. ³¹But by shifting our focus from what we do to what God does, don't we cancel out all our careful keeping of the rules and ways God commanded? Not at all. What happens, in fact, is that by putting that entire way of life in its proper place, we confirm it.

Think:

So you spend all year skipping class just hanging around with your mates. You can't be bothered with home work. You even call your teacher names behind his back. You are having a great laugh, it looks like the fun will never end. Then it slowly but surely begins to dawn on you, the exam is coming up, it's only a week away. You can't revise; you have no notes to revise from. What are you going to do? So you turn up at the exam, knowing that you are completely without a clue and go to sit down. But in your seat is some other guy and he is just finishing the exam paper. You stand there puzzled, wondering what is going on. Your teacher walks up to you and says don't worry Graham the Geek has done the exam for you and you passed with an A+. That's what Jesus did for you. God is the perfect teacher. The mucking about and calling him names? Well that's all the stuff we do that separates us from him. How can we imperfect people that we are, be in the same place as a perfect God? Well Jesus the Geek has taken our exam. He has made us perfect, by taking the punishment for our years of skipping class and missing home work which is the selfish things we do. That's what Paul is saying in this passage. You have passed the exam, not because you are perfect, but because Jesus took it for you.

Pray:

Dear God, Thank You. Amen.

Action:

Can you explain what Jesus has done for you mates in a way they will understand? Think up a way now that you can explain it to them. Bye.