

DISCUSSION GUIDE: ROMANS 3:25-26
APRIL 23, 2017

INTRODUCTION

We've been marinating in Romans 3:21-26 for the last few weeks, and for good reason as many consider this paragraph to be the very heart of Romans. This week, we zero in on the last two verses (vv.25-26) which gives us a glimpse of God's good God-Centeredness in the gospel. This idea, that God's primary motivation is the display of his glory, is not one that we come to naturally. But, seeing this truth in the Scriptures will enable us to understand the Bible more clearly.

1. In v25b, Paul says God passed over former sins. Paul's concern here is that his audience might be tempted to call into question God's righteousness—even accusing God being slack in judging sin.

—Paul's concern is the apparent injustice that God is too lenient with sin. That's not even a consideration for modern man! Mankind assumes the opposite, that God is too harsh in dealing with sin. What does this say about the difference between a worldly view of God and a biblical view of God?

—Discuss the implications of approaching the Bible with a man-centered perspective versus a God-centered perspective.

2. The phrase "to show God's righteousness" is used in both v.25 and v.26. In other words, God is concerned with putting his grace on display to an onlooking world. The Bible is full of passages that base God's motivation for saving his people on the display of His glory. (e.g. Psalm 106:8, 1 Samuel 12:22, Isaiah 48:9-11, Ezekiel 36:22-23). His love for His people is rooted in the commitment He has to His own glory.

—Discuss the biblical idea that God's primary motive for saving his people is His namesake.

—How is this truth contrary to modern man's conception of God?

—What implications does this have for the Christian life and how Christians deal with suffering and trials?

3. In v26, Paul says God is both just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus. In other words, he does punish sin (He's just), but He gives grace to the sinner through Christ (He's the justifier). This verse contains the very heart of the gospel—that God is both holy and merciful. He demands perfection, but He gives what He demands by offering Christ and supplying the faith for those whom He saves.

—Discuss with your group the beauty of this gospel truth—that God is both just and merciful.

—If this is how God has treated us, what effect should this have on how we interact with others?