Sermon Guide

June 21: Romans 1-3

What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Definitions:

1. Sin: an archery term: to miss the mark
2. Law: a covenant term: God's instructions for how His people are to live
3. Righteousness:a measurement term: perfectly meeting God's standard
4. Justified: a legal term: to be declared righteous by the Judge
5. Grace: a royal term: the undeserved favor of the King
6. Redemption: a rescue term: freedom secured by the payment of a price
7. Atonement: a sacrifice term: a sacrifice that covers sin and restores peace

Key Takeaways:

1. We are more broken than we realize - The law exposes that we've missed the mark entirely, not just by a little bit.
2. We cannot fix ourselves - Neither comparison nor religious effort can make us righteous before God.
3. God has provided what we could never earn - Through Christ's death and resurrection, righteousness is available to all who believe.
4. The entire Bible tells one story - From Genesis 3:15 forward, Scripture points to Jesus as our Redeemer.
5. We now wear Christ's righteousness - When God looks at believers, He sees the perfection of Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. The Ten Commandments acts as a "mirror." Which commandment hits you hardest and why? How does the expanded understanding of commandments (like murder including hatred, adultery including lustful thoughts) change your view of your own righteousness?

2. Two ways we typically respond to bad news about our sin are comparison ("at least I'm better than...") and religion (trying harder). Which one do you tend to lean toward? Why do you think that is? Why doesn't "being better than someone else" actually solve our problem before God?

3. What does it mean that we're "dead people who need to be made alive" rather than "bad people who need improvement"? How does this change your understanding of what you need?

4. Share a time when you felt like you were on a spiritual "treadmill"—working hard but getting nowhere. What was that experience like?

5. The entire Old Testament pointed forward to Jesus as the "serpent crusher." Why is it important that this wasn't "Plan B" but God's plan all along?

6. How does understanding the Day of Atonement imagery (the high priest, the mercy seat, the blood) help you appreciate what Jesus accomplished on the cross?

7. Believing isn't just acknowledging Jesus existed, but "leaning your entire eternity on the fact that when Jesus died and rose again, it counted for you." What's the difference between these two kinds of belief?

8. Using the house fire illustration, what does it look like practically to "call the fire department" rather than just acknowledge it exists?

9. Justification means "just as if I never sinned" AND "just as if I've always obeyed." Why are both parts necessary for us to stand before God?

10. How does knowing that Christ's righteousness has been "stamped onto your account" change how you feel about approaching God?

Practical Applications:

1. Each day this week, read through the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) slowly and prayerfully. Journal about how they expose your need for Jesus, and end each time by thanking God for the righteousness of Christ that covers you.
2. Memorize Romans 3:23-24. Set a daily reminder on your phone with the words "But Now," and when it goes off, pause and thank God for the gospel.
3. Identify one person who needs to hear the "but now" message. Pray for an opportunity to share how Christ has changed your standing before God.
4. Make a list of ways you've experienced God's undeserved favor this week, and share it with your group next time you meet.