

UNSTOPPABLE CHURCH

Then and *Now*
in 30 Minutes



Episode 41 - Justified

[Listen Now](#)

THE SETTING



We're now at **the Church of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome**. The first church on this site was built in the fourth century AD by Emperor Constantine on the traditional site of Paul's grave. Constantine's successors replaced it with a basilica, which stood here until a fire destroyed most of it in 1823. It was rebuilt following the original plan and dimensions. The church is quite magnificent: It is fronted by an atrium of four porticoes around a courtyard with a statue of St. Paul. The main door, which portrays scenes from the lives of Paul and Peter, leads to a nave lined with 80 columns on both sides. The altar, above what is believed to be Paul's tomb, is reserved for use by the Pope alone and those to whom he gives permission. The church also boasts a relic that was allegedly the chain used to bind Paul before his execution. Standing at 420 ft (132 m) long, 210 ft (65 m) wide, and 100 ft (30 m) high, it is the largest church in Rome after St Peter's.



Statue of St. Paul with his sword of truth
in the courtyard of the Church of St Paul
Outside the Walls



Inside the church

BIBLE READING

[Romans 3:21-26](#)

KEY IDEAS

Paul's story may have ended at his martyrdom; but his impact certainly didn't. For ever since Peter ([2 Peter 3:15-16](#)), the church has seen Paul's writings as inspired Scripture - writings that form 24% of the New Testament's text. One of the most profound of those letters is Romans; so since we are in Rome, this seems a good place to stop and look at some of it. Written in AD57 from Corinth to prepare for his visit to this church that he didn't know, Paul used this letter to outline the very heart of his gospel and its implications - at the heart of which stood the cross of Christ. He had already written to the Corinthians a couple of years earlier, outlining his conviction in the reality of the cross and resurrection - and the utter meaningless of Christian faith if they didn't (see [1 Corinthians 15](#)). But it is in Romans that he unpacks the significance of those events.

The significance of the cross

What Christ achieved for us through his death is so amazing that Paul had to use several different images to try to explain it. Each of these is like the facet of a cut diamond - beautiful,

but not complete without all the other facets. Our passage in Romans 3 brings three of those facets together:

· **A picture from the temple: sacrifice.** Christ's death was "a sacrifice of atonement" (NIV) or "a propitiation" (ESV) for us (3:25.) "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23); but Christ died to pay the price of our sins and to remove God's hostility towards us because of that sin. Through faith in Christ, we are completely MADE CLEAN! (See also, [Matt 26:27-28](#); [Eph 1:7](#); [1 Pe 2:24](#); [3:18](#)).

· **A picture from the market: redemption (ransom)** (3:24). Just as a price was paid to free Israel from slavery in Egypt, so Christ paid the price to free us from slavery to sin. His cry from the cross, "It is finished!" ([Jn 19:30](#)) - meaning "It is all paid for!" - means there is nothing more for us to pay. Through faith in him, we have been BOUGHT BACK! (See also, [Matt 20:20-28](#); [Col 1:13-14](#); [Heb 9:15](#))

· **A picture from the law court: justification** (3:24-26). As a Jew, Paul had always believed it was God alone who justifies people (that is, declares them "not guilty") - something that went right back to Abram who was put right with God solely by his faith ([Gen 15:1-6](#)). But Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus changed everything. Jews believed that God would justify people at the End of the Age, when the dead were raised. But Paul had met Jesus whom God had raised right now; and that must mean that the End was breaking in right now; and that in turn meant that God's justifying of people was happening right now - based not on what we have done or will have done, but solely on Christ's death. That's why Paul could write "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" ([Rom 8:1](#)) - 'now', not 'then'. And this is what gave Paul - and can give us - such great assurance. (See also, [Rom 5:6-10](#); [Gal 3:1-14](#); [Tit 3:4-7](#)). Through faith in Christ, we have been PUT RIGHT with God, declared not guilty! Right now!

MADE CLEAN, BOUGHT BACK, PUT RIGHT - and in Romans 5 Paul shows the consequences of all this: reconciliation - MADE FRIENDS. This was what got Paul up in the morning! This is what sent him on his journeys. This was what made him endure so much! Because this was the best news ever!



1. MADE CLEAN, BOUGHT BACK, PUT RIGHT, MADE FRIENDS. Do you know the truth of these four things in your own relationship with God? If you are unsure, go to www.ucb.co.uk/yes for more help.
2. And if you are convinced of these four truths, is there any one of them that you need to hear again today, for Satan loves to rob us of our assurance?
3. How could this message help the Church become unstoppable once again?



For a behind-the-scenes glimpse into what was involved to create this podcast series listen to Mike and David recounting their experiences!

Listen Now

How about listening to other UCB Bible-based podcasts from Mike and David:
Bible Books in 30 Minutes

Bible Biogs in 30 Minutes
Bible Surprises! in 30 Minutes
and the series that preceded
Unstoppable Church, Then and Now in 30 Minutes
called *Jesus, Then And Now in 30 Minutes*.
They are all available on the UCB Player app and from other podcast providers.
Why not download UCB Player from your app store now?

Download the free UCB Player app now.



UCB UNITED
CHRISTIAN
BROADCASTERS



[Privacy](#)

[Terms](#)

[View Online](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

© 2024 United Christian Broadcasters Ltd.
Company registered in England & Wales 2182533. Registered Charity 299128