

## **DEVOTION – Romans 3:23-24**

*Accompanies [“Grace for the unforgivable: Roy’s story”](#)*

**<sup>23</sup>For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ.**

---

Watch the news for any length of time and you easily encounter some bad characters—people whose words and actions are deplorable and seem to be unforgivable. It's hard to argue that things seem to be getting worse these days, and it's easier to find such examples. But bad characters have really been around since the beginning. Early in Genesis, the first book of the Bible and the record of the beginning of history, Moses records for us the account of the murderous Cain—a son of mankind's first parents, Adam and Eve.

But have you ever thought of *yourself* as one of those “bad” characters? In reality, we are really no different. Sin is a tricky thing. We all have it churning within us, but it's sometimes harder to see it within ourselves. It's much easier to see it in others, especially those we don't know or have any connection to. And when we see the evidence of the serious sinfulness of others, it's very easy for us to point fingers and shake our head in disgust, leading us to forget that within that “bad character” is a soul for whom Jesus died.

In the video we just viewed, we heard the story of Roy, who could be categorized as one of those “bad characters” due to the actions of his earlier life. Yet by the grace of God, he became connected to one of our home mission churches in Detroit, Michigan, where he heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and how he—even he—was forgiven by what Jesus did on the cross.

The inspired apostle who wrote the book of Romans and the words we just read was also a pretty “bad” character in his early life. He sought out and persecuted Christians, before he himself became one on the road to Damascus. After that, by God's grace, even for someone as supposedly “unforgivable” as Paul, he became a missionary who brought many others to God's grace in Jesus by the gospel. His Holy Spirit-inspired words remind us that ALL have sinned and are “bad characters,” undeserving of anything from our holy and perfect God. And yet in his grace, his mercy, and his love, the Lord Jesus calls us to himself through the gospel, so we also can become missionaries.

Whether we realize it or not, we are living in a mission field. We encounter all kinds of people, all of whom are sinners, who need that grace of God in their lives. They are people from different backgrounds, different cultures, and yes, even some pretty “bad characters.” So many people are still wandering in spiritual darkness and need the light of the gospel that we have to offer. As we seek to bring more into Christ's kingdom of grace, we

share that gospel through both established churches and mission settings right in our hometowns, making the most of the opportunities the Lord provides us to show God's grace to everyone—especially those who may feel they are “unforgivable.” Because they're not! Jesus' blood and righteousness covers their sins, as it does ours. God's grace is for them too.

Reflect on the privilege we have to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others! While you may feel inadequate or lacking in the skills you might think are necessary to do this gospel sharing, the fact that you have Christian faith as a gift from our gracious God means you have the ability to share it with those you encounter. You are a vessel that the Lord uses to reach those who need to hear about what Jesus has done for them. It is through people like you that others are drawn to the Savior so that the gospel can work in their heart and bring them into the family of Christ.

Most importantly, you have Jesus with you in your mission field. He has promised to be with you always, which brings us confidence as we take those opportunities in our personal mission fields to tell others of Jesus. God's holy Word continually reminds us that it's not by our power and eloquent words that a person comes to faith. It's by the power of the gospel that we share. We share Christ's love in our words and actions, and that opens up opportunities to tell them about what Jesus has done for them and for all people. Then they also become missionaries that bring that gospel to others whom they encounter.

*Written by Rev. Thomas Mielke, WELS Christian Giving Counselor. Used with permission.*