

Romans, 1978 - Part 2

by Norman Grubb

The sermon explains how the Law exposes our sinful condition, but Christ's blood redemption is the solution to our sinful condition, and justification is a declaration of righteousness in God's sight.

Duration: 44:00

Topics: "Romans"

Description

In this sermon, Paul discusses the concept of justification and the guilt that comes from breaking the law. He explains that Jesus came under the law to experience death and hell on behalf of humanity, completing the penalty of our salvation. Paul emphasizes that we are often blind to our sinful condition, but the law reveals our guilt through our actions. He then introduces the concept of redemption through Christ Jesus and the importance of faith in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Transcript

So, uh, uh, here came the, uh, giving of the law on Mount Sinai. We usually know it, first of all, as the Decalogue, the same commandments to Moses, on those tables of stone. Um, which the Bible later on says were given him, not by God himself, but by an angel.

It says that in, uh, Galatians, and, uh, in the speech of Stephen at, uh, the seventh day of Acts. The reason being that, uh, God is pure love, and he cannot therefore give himself as God, simply in the form of thou should not. It has to be a kind of, uh, a reflected form of God, um, which was all at the moment, that the, the fallen one could take, uh, to find out their own fallen condition, which is only a stepping stone to grace.

And so, um, it says, uh, that, uh, the law in, uh, Galatians 3, 19, uh, was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator. Later on, in, uh, God's, in Moses' meetings with God on Mount Sinai, it was face to face, but that was when grace came. That's when he, when he then goes on to, to give him the pattern of grace in Tabernacle.

It shows always grace, always acceptance, and always his presence in, in, in a, in a faith relationship with him. And so there he met him, and spoke as a man speaks to his friend. Not, not, not when he gave the law.

That was by, was given as a representation of an angel. Uh, so here came, uh, to the, to the visual, um, the necessary means, uh, of exposing sin as sin. Um, so we've read here, uh, in, uh, Romans chapter 20, 320.

By the law is a knowledge of sin, which had to be the first stepping stone into grace. Because, uh, when we become honest, uh, then, uh, we, confronted by the, uh, the law of God, the commandments of God, uh, we confess with beauty. So it says here, the whole world may become beautiful before God.

That's why Jesus said that the first step into himself must be by coming to the light. Where he himself had fulfilled the, the reconciliation necessary, which could, uh, bring us, uh, from our sin condition to our justified condition in the presence of God. That couldn't be until first of all we were confronted by the light, which light exposes things as they are.

So Jesus said, uh, no one is condemned in John 3 is condemned by their sins. They are condemned because light has come into the world. Uh, and men love darkness rather than light.

Uh, and would not come to the light and hated the light, uh, lest their, lest their, their sinful conditions be exposed. That's why there has to be repentance before there can be faith. Repentance is a change of mind about myself, not about God.

So now, Paul has played us, uh, in Romans with the, uh, uh, the first necessary stage, uh, to, uh, us, uh, being what we were, uh, created to be. We, uh, failed to be through the fall and are recreated to be in Jesus Christ. Uh, liberated sons of God.

As means by which he manifests his own personal self-loving, self-giving self to eternity. Now it is at this moment that Paul turns from, uh, the exposure of our sin condition to its liberty in the blood of Christ. Not yet the body of Christ, but the blood of Christ.

We should read about our relation to the body of Christ in the sixth chapter of Romans. We are now in the third chapter. And this is where, uh, it brings in, uh, uh, the reality of the blood and the necessity of faith.

This verse comes in here. And so, he says in this Romans 3 to 5, We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be of appreciation through faith in His blood, that He declares His righteousness for the remission of sins of the past, through the hope of the truth of a balanced God. Not yet sin.

Sins. Specific, uh, act of breaking the law of God. Sins.

Not yet sin. We discuss sin later on. And, uh, the, uh, um, the removal of, uh, the guilt, our guilt, and consequent penalty, um, as those that are, are, are sinned, is said to be here, um, through faith in His blood.

He doesn't, uh, in this letter, as I say, which can not, can, is in sort of shortened form, uh, give all the, all the, uh, uh, explanation of why, um, we can have, uh, this propitiation, uh, through faith in His blood, and thus that God can declare His righteousness for the remission of our sins of the past, uh, and be both just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. That is why it's important to realize, uh, this is the first stepping stone into our grace and saved relationship with God through Christ. Not the finalizing of it.

Just the first stepping stone. The reason being, that as we've seen, we have been so blinded by our deceit of Satan into a self-affirming self, and with its deepest righteousness, with its deepest form, a self-righteous self, which is when we receive some external, uh, approaches to God, uh, by the requirements of the law, and the external forms of religion. And in our self-righteous self, we think if we outwardly are supposed to conform to these standards of the law, that religion, uh, of religion, therefore we're acceptable to God.

Um, which is a lie in itself, because we've already seen in the previous chapter, uh, that, um, we would say we are, uh, in this, uh, righteous relationship with God, but we are really unrighteous. When we come down to here, we are the sinners. And he mentioned the sins.

We are the liars. We are the adulterers. We are the haters.

We are the murderers, and so on. So our first, uh, first move in is when there comes an exposure to our sinful condition, in the form of the sins we've committed. Perhaps I shouldn't use the word sinful condition there, because we haven't got so far as to deeply see sin in its inner essence yet, which is our self-loving self.

Uh, but we've seen its products, which are the sins. And the law has pinpointed those products, and it comes to the point of a recognition, uh, and therefore recognises our guilt. We've also known, uh, those to whom the law has come, that, uh, that produces the consequence of the curse and death.

The Galatians speak of the curse of the law, those who, those who have committed sins. And James explains, explains, explains that even if you commit one sin, uh, you're guilty of broken law. Just as a person in the law of a country commits one sin, he's guilty of breaking the law of the country.

And therefore we have this destiny of being under curse, and, um, uh, exposed to us in other scriptures, uh, the, uh, uh, eternal hell, which is described in, in, uh, uh, by Peter, as, uh, being a condition of being spiritually in prison, which is very significant, because it's taken us deeper there than we know when we first commit sins. We get down to that. The real, the real prison of a person is his self.

But if, if freedom is God in a self-giving self, bondage is a self in a self-loving self. So, uh, a, uh, a self-getting, self-seeking, self-preserving, self-justifying self, that is in hell. That is in prison.

We are always in prison by self-loving self. That's how we can taste something of the, of the, uh, of the pains of hell in our life down here, uh, when they take the form of our self-reactions, in our resentments, in our hates, in our fears, and so on. We're touching the meaning of the spirit in prison, which is a condition of hell.

A condition given us in the, in the John's Revelation, the Book of Revelation, as being a lake of fire. Remembering that the physical is only a dim outline of the, of the, of the true condition. Like in Revelation, gold is transparent.

Well, our gold is a, is a, is a dull thing. Yet pure gold, the streets of the, of the, of the city of God are transparent gold. Pure gold.

We have a dull form of gold. So we only have a dull form of fire. Pure fire is something much worse.

We have to, it has to become a symbol to us of, of the body burning. But the true fire is the spirit in prison. And we know a little of that, thank God, down here.

That's why, uh, hell is broken. There's something which, which operates in us, in one statement. And that is in James, where it speaks about us having a, a, a fallen tongue.

A blasphemous, vile, cursing tongue. It says the tongue is set on fire of hell. Therefore, hell is the inner principle which is causing me to use my tongue in these, um, uh, self-hated, these, these, these, uh, uh, expressions of hate.

Revenge, or whatever it may be. However, the first form in which, uh, uh, the, the principle of sin, which is self-centered, self-centeredness, uh, is seen by us as in sins. We're too blind to see our self-centered condition, or the being who's causing us to be a self-centered person.

That's beyond our sight. But we do see the products. And that's why the law, the outer law came, because, because you have lied.

You have committed adultery. You, you do want to commit murder. You do steal.

You, you do, uh, um, uh, worship anything except God, and so on. Um, that's why now we have the first, um, presentation, um, of the, uh, uh, coming among us of, um, the Redeemer. He's first mentioned to us here.

Uh, Paul said his, his gospel was asserted by the, the, the, uh, uh, revelation to us of, of his Son. Um, evidence to be the Son of God by the, by the resurrection from the dead. And here we have the Christ Jesus coming in.

Who will be justified freely by his own grace through redemption, that is in Christ Jesus. We move on a little later, chapter two later, um, to a, uh, presentation of Christ Jesus, uh, as, um, the, the true Adam for us. We find that in Romans five.

It's a few parts on it later. Um, we don't go into that in detail now, because we'll pick it up again then. Um, but, uh, uh, we are therefore in Paul's statement here, uh, taken for granted.

Um, that, uh, we understand that, uh, Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Um, Paul doesn't speak in Romans of the virgin birth. He speaks of it in Galatians, where he says you've made a woman, a woman made under law in Galatians four.

He just moves us into the, uh, the, uh, the, uh, statement, uh, uh, applying his, uh, his, um, incarnation. Um, here he speaks for him only in his completed person as a savior. He doesn't take us through the backgrounds, uh, of his, uh, um, being the one person who never became, um, a vessel of Satan.

Um, who rejected the, uh, um, the, uh, uh, temptations of different kinds, uh, to yield to Satan's voice. Both in the mount of temptation and in the ways in which he said he was tempted in all points, uh, like as we are. Uh, temptation is enticement.

He rejected it as enticement. So he never became either a child of Satan or a vessel that contains Satan or a branch of the, of the satanic vine. He remains his father's, father's son.

Uh, the blood of Christ, however, means that, uh, uh, as we know of his history, uh, the appreciation to his blood, and that he voluntarily, uh, uh, offered himself for, to be a, first of all, a physical sacrifice. Um, as what, um, what, uh, John the Baptist had previously called the Lamb of God. And, uh, that there'll be a, a, a physical crucifixion and a physical shedding of the blood.

The necessity of that being that, uh, um, the wages of our sins is death. He must fulfill that same way of death. Uh, if he's to be the, the, uh, the, uh, one that took our place, um, and remove necessity of us going that same way.

Um, but the, uh, um, fullest, the full significance of death, which is important for us to grasp, um, is that it's not the physical. Uh, it had been said to Adam and Eve, as we read, in the day you eat of this you shall surely die. Well, it didn't die physically.

We're told in Ephesians 2, we're dead in trespasses and sins, we're not dead physically. Paul said in 1 Timothy, uh, 3 or 4, she or he that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. Well, it's not physical.

So we realize that what we really are is spirit. And the, uh, our soul clothing, which are our emotions, reason of the emotions, our body activities, is merely a clothing of our real self. So the real death is the death of the inner spirit.

But the inner spirit never dies. It's immortal. So it goes to a death condition, and remains in a death condition.

Therefore the seriousness of death is not our physical. It's the destiny of our spirit. And, uh, the Bible presents us as spirit.

Either it's, um, in our foreign tradition, joined to Satan, and therefore goes to the realm of Satan. Which is called in the Bible, rather spiritually, rather spiritually in prison. We recognize the real prison is our self-centeredness.

Uh, or, if there's been a way of redemption, uh, we move among those who are called in Hebrews 12, uh, after physical death, um, we are among the spirit of just men made perfect. In, um, Hebrews 12, verse 23. Spirit of just men means that my real self, having become a justified self, perfected in Christ, is among the company of the justified and perfected in Christ.

In Mount Zion. Therefore that means, that, uh, if, if the Lord Jesus Christ, the God's Son, who later on we find is called the last Adam to represent the human race, which is later on in 5, um, if he is to remove from me, uh, the effects of my sins, my sins, judgment, curse, judgment, guilt, death, he must go that way of death. And that way of death is only incidentally the body.

So he went the way of the body, which is mainly probably because that's the outer evidence he really died. That's what we think of as the shedding of the blood. And that's why we see, it's important in the, in the history given of Calvary, that when they saw that he was really dead, they didn't break his legs to kill him, as they did the two thieves.

They pierced him, because he was already dead. And then we came out blood and water. Which is the evidence that it was really a dead body.

But then the importance to us, uh, and the totality of this blood redemption, is that that's not real death. Death is the death of the spirit. Uh, and that's why it's important to know that the Bible says in, first of all by prophecy in the Psalms, and then by quotation in the first speech of the Pentecost, that he went to hell.

The place of the spiritual prison. In Acts 2, Paul, in his speech before the people of Jerusalem, he says, quoting what David said about the Lord, about Jesus. Because I would not leave my soul in hell, neither would thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

Uh, and it says in another case, it was impossible to hold him. Death couldn't hold him. But it does say, in this first Peter statement, which I briefly referred to, that he went and preached the spirit in prison.

Being put to death in the flesh, the quickened by the spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirit in prison. So we know he was there. Therefore the perfection of all this to us means, he went all the way, uh, where destined to go, by the outer fact, not the external and inner condition, but our outer condition, the inner condition which you see later on, caused us to commit these sins, and therefore break the law of the earth, the curse, and go into the death which is the product of that curse.

Death, not being physical death, but spirit death. He went all that way, and then the resurrection, is the evidence that, uh, all that has been completed, to go as for the sins of the world. This Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world, John the Baptist says, or our sins, Peter says, no, our sins, not our sins, take away the sins of the world, or our sins, his own body on the tree, as Peter remarked.

That, uh, going therefore, uh, as, uh, uh, the human race in its multitude of sins, to its necessary destiny, as a human race, it couldn't hold it. Because, not because, just because he's God's son, but because Satan never forgave him. And because he was God's son, and Satan had no hold on him, it's impossible for that to hold him.

He was raised from the dead, it says, by the glory of the Father. Uh, that statement is made in, um, uh, Romans 6, 4. Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. He couldn't raise himself because he was, as a man, as a, he represented not sin, not man can't raise himself.

So, it says, he was quickened by the Spirit, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. And that means, therefore, as representing us, all that could come to us, as a consequence of Satan's book, it disappeared. We may say, shut the gates of hell to us.

And to all humanity, to all mankind. Uh, thus it says, in first, in, in, uh, 2nd Corinthians 5, um, uh, uh, to which, God, 519, to which God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. So, the whole world is reconciled.

Not imputing a person to him. That's made up of that word of reconciliation. Therefore, God said the whole world is reconciled.

He imputes, uh, doesn't, uh, impute the sins of anybody to him. So, it's a total redeeming act. By the, uh, the one, we would say, if he called the Father, who only could be, because he was Creator.

Because the Creator originated in the human race, therefore he could represent the human race, where one man couldn't represent another. Uh, the consequence being, therefore, that that, that, um, that resurrection, the, the, uh, the blood, uh, that meant he went away, we go, to an eternal destiny, death of body, leading into eternal destiny of spirit in prison. Um, the resurrection, uh, gave us our justification as if

we'd never sinned.

So, in Romans 4, now 25, at the end of this bit, he goes on to say now, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. Justification being a far greater word than forgiveness. We will forgive and not forget.

Justification isn't there. Justification means the thing is not there. It's disappeared.

All that had to be done is not there. I don't see it again. There's nothing in the record.

The record's clean. Therefore, in Jesus Christ, there was Jesus Christ, awakened here as if we'd never sinned. We are righteous as he is.

That, at this point, isn't talking about the inner righteousness. It's a question of what's called an intuitive righteousness. That as we are seeing in God's sight as if we'd never sinned.

It doesn't get further to the fact that how we cease to be people expressing sinfulness. That goes a little later now. It's basically our outer position and condition.

In other words, he's not intuiting righteousness as such. That was said of David and said of Abraham and Neotus because the one who went the way we went, went there, went all the way into hell, was delivered, and hell closed before him, and the resurrection meant you're accepted, the thing's finished, it's as if it isn't there. So, he's raising it by justification.

So, this is the presentation by, in this somewhat shortened form, a very different form by Paul. That we've come under guilt, and the guilt is confirmed by the law. All the world's guilty, but they don't know they're guilty.

Until the law comes to them, then they know they're guilty. That's why Jesus came under the law as a law person, and then went as a law person, as if he was us, into death and hell, as well as again, by justification. That completes, in Romans 3, the presentation of the totality of our, the first four of our total salvation.

The outer form, which are sins, guilt, love, judgment, hell, destiny, are wiped out, in this one, as the Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world. Paul then moves on to the centrality of this world's faith. And, of course, there again, now, we come across a great thing to be said.

He says in the end of this third chapter, he's talking about the one whom God has set forth to be appropriation, the faith in his blood, that where it's boasting, it's extruded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. That's in Romans 3, 27.

The law of faith, therefore, is a principle that takes a great deal of gain from examination, which is not given us in detail by Paul, except that he exemplifies to us in chapter 4 what faith is against our self-effort, against our duty of our own initiative, relying upon our own deeds, the ways that it works. And he illustrates that to us by the final great act of Abram's faith, when it's said towards the end of this fourth chapter of Romans, that we can understand faith by Abraham, and also we can understand it doesn't depend on law, because Moses came long after Abraham, 400 years after. Because we are saying, law wasn't God's grace.

Law came to expose us, not to reveal Christ. That's where we get wrong. Law didn't come to expose God, that's why God didn't give it.

It came by an angel. That's what my character is, because we've got to find his character before we find him. We're not prepared to find him until we find his character.

We've got to find his character, the character of what we know, of course, love fulfills all law, but we couldn't use those terms then. We had to specify righteousness by certainty, we don't see, we don't lie, we don't commit adultery, we don't murder, we worship only one God, and so on. Because in our childish condition, that's all we could see.

We had to be cordial, but you have lied, you have committed adultery, you have hated, you have outcouraged, you have worshipped other gods, you've got to nail this down. By the law is the knowledge of sin. But the real God, of course, God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the God of grace.

And grace means free gift to the undeserving. Free gift to the undeserving. Incidentally, he is saying there, chapter four of Romans, which is a chapter which is differentiating between works and faith, that this is the final danger as well as the final privilege of religion and high standards, and so on, is that we take them upon ourselves to justify ourselves.

We think we can justify ourselves because we're attached to certain church laws, certain commandments, and so on. There can still be a cause of danger right among us Christians, as it was among the Jews, and take on certain forms if the forms meant something. But he exemplifies faith as coming, in this instance, to Abraham physically at a time that was beyond physical possibility.

Well, this is the occasion given at the end of Romans four. The fate of Abraham, where it is God that said, God said that, quickened the dead and caused them to be not as though they were. He said that to Abraham where it is impossible to have a child, where it says that his body was now dead, when he was 100 years old, and Sarah, the deadness of her womb at 90 years age, where it is impossible for physical fulfillment, in this word, that now I have come to you and you will have a son.

So this is given as a standard example of faith. You may say it is an extreme form, and therefore it is a fairly simple form. And that way it says, when this word came to Abraham from God, it says, against hope, he believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations.

And it gives there the process of faith, that he wasn't wishing in faith by considering his own condition, that is the first step, he didn't consider his own condition, and that is hopeless. It says, he didn't consider, that is verse 98 chapter 4, he didn't consider his own body, which means hopeless, or the deadness of Sarah's womb, hopeless. So faith, first step, I am not going to be influenced by my sight or my reason, my utter reaction, which says that is hopeless, it is impossible.

It then says, as faith moves on, it will stretch in, and will take an impossible promise, and not stagger at it. That is the next moving, the spirit, in a sense you are moving back from soul to spirit. But soul, emotions, means it is impossible.

Body, impossible, impossible. Spirit, which is in tune with God, this is talking about Abraham, Abraham's faith in tune with God, his spirit can take a promise of God which is ridiculous, and not stagger at it because God said so. Because he had the promise of God, so it didn't stagger.

So it didn't stagger the promise of God. Then it says, faith had its consummation, and was strong in faith when he gave glory. He said, OK, it's going to be.

So faith had these phases. It rejected being controlled by the utter appearance which is ridiculous. It moved to say, well, God does the impossible.

And in this condition, in this situation where the impossible prevails with me, I'm going to take it. Therefore I take it. I speak a word of faith.

We can further go on in a moment about the word of faith. Strong in faith, giving glory to God. Being fully persuaded that what he had promised to him he was able also to perform because when there's that word of faith there comes the inner witness.

He has to witness himself. And there comes, he'll do it, he'll do it. So the link to the word of faith and giving glory to God was the inner assurance and the counterparts.

Therefore it was a purity of a righteousness. In other words, what that meant was that he totally conformed himself to the promise of God. He totally delivered any idea of self-answer was destroyed.

How could he lie on a body in that condition? So he couldn't rely on himself. He thought to himself, no, he could lie on himself. I took the promise of God against his body condition, against Tara's body condition.

And that was a purity of a righteousness because he was confirming the righteousness of God. God said a thing, that's it. God is right.

Righteousness means right. That's God's right. And Paul then says this is written as a standard example to us.

The historical example, we say, what this faith is of which this chapter is concerned. And therefore it comes back here, and therefore it means that we know that this first stage of redemption comes about when we consider or not our sins, like Abraham considered his body. Our sins? Well, our sins are sins.

That means we first of all admitted our sins. We moved in now, the repentance, we changed our minds a bit of our sins. We're guilty before God.

Well, we're done for then. All this guilt upon us. There's wrath and judgment.

We do not consider that. But we're there, we staggered off the promise of God. We move over to the presented fact of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

And the resurrection which confirms in that shed blood resurrection all that should come to us through our sinful condition, this is out. So we staggered off the promise of God. And then, before your faith, we praise God.

And faith, therefore, always is a moving in against appearances, against our condition. And, of course, there's a greater profounding in that condition because that means we've come free from this false self-righteousness. The Lord has to operate on us first.

He has answers. Oh, I'm all right. I fulfill the laws.

I've got to say it. I've got to square up. I've come to light with my sins.

So I've moved out from the false content of self-righteousness. That's what the law is meant for. Into a recognition of our sinful condition.

And then we refuse to be recognized by our sinful condition. We are transferred by our believing of our sinful condition into what God said about His Son, Jesus Christ, which was there to us in this Gospel. And the meaning of the blood and the resurrection.

And I move in and I affirm this myself. Now God imputes that to me for righteousness. And, therefore, in God's sight, I am there as if I was Jesus Christ and I'd never sinned.

Now we know that to be the first stage of this redemption. And the fourth chapter gives this custody, the difference between this work, false work, which is the subtlest and highest form of self-loving self. I'm all right, anyhow.

Especially if I've got religion. I can say I have some religious force. Well, we know how millions of us go through that.

And that has to be destroyed in us by the operation of the law. And I can't be honest about the law. That's why there had to be a law to bring God to light and sin.

And then sin and knowledge moves into repentance, faith, righteousness, justification. We then move in to the finalizing of that, which we commonly speak of as a new birth, a new creation in Christ, although that term is not used in Romans. When Paul describes the effects of this faith relationship, this is where we learn which is also not in Romans, that faith produces substance.

Faith is substance. It becomes something substantial to us. And that's why we always go into it anyway.

We say by faith, I come to this home this evening, this day. Now, faith becomes substance and we are in the home. Faith moves us into something which is available and desirable.

But faith is a free movement we take into the thing and then it comes to pass. And now we don't say, I'll be in this room this evening. I am in this room.

Faith has become substance. So now Paul is saying the real substance is your spirit person in the beginning, that inner self. God's that inner self, the spirit.

We are spirits. That knew him. That inner self.

That inner circumcision and so on. This is the end of side one. Please stop your machine and turn the tape over.

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