

# He Drank Your Hell

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes the necessity of understanding the gospel and the depth of human sinfulness in light of God's holiness.*

**Duration:** 1:14:09

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:5, Psalm 22:1, Psalm 22:4, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23

**Topics:** "Hell"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding and preaching the Gospel. He highlights Romans chapter 3 as one of the greatest passages on the Gospel ever written. The preacher explains that all people have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, but through the redemption in Christ Jesus, they can be justified by God's grace. He emphasizes the need for a miracle in the hearts of individuals to come to God, which can only happen through the preaching of the Gospel. The central question of the Gospel is how God can be just and justify wicked individuals, and the preacher explains that Jesus Christ's death is the answer to this question.

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## Transcript

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All that is a work of the flesh. Maybe the best thing that could happen here tonight would be for God to walk away. To leave me here as what I am.

A nose full of breath. Weak. Graceless.

Powerless. What is man that God would even take thought of him? Or the son of man that God would be concerned for him? There are no great men of God. Only pathetic, little, disappointing men of a great and a merciful God.

In my prayers this evening, I kept thinking of the words of Robert Murray McShane. Who said, Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be. That the desire for God to work in this place would be a holy

desire.

That it would be fixed upon Christ alone. Oh, that God would raise up a child to stand up and begin to preach. That a revival would break out through a little boy.

So that no man could stretch forth his hand and touch the ark of God. And claim that he had something to do with it. Oh, that God would use the most ignoble.

The most unknown among us to do something great for his name. That way we would be at least a little bit more comfortable in realizing. That the whole thing may not be sideswiped by men and their desire for glory.

My question to you tonight is, have you ever understood the gospel? You might be saying, well, what do you mean? Most of us in here are Christians. But have you ever understood the gospel? Well, I share the gospel. Many share the gospel, but they do not understand the gospel.

Have you ever understood the gospel? Today there is much done in the church. The music is to be perfect. The administration and ordering of the service is to be spectacular and quick.

So as to not to leave one dull moment. So many things have to be done to attract a crowd and to keep that crowd they've attracted. Why is that? Is it because the gospel no longer has power? Or is it because we deceive ourselves in thinking that we are preaching the gospel? Paul said that the gospel was the power of God for salvation.

Everyone who believes that is true. And power is demanded. Because men are dead in their trespasses and sins.

Men are born haters of God. Before they will come to Him, a magnificent miracle must be wrought in their heart. And it's only through the gospel and the preaching of the gospel that such a miracle occurs.

Have you ever truly understood the gospel? Tonight I want to go to a passage that I preach very often. Every time I get one chance at a crowd. Apart from some special impression, strong impression from the Lord.

I'm going to go straight to this text. Why? Because everything depends upon the gospel. And most people think that they understand it.

Many people think that they have comprehended it. That they put their arms around it. It's only because they do not understand the gospel.

As I always say, my dear friend. The day that Jesus Christ comes back. You will understand everything you need to know about eschatology in the last days.

But you will be an eternity in heaven. And you will not even have begun to comprehend the glories of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is not Christianity 101.

It is not the beginning infant baby step of Christianity. Which you soon master and then go on to something else. The gospel is everything.

It's the first truth. It's the last one. It's the truth on which you must cut your teeth.

It's the truth that you will be chewing on. Even throughout eternity. The gospel.

Now, let's go to one of the greatest passages on the gospel ever written. Romans chapter three. Romans 3:23.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Then he goes on. Being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness because in the forbearance of God. He passed over the sins previously committed for the demonstration.

I say of his righteousness at the present time. So that he would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting it is excluded by what kind of law of works? No, but by a law of faith.

For all have sinned. Does that make you afraid? It should. But it doesn't for primarily two reasons.

The first being this few people today have a proper knowledge of God. They do not know who God is nor whom they should fear. Secondly, they do not have a proper knowledge of self.

Of how sinful we are in nature. And how sinful our deeds truly are before a holy God. For all have sinned.

One of the greatest reasons why we see so little power in enduring supposed gospel preaching. Is because rarely are the attributes of God set before the sinner. We walk up to people and say, do you know you're a sinner? And sometimes with a chuckle in our voice.

So that they not be too isolated or feel too bad about themselves. Do you know you're a sinner? And they say, well, yes, I am. They don't know how terrifying their confession is.

Because they do not know God. And men do not know God. Because very few preachers are proclaiming God.

At least God in his fullness. A God who is holy. A God who is perfectly righteous.

It is only when men have something of a comprehension of who God is. That they can tell something about who they are. And how horrific the declaration is.

That all have sinned. What does it mean to sin? Principally the idea is that you deviate from the law or the will of God. You break God's commandments.

Either you do not do what he tells you to do. Or you do what he prohibits you. Either way, it is a trespass against God.

And it is an offense against his glory. Against his holiness. Against his righteousness.

Against his person. All have sinned. And let me put this in perspective for you.

God created the world with a word. He said, let there be light. And the light obeyed him.

He told the sun and the stars to put themselves in certain places in the sky. And they all bowed in reverence. He told the planets to follow the path that he had marked out for them.

And they all submitted to his will. He told the mountains to be lifted up and they obeyed. He told the valleys to be cast down and they bowed in reverence.

He told the great seas of the earth. You'll come to this point and no farther. And they worshiped him.

And then he told you come and you said, no, no. I will not. And thus all of creation comes together in agreement and applauds your condemnation.

Worships God when he comes to the earth to judge you. The smallest creatures obey his will. He tells the geese to fly south.

They obey. He sends rain to the parched ground and it turns to mud. He sends the sun and it responds appropriately and dries up.

But you will not all have sin. Now, I want to look at this deeply. And for those of you who are preachers, I want you to understand the street preachers and those who are witnessing on the street with love, great compassion and patience.

You must press these truths upon the souls of men. None of this superficial evangelism today. None of it.

It has no power in it whatsoever. You must deal with the hearts of men. And you must use the scriptures to do so.

I want us to just hold our place. And I want you to run over to Genesis chapter six, verse five. This text teaches us clearly about the corruption of men, you say, but Brother Paul, this was prior to the flood.

Yes. And after the flood, the corruption continued. The flood only judged wicked men.

It had no power to change them. So those who went into the ark corrupt, came out of the ark, corrupt and continued that corruption of Adam even till today. It says this.

In verse five. Then the Lord saw the wickedness of man, that it was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. What is it teaching us? It's teaching us more than the fact that we have sinned with our thoughts.

It is teaching us something about our nature. Those thoughts must come from some place. You cannot blame it on society.

You can't blame it on culture. You can't blame it on someone who supposedly did you wrong. Your thoughts reveal the character of your nature.

Now, let's look at those thoughts for a moment. If I were to take out your heart or if I were to take every thought you've ever had. From the moment you first remember thinking.

Until this very night, this very moment, if I took every thought you've ever had and I was able to put it on a DVD. And then I was able to show every thought. And every deed that you have ever accomplished on this earth.

I submit to you that you would rise up and you would run out of this building and you would never come back here again. You would never show your face to any of us. You have thought things so vile, so wicked, that you cannot even begin to share them with your closest friend.

You have thought things against your closest friend that if they knew them they would no longer be your friend. And look at this. If your thoughts were laid bare here tonight, every one of them, you would run out of here in shame.

And yet you know that those who are looking on all your evil thoughts have the same evil thoughts. Even among the wicked, you cannot bear that they know who you are. Now, how will you stand before a holy God? How will you stand before a holy heaven that has no darkness, has no variation, has no nature subject to change? How will you stand on that great day? Do you think that your case before Him will be dismissed? If you are judged based upon your thoughts, if you are judged based upon your deeds, you yourself will have to raise your hand on the day of judgment and swear that the God of all the earth has judged you correctly when He condemns your soul to eternal punishment.

Let's go on. Look in Genesis 8, verse 21. The Lord smelled the soothing aroma, and the Lord said to Himself, I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.

It's not merely going back to some supposed adolescent stage. The idea here that is set forth and what is confirmed throughout Scripture is this, that men, the evil they do, is caused by something greater than outside influences. Men do evil because men are evil.

Let me give you an example. I have a two-year-old daughter whom I love, for whom I would give my life. Let's say that I'm holding her in my arms, and she sees my shiny watch, and she reaches for it, and I take her hand and say no.

She gets angry. She reaches again for the watch. I say no.

She begins to frail her hands in the air and swing them in the direction of my face. I grab her. I say no.

I submit to you, theologically, that if at that moment my two-year-old daughter had the strength of an 18-year-old man, she would slaughter me where I stood. She would rip the watch off my arm. She would walk over my bloody body, leaving bloody footprints on the floor, and walk out the door and rejoice in her watch without one feeling of remorse in her heart.

You say, I don't believe it. There's your problem. There's your problem.

You say, but men don't act that way. We'll understand in a moment. The reason why some men don't act that way is not because of the goodness of their own heart, but a good God who restrains evil men so that society might continue and the gospel might be preached for the salvation of some.

Let me ask you a question. What makes you different from Hitler? Have you ever wondered why was Hitler as bad as he was? Have you ever wondered this? Why wasn't he worse? Have you ever wondered this? Why are you not his equal in evil? I submit to you this, that all men are evil. And the only thing that keeps all of humanity running headlong into the crimes of Hitler is that they simply do not have the opportunity or power.

And it is because also they are restrained by the grace of God. If it were not for the grace of God restraining society as a whole, we would run after Hitler, we would pass Hitler, and we would make Hitler look like a choir boy. One of the greatest problems with the gospel today is that men are not being told what men are.

The Bible teaches that we are radically depraved. What does that mean? It means that our fallenness, evil, permeates every aspect of our being. And apart from the grace of God, we are worse than brute beasts.

We do far more damage to our own kind than beasts do to theirs. Have I said anything that is not backed up by the newspapers and the media and history? The cruelty of men against men. One of my favorite preachers in the whole world is Conrad Mbewe from Zambia.

And this is what he said in the last sermon I heard him preach. In Africa, we do not fear lions, nor do we fear elephants or crocodiles or leopards. In Africa, we fear other Africans.

We fear other men. And what is said by him can be said of us all. We walk out here tonight, we're not going to be afraid of some bear attacking us on the street, but all of us are guarded when we walk through a dark alley.

For no reason at all, men will steal from us. They will kill us. They will hurt us just for their own pleasure.

They're not an anomaly. They're not some strange phenomenon. As one scholar said, peacetime is an illusion.

When the world is at peace, it's just that everyone is reloading. And that is true. It is true.

Now, let's go on. Go to Isaiah 64. For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.

And all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind take us away. Years ago, far out on the Amazon, we began to work with a group of lepers. Built a church there among them in a place called San Pablo.

Have you ever seen leprosy? It is an astounding thing. It is frightful. They tell me that there's different kinds of leprosy, and I by no means know the worst.

But if I had a leper here tonight, you would have smelled him before you entered into the building. He would be a mass of blood, rotten flesh, and pus oozing from his body. That's the illustration God gives with regard to the unregenerate, unconverted man.

There is nothing in that man that could be pleasing to a holy God. Now, you can attempt all sorts of things to try to clean him up. Let's say that we went out here to San Antonio or Dallas or Austin, and we found an exquisite shop, clothing, and we bought the finest white silk, and we wrapped the man in the silk in order to make him presentable.

But what's going to happen? It won't take long before the corruption of the man himself bleeds over into the silk, and the silk becomes just as defiled as the man. That's why good works cannot save you. Because you have no good works.

You have none. It is the nature. And out of a corrupt nature comes forth all your deeds.

And that is why our best deeds, our most righteous works, are like filthy rags before God Almighty. Now let's go on to Romans. Back to Romans 3, verse 9. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all.

For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin. Sin is a universal reality. I remember reading once of the Nazi war crimes.

Many, many Nazis were caught and were put on trial. And a Jewish man who had suffered greatly at the hands of the Nazis was sitting there across the bench, across the table, from a man who had done him great harm. And the Jewish man began to weep.

And someone asked him why. And he said it was because he saw so little difference between the man who had done such atrocities to him and his own heart. You see, sin is a universal reality in all stages of life.

Look at even the infant. Look at the children. There's this poetic idea that if only children ruled the world, if children ruled the world, it would be hell on earth.

It would be. Think about the violence in children. Think about the pecking order in children.

Who taught the child to lie? No one. They learned it on their own. Who taught the child to be selfish and to scream and to demand and to throw toys at other children? No one.

They learned it on their own. We have all this proof around us that the Scriptures are true when it speaks about man. But man cannot hear the Gospel because he will not hear the verdict against him.

For all have sinned. Whether they be the Jew who received the testimonies and the law and the promises or the Greek and all his intellect and all his scholarship, it doesn't matter. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Now he goes on here and he says in verse 10, as it is written. Now notice he is drawing from Scripture, from Scripture, from Scripture. Paul has the authority as an apostle to speak.

But he is making the word doubly sure. Using the Old Testament to prove that his doctrine is true. He says, as it is written, there is none righteous.

I think it's interesting that that statement is followed up with no, not one. Because if you make the broad statement there's none righteous. Someone in the crowd says, yes, I know, but... No.

None righteous. Now understand this. To dwell in heaven with a righteous God, you must be more than forgiven.

You must be more than neutral. You must be righteous. And you are not.

In your own standing, by your own virtue and merit, you are not righteous. He says there is none righteous. No, not one.

There is none who understands. None who seeks for God. I have traveled around this world many times and seen many different types of religious societies.

And I find that they all have something in common. And even in the different religions, we have a similar complaint. And what is it? That men only seek God when they have some need.

You go into an evangelical church and someone will say, well, they're seeking God at this moment. Why? Well, they've been diagnosed with a terrible disease or they've lost their job or this or that. They're seeking

God.

What's amazing, you go to a Catholic country, you see a lot of people praying and you'll hear a Catholic say, yeah, they're seeking God now. I know the guy, but it's just because he lost his job. Go to the Buddhist.

It's the same thing. Seeking God, not with sincerity, but out of need. Men are self absorbed, full of self love, and they do not seek God.

Unless God has first sought them out and done a great work, there is no one who seeks God. He goes on and he says this, verse 12, All have turned aside, together they have become useless, if this is not a word for the evangelical church in the West. How many people claim to be children of God? They claim to be regenerate.

They claim to be converted. And yet, when you look at their service to God and God's people in the church, you can only designate them as useless. They claim salvation for themselves, but they are not useful servants of God.

They do not think on the will of God. They do not obey the will of God. They do not mourn when they break the will of God.

They're not about giving their life totally to the things of God. They're only about getting their best life now. Useless servants.

Prove themselves to be unconverted men. He goes on and he says this, There is none who does good. There is not even one good.

There's a wholesome sound to that word. Good. But how can anything good come out of a heart that is dislocated and twisted itself away from God, the fountain of all virtue? Good.

Good. Show me your goodness. Stand before God with your boast.

No man can. There is none good. Isn't it amazing? We can go all throughout this city, all throughout this country.

We can go all throughout this world. And if you ask men with regard to some eternal hope, the great majority of them will point back to their own goodness. Even some of them who claim to know Christ.

Do you know Jesus? Yes, I'm a Christian. If you died right now, where would you go? I would go to heaven. Why? Well, I try to keep the Ten Commandments.

I try to do good. I take care of my sick mother. But the Bible says, no.

There are none good. There's not even one. Now let's go down to verse 19.

It says, now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God. What is the purpose of the law? Is it to save? No. But that does not make the law unholy or unrighteous or unworthy.

The problem is this. The law is holy. It is good.

But men are not. Men cannot. Will not.

Obeys the law. Because obedience to the law requires perfect obedience to the law. In every law and in every degree.

But we have not obeyed the law. Rather, we are law breakers. Covenant breakers.

Faithless children who do not follow their or all have sinned. Look in verse 23. And fall short of the glory of God.

What does that mean? Well, the most popular teaching on this is that God has a glorious purpose for your life and because of sin, you have missed your glorious purpose. There may be something of that in the text, but the primary idea is this. You were made for the glory of God.

You were made for Him. For Him. Only for Him.

You were not made for you. You were not even made for your spouse. You were not made for a job.

And you were not made for some purpose distinct from Him. You were made for Him. For Him.

It is one thing to turn away from the law of your God. It is quite another thing to turn away from your God completely. Follow this rule.

I will not. Live for me. For me, I would rather have another.

If you speak of an offense, that is a great offense. When God addresses a man and says, you were made for me, and the man says, I'll not have any of it. I will take sovereignty over my own life.

I will claim lordship of my beating heart. I will do for me. That's why men are so miserable in this secular, materialistic age.

They live for them, thinking that what they need is material, economical, physical, when the fact is, dear friend, you were made for Him. At times when I have a bit of time, I make longbows out of wood, and they can shoot an arrow very straight, very strong. You can take the largest animal in North America with one of my bows.

They're made for shooting arrows. You cannot play a song on them. Try to play a song on one of my bows.

You'll look absolutely ridiculous. You'll end frustrated, in the same way you cannot shoot an arrow with a guitar. Things are made for a reason.

You were made. The only reason you are given breath is so that your breath might return to Him in praise. The only reason why your heart beats is so that it might beat quicker at greater and greater knowledge and experience of Him.

The only reason your mind was given an intellect to think great thoughts about Him, your ears to hear Him, your eyes to see Him, your mouth, your tongue to praise Him. But we would not. We would not.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's the verdict. About all men.

About everyone here who does not know Jesus Christ. All have sinned and fall short of the glory. Now let's go on.

Being justified as a gift. Being justified as a gift. What does it mean to be justified? It does not mean that the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, God does some supernatural work in your nature and infuses you with such grace that you become a totally, completely righteous being who from then on completely and perfectly obeys the law of God.

That's not what it means. What does it mean to be justified? It means the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, you are forensically or legally declared right with God. Do you understand that? It is a legal declaration from the throne of God that you are right with Him.

Now let's go on. This is very important. Being justified as a gift by His grace.

How can a man be right with God? That is the question of the ages. It is the question of most religions. It is a question of almost every beating heart.

How can man be right with God? That's the question. Now I want you to understand if you do a study of comparative religions, there's really only two types of religions. Seriously.

Religion of works and human merit and a religion of grace, unmerited favor. There is only Christianity and all the other religions of the world. And what sets a Christian apart from everyone else? This.

You interview the Orthodox Jewish man. Sir, if you died right now, where would you go? I would go to the way of the righteous. I would go to paradise.

I would go to heaven. Why? Because I love the law of God. I seek to obey the law of God.

I seek to keep the law of God. I am a righteous man. You interview the Muslim.

Sir, if you died right now, where would you go? I would go to paradise. Why? I love the Koran. I obey the Koran.

I have made the pilgrimages. I give the alms. I say the prayers.

I am a righteous man. Then you come to the Christian. Sir, if you died right now, where would you go? To heaven.

Why? And he begins to tell you something you don't understand. He says, I was born in sin. In sin did my mother conceive me.

I have broken every law of my God. And I deserve nothing before Him but His wrath, His justice. And you stop him and you say, Sir, I don't understand.

The other two men I understand. They are righteous men by their own deeds and thus they have earned heaven for themselves. But you are contradictory.

How are you going to get to heaven if you claim no virtue or merit for yourself? And the Christian smiles and says, I will go to heaven based upon the virtue and the merit of another Jesus Christ my Lord. Now that's the doctrine of justification. But let me say this.

Those who have been justified have also been regenerated. And those who have been regenerated have been given new hearts. And with those new hearts they will live a different life.

As a matter of fact, the evidence of justification that you have been declared right with God is that is that your heart has been so changed by the power of the Holy Spirit that you begin to live in a newness of life. Now we go on. He says being justified as a gift by His grace.

Being justified as a gift by His grace, that's redundant. It's the same thing in a sense. Being justified as a gift.

As a gift. Why say it twice? Because men hate grace. That's why.

Why would anyone hate grace? Pride? The desire of men to exalt themselves, even to exalt themselves over God so that they make God their debtor. I am so righteous. My deeds are so worthy.

God owes me heaven. But grace comes to the man who recognizes he has no deeds, he has no merit, he has no virtue, and he falls upon the unmerited favor of God. Now I want you to look at something here.

It's very important. Being justified as a gift. The New Testament, the Gospels quote a very important passage in the Old Testament.

Speaking of Jesus Christ, it says they hated Him without a cause. They hated Him without a cause. Did anyone ever have cause to hate Jesus? Did Jesus ever sin against someone so that they were armed to argue that they could hate Him with a cause? No, never.

That's the same word used here. You were justified without a cause. What does that mean? The sinner gives God no reason to save him.

When a holy God, a righteous God, comes into contact with sinful man, the only motivation that sinful man can give a righteous God is to condemn him. God did not save you because of you. He saved you because of Him.

When He explained to Israel the reason for His love for Israel, He said, Israel, I have loved you because I loved you. It had nothing to do with you and everything to do with Him. It's an act of grace.

Now let's go on. By His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Through the redemption.

I believe it was Vance Havner who said, or Tozer, one of the two, who said that Christians have become so brutish, so to speak, that we are prone to playing marbles with the diamonds of God. We don't know how to appreciate. We handle roughly and rudely the most precious things that God tells us and gives us.

I believe that the word redemption is one of those things that we handle rudely. I've been redeemed, they say, and everyone laughs. Every time you use that word, your lips should tremble.

What does it mean, redemption, to be redeemed? It means to be set free from prison, from slavery, from captivity, because a price has been paid. So if you have been redeemed, it is because a price has been paid. Now, if it was just a small price, if it was just some earthly trinket that was given so that you might be set free, that would be quite another thing.

But you have been redeemed by the blood of God's own Son. You need motivation for the Christian life. You need motivation to walk in godliness.

You need motivation to say no to the world. I'll give it to you. Christ shed his own blood for your soul.

What more do you need? Meditate upon that. Think deeply on that. Christ shed his own blood for you.

That's the motivation of the Christian life. To do it for any other reason is idolatry. It's because He died for you.

And in dying for you, He doubly owns you. You say, Pastor, what do you mean? I mean this. God has a claim upon you by right of creation.

He made you. He owns what He makes. But God has a double ownership upon you in that not only did He make you, He redeemed you.

He bought you. And He bought you with His own Son. The blood of His Son.

Oh, to grasp that. For that to become a reality in our lives. It will be the only power, the only fuel we need to propel us to godliness and to true Christian service.

Knowing the great price that was paid for us. Now let's go on. He says this.

The redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Exclusively in Christ Jesus. Exclusively.

Not in anyone or anything else. One time a young man. He said this.

He came up to me so full of zeal. And he said, you're right, Brother Paul. Jesus is all we need.

I said, young man, Jesus is all we have. He is all we have. Outside of Him, there is nothing.

We come before God in the name of Jesus because apart from Jesus, we have no part with God. He's everything. Our entire life is found within the sphere of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Outside of Him, there is nothing. Nothing. Why do you hold so dearly to the Christian life? Because outside of it, there is nothing.

Why do you hold so dearly to this Christ, this Messiah? Outside of Him, there is nothing. And we go on. Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation.

I would agree with many theologians who say that propitiation is the most important word in the entire Bible. Do you understand it? I'm a preacher of the Gospel. Do you understand propitiation? Propitiation is a sacrifice that is given to satisfy justice and to appease wrath that a just God might pardon wicked men and still be just.

Now we get to the center of the cross. I want you to look at something. Verse 23.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 24. Speaking of Christians who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, it says being justified.

That presents one of the greatest problems in the entire Bible. Did you know that? This presents possibly the greatest theological, philosophical problem in the entire Bible. And if you don't understand this, you're

not understanding the Gospel.

Here's the problem. If God is just, He cannot forgive you. If God is just, He cannot forgive you.

Go with me for just a moment to Proverbs 17. Proverbs 17.15 says this. He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike, are an abomination to the Lord.

Now, let's put those two phrases together. He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. An abomination, there's just, there's no word that goes further in describing the vileness of something than the word abomination.

The Scriptures say, whoever justifies the wicked is an abomination before the Lord. And yet in Romans 3, we understand that's what God did. He justified the wicked.

The greatest question in all the Scripture is this, how can God be just and at the same time justify wicked men, especially when the Scriptures, which cannot be broken, say he who justifies the wicked is an abomination. Do you want to know what the whole Bible's about? Sacrificial system? Everything? One question. How can God be just and the justifier of wicked men? Many of you have never heard that, and yet that's the center of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you an illustration. Let's say that one of you go home tonight and you find your family slaughtered on the floor. And you see the murderer standing over your family with blood on his hands.

And you run to the man, you grab him, you knock him down and you tie him up and you call the police. And the police take this man to prison. In time, the man is brought for trial.

He stands before a judge here in this town and the judge looks down on the man who has slaughtered your entire family and says this, I am a very loving judge. I pardon you. You're free.

What would you do? You would write the newspapers, you would call the media, you would be on television, you would write the Congress, you'd write the President, you'd do everything to make it known that there's a judge on the bench that's far more wicked than the criminals he pardons. Judges must do justice. If God is just and you are wicked, then how can He pardon you without becoming an unjust judge? Without becoming an abomination? That is the question of the Gospel.

And that is the reason for which Jesus Christ died. Now I want us to look here. Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation.

Martin Lloyd-Jones said in this text that God placarded His Son. Do you know as you drive around town or you go down a country highway and you see all these billboards, these placarded, all these advertisements, they're put in a place, not hidden, but they're put in a place where they can be seen by everyone. God placarded His Son on that tree.

Why? To demonstrate something. To demonstrate something. Let's look at our text.

God displayed or placarded Him publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. Why? This was to demonstrate His righteousness. God's righteousness.

Because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time. What is going on? All throughout the ages since the first

man and first woman, God has been merciful to men. He has pardoned men in their sin.

He took to Himself a Noah and spared the life of Noah. Do you not realize Noah should have died with the rest of them? Was not Noah a sinner? Was not Noah guilty? Yes. Do you think, honestly, he was spared from the flood because of his good deeds or righteousness? Noah should have died.

Noah's family should have died. Abraham was made God's friend. In many ways, he did not believe God.

He put his wife's life in jeopardy. He lied. David was a man after God's own heart.

How so? He was an adulterer, a murderer and a liar. The accusation is railed against God. God, where is Your justice? God, how can You save Noah from the flood? God, how can You make Abraham Your friend? How can You call forth a people from a group of idolaters? And how can David be brought close to Your presence? On the day that Christ died on Calvary, God answered every one of those objections.

I could pardon Noah by My sovereign grace. I could make Abraham a friend. I could adopt David as a son because this son died for them all.

Look to Him. You do not believe I am just. Know this.

Every man who has ever been spared has been spared for only one reason. Because my son died for them on the tree. And in his dying for them, he satisfied my justice.

And now I can be just and the justifier of wicked men who believe in my son. Do you see that? So, you understand so much about the Gospel, eh? There's a whole lot more than we think, isn't there? Now let's talk for a moment about the death of Christ. He's hanging on a tree.

And He cries out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why have You forsaken Me? Now, I have heard preachers say this, that God looked down from Heaven at the suffering of His own Son and could not bear to witness that suffering, and God turned away. That's not what the text says. The text says, on that tree, God forsook His only begotten Son.

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? The answer. Let's go to Psalms 22 for a moment. Verse 1. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Far from My deliverance are the words of My groaning.

O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer. And by night, but I have no rest. There's the Messiah's complaint on that cross.

And then we find an argument. Look in verse 4. In You our fathers trusted. They trusted and You delivered them.

To You they cried out and were delivered. In You they trusted and were not disappointed. Father, there's never been a time in the history of Your people Your covenant people Israel that a man cried out to You and You did not answer him.

Even among the faithless. Even in their idolatry. When they turned back to You and they cried out to You, You answered them.

But I, Your only begotten Son, I hang from this tree. I call out to You all day long. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? You do not help Me.

You are far from the words of My groaning. Why? He gives us the answer. Verse 3. Yet you are holy.

Verse 6. But I am a worm and not a man. Why? Because on that tree the sins of all of God's people were placed upon the Son of God. They were imputed to Him.

He was considered guilty now before the bar of God and He was treated by His Father as guilty. He stood in Your law place and He was treated as You ought to be treated. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? And heaven's door is slammed shut by the hand of God and God cries out, The Lord, Your God, damns You.

Someone had to die bearing the sins of God's people, standing in the law place of God's people and condemned by God for all their crimes. Cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law becoming a curse for us.

Separated from God. Dying on a tree bearing the sins of God's people. He's in the garden.

He cries out, What was in the cup? I hear these preachers say, Christ dreaded the Roman cross. He foresaw the cat of nine tails coming down on His back. The cruel cross.

The nails. The crown of thorns. The spear in His side.

Absolutely absurd. I can prove it. After the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ for several centuries, many Christians, thousands of Christians died on crosses.

They were nailed to crosses upside down. They were covered with pitch. They were set on fire to provide lights for the streets of Rome.

And the history tells us that many of them, most of them, went to the cross, singing hymns and joyfully praising God for the opportunity to die for their master. Now, are you going to tell me that the captain of their salvation is not as strong as His disciples? That He's cowering in a garden because He's afraid of a cross that they willingly take upon themselves? What kind of preaching madness is that? What was in the cup? I'll tell you what was in the cup. The wrath of Almighty God was in the cup.

He feared no Roman. He feared no cross. He feared no nails.

Yes, that was part of His dying. Yes, it was necessary for it to be a bloody death. By His blood we are saved.

But know this. It was the wrath of Almighty God. The holy hatred of God against our evil that had to fall upon His head and not only fall upon His head, but crush Him.

Have you never read? It pleased the Lord. It pleased Yahweh. It pleased God to crush the Messiah.

I've heard evangelists say, instead of being just with you, God was loving. Now there's a problem. Are you trying to tell me that God's love is unjust? You must understand that God must be just.

He is love. He can freely and sovereignly exercise that love. He is love.

But He cannot be love at the expense of His justice. He is perfect in all His attributes. He is consistent in absolutely everything.

In order to demonstrate His love toward man in salvation, pardon, justification, He had to first satisfy His own justice. And how did He do that? Through His Son. You've heard in many places, I suppose, these songs that say things like, God looked all over heaven and couldn't find an angel willing or able to die.

God looked all over the earth and couldn't find a man willing. My dear friend, if God had found a trillion angels who were spotless and willing to die, they could not have purchased us. If God had found a million men without sin and they had all gone to crosses and died, it would not be enough.

There is only one who can make that payment. He must be man. Man has sinned.

Man must die. A man must pay. But He must not only be man.

He must be God. A student asked me one time from the auditorium, wasn't very pleased with the preaching of the Gospel, and he stood up and he asked me, he says, I've got a question for you. How can one man, suffering a few short hours on a tree under the wrath of God, save a multitude of men or make a payment for a multitude of men and save them from an eternity in hell? How can that be? I said, oh, young man, it is for this reason.

Because the one who died on that tree was worth more than the rest of them put together. You take everything that is, you take mountains, mole hills, you take clowns and universes and suns and moons and stars, everything that was, everything that will be, everything that currently dwells, you put it all on the scale and you put Jesus on the other side and He outweighs them all. It was His worth.

When theologians talk about the perfect sacrifice of Christ, it's not just saying that He was without sin, though He was without sin. It is also speaking of His infinite value. Christ and Christ alone had sufficient merit, virtue, worth to pay for the crimes of a multitude of people.

He died on that tree. He died deaf. He was swallowed up by it.

But up from the grave, He arose with a mighty triumph over His fellow men. He arose a victor from that dark domain and He lives forever. He arose.

Sure, mock a prophet from Nazareth standing out in the middle of the square screaming out, I am the way, the truth and the life. But it's another thing to mock Him when He comes out of the ground. And God testifies publicly, declares with great power in the Holy Spirit, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

He shows Himself with many proofs and then He ascends up. He ascends to where no man has ever gone before. You see, He was God in the flesh.

Take note of that. Never lose that. That is an essential truth.

He is God in the flesh or He is no Savior. But never forget this. He is the man, Christ Jesus.

It was man who sinned. It was a man who had to die. And it was a man who had to go up.

Go up. The ancient writers, the patristics, go to Psalms 24 for a moment. They use this text.

In a most intriguing, beautiful and powerful way, that Jesus Christ, the resurrected man, God in the flesh, the Son of Glory, ascends up and He comes to the gates of heaven. And He cries out in verse 7, Lift up

your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in. And the answer back, Who is this King of Glory? Can you imagine? All of heaven in silence.

Who's knocking on these gates? What man would dare lay his hand to the latch of these doors? And then comes back the answer, The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in. And for the first time in all of time, heaven's gates open for a man.

When he walks through those doors, everything in heaven is laying prostrate. Oh, hail the power of Jesus' name. Let angels prostrate fall.

Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all. And he walks up to the place where angels and men cannot stand, to the very throne of God the Father. He ascends the steps and he sits down at the right hand of majesty on high.

His father, I suppose, looks at him and says, Son, it is finished. Father, it is finished. Indeed, crowned King.

King, let all the nations beware. Let every man who lifts himself up as king or governor or mayor or providence understand this. Let the mightiest men in the world tremble because in reality, there is only one government.

In reality, there is only one King. Everyone else who wears a little crown on his head is nothing more than a cut flower. Every nation that marches with its army, its strength, if they were to oppose Christ, their strength would be nothing more than a tiny gnat beating its head against a world of granite.

He is King of kings and Lord of lords. And all the governors and kings and princes and presidents are warned to do homage to the Son, to worship Him, because His wrath is quickly kindled. Yet at the same time, there is a fountain opened up in the house of David.

And the humble hear it and they are glad. For the Word has gone out through all the earth. There is a Savior.

There is a balm in Gilead. And His name is Jesus. It doesn't matter what you have done, what you have become.

It doesn't matter how great you think your sin may be. There is nothing mightier than the Christ. With His blood, He can wipe away your sin, make you spotless before the throne of God and grant you an inheritance that will last forever.

But also know this, He is coming and He will judge the earth. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. If you are Christian, truly Christian, that is you bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and faith, you are trusting in Christ alone, your salvation is by faith, that there is evidence of that faith in God's reality in your life and your bearing of fruit, then meditate upon this.

You don't need some great conference. You don't need some great speaker. You don't need some new technique in Christianity.

You just need a greater and greater vision of what God has done for you in Jesus Christ. If you are outside of Christ and you do not feel, let me just share this with you. Do you want to know how much God hates

sin? Do you want to know how much God hates sin? When His own Son bore sin, God crushed His own Son.

Sinner, what do you think He'll do to you? You say, are you trying to make me afraid? My dear friend, there are reasons to be afraid. And love demands that I tell you to be afraid. Love demands that I beg you to seek a remedy quickly.

That you run away from the law that chases and condemns you and you run to Christ, to that city of refuge. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous man runs into it and he is safe.

Come to Christ. You say, what must I do to be saved? Repent and believe the Gospel. Repent and believe the Gospel.

Brother Paul, what does it mean to repent? Well, let me say this. Are you here tonight? You know you're outside of Christ and yet all you can think about is He's gone on long enough and I need to get out of this building. I do not care for my sin or His God.

It's a nice thing. It's a pleasant thing to hear. But I've got more important things to do.

My dear friend, if that's the attitude of your heart, you cannot be saved. Not this moment. You have no repentance.

But if you're here tonight and maybe you came just because someone drug you here, but as you were listening to the message you said to yourself, I had no idea God was like that, but I know it's true. I had no idea my sin was so vile. I feel so ugly, so wretched.

I had no idea that I was so lost, that my goodness is like filthy rags. Oh, how I hate my sin! Oh, how I wish I was clean from it! Those are the kernels of repentance. Those are some of the characteristics of a genuine sorrow over sin.

Now, you lack one thing. Run to Christ. Run to Christ.

Throw yourself upon Christ. Trust in Christ alone. You're not only to turn away from your sin, you're to turn away from every hope you might have ever had in your own good works.

Flee from your righteousness. Flee from your filthy rags that cannot save you. And throw yourself upon Christ.

If this preacher died in this pulpit tonight, I would go to heaven and stand before God, sound in glory. Why? Because 2,000 years ago, the Son of God died for me. That is my only hope.

But that is the scarlet thread, and I expect to swing out into eternity on it with the greatest amount of confidence. Trust in Christ. In Christ alone.

Christ alone. Christ alone. Christ.

You begin with Christ alone. You continue in the Christian faith with Christ alone. And you end with Christ alone.

Father, I come before You, and I pray that You would use Your Word in the hearts of men. In Jesus' name, and for His sake, Amen.

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