

New Life Baptist Church - Part 1

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Gospel and the nature of God, including His hatred and wrath, in order to truly be saved and live a life pleasing to Him.

Duration: 1:02:19

Scripture: Romans 3:23-26, Romans 3:28

Topics: "Gods Righteousness", "The Son"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a young soldier who sacrificed his life to save another person. The soldier had always wanted to learn how to draw, and the person he saved happened to be a famous artist. The soldier learned how to draw from the artist and created a picture of the artist's son as a way to express his gratitude and love. When the artist passed away, his artwork was put up for auction, and the first painting to be auctioned was the soldier's drawing. Initially, the art critics and purchasers scoffed at the painting, but the artist's will revealed that whoever takes his son gets everything. The story illustrates the importance of the son and highlights the righteousness of God.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to the Book of Romans, Book of Romans, Chapter 3. Whenever I speak at a place, the first time I try never to miss speaking on this topic that Martin Lloyd-Jones called the Acropolis of the Christian Faith. Acropolis is a strong, major, main city of any civilization. It's the strong tower, the high hill.

The passage we're going to study is possibly the greatest passage in the entire Bible. It's found in Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 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. Possibly if I had to lose every portion of Scripture and keep just one, this would be the one that I kept.

It is the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To understand this passage is to understand something of the Gospel. To not understand this passage is for the cross to have very little meaning for you.

So we'll take a look at this. For all have sinned. There is no fear of sin among men today because we do not realize that sin in itself is not the horrid thing, but the one against whom we sin.

As the Puritans would always say, He is not an inferior prince of a small village, but He is the Lord of glory against whom you have sinned. You see, we must know the attributes of God. We must know who He is and we must clearly communicate that to the world or they'll never understand how sinful sin truly is.

For all have sinned. What does it mean to sin according to the Westminster Confession? It is, of course, to not be conformed to the holy character and will of God, to violate His law, to deviate from it. You see, prior to becoming a Christian, it is not that you are pretty much a kind of a good person who every once in a while deviates from God's law.

Prior to becoming a Christian, the only thing you have ever done is sinned. Every act, every thought, every deed prior to your Christianity is sin. Now, even some Christians would take me to task on that, saying that's not really true, when in fact it is, and I'll show you how.

Even if an atheist were to sell everything that he had, to buy a special potion to save an enemy of his, and then buying that potion, walked 600 miles on broken glass through a snowstorm, and took that potion to his enemy to save his life, even if an atheist did that, it would still be sin. Why? Because the atheist has not done it unto the glory of God. Whether you eat or drink or anything you do, you do it unto the glory of God.

You see, sin is not sin simply because we do it against men and it hurts men. Sin is sin because of its relationship to God. Now, having no concern for God or to bring honor to God, you have sinned even if you have done a good deed to men.

All have sinned. All. And fallen short of the glory of God.

To fall short of the glory of God does not mean what contemporary Christianity would have you believe. Some say it means that, well, God had this tremendous glorious purpose for man, and we have fallen short of that. Well, that is true in some degree, but the emphasis here is not that.

To fall short of the glory of God means that we were made to glorify God and we have not done that. It says, although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks. You were made to honor and to worship and to please and to bring joy, good pleasure to God.

And that is the reason why men are miserable. I make wooden bows and arrows, and you can shoot an arrow very fast out of one of my bows, but you cannot play a hymn with one of my bows in the same way you cannot shoot an arrow with a guitar string. Things are made to have a certain purpose, and if they do not perform according to that purpose, they are miserable and wretched.

Men were made for the glory of God, to glorify Him, to worship Him. We find our meaning in giving ourselves totally to Him. Not only does that have something to do with the sinner without Christ, but it has something to do with the people of God.

If you were to go into a Christian bookstore today, you would find that over half the bookstore is filled with books written about how empty we are. We are the most wealthy, most prosperous, most protected Christians in the history of Christianity, and yet we are the most empty. And why is that? For the same reason Jesus Christ was not empty.

He said, I have food to eat that you know not of. My food is to do the will of my Father who sent me. The reason why Christians are so empty today is because not only are they convinced, but they are being preached to with words that tell them that they are to get their best life now, that they are to live their lives for themselves, that Jesus is all about us and doing things for us.

It is almost as though God has been made into not only a Santa Claus, but the cosmic servant of man. He exists for us. And that is not true.

We exist for Him. And until we give our lives for Him and live for Him, we are miserable. There was an old Christian mystic who used to say, every conversation where Jesus Christ is not the principal theme is an absurdity.

We were made for Him, for Christ. But all of us have sinned. We have violated every law God has ever given.

And none of us have lived for His glory, but for our own. It is an amazing thing. You think about that.

You know, there is a lot of people today, I have heard evangelists say, begin their preaching by saying, you know, most of you think that God is an angry God, but God is not an angry God. That is a lie. It is a lie.

The Bible says God is angry every day. You see how in an attempt to bring carnal men to God, we teach them about a God that is not even the God of the Bible? How many times have I heard evangelists and preachers on television say, now the first thing you need to know is God is not an angry God. And yet the Bible says He is angry with the wicked every day.

And He has right to be. We have violated His law. We have shunned His glory.

We have turned the punies of things into idols. The illustration I often use is, imagine the glory of God standing there in the days of creation, and God commands the stars to take orbit and move in the place that He has set for them. And they all bow down and say, Yes, Lord.

God commanded the planets to move in certain directions, and they all bowed down and said, Yes, Lord. God commanded the seas to stay put. They said, Yes, Lord.

He told mountains to be lifted up and valleys to be cast down, and they all obeyed Him. And then God looks at you and says, Come, and you say, No. You deserve hell.

That is what the Bible teaches. You deserve hell. You deserve condemnation.

As a matter of fact, let me put it this way. In sin, men are so vile and so wretched, their crimes so heinous, before not only a holy God, but a holy heaven. Let me share with you something.

The last thing you will hear when you take your first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because He has rid the earth of you. That is how wicked, holy creatures see you. I never heard of such a thing.

Of course you have not. But it is what the Bible teaches. We are really not convinced that men are evil.

Let me ask you a question. How did Hitler become Hitler? Have you ever thought about that? Here is a better question. Why wasn't Hitler worse than he was? Here is an even better question.

Why are you not as wicked as Hitler? Were you born with some moral spark? Were you better than him? The only reason you do not make Hitler look like a choir boy is because the common grace of God restrains you in your sin. And if he were to pull back from you, you would make Hitler ashamed. See, we really don't believe men are evil.

You see atrocities in the newspaper and you say, well, I just can't imagine. You can't imagine? You could do worse. But were it not for the grace of God.

That is why this gospel is offensive. And that is why you don't see much power of the gospel revealed today. That is why churches use church growth methods and manipulation to make their churches grow.

Because there is no power in their gospel, and there is no power in the gospel because they are not preaching it. Because you can't preach the gospel if you are worried about offending carnal men. Because the gospel is offensive.

It was offensive to me, and that offense is the very thing that cut my heart and saved me. Now, let me share with you something before we go on. It is very, very important.

You need to understand. It is the hatred of God. We always hear about the love of God, but when was the last time you heard about the hatred of God? Have you ever heard someone say, God loves the sinner and hates the sin? Have you ever heard that? It is an absolutely beautiful statement.

The problem is it is wrong. It is heresy. The book of Psalms chapter 5 says that God hates all those who do wrong.

It says in Malachi that Esau hated. It says that. And hate is a synonym really for wrath.

It says God hates people. It says it all over the Bible. Now, if you want to preach something else, go ahead and preach something else, but don't call it biblical.

I had a lady one time say, I don't believe that. God is love. He can't hate.

And I said, Madam, God is love, therefore He must hate. She says, I don't understand. I said, Listen.

Well, I'll ask you the question. Do you love children? Do you love babies? I love babies. I wish I had a whole bunch more babies.

Do you love babies? Then you must hate abortion. Do you love Jews? Do you love Israel? Well, if you tell me that you love Israel, then you tell me at the same time that you're apathetic with regard to the Holocaust and don't think it's really that big a deal, you've got a serious problem. See, if you love Jews, you're going to hate the Holocaust.

So see, if you love, you've got to hate. Not in this neutral, pseudo-tolerant culture of ours. If you actually love something, you must hate something.

If God loves with a passion that is beyond description all that is holy, all that is righteous, all that is beautiful, all that is true, all that is good, He hates the opposite of that. And that holy hatred is manifested against men by means of His wrath. You walk up to a sinner and you just tell him, God loves you so much.

Well, there is a real sense in which God loves His creature, but you also maybe ought to tell him, did you know that the wrath of God abides on you? Because that's what Jesus said, that everyone who did not believe in Him, the wrath of God abides upon them. The pastor read that this morning. Now, knowing that, let's go for a minute, let's keep going.

Now, having sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, verse 24, speaking of Christians, true believers in Jesus Christ, people who have truly been regenerated, truly converted, it says being justified. Now, what does it mean to be justified? I was sharing this with a lady this morning who was struggling with victory over guilt and things, and what does it mean to be justified? Some people say, well, it's just as if I'd never sinned. No, that's not what it means.

Well, it means forgiven. No, it means more than that. What does it mean? It means it is a forensic or a legal term.

It is a forensic or legal term. It means the moment that a person believes in Jesus Christ, the moment they believe, God Almighty legally declares them to be right with Him. Okay? Legally declares that person to be right with Him.

And who is that person? The person who has broken His law, the person who has not glorified Him, the person who is atrocity, the person who deserves judgment, the person who deserves wrath. The moment that person believes in Jesus Christ, God legally declares that person right with Him. Now, the word legal is extremely important.

Why? Some people believe that the moment that a person believes in Jesus, God makes them righteous. Okay? Makes them righteous. He does not make them righteous.

He declares them righteous. And there is an important difference. If the moment you believed in Jesus, He made you righteous, that means you would never sin again.

Do you see that? I am not righteous in that sense. God, when He saved me, although He is changing me, He did not make me righteous the moment He saved me because I still sin. I am still susceptible to sin.

I still commit error, moral failure, on and on. So the moment a believer believes in Christ and is saved, God does not make them righteous so as that they never sin again. He declares them legally before His throne to be righteous.

It is a legal standing before God. The moment a person believes in Jesus Christ, even though they have sinned, even though they have broken God's law, God declares them to be legally right forever with Him. Do you understand that? Okay.

It is a legal term. It is very, very important. Now, let's go on.

Being justified as a gift by His grace. Now here is something that I want you to understand. Take all religions, except for a few eastern religions that do not even consider themselves religions.

You take the major religions, what are they all dealing with? How can a man be right with God? Do you realize that? It doesn't matter. Judaism, Muslim faith. It doesn't matter what you got out there.

They all have one thing in common. And what is that? How can a man be right with God? Now that is proof right there that the Bible is true. Isn't it amazing that even people who never heard anything about the Bible or Christianity still have this sense that they are not right with God? Isn't that amazing? All the religions that have ever been invented outside of Christianity deal with the fact that man is not right with God.

How can he be right with God? That proves the Bible to be true. That God has written His law in the hearts of all men and all men have a conscience and all men know their guilt. Because all religions are designed to remove that guilt and make someone right with God.

Now, I've said that's what all religions have in common. But now we're going to divide all religions into two groups. All religions and Christianity.

Because all religions outside of Christianity say that a man can be made right with God by what he does. By his works. But see, their greatest problem in saying that is they don't know God.

Because none of those religions would say that a man could live perfectly before God. But they all think that you can live well enough before God so that He doesn't condemn you. And they don't realize that God is so righteous that one moral infraction is enough to disqualify you.

Just ask Adam and Eve. Alright? All the religions of the world have one thing in common. It's that they believe that a man can be made right with God through what that man does.

Christianity over here comes over with something completely different. Look what it says. Being justified as a gift by His grace.

It is not through what is earned in Christianity by the beneficiary. It is not of works. It is a gift.

It is by grace. Now, a reporter interviews a Muslim and says, if you died right now, where would you go? The Muslim says, I would go to heaven or paradise. The interviewer says, why do you say that? The Muslim says, well, I am a righteous man.

I've read the Koran. I've made the pilgrimages. I've done the prayers.

I've given alms to the poor. I'm a righteous man. Okay, I understand that.

The reporter asks the Jewish man, if you died right now, where would you go? I would go to heaven. Why would you go to heaven? I am a righteous man. I love the law of God.

I've kept the law of God. I've kept the traditions of the fathers. I am a righteous man.

The reporter, being a secular, worldly man, says, okay, I understand that. You deserve to go, just like your Muslim friend. Then he comes to the Christian.

He says, if you died right now, where would you go? The Christian smiles and says, I would go to heaven. He says, well, why? The Christian says, well, I was born in sin. And in sin, my mother conceived me.

I have broken every law and I have not served the purpose for which I was made. And the reporter stops him and says, hold on, buddy. I mean, I can understand the other two.

They're going to heaven because they deserve to go there. You're telling me with a great confidence you're going to heaven, but also at the same time, you're telling me that you deserve absolute condemnation. How are you going to heaven? And the Christian says, because I'm going to heaven upon the virtue and the merit of another, Jesus Christ my Lord.

All other religions are self-glorification and trying to put God in debt. I'm going to heaven, self-glorification, because I'm a good man and because God owes me. I've done enough.

He's got to pay me heaven. Christianity is, I have done nothing but deserved condemnation, but Jesus Christ my Lord has shed His own blood for myself. Who's glorified in that? Jesus Christ.

And God is no man's debtor. God has done it all. Now, here's something that's very, very interesting.

Being justified as a gift. The word gift here is the same word in Greek that's used when the Scripture says they hated Him without cause. Speaking of the Messiah, of Jesus, they hated Him without cause.

Did anyone ever have a cause to hate Jesus? Did Jesus ever sin against anyone, give them reason for hating Him? Of course not. That's absolutely absurd. They hated Him without a cause.

It's the same word here. It says that you were justified without a cause. You gave God no cause to justify you.

You did not give God any cause to declare you right. As a matter of fact, you gave God cause to do just the opposite, condemn you. But He says, justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption.

It's a marvelous word. Frightful word. Because of the price that was paid.

To be redeemed means to be bought with a price from slavery. From slavery. To be bought with a price as a captive.

And the Bible says that you, if you are a Christian, you were bought with a price. And you were not bought with the blood of bulls and goats. You were not bought with coffers of gold from heaven.

You were bought with the precious blood of God's own Son. Why do we live for Him? You know, there are many self-centered reasons to live for God. And preachers are full of them.

The Gospel in preaching today is so humanistic. We tell people, you need to trust in Jesus. You don't want to go to that nasty old hell, do you? So my motivation for trusting in Jesus is to save my own skin? You need to follow Jesus.

You don't want to get to heaven and not have any rewards, do you? There's no virtue in that. It's like men sitting around a cafe talking about how they're going to rob a bank and get something for nothing. You need to believe in Jesus because He's worthy.

You need to serve Him because He's worthy. I would submit this to you. When I'm with a person who has very little assurance of salvation, I've done this many, many times.

There's a girl that was seeking assurance of salvation. She kept calling on the Lord. She was not sure that she was saved, that God had saved her.

And I shared with her this. I said, look, you need to repent of your sins whether He saves you or not because He's worthy. You need to believe in Him whether He saves you or not because He's worthy.

And you need to serve Him all the days of your life whether He casts you in hell or not because He's worthy. It wasn't a little bit after that that she gained assurance. Because I want to tell you something.

A person who comes to God out of a sincere heart and says, God, I'm going to repent of my sins whether You save me or not because You're worthy. And I'm going to believe in Your Son whether You save me or not because He's worthy. And I'm going to serve You all the days of my life whether You save me or not because You're worthy.

It won't be long. God grants that person assurance. I'm going to do it even if I get nothing.

How many Puritans do we hear down through the ages and early Baptists that used to say that type of thing would wrestle with whether or not God had saved them and come to the conclusion, God, You are so worthy that I should serve You whether You save me or not. It's a little bit different gospel than the one you'll hear today, isn't it? But it's a strong one and it's mighty to save. He says, justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

You know what God's doing? He's going to spend your entire life teaching you just this one thing in Christ Jesus. The longest sentence in the whole Bible is in Ephesians 1. Paul almost goes wild. I mean, he just can't put the period.

It was at 11 times, like 14 verses, in Christ, in Christ, in Christ, in Him, in Him, in Christ, in Him, in the Beloved. You see, every ounce and inkling of your salvation is in Christ. None of it is you.

If it was 99.99999% Christ and 0.00001% you, you'd go to hell. It is all Christ. A young boy said one time, he goes, that's right, Jesus is all we need.

And I said, young man, Jesus is all we have. Apart from Him, you have nothing. Absolutely nothing.

It's Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. Now, he goes on and he says, redemption which is in Christ Jesus whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation. Martin Lloyd-Jones used the word placard.

God placarded Him publicly, billboarded Him. In the crucifixion, God purposed that it be the most public possible. Christ could have put away sin in a dark room somewhere, but He was hung on a cross.

He was hung on a cross in the most significant religious city in the history of the world at a crossroads outside of that city for all the world and principalities and powers to see. You see, the cross of Jesus Christ is not an accident. It's not plan B as I heard a very popular radio preacher a few years ago say.

He actually said this, if those Jews had accepted Jesus and not crucified Him, the millennial kingdom would have started and we'd all be walking around in glory. If Jesus Christ hadn't died on that cross, we'd all be in hell. The cross wasn't plan B. It was plan A. And it wasn't even plan B with regard to the fall of Adam.

A lot of people say the cross was necessary because of the fall. No. The fall was necessary so that there could be a cross because it is only through the cross of Jesus Christ that the full revelation of God comes to men.

The cross is everything. Absolutely everything. And God did it.

God ordained it that His Son would die delivered up by the hands of wicked men, but according to the foreknowledge, the ordination, the election of God. God did it. And He did it with purpose and on purpose.

He goes on and says, whom God displayed publicly. Now we've got to ask ourselves, why publicly? Because God is going to reveal something through the cross. It's going to be something quite different than what you think.

I want you to hold this in your mind. I know that you see the cross as the means through which God justified men. That men were justified through the cross.

And that is true, but I'm going to give you something bigger. The cross is the means through which God justified Himself. Another word for that synonym would be vindicated Himself, proved Himself right.

Now, let's go on. It says, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation. Now, possibly the most important word in the entire Bible.

Propitiation. In ancient Castellano, we use the word propitio, which means mercy. Propitio.

Sed propitio a me, amo. Be merciful to me, Master. Propitio.

So what is a propitiation? A sacrifice that enables mercy. A sacrifice that makes mercy possible. Now, I want you to understand something.

And some of you have heard this sermon probably a few times, but I do this everywhere because so few people truly understand the cross. Do you want to know what the greatest problem in the Bible is? What the whole Bible is written about? It's called the divine dilemma. It's what everything is about.

It's the greatest problem in all the Bible. This is it. If God is just, He cannot forgive you.

And if He does, He becomes an abomination. If God is just, He cannot forgive you. You say, well, I don't know why not.

I know you don't know why not because of the culture you live in where there's no justice. If God is just, He cannot forgive you. It's wrong.

And let me give you a text. Just listen to this. It's in Proverbs 17, 15.

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike, are an abomination to God. What is an abomination? The worst thing you can be to God. Synonyms would be something putrid, horrid, disgusting, loathsome.

So what he says here, he who justifies the wicked is an abomination to God. Now, anyone who justifies a wicked person is an abomination, a horrid, disgusting thing to God. But here's the problem.

In Romans that we've been studying, what does it say? God justified who? The wicked. Romans 3 is rejoicing in the fact that God has justified the wicked. Proverbs 17, 15 says anyone who justifies the wicked is an abomination to God.

Do you see the problem? That's the greatest problem in all the Bible. If God is just, He cannot forgive wicked men. There it is.

Let me give you an illustration because I can see that some of you are going, well, why not? Well, don't you complain all the time about the corruption of judges? My, they let the criminals go. Those judges are just as wicked as the criminals who stand before them. Haven't you said that before? You have.

Someone murders your entire family, is caught by the police, is taken before the judge. The judge looks down on the man who's murdered your entire family, and he says, I'm really loving, so I'm going to let you go. Goodbye.

Have a good day. I forgive you. What are you going to do? The first thing you're going to do is scream out for justice.

Then you're going to write the newspapers. You're going to call the media. You're going to write congressmen.

You're going to say, there's a judge on the bench that's more wicked than the many forgives. Because a judge does justice. Judges don't forgive.

They do justice. And if they forgive the wicked, all the righteous people in the community jump up and are angry. Why? Because they ought to be.

Because it's an abomination. And that's what God says it is. Anyone who forgives the wicked and justifies them and declares them to be right when they're not right is loathsome, abomination.

So the question comes back, if God is the just God who does right in all the earth, then how can He justify the wicked? There's only one way. He must first satisfy the demands of justice with His own life. Justice has demands.

They must be satisfied before the unrighteous can be declared. Now, I've heard a lot of people say this in such a way that's wrong. It's almost like they say there's this rule that's even above God.

God's got to satisfy justice before He can forgive men. No. God's got to satisfy His own justice.

It's His own justice. There's no inconsistency in God like there is in us. Remember? There's no shadow.

There's no turning. God is perfectly consistent, absolute perfection in all His attributes. Have you ever heard someone say, God could have been just with you, but instead of being just, He was loving? You realize what they're saying? God's love is wicked.

It's unjust. You can't do that. God has to be loving and just at the same time.

So what does He do? He satisfies His justice by paying the price for all our crimes. For all our crimes. Now, how does He do that? How does He do that? Now, here's something that is probably of all the things I think about, all the things I dwell on, all the things I teach on, this is the most important thing to me by far.

How does a cross satisfy the justice of God? How does a man dying on a tree with nails in his hands and a Roman spear through his side and a crown of thorns on his head, how does that in any way pay for our sins? Most people do not understand this. I was in Romania several years ago and I was kind of in a Germanic seminary, a brethren seminary, and I was looking for something to read during one of my free times there. And I found this book on the cross of Christ.

And if you read a lot, you can pretty much kind of thumb through a book and kind of figure out where the author is at. You know where to look. And so I started reading through this book.

I got to the important point. And this is what he said. God looked down from heaven and saw the punishment and the suffering that men inflicted upon Jesus Christ and He counted that as payment for our sin.

That's heresy. That's false teaching. It's blasphemy.

Did you notice what was wrong there in that statement? Men afflicted Jesus and God counted that as payment for our sin. That's not what happened. How was justice satisfied? It wasn't simply because Romans whipped Jesus or they put a crown of thorns on His head or they nailed His hands to a tree or they put a spear in His side.

That in no way satisfies justice by itself. Justice was satisfied because when Jesus hung on that tree, He bore our sin and in bearing our sin, He became the curse and in bearing the curse, His Father broke fellowship with Him, turned away from Him and then His Father poured out all of His holy hatred upon His own Son and crushed Him. That's what satisfies justice.

It's not what men did to Jesus. It's what God the Father did to His only begotten Son. I have heard preachers say that the Father looked down upon His Son and saw that He was suffering so much that He could not bear to look at His suffering so He turned away.

Really? Well, Jesus had another interpretation to that. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, abandoned Me? You see, when we say God is holy and man is not and then in our little tracts we got that separation or divide between God and man, someone had to die abandoned of God. Someone had to die forsaken of God.

Someone had to die like that criminal. Out of God's favor. God turning away.

God cannot look upon any sin or any wickedness. His eyes are too pure and too holy and His Son became the curse. Cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them.

And then the Bible says, and Jesus Christ, He became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law. All the filth of His people, all the guilt of His people, He carried. The Father turned away from His Son who had become sin.

You know, the Son always dwelt in the bosom of the Father. Always perfect fellowship. Always perfect communion.

And on that tree He bore our filth and the Father turned away from Him. And then all the holy, just hatred of God against the filth and wickedness and criminality of men. Every full force of it was thrown down upon

God's only Son.

Have you never read, And it pleased the Lord to crush Him? God crushed His only begotten Son on that tree. Do you remember Abraham? He takes Isaac up to the mount. He takes the knife, probably puts his hand on the head of the boy to either thrust the knife into his heart or to thrust it into his neck and slaughter him like a lamb.

And as he slams the knife down on the chest of the boy, his hand is stayed by God. Do you think the story ends there? And God takes the knife out of Abraham's hand and God lays His hand on His only begotten Son and God slaughters Him. Do you see why the cross that's preached today has no power? Because it's not being preached.

God hates sin. Sinner, you laugh at sin. You care not to come to Christ.

Let me share with you something. You want to know how much God hates sin? When God's own Son bore sin, God slaughtered His own Son. What do you think He'll do to you? Tremble where you're at.

If you're wise, you'll tremble. He became the worm, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, the scapegoat, bearing the sins of the people to wander in the desert and die. Thus, the writer of Hebrews says, He died outside the gates of the city.

He died a propitiation. A sacrifice that satisfies the demands of God's justice so that a righteous and holy God can declare right men like us who are not right. It says, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood.

His blood. The shedding of blood. Someone must die.

A sacrifice must be made. Blood must be shed. But it wasn't the blood of bulls and goats.

It was the blood of God's own Son. Now, let's continue on. Why? Now listen very carefully.

We're always thinking the why of the cross has primarily to do with us. To save us. To do us good.

To redeem us. So that we can go to heaven. So that we can have our sins forgiven.

All about us. Everything is about us. Well, He died for us and to save us.

But you need to see a bigger picture. He tells us why. Verse 25.

This was to demonstrate His righteousness. Why was Christ crucified publicly for the whole world to see? To demonstrate that God is righteous. You know, you turn on the television today.

All over that television. Secular channels. ABC, NBC, CBS, everywhere.

Cable. They're going to tell you God is love. You hear it all the time.

You go to any channel anywhere that's talking about God and they'll tell you God is love. Tell me when was the last time you heard one of those boys say God is righteous. God is righteous.

God is holy. Never. But the Bible says that Christ died on that tree and God ordained it so.

It was in order to demonstrate that God is righteous. Now why would God have to prove that or demonstrate it? Why would God have to just come and prove that He really is righteous like He says He is? Why would He have to do that? He's going to give us the answer. Because in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed.

What does that mean? It means this. Adam sins. Adam sins.

He should have died. He should have died that day. He should have died that moment.

He shouldn't have got a promise. He should have just died. But in God's forbearance, in His patience, His mercy, God passed over His sin.

Not only passed over the sin, but gave Him a promise of salvation. Then Abraham. He calls Abraham.

Abraham didn't believe God. He lied about his wife and put her in jeopardy. Abraham.

In Israel. I mean, He should have killed Abraham. He should have killed Noah.

Let's go back even further. Look at Noah. Someone says, well, God's been righteous.

He destroyed the world with the flood. No, He didn't. He didn't destroy Noah.

He should have destroyed Noah. Noah should have died too. It's like Satan standing back there going, hey God, what's going on? Have you changed? Adam? He was supposed to die.

Noah? A righteous man in his generation? He sinned. He should have died in the flood also. Abraham, your friend.

Boy, you've got a poor choice of friends. God's standards starting to drop. Oh, in Israel.

They're a winner, aren't they? Bunch of idolaters. You should have killed them before you ever got them into the Promised Land. Justice called for it.

David? A man after your own heart? Your son, David? He was a murderer and an adulterer. God, you've got some explaining to do. If you're just, then how can you let these people go? Well, the cross was God's answer.

I can give a promised Adam. I can call Abraham my friend. I can save Noah from the flood.

I can call Israel out as my people. And I can call David my son. Because my true son died for them all.

Two thousand years ago, when Jesus Christ died on that tree, it shut the devil's railings about God's mercy. Proved once and for all, God is just. And the only way anyone is ever going to get to heaven is by being absolutely perfect.

Sit down on a plane with somebody and open your Bible. They kind of look at you and go, what are you doing? I'm reading my Bible. They say, well, alright.

How do you get to heaven? You look at them and you go, oh, that's easy. You just got to be absolutely morally perfect, like God is morally perfect. Keep reading your Bible.

And they go, no, really? Really? What are you talking about? Oh, I'm sorry. In order to go to heaven, you have to be absolutely morally perfect without one sin, stain, or blemish, or moral failure. Hey! Hey! Hold it! Nobody's like that! Oh, really? Well, I guess there isn't a whole lot of hope, is there? To read my Bible.

You see, that's where you've got to take people. The only way you're going to go to heaven is to be absolutely, not just forgiven. You think you can go to heaven just by being forgiven? To go to heaven, you've got to be absolutely, perfectly righteous.

There's only one way that's going to happen. Jesus Christ shed His blood on that cross and paid the price for your sin and justifies you by His death. But not only that, vindicates God's forgiving you.

You know, it's amazing. I go to university and if I talk on hell, someone always comes and goes, well, you've got some explaining to do. I mean, after talking about it.

I'm appalled that you would even think that God would send someone to hell. And I say, well, you know, the angels also are appalled. But it's something quite different.

They're appalled at the fact that God would let anybody into heaven. Because you see, if God had sent every human being on the face of the earth to hell, He would not have had to explain anything. Because everyone deserved to go to hell.

The fact that He's bringing people into heaven is when the explanation has to start. How can you do this? They're all criminals. They're all wicked.

They're all vile. They've broken your law. How can they come in here? There's only one way.

Jesus Christ shed His blood for them on that tree. Now, I want to teach you something about justification that's very, very important. And it's this.

Look what it says. It says, 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. The cross of Jesus Christ solves the problem.

God is both just in that He punished sin and the justifier of wicked men in that He paid with the blood of His own Son. Now, I want to talk to you about justification for a moment. You are not only saved by the death of Jesus Christ, you are saved by the life of Jesus Christ.

And when I say that, I know what you're thinking. Yes, the resurrection. No, that's not what I'm thinking about.

Even though, yes, the resurrection is important, essential. What I'm saying is this. Jesus Christ not only died for you, Jesus Christ lived a perfect life for you.

This is very important. The entire time of His incarnation, He never sinned once. He lived absolutely, perfectly conformed to the will of God.

When He was on the cross, all your vile deeds, your sin, was imputed to Him. Okay? You understand what impute means? It comes from the Latin word imputare, which means to think or consider. All your sins were placed upon Him or imputed to Him.

He died on that cross. He paid for your sins. Now, when you believe in Jesus, you are forgiven of your sins.

But not only that, you are legally declared righteous, which means God takes that perfect life of Jesus Christ and He imputes it to you. You are not only forgiven, but the perfect life that Jesus Christ lived is imputed or counted as yours. So that as the Father always looked down on the Son and said, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, the Father looks down on the believer who now is clothed in the imputed good works and righteousness of Jesus Christ, looks down and says, this is My beloved Son, this is My beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased.

You see, it's not just that you're forgiven, but the perfect life that Jesus lived is given to you. A way of putting it would be like this. Joseph had a coat of many colors, which he did not want to share with his brothers, but we have one who is greater than Joseph who bears a coat of righteousness and he has given that coat to all his brothers and for this reason he's not ashamed to call them brothers.

So his justification means more than that you're forgiven. It means that you have literally been clothed in the righteous life of Jesus Christ, the righteous deeds, the perfection of Christ. So that when the Father looks down at you, he sees Christ, the righteousness of Christ.

That's the gift that's been given to you. Now, it goes on and he says this, verse 27, where then is boasting? It is excluded. I like that.

It's excluded. Unless, of course, you want to boast in Christ. Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

You see, the Christian is the only person on the face of the earth that can say that they're going to heaven and not be bragging about themselves. Any other religion, any other person in any other religion that tells you they're going to heaven, they are very proud because they're saying they're going to heaven based upon their own merit and virtue. But the Christian, though saying he's going to heaven, boasts not in himself, but boasts in Christ, his merit and his virtue.

Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling. And so, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. The one thing that I want to stick most in your mind tonight is this, your sin, if you are not in Christ, if you are not a Christian, your sin is vile, it is heinous, and it will bring eternal judgment upon you.

And that in your sin, apart from Christ, on that day of judgment, you will be seen as what you are. All common grace will be removed from you and you will be revealed as the monster you are. And you will be so vile and so disgusting before all of holy heaven that every creature in heaven and earth will stand up and applaud God because He has sent you to hell.

That's how vile men are. But that Jesus Christ died for men such as that. He carried their sin, He was crushed under the full weight of His Father's own wrath, and when He died, He paid the price.

Those who repent of their sins and throw themselves upon Christ, who trust in Christ, all their sins are forgiven. God says, their sins I will forgive, their iniquities I will forgive, and their sins I will remember no more. But not only that, they are clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Now, the Bible commands you to repent and believe if you are not a believer. If you are a believer, the Bible commands you to love. The Bible commands you to seek out this Christ and to adore Him, to worship Him.

The one who honors the Son honors the Father. It is all about Jesus Christ. I'll finish with a little story.

It's a little bit kind of emotional, but it just provides for a good illustration. And it's this. It's this guy, a famous painter and his son.

Just each inspired the other's works. A famous painter and his son. World War I broke out, and his son had to go off to war.

It wasn't long after that that the father received a note that his son had died in war. It tore him to pieces. Then several months go by, and there's a knock at the door, and he opens the door, and there's a young soldier standing there with a canvas under his arm.

The man says, can I help you, son? And he said, well, sir, I'm the reason your son died. He pushed me out of the way, and he took some shrapnel, and he died. I can't repay you, sir.

But while we were in the foxhole, those many months together, I've always wanted to learn how to draw, and so your son taught me how to draw. And I know that you're a famous artist and all that, but I drew this picture of your son, and it's just because I love him so much. He gave his life for me.

He's the only reason I'm alive. So the old man thanked him, went into his gallery, moved all his priceless works of art to one side or the other, and put that picture right in the middle of the gallery. Then a few months later, the old man dies.

Sotheby's and all the great auction companies are brought in. They're going to have a great auction. And so all the people, art gatherers from all over, from every nation come.

They're all excited about getting a chance to purchase this man's art. So the auctioneer starts it all with a thrust of the gavel, and he says, the first painting to be auctioned will be this. And they pulled off the cloak, and it was the painting that the boy had made, the young soldier.

All the art critics and purchasers began to laugh and scoff. Some were even a little bit angry. They said, look, enough of this tomfoolery.

We came here to buy some art, not this thing, whatever it is. Bring on the art. Let the auction begin.

Well, the soldier just happened to be present that day, and he heard the scoffing and the laughing and everything else. The auctioneer said, he'll give me \$500 for this. People laughed, and he said, well, 300 of people laughed.

The soldier stood up, and he said, sir, I have a soldier's pay, and it's all I have, something about \$6. And he said, sir, it's everything I have, but I'll give it to you if you'll just please give me that painting, because the one in that painting means more to me than absolutely everything on the face of this earth. He's the one who died to save me.

So the auctioneer struck down the gavel, and he said, okay, the painting's sold for \$6. The boy goes up and gets the painting, and people stand up and kind of laugh and say, all right, now, let's get on with the real stuff. Let's get on with the auction.

The auctioneer slammed down the hammer one more time, and he said, this auction is over. And they said, what do you mean this auction is over? It hadn't even begun. And he opens up a will and testament

from the old man.

It simply said this, the one who takes my son gets it all. Gets it all. The point is this, it's only the son.

You know, I really don't like southern gospel music very much at all. I know in Alabama, that's probably a dangerous place to say that. I'm so sick of people singing about streets of gold and gates of pearl, I could care less about streets of gold and gates of pearl.

I could care less about a mansion on the hillside. I could care less about all that other stuff. Heaven is heaven because Jesus Christ is there in the fullness of His glory.

What do you want? Do you want to be saved? Snakes want to be saved. My question is, do you want Jesus? Do you want Jesus? That's the question, isn't it? Do you want Him? Not for what He can give you, but because of who He is. Pastor.

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