

# The True Gospel

by Paul Washer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the nature of sin, and how these truths are essential for a deep and rich relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 1:05:19

**Topics:** "Gospel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses a powerful illustration to emphasize the need for justice. He describes a scenario where a judge pardons a murderer, causing outrage and a demand for justice. The speaker then highlights the inconsistency in our own demands for justice while questioning why we expect God to intervene in the atrocities of the world. He argues that the true gospel has been forgotten and that the church needs to rediscover it. The speaker also reflects on the inherent sinfulness of humanity and the history of violence and injustice.

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## Transcript

To Grace Fellowship this evening. Just one quick little thing before we get started. Most of you, when you came in, would have been handed a little card.

It's got a web address on it, but some of you were late and wouldn't have got one. If you didn't get one, you can pick one up from the sound desk at the back. At that web address, we put up our video sermons each week.

We have the Ashford Bible Conference from earlier this year. And Paul's message from this evening is going to be posted up, hopefully, sometime next week. So if you want to see it again in all its HD glory, then that's the place where you can get it.

So please do take that with you. We're very privileged this evening to have Paul Washer here to share with us from the word again. I hadn't heard Paul speak in the flesh until yesterday.

Like many of you, I'd seen clips on YouTube and here and there and had been most encouraged. When we heard him yesterday, Andrew and I spoke afterwards, and we were just so encouraged to hear the passion in Paul's heart, to hear the concerns he has for the church, to hear that and to know that we share the same passions and concerns and desires was such an encouraging thing for us as a fellowship. But the thing that struck me most of all was, as I was sharing with someone at our church this morning, you

can take anybody and you can train them up in theology.

You can take anybody and you can, to some degree, give them training in public speaking. Homiletics, as we call it in our Christian circles. But you can't give anybody the gift of teaching.

And when God, by His Holy Spirit, speaks through a man, it's a powerful thing. And Paul has that gift. And we're very, very grateful that he's here to share with us tonight.

So, if Paul would come up, that would be great. Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Romans, chapter 3. It is a tremendous privilege for me to be here. England has a very important place in my heart because of the men and women of God who have lived here in the past.

The truth, the theology, the gospel, the preaching, the missionaries that have come out of this country is utterly astounding. If there has ever been a nation blessed, it is yours. And that is why it is so necessary that that tradition of truth continue on.

Because to whom much is given, much is required. You know, it's going to happen. A prophet is not honored in his own home.

But do you not have any idea how many Americans come here just to find the graves of the men that many Englishmen no longer remember? The Bunyans, Spurgeon, Martin Lloyd Jones. So many. If there ever was a time in the history of the West that we need men and women to stand up and join their fathers in the fight for the gospel, it is today.

This is a dark hour for the West. Very dark hour. And what we need are men and women to sell themselves out to the person of Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ, to serve one another, to die to self, and to represent what the body of Christ is supposed to be.

To pull ourselves away from the world and the materialism of the world, the distractions of the world, and give ourselves to the things of God. Soon everyone in this room will perish. We will all go the way of all flesh.

It seems like yesterday I was 9, today I'm 48, and tomorrow I will be gone. What kind of legacy will I leave? The only legacy that will matter is that which has to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I also want to thank you for your kindness, generosity shown to HeartCry.

The offering that has been taken up will be given to support missionaries. I'm very fortunate that when I go somewhere to preach, because of HeartCry and God's providence, I have no need of touching the offering given by the people. But it will all go to support a hundred or so missionaries and their families around the world.

So thank you very, very much. Also, I want to thank you on behalf of my family. John and Gobby Green told me that for them, when they were back in England for a spell, that this place was an oasis to them.

That here they heard the word of God. Here they found true fellowship with believers. And that's a great, great encouragement for me.

Let's go to our text. Romans chapter 3, verse 23. For all have sinned and fall short to 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.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I thank You for this day. For the kindness that You have shown us.

I thank You that we have Your Word to guide us. That we have not been left to ourselves or our own wisdom. But that we have a sure prophecy written down in the Bible.

That speaks much of Christ and teaches us to love Him. Father, I pray that You would use Your Word in the life of every person here, including myself. Those of us who know You, Father.

That we would know You in a greater way and be more passionate in our relationship with You. That if there is someone here tonight, that as You created the world, You would recreate their heart. You would take out their heart of stone and put in its place a heart of flesh that is supple and can respond to You.

Pray that by Your Spirit, You would draw them and that they would see Christ as all sufficient and all precious. Father, I pray for this country. Dear God, that You would have mercy.

That You would raise up men, women to build up the ruined wall and to stand in the gap. That salvation might spread throughout this land and from this land. That it might cover the world as the waters cover the sea.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Many scholars and theologians have said that the passage that I read to you just now could be labeled as the most important passage in the entire Bible. Some have said that if they had to lose every portion of Scripture except one, this would be the one that they chose to keep.

Now, we're going to look inside this passage to see what is so very important about it. And what we are going to discover is the Gospel. Now, if you're thinking for a moment, well, hold on, I came here to hear something deep.

I didn't come here to hear a Gospel presentation. That thought betrays you and demonstrates that you know very little about the Gospel. There is no truth greater, no truth deeper than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And today, in the West, we've reduced it down to a few spiritual laws or five things God wants you to know. And therefore, we are not truly preaching the real Gospel, nor are we able to glory in it. One of the greatest needs of our day in the church is not to invent a new Gospel, but to rediscover the Gospel we have forgotten.

I like to say it this way. On the day of the Second Coming, you will understand absolutely everything about the Second Coming. But you will be in heaven an eternity of eternities, and you will still not even have begun to understand or comprehend the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's how rich, that's how deep it is. And my desire is that the passion of your life would be the person of Christ and what God has done for us through Him. That that would be the thing that drives you, so that you have no need in this church to light a false fire, or to seek entertainment, or to hold emotional rallies.

Because all the fire you need is burning in your heart because of your knowledge of Christ and your knowledge of the Gospel. For all have sinned. We don't make much of sin today.

We must. We cannot understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ apart from understanding the meaning of this passage. To sin means to miss the mark.

To be dislocated. To not hit the blank. It is a terrible thing when you think about against whom we have sinned.

The Puritans used to say something like this. You have not sinned against some small mayor of a tiny village. And I would say you have not sinned against some meaningless bureaucrat.

You have sinned when you sinned against the God of glory, whose greatness, and goodness, and glory, and love proves that He is deserving of absolute perfect reverence and obedience. But all men, including myself, including you, have turned away from that. Now let me give you an illustration.

On the day of creation, God tells the sun to put itself in a certain place, and it bows and obeys Him. He tells the stars to find their place, the place He has marked out for them in heaven, and they obey Him. He tells the planets to march in the order that He gives them, and they obey Him.

He tells the mountains to be lifted up, the valleys to be cast down, and they obey. He tells the great seas, you will come to this border, and you will come no further, and they obey. And then He looks at you and says, Come, and you say, No! Our sin is so horrible that I want you to know this.

All of creation stands as a witness that we are worthy to be condemned. I know that's not heard much in our modern times, but it is true. And until you understand the depth of the sin of man, you cannot understand the glory of God in the Gospel.

Let me give you an example. Where did all the stars go this afternoon? You couldn't see them because there was so much light. You could not see their glory.

You could not even find them. But when the pitch black darkness of the sky appeared, the stars came out in the fullness of their glory. In the same way, we cannot understand the glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ until it is set against the pitch blackness of our own sin.

Some might die for a good man. Someone might die for a righteous man. But Christ died for us while we were sinners.

And in that there is much glory. He came for us not because of us, but in spite of us. And the more we see that, the more we will love Him.

Do you remember what Jesus said about the sinful woman? She loves much. Why does she love Him much? Because she's been forgiven much. I would submit to you that we do not love Christ as much as we should because we do not realize how much we have been forgiven.

And we do not realize how much we have been forgiven because we refuse to open the dark veil and look at the sinfulness of man. Because the more we see the profound depravity of our own selves and our people and our society, the more we glory with amazement at what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Looking at the sin of man is not an end in itself.

That would just lead us to despair. But we look at our sin so that it might lead us to Him. Paul says that's the purpose of the law, isn't it? The law was never given to save us.

Never. It was given to show us our sin so that we would realize we cannot save ourselves and we would run to Christ. That's a very important thing.

Very important thing. For all have sinned. And that does not mean, my friend, that every person prior to coming to Christ is basically a good person, but every once in a while slips up.

It means that all a man does prior to coming to Christ is sin. You see, here's something that you need to understand. The Decalogue or the Ten Commandments is somewhat split in half.

The first section of commandments are with regard to man's duty to God. The other section is with regard to man's duty to man. And so many people today think that because they're good to their fellow man, that they are righteous before God.

Well, first of all, I would wager that we're not as good as we think to our fellow man. We sin against our fellow man. But even if we were perfect in our deeds towards our fellow man, we would still be in grave error, in sin.

Why? Why? Sin is sin only in relationship to God. If you're good to the fellow man, but you totally ignore the God who made you, you totally rebel against the God who gives you every breath and makes your heart beat, you are in a wrong way. You have sinned.

Man is basically a self-absorbed creature. Would we not all agree with that? Our great problem is our self-absorption, our selfishness, our self-love. We don't think much about our fellow man, and we think even less about a God we do not see, but we know He's there because He's made sure that we would know He's there.

We live our lives in His world, and whether we like it or not, we are His creatures, His property, His possession. We receive so many good things from His hand. And yet, do we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength? No.

But that's the greatest commandment. And do we do everything that we do for His glory? When a professional football team wins the championship, is it for the glory of God? Is that what they say on television? Absolutely not. It's for their own.

We are a self-glorying, self-loving people. It's true. It's true.

Now, I want us just to look quickly at a passage in Genesis. Genesis chapter 6, verse 5. This is prior to the flood and the reason for it. It says in chapter 6, verse 5, 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.

You say, oh, they were a wretched lot prior to the flood. Guess what? When they got off the boat, they were still a wretched lot. You say, well, that is not a description of me.

Would you like to wager a hundred pounds on that? Because if I could take out your heart and put it on a DVD, every thought you've ever had, every deed you've ever done, every word you have ever spoken, and show it here tonight as a film, you would run out of here and you would never show your face here again. As a matter of fact, if some of you saw me getting ready to turn on the switch, you would get out of

your seats and tackle me. Screaming wildly that the thoughts of your heart not be exposed.

That's true. As a matter of fact, some of you thought things about me while I was walking up here that you would be embarrassed to admit. I see who's laughing.

Do you see what I'm saying? What God testifies with regard to us is true. Now, we can humble ourselves before the Word of God, or we can stick out our chest and go to ruin. Look in chapter 8, verse 21.

This is after the flood. 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.

This doesn't just mean from teenage years. It goes even farther back. As a babe.

As a child. Let me ask you a question. Do you have to teach your child to be selfish? Do you have to train them to do that? Did you have to work very, very hard to teach them not to lie? Because, oh, they wanted to be truthful.

No, you didn't have to teach them any malady. You didn't have to teach them any sin. Before society even got a hold of them, they were doing quite well in the nursery sinning.

Turn a couple of three-year-olds loose in a nursery and put a favorite toy in between them. World War III. I remember one time on the Amazon.

The Lord will not let you get away with a deviant thought, I can assure you. I pulled up a boat there on the Amazon. I was going down this beach, and I saw these two children from tribal children playing naked.

No television. No Hollywood. Nothing.

And I thought to myself as they were playing there in the sand, I thought, how innocent. Well, I walked down a bit, turned around and came back. They were practically beating one another to death.

Goodbye, paradise. Hello, Cain and Abel. It's rooted in us.

Look at the history. Look at our history. Has there ever been peace? One philosopher says, no, there's never been peace.

If you don't hear gunshots, it's only because everyone is reloading. It's true. Look at the atrocities.

Look what man does to man. I'm an outdoorsman and spend as much time as possible in the woods and in the mountains and the wilderness. I've never seen even bears treat one another like humans treat their own children at times.

What's wrong with us? If we say society, then my question is, then how did society get that way? Well, it was made of us. Then we're going around in circles. The problem must begin with our own heart.

Look at Isaiah 64. Six, for all of us have become like one who is unclean and all our righteous deeds are like filthy garments. Isn't it true? And it is amazing.

Almost every, well, all the religions of the world with the exception of, I think, Christianity and most people who identify themselves with Christianity. If we were to walk out into England tonight or the United States of America and ask people, if you died right now, where would you go? Well, the majority of the people

who say that they would go to heaven will give you this answer. Because I'm good.

I've never killed anybody. I try to do well. No.

You see, God is a perfectly righteous God. He is. And we are not.

I was sharing this morning something I'll share with you right now. Do you know what man's greatest problem is? I'll tell you. God is love.

You say, what? Man's greatest problem is that God is good. How can that be? Well, let me ask you a question. Does a criminal fear a corrupt judge? No.

He can buy them off. The corrupt judge is just like the criminal. No.

They can work together even. A criminal does not fear a corrupt judge. A criminal fears a good one.

Our greatest problem is that God is good because we are not. He must deal with us. Isn't it amazing? Sometimes when I'm on a university campus, I'll try to... Well, maybe I shouldn't tell all my tricks.

But what I will do is this. I'll talk about God's lordship over the people I'm preaching to. That God is Lord.

He is sovereign. And you are to submit to Him. And I keep going and going and pressing the point until some university student, some brilliant mind pops up and says, I am an autonomous creature and I ought to be able to do exactly what I want to do.

Okay. Point taken. Now sit down.

Then I keep going. Then I start talking about all the atrocities in the world. The millions of people that were killed by socialism and Stalin.

The millions who died in Nazi Germany. The millions who died in Cambodia. Those who are starving to death in Africa because of corrupt leaders who will not even give out the food unless money is paid.

And the same student will jump up and say, Why doesn't God do something? I go, I got you. You demand freedom to do whatever you want. But you want God to jump over there and make everybody else conform to His will.

You see, the great problem is man does not want to submit to the lordship of God. Why? They do not want to submit to God's commands. Why? Because God's commands are good.

Let me ask you, what's so wrong about honor your father and your mother? Then why don't we want to do it? And we don't. Especially this generation. What's so wrong with you shall not murder? What is exactly, I've never been able to figure this out, what is wrong with you should not commit adultery? What is wrong with you should not steal? And you should not bear false witness? Why are we so angry? Are these laws terrible? Or are they good? They're good.

Then why do we not want to obey them? Because we're not. Is God a tyrant? Because He says, I made you and these are my laws and they are good laws and they are written for you that you might live and not die? You know what we're like? We're like a man who awakes from a coma and realizes he's on a life support system and then tries to do everything in his power to rip the cords out of his arm. We're like a man who sits on a branch a hundred feet above the ground and curses the branch and claws at it with his

hands trying to tear it off the tree.

And when he does, he'll perish. That's why the Puritans would refer to sin as insanity. All have sinned.

Let's go back to Romans. Look for a moment in chapter 3, verse 10, As it is written, there is none righteous, not even one. I think he put that not even one in there because if he had just said there's none righteous, someone would have said, yes, I know, but.

No, not even one. Look at verse 12. There is none who does good.

There is not even one. You know, it goes back to this thing. How many times did Adam and Eve sin before they were cast out of the presence of God? Once.

How many times have you sinned? Can't even begin to count it with a calculator or a supercomputer. We're not good. Maybe if you compare your life to Hitler or Mussolini, you would demonstrate some virtue, but compared to a holy God who is all love, you prove to be loveless without holiness.

You say, oh, I'm not as loveless as all that. I can use your marriage as an example. How difficult is it for you to love one another as you ought? How many fights do you get in? Squabbles, arguments.

Paul says in verse 19. Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law. And here's the purpose of the law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.

The purpose of God pointing out our sin is a kind purpose. It's to shut our mouths that we not boast before Him. He seeks to cage us in with the law so that we see that we cannot save ourselves.

We cannot make ourselves acceptable to Him. To shut us off from every human hope of virtue and merit so that we might fall upon Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. The only begotten Son of the living God.

The once and for all sacrifice that pays for the sin of man. Now he goes on and he says this. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

We don't have much time to really grasp this, but I just want you to think about this. In modern contemporary thought, this means that God made us for a glorious purpose and we have not reached that glorious purpose because of our sin. Well, that's part of it, but I don't think that's the main thought.

The main thought is this. We were made for the glory of God and we have fallen short of that and that's why we're so miserable. You see, as I share often, I make long bows and you can shoot one of my bows very, very far.

It's a good bow, but you can't play music on it. Now you can kill a deer with it, but you can't play music on it because it wasn't made for that purpose. And if you try to play music on one of my long bows, you will be frustrated and so will everyone around you.

You were made for God and that is why man is so frustrated. We were made for His glory, His purposes. And one of the greatest sins is when the giftedness that He's given each one of us is not used for Him.

For Him. Now, having spoken much about this, the sin of man, we have in verse 24, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Now, what does justified mean? Justified means this, that although men have sinned and deserve condemnation, that God is able to justify man or declare man to be right with Him.

Do you see that? To justify means it's actually sort of a legal or a forensic term. It means to declare someone legally right before the throne of God. Do you see that? So the moment a person believes in Jesus Christ, it means that God declares that person to have a right standing with Him legally and God treats that person as having a right standing with Him.

Now, it says something very important. Being justified as a gift. Now, I want to do a comparative study of religion right now.

There are really only two religions in the world. One is a religion of works and the other is a religion of grace. Christianity is that religion of grace.

If we were to, for example, interview a Jewish believer and say, sir, if you died right now, where would you go? His answer would be, if he's devout, he'd say, well, I would go to paradise. Why? Well, because I've read the Torah. I've read the law.

I love the law. I seek to be a righteous man. I walk the way of the righteous.

I'm a righteous man. We talk to a Muslim. Sir, if you died right now, where would you go? I'd go to paradise.

Why? I love the Quran. I have given the alms. I have made the pilgrimages and the prayers.

I am a righteous man. Now, if we talk to a Christian, and that's very, very hard because there's so many distortions of that name. So many people who claim that name that are not truly Christian.

But a genuine biblical Christian, he said, sir, if you died right now, where would you go? He would say this, I would go to heaven. Why? And then he would say something very unusual, something quite different than everyone else. He would say this, I was born in sin, and I have broken every law of my God, and I deserve the greatest of condemnation.

You stop him and say, sir, the other two men I understand. They're going to heaven because they deserve it. You tell me you're going to heaven even though you deserve just the opposite.

How can it be? They're going to heaven and I understand it based upon their own virtue and merit, but you're telling me you're going to heaven even though you claim to have no virtue or merit. How can that be? And the Christian smiles and says this, because I'm going to heaven founded upon the virtue and the merit of another, Jesus Christ my Lord. And so, in that sense, the Christian is the only one who can boast about going to heaven without boasting about himself because he's acknowledged that it has nothing to do with himself and everything to do with the grace or gift of God.

Now, when I say that, there's always detractors in the audience that say, yeah, yeah, I see that now. The Christian says he believes in Jesus. He lives like the devil and he's still going to heaven.

Not at all. You see, you need to understand Christian theology. Man has two problems and both of them deal with sin.

The first problem is the condemnation of sin. You are condemned because of your sin. Justification takes care of that problem.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ are no longer condemned, but declared right before God based upon what Christ has done for them. But then there's also a doctrine called regeneration, being born again. And what does that mean? The person that has believed in Jesus Christ has been born again.

God has done such a supernatural work in their heart that they become a new creature and as a new creature, they live a different way. You see, because what you need to understand in the words of Jesus that what comes out of our mouth is of very little value with regard to our profession of faith because he says, many will come before me on that day and say, Lord, Lord. And I'll say, depart from me.

I never knew you. Let me give you an example. I'm from America.

I know nothing about soccer. So I tell you, I'm a football player. I'm a soccer player.

And you go, really? Tell me about the game. I don't know anything about it. Tell me about the rules.

Got me there. Show me how you can kick a ball. And I try to kick it and fall down.

And you look at me and you go, you're no soccer player. Use the same logic with Christianity. My dear friend, there are all sorts of things going on in this world today in the name of Jesus Christ that have absolutely nothing to do with the name of Jesus Christ.

And there are a lot of people claiming relationship with Jesus Christ that have no relationship whatsoever with Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, if there is a devil, and there is, and he is the enemy of Christianity, isn't it the wisest thing he could do is to raise up a group of people who call themselves Christians though they live like the devil? And that has happened, my friend. But remember this, you will find no excuse on the day of judgment by pointing to other condemned people who claim to belong to Jesus.

Because the person you have to deal with is not them. It's Jesus Christ Himself. Who is He? You see, you only have three options.

He's a liar because He said He was the Son of God and He knew He wasn't. That's a liar. Or He's a lunatic.

He said He was the Son of God because He sincerely believed He was the Son of God. But anyone who says that and believes that and is not the Son of God is a lunatic. As C.S. Lewis said, on the level of a poached egg.

Or He's Lord. And if He's Lord, then He is the one with whom you must deal. So now, it goes on.

He says this, and very, very important. He said, justified as a gift by His grace. Now look at that.

Here is God telling a mass of sinful humanity, You have disobeyed Me at every turn. You deserve condemnation and all of heaven testifies to the same. And you cannot do anything to pay for your crimes.

But, God says, I have. I've done it. Is that a terrible God? Is that a God that you would say, I want no part of that kind of God? Isn't it amazing though, that men, rather than accept the free gift of salvation, would rather set their jaw and say, I need nothing from deity.

I need nothing from God. I hear so many recently. I didn't used to hear this when I first started preaching many years ago.

But I hear this all the time. Young, proud, boastful men. Women sticking out their chest.

Saying on the day of judgment, I'll stand there before God and I'll tell Him, My dear friend, you will melt before God like a tiny wax figurine before a blast furnace. And do you know what it will be that will melt you? His goodness. His beauty.

His holiness. His love. His excellence.

His supremacy. Now, this is being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Redemption is a term.

To redeem means to set a captive or a prisoner free by means of paying a price. In order to set us free from the condemnation of our sin leading to eternal death, a price had to be made. Now, that price was not paid to the devil.

It was, in a sense, paid to the justice of Almighty God. And this is the point that I want you to understand. We're going to talk about a great deal from here on out.

It is this. The greatest problem in all the Scripture is if God is just, He cannot forgive you. Did you ever hear that before? It's the truth.

It's called the divine dilemma. If God is just, He cannot forgive you. You say, why? Well, let me give you an illustration.

Let's say you go home tonight. You find that your family has been slaughtered. And standing over them is the assassin with blood all over his hands.

You grab him. You throw him to the ground. You tie him up.

You call the police. The police takes him off to prison. And then the day of court comes.

He's to appear before the judge and be sentenced. He appears before the judge and the judge looks down at him and says this, I'm a very loving judge, so I pardon you. Go free.

Now, would you stand up in the courtroom and say, what a wonderful man. No, I assure you that what you would do is you would write the parliament. You would get in touch with the newspapers.

You would call up the television stations. You'd even try to get a hold of the queen. You would do everything in your power to make it known that there was a judge on the bench in England who was far more vile than the criminals He set free.

You would demand justice from your own earthly judges. How much more shall the judge of all the earth do right? The greatest problem in all the Scripture is this. If God is just and you have broken all His laws, how can He forgive you without becoming unjust? There's a great sort of illustration of this in the book of Proverbs 17-15 where it says this, He who justifies the wicked is an abomination before God.

Now I have just spent about 10 minutes explaining to you that God justifies the wicked. God justifies the wicked in Romans 3. But the Bible also says he who justifies the wicked is an abomination before God. So

how can God justify the wicked and not be an abomination? How can He call the wicked righteous when they are not without becoming an abomination? There's only one way.

That God Himself would take upon Himself the guilt, the sin of the wicked and die in their place and on dying satisfy His justice once and for all and make it possible for Him to be both just and the justifier of us. And that's what happened on the cross of Calvary. You do not understand the cross unless you understand that.

Justice of God demanded satisfaction. He cannot turn His head away. He cannot be apathetic toward wickedness.

He cannot just pretend the sin didn't happen. It must be judged. Divine justice must be satisfied.

In order to satisfy it, His Son became a man and suffered the full punishment of divine justice. And when He died, He paid the price. That's redemption.

Now, just quickly, I want us to look at two things. We haven't much time, but I want to talk about the cross for just a second. Let me give you something and you just ponder it in your mind.

What do you think about it? That when Jesus was hanging on the cross, God the Father looked down from heaven and saw the punishment that was heaped upon Him by the hands of men, and God counted that as payment for our sin. Do you know what that is? That's heresy. That's false doctrine.

Our sins were not paid for. Our sins were not put away because of what the Romans did to Jesus. Our sins were put away because of what God did to Jesus.

Remember when He was on the cross and He cried out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? What you need to understand, I've heard preachers say that God looked down at His Son and couldn't bear to see His suffering, so He turned away. Are you telling me God lacked the moral fortitude to see His Son suffer? That's not what Jesus said. Jesus said the Father had forsook Him, abandoned Him.

What does that mean? We know those tracts of ours where it says man is sinful and God is holy, therefore, there's a great separation between the two. In order to close that separation, my friend, someone had to die separated from the favorable presence of God, to suffer outside the gates of the city, cut off from God, cut off from man. You and I deserve eternal punishment outside of the favorable presence of God.

In order to pay for that, in order to satisfy that, Christ had to suffer our abandonment. In Psalms 22, we have that very verse, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? The psalmist cries it out. And he even argues, all throughout the history of Your covenant people Israel, no righteous man has ever cried out to You that You have not answered, but I cry to You day and night and You do not answer me.

Why? And then he gives the answer, because You are the Holy One and I am a worm. Christ became that worm. He became that serpent lifted up in the wilderness.

He became the one who bore our sins and He was cut off from God. Not only cut off from God, but crushed under the wrath of God. Have you never read in Isaiah 53.10? It pleased the Lord, Yahweh, to crush Him.

It pleased God to crush the Messiah, His own Son. Does that mean that God got some gleeful satisfaction or joy out of crushing His Son? Absolutely not. What it means is that God's will was prospered.

It was carried out. Salvation was made available to men because on that tree, Jesus Christ bore their sins and the wrath of God that should be poured out on wicked men was poured out on the head of His own Son and Christ was crushed on that tree. I'll give you an example.

I always love to say this because it turns so many errors away from us. When Christ is in the garden and He cries out so many times, three times, let this cup pass from Me. Let this cup pass from Me.

Let this cup pass from Me. I've heard preachers say that Christ could foresee the Roman cross and the nails and the crown of thorns and the whip upon His back and all the shame and all the part of what it meant to Roman crucifixion. My friend, that's absolutely absurd.

I'll prove it. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the ascension into heaven, for the next three centuries, Christians, almost without number, were crucified. It was what you did to Christians.

Not only were they crucified, they were crucified upside down. Not only were they crucified upside down, they were covered with pitch or tar or kerosene and they were lit on fire to provide lights for the city of Rome. And the testimony of history is that most of them went to those crosses singing hymns joyfully, counting it a privilege to die for their Master.

Now, are you going to tell me that the followers of Jesus Christ boldly go to a cross singing hymns with joy while the captain of their salvation hides in a garden? Do you really think he feared a Roman cross? What was in the cup? The wrath of God was in the cup. That He would have, the One who is holy, would have to bear our sin. You don't think that's that big of a deal and I'll tell you why.

We can no more understand the dreadfulness of sin than a fish can understand that it's wet. A fish is always wet. We were born in sin, surrounded by it.

I mean, in Job we understand we drink down sin like it was water. It doesn't bother us. And each generation becomes harder.

Do you realize that? More calloused to it. But Christ was the holy, holy, holy Son of God who knew nothing but His Father's favor throughout all of eternity. But on that tree He bore our filth and He suffered abandonment throughout all of eternity.

Do you actually think God created the world because He was lonely? That's blasphemy. Don't ever tell your child that. He was never lonely.

In that perfect relationship of the Trinity it was nothing but love and glory. He didn't make the world out of need. He made the world out of His superabundance.

But on that tree, for the first time, the Father turned away from His only begotten Son. And then all the divine justice that ought to pour out on our heads was poured out on Him. And it pleased the Lord to crush Him.

A student asked me one time, kind of in an angry sort of way. He said, answer me this, how can one man suffering for a few short hours on a tree save a multitude of men from an eternity of suffering in hell? I said, oh, that's easy. Not only is it easy, it's wonderful.

It's because that one man on that tree was worth more than all the others put together. That's how. You take everything, mountains and molehills, crickets and clowns, large stones and small ones, everything that is in this world and the universe and beyond, you put it in the scale, you put Jesus on the other side of the scale and He outweighs them all.

It is not just His sinless perfection that saves us. It is His infinite worth that saves us. And He died.

And the veil was torn in two and now men can come back to God. And I will tell you this, and this is the one thing that will one day probably get me thrown in jail. It's the difference.

It's a tiny difference, but it's a great difference. It's the difference between a definite article and an indefinite article. Jesus is not a Savior.

Jesus is the Savior. He's the only Savior. I know what that sounds like.

Exclusive. I'm a bigot. I'm a moron.

I'm intolerant. I know all the words. I've heard them.

Did you know that Christians were persecuted throughout Rome for being atheists? Did you know that? Rome was filled with thousands of gods and everyone was happy with their God and they traded gods like we trade baseball cards. Well, football cards or whatever you trade. And then the Christians show up and say, no, He's not one of the gods and He is not one of the saviors.

He is the God and the Savior. And He's ascended to the right hand of God and He is the only Savior and He's coming again to judge the world. And just know this, mankind will one day stand before Jesus Christ and all of mankind will one day bow before Jesus Christ.

And to the glory of God the Father, they will cry out, One theologian sounds harsh, his words, but this is what he said. He's true. You will bow before Him in love and gratitude for your salvation or you will bow before Him because the one who yields and wields the rod of iron has broken your kneecaps, but you will bow.

A sovereign Lord of glory who will judge all men. And therefore, the Scriptures with the authority of God call all men everywhere to repent and to believe the Gospel. Now you sit there and you go, I can't believe this guy.

I mean, Christianity, we don't even acknowledge it anymore in England. We make fun of it. America, they could care less about Christianity.

On the university, they tell me this and that. And after all, there's all these Christian groups and all these crazy television preachers asking for money and all these things. And then this American comes here and tells me that Christianity is the religion of salvation and Christ is the only King.

It's absurd. You need to read your Bible well and I'll tell you why. Because all the things you mentioned, the Bible's already dealt with.

It said in the last days men would depart. It said in the last days false prophets would rise up. It said in the last days that men would look for preachers who would tickle their ears and line their pockets.

All the things that you think stand against Christianity were actually predicted by Christianity. Jesus Christ is Lord. He is Lord and Savior.

And you are commanded to repent. What does it mean to repent? The word in Greek primarily means to change your mind, to look at things absolutely differently. Let me give you an example of the Apostle Paul.

Here was a man who believed that Jesus was a blasphemer and he believed that all Christians ought to be destroyed. And then on the road to Damascus what happened? Paul's world view was totally and completely disintegrated. He discovers that the one he called a blasphemer was the Messiah and that the people of God he was killing were the people of God.

His mind was totally changed and he rose up and began to preach that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God. That's a change of mind that led to a change of everything, didn't it? To repent. To recognize who Christ is.

To recognize what we are. The word confession, homologueo in Greek, it's an amazing word, it really is. It means to speak the same thing.

And confession in Christianity is this. God comes to you and says, you are a sinner. Confession is when you speak the same thing.

God, I agree with what you say about me. I am a sinner. The only way to pardon and reconciliation is through Christ.

Lord, what you say, I agree with. It is only through Christ and you throw yourself upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. If I died right now, I'd go to heaven for one reason.

Not because we have missionaries all over the world or help Romanian gypsies learn to read or we feed this child or that one. No, if I died right now, I'd go to heaven because 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ died for sinners and I trust in Him. Let me give you one last illustration.

The iron workers, that's what we call someone in the United States. Incredibly courageous men who will climb 50, 60, 70, 100 stories up in the air and just walk on narrow beams building these skyscrapers. There's story after story of these men who are so confident, they just walk around as though it were nothing up there.

That maybe it's raining or it's a slick spot on the beam and a man is walking and begins to slip and right when he's slipping, he's going to fall off to his doom. He grabs a hold of a post that's near him. And that man's confidence in himself is so drained away that he has grabbed a hold of that post with every fiber of his strength.

And I have heard stories that men would have to go up there and literally break his hands to get him to let go of the post because he knew apart from that post, there was no salvation, no deliverance. That's what it means to believe in Christ. When you know outside of Him, there's nothing.

You trust in Him alone. Your good works? Absolutely vain. Your own strength and religious deeds? Futile.

You've thrown away every hope whatsoever in every other thing and you have thrown yourself upon Christ. Upon Christ. That is saving faith.

That is saving faith. I'm going to ask the musicians and the pastors and others, whoever, to come forward. I'm going to turn the service over to them.

You know, I'm not going to stand up here and manipulate you. I'm not going to try to move your emotions. I have preached to you the greatest message ever told.

But if your heart is troubled and you want to know more about Christ and you don't understand the cross or you don't understand repentance or you don't understand faith, I'll stay here all night and talk to you after the service if necessary. Why? Two reasons. Christ deserves it.

Second reason. God loves sinners and desires that they be saved. And you say to yourself, well, you had me there for a moment until you called me a sinner and then you offended me.

Well, then, if that's your attitude, it would have done no good to talk to me anyways. Because the only people who can be saved are those who recognize they're in need of it. Let's pray.

Father, I come before You and I ask You, Lord, to direct this service to do Your work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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