

**How Christ Died for God, Part 3: Declaring God's Righteousness**

Scripture: Romans 3:29-31

Code: 45-33

We come to Romans chapter 3 in our study tonight. And I really want to go on to the last little part of the message I intended to give last week, but also pick up some things that I think are of great importance for us in understanding the meaning of this chapter. We are at the heart of the teaching of the New Testament in this chapter. Paul has described for us the human condition. He has detailed for us the human situation from the divine viewpoint. Men, religious and irreligious, moral and immoral, have chosen to glorify themselves rather than God. We learned that from chapter 1. Consequently, both kinds of people, religious and irreligious or moral and immoral, are under the wrath of God, under the condemnation of God's judgment.

But, God also made it possible for man to avoid that judgment and make men right with Him, make them acceptable in His presence. And the way He did it was to pour out His fury and to pour out His wrath on Christ and Christ became the substitute for men. He bore the wrath of God. He suffered our pain. He died our death. And His death satisfied God's just requirement and it freed God's love and mercy and grace to be enacted toward man because the penalty was paid.

So, the news was bad in chapter 1 and 2 and part of chapter 3, but the news is very good in the text to which we are looking. Paul has said Christ became a satisfaction in His death. He satisfied the just requirement of God's divine and holy nature. He satisfied what God required against sin and now God has been able to give to us His grace and mercy when we accept the work of Jesus Christ. So, in our text, chapter 3 verses 21 to 31, is really a unit that tells us about the meaning then of the death of Christ, how that Christ died as a satisfaction and we by faith in Christ and in the work He did receive the grace and mercy and forgiveness of God.

Now, we've tried to say it in a simple way. The death of Christ enables a man to be made right with God. That's basically what justification by faith means, or righteousness by faith means, that we are made right with God by faith, not by works, not by something we've done but by believing in what Jesus has done. And so, you remember verses 21 to 25 laid out a description of how a person is made right with God. And we saw in verse 21 that it is apart from legalism. You're not made right with God through legalism. It is based on divine revelation, verse 21 says, it is revealed, manifested by God. It is acquired by faith, verse 22 says, by faith in Jesus Christ. It is provided for all, it says, unto all and upon them all that believe. It is given freely, verse 24 says, we are made right with God freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And it is paid for by His sacrifice, verse 25, His blood, the act of pouring out His life became a satisfaction to God.

So, Paul has told us really some tremendous truths that we are made right with God not according to works or law but by God's own gift which is received by faith, provided for all who will respond in faith, given freely and paid for by the sacrifice of Christ. Now that is how God makes man right with Him. And that is the basic idea of justification by faith...to make men right with God, to make men acceptable to God, to enable us to have fellowship with God now and forever.

Now, there are two aspects to this justification, and I want you to listen very carefully because people get confused at this point. There are two aspects to being made right with God. And whenever you talk about justification by faith, you have to explain these two as I found out by many letters that I've been receiving. And I didn't take the time, perhaps as clearly as I should, so I will right now for a moment.

Justification by faith encompasses two things. First of all, it is a declaration. It is a statement. It is an affirmation. It is God saying - Based upon the merit of Jesus Christ, based upon the death of Christ, based upon the righteousness of Christ and your faith in Christ, I declare you to be right with Me, I declare you to be just, to be righteous. In Romans chapter 4 verse 11 it says that righteousness, the end of the verse, is imputed unto them. That it is ... that is, it is granted to them. Based on the work of Christ, God declares us righteous.

Now, in a very real sense, we are not righteous. We are unrighteous. And we don't, by believing, make ourselves righteous, but God declares that we're righteous and He imputes that righteousness to us in that declaration because Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for our sin. But I said this the other night and I want to make it very clear again. We are not only declared righteous in justification by faith, we are made righteous. And apparently some folks have difficulty with that. Now I agree that maybe you haven't been taught that way, but I believe the Word of God is clear and in a few moments I'll try to demonstrate that to you. We are not only declared righteous and people have always said justified means that God says Well, just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned. And so God just sort of says Well, I count you righteous even though you're really not. There is that declaration, but there also is secondly a reality of righteousness. We are not only declared righteous, we are made righteous so that you have not only imputation, which is a declaration of righteousness, but you have impartation which is a granting of real righteousness ... so that God is not guilty of some legal fiction, so that God is not play acting in some way, saying something to be true about us that isn't really true. I mean, you could simply look at it this way, if God says you are righteous, then guess what, you are righteous. Fairly obvious because God doesn't make up things. There is a genuine transformation.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made Christ to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." And the verb there is to become righteous in Him. So we actually do become righteous.

Now, the Old Testament has a word for this, the word for this, the word for "righteous" basically is tsedaqah in the Hebrew and this would be Paul's frame of reference, in the Hebrew. And the word tsedaqah means "to cause to be righteous." It is not simply a statement of something that isn't really true; it is a statement of something that is true. We are made righteous. In salvation, God actually causes us to become righteous. We are changed. Look at chapter 5 of Romans, verse 17, "For if by one man's offense, death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." Now there's a very good analogy. Now one man's offense brought death on everybody. Who was that one man? Adam and when Adam sinned, everybody was bound up in sin.

Now, it isn't that we were just declared sinners, we really are sinners, aren't we? I mean, that is not just some statement about us, that is a fact. We can be called sinners because we are sinners. And just as by one man's offense death reigned in the rest of us, so by the gift, or rather by Christ Jesus, the other one man in Paul's analogy, we have received the gift of righteousness. We are then in the parallelism of this text, in Adam made sinners, real sinners who really sin and in Christ made righteous, real righteousness manifest.

Now look at verse 19 and we find the same thought, different terms. "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." Not just counted as sinners but made sinners. "So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." And the word "made" there is kathistemi, for you Greek students, it means "to make." It is not just a declaration. It is not just God saying - Well, you're just as rotten and wretched as you've ever been but I'm going to just pretend you're righteous, or I'm just going to sort of account you as righteous. No, there's more than that. There's a real righteousness there. The word is used in the Scripture to mean just exactly what it says, "to make." It is a reality. It says in Matthew 24:45, "A faithful and wise servant whom his lord made ruler." It is a reality. It is something that really happens. And it's used that way again and again and again in Scripture and I don't want to belabor the point with all kinds of illustrations, just simply to say the word means "to make." So, we're truly made righteous.

Now, I'm convinced that the reason God can declare us righteous is because we really are made righteous, otherwise God is saying something that isn't so about us. And I know for years there have been many who have tried to teach that we are just declared to be righteous and we aren't really made righteous and therein is an excuse which says you can be declared to be righteous but since you're not made righteous there doesn't have to be any result. That's not the case.

Now I want you to turn for a minute in your Bible to Galatians chapter 3 and we have a little longer introduction because I had a short sermon left over from last week, so don't be nervous, but in Galatians 3 verse 24 it says: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith." Now there's the same thing--justification by faith. This is the terminology of the

Reformers, this is the great heart of Christian doctrine, we are made right by faith. We are made righteous by faith. We are made just by faith. We are just before God by faith. Now what does that involve? Is it only a declaration? Or is it a reality? What does it involve? Well, let's find out. Verse 26, "Being justified by faith" means we are all ... the what? ... the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. The same thing. If "by faith" justifies you and "by faith" here makes you a son of God, then justifying you and making you a son of God are ... what? ... same thing. So, justification then involves regeneration, now that's a very important point. Justification involves regeneration. We were enemies, now we are sons. We have been re-born. We've talked about that so many times that we are born again, we are born of the Spirit, we are born, says Peter, with an incorruptible seed, we have, John, 1:12 says, become the sons of God. First John 3, "We are now the sons of God." I mean, we literally are born into the family of God and that is a new birth, that is a regenerating, that is a new life. Put it in simple terms, that is an actual transformation-...n actual transformation. So justification by faith must encompass the concept of regeneration so that there must really be a righteousness before God can say there's one.

Now secondly, another theological term that applies here is the term "identification," verse 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ," and that is not talking about water, that's a dry verse, that verse is saying, "As many of you as have been dipped into Christ, have been put in union with Christ, have joined to Christ, have put on Christ." What a great statement! That's called "identification" by the theologians. "He that is joined to the Lord," 1 Corinthians 6:17 says, "is one spirit." So, we are really transformed. We become one with Him. We become clothed with Christ. And may I say to you, and don't be shocked by it, for a Christian it's almost impossible, if not impossible, to tell where you leave off and where Christ begins. I can't tell. When I live in obedience to Him and walk in the Spirit, I can't tell where I end and He begins, or He ends and I begin because we are so much one by His indwelling presence. And Paul may be referring to that toga virilis which was given to a Roman boy when he reached the age of manhood, he was then put on...this toga was put on him and he was granted all the rights and privileges of adulthood and no longer treated as a child, and so Paul is saying that when you came to Jesus Christ, you received the covering of the righteousness of Christ, you were in union with His death, you were in union with His resurrection, you are in union with Him in eternal, indivisible union with the living Christ. And that is an identification and so we have no fear of judgment because I we are clothed, as it were, in Christ.

Further, this justification by faith not only encompasses regeneration and identification but it also encompasses the concept of the seed in verses 28 and 29, "There's neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male or female, we're all one in Christ Jesus." And then he goes on, "And if you are Christ's then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." You then are also the partakers of the covenant. You become redemptive family, recipients of covenant blessing. Regenerated to the family of God, identified with Jesus Christ in an eternal and indivisible union, and then identified with all the family of blessing, all the family of promise, all the family of redemption that have sprung from the loins of Abraham. And that's not a racial designation, that's a designation of faith. Abraham is the

father of all who trust in God. He is the father of the faithful...for he believed God and became the father of those who live by faith.

And then further into the verse, you see we become heirs according to the promise, we receive all the promises of God. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. And then if you look at chapter 4 verse 5, when we've been redeemed and when we've become adopted as sons and we're in the family, and then it says in 6, and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your ... what? ... in your hearts. And you cry, "Daddy." In other words, there's marvelous intimacy, "Abba Father" means "daddy" and that word "Abba" you'll still hear in the east, it's still the word for daddy. You are no more a servant but a son and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Tremendous truth. Don't you think for a moment that justification by faith is simply some statement that God makes apart from any reality, there is a reality in justification, you are regenerated into the family of God, you are born again. And the new birth is the implanting of a new nature ... the implanting of a new nature. You are identified with Christ. You literally are cloaked in Christ. You become a part of the redeemed seed of faith. You become an heir to all the promises of God and you become the temple of the resident Holy Spirit of God. Now when justification by faith occurs then a person is transformed. You're given a new "I" -- a new ego - a new life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new ... what? ... creation," or creature. "Old things have passed away and behold, all things have become new." There is a whole new creation. Second Peter 1:4 says that you become, and this is marvelous, a recipient of the divine nature. I've said this to you before that your death will be less of a change for you than your conversion was cause you've already been fitted for eternity. You've been transformed. Sons of God, members of the covenant family with all the blessings, heirs of all that God promised, possessors of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the guarantee or engagement ring of our glorious future, and so we are literally made righteous, we are transformed, we are metamorphosed, if you will. And thus when I say you are made righteous, I mean exactly what I say.

In Galatians 2:20 it says so beautifully, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I," it's not the same old I, you're not the same, it isn't the same you and God just pretends you're different, it is different. "Christ lives in me and the life I know live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." It's a new I...you're a new creation. You are possessor of the divine nature, the Spirit of God lives in you, you are cloaked with Christ. That's transformation. You've been made righteous.

Now, what are the implications of being made righteous? And this is where we get into some real theological discussion. When I say you are made righteous, what do I mean? Well, let me tell you what I don't mean. I don't mean you're perfect. I don't mean you're sinless. Otherwise, the whole rest of the New Testament's a waste of time, right? Cause there's no sense in making commands to unbelievers, they can't do them. And if all the Christians are perfect, there's no sense in telling them anything 'Cause they're already doing it. But it's obvious that that isn't how it is. So when I say you are made righteous, that is not to say that you are sinless. It is not to say that you are perfect. It is to say

that God has recreated you into an eternally righteous transformed person, fit for eternity. But, for the time on earth, that new creation is encompassed within the flesh, our humanness, and that restricts the full manifestation and the full development of what that potentiated righteous creature is. Understand that? It's as if you're in there and you can't burst out because you're encased in your humanness. That's why Paul says in Romans, "It is not I, it is sin that is in me." And he makes an amazing distinction between I and sin that is in me. When he says "I" he means that new creation. And when he says "I sin" it isn't the "I" it's the sin that's in me and so we are not perfect because that new creation is encased, as it were, in our humanness and when we die, we fly from this humanness, we fly from this flesh to see the fullness of what that new creation is. And that's why it says in that day we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

Now, one other very important thing, the righteousness that I have and that you have as a Christian, justified by faith, is not your own righteousness. Whose is it? It's God's given to you. You couldn't earn it now anymore than you could before you were redeemed. It isn't yours. It's His granted to you. If it were just you, without God's gift of righteousness, you'd be all flesh and sin, like unregenerate people. So when we say God makes you righteous, He makes you righteous in Christ by the gift of His righteousness which cannot reach its fullness because it is ensconced, as it were, in our humanness and until that is burst asunder we'll never know the fullness of what that righteousness means. But, the longer you live as a Christian and the more you walk in the Spirit and obey the Lord, the more that new I overpowers the flesh. And that's why in Romans 8 Paul says ... in Romans 7 he's fighting and fighting and fighting against the flesh, in Romans 8 he discovers the Holy Spirit, see, and he says, "Okay, Holy Spirit, You take over." And then he begins to see that new I have victory over his sinfulness.

In Philippians 3, 1 want to show you just a couple of verses there, and we'll talk more about this, by the way, when we get to Romans 6, 7 and 8. Philippians 3:7, "But what things that were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ," he said. "I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. For whom I've suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse that I may win Christ." Now listen, here it comes, "And be found in Him but not having mine own ... what?...righteousness." It isn't yours. The end of the verse says, "...But the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." It is a real righteousness, it is given by God, it becomes ours by faith as Christ's righteousness is granted to us as a gift of God. We become right with God. It is not only a declaration, it is a reality. And for the first time in our lives, when we become Christians, we can do that which glorifies God ... because we have that new righteous nature.

And you see, you have to have both of those things in righteousness or it doesn't mean anything. Give you an illustration. Let's say my son was on...I was on the mission field with my son, maybe our family went to the mission field. And we were in a place of great poverty and disease. And there was a certain part of the city where there was a plague of disease and I said to my son, "Don't go there,

stay away from that area of the city because if you go there, you're going to get a fatal disease." And I gave him that word.

But let's say he went there anyway. And he got the disease. And he comes back to me and now he's got two problems: one is he's guilty of disobedience, and two is he's got a deadly disease. Now I could forgive him and say, "Look, I forgive you." I can see his repentance and his remorse and his sorrow and he could say, "Dad, I ... I'm so sorry I did it, I didn't want to do it, please forgive me." And I could forgive him and say it's okay, I forgive you and our relationship is okay, it's all right, I love you, I'll accept you and your repentance. But you want to know something? That isn't enough. Because he's got a fatal disease and I can say all I want but I can't get near him and he can't near me unless we do something about his fatal disease.

So you see, he does not only need forgiveness, he needs healing. He needs deliverance from the disease, or there can be no communion no matter what my heart attitude is. Otherwise he's left hopelessly defiled and my forgiveness means absolutely nothing. You see, he has to be relieved of the foul, contagious disease if he is to experience what it means to be right with his father. Do you understand that? He can never experience what it means to be right with his father, unless we get rid of the disease. He can never have communion with me or fellowship with me unless he is rid of the disease. There will be no intimacy. There will be no place in my presence. And so it is in justification by faith. God has to look at the sinner and not just forgive his sin and treat him as just, but He's got to heal his disease. You see that? Or He can't fit him for fellowship.

I believe Tozer spoke to this, he didn't know he did but I think he did. I was reading his book Rich Hines gave me the other day called DIVINE CONQUEST and it seemed to just fit in with it even though he was speaking on a different subject. He said this, "Saving faith invariably affects radical transformation in the life of the one who exercises it. It shifts the inward gaze from self to God. The believing man is overwhelmed suddenly by a powerful feeling that only God matters, a mighty desire to please God lays hold of him," end quote.

Now what generates that? I believe it's the new nature. It's the strong urge of the new I, you see, that's come to him through justification by faith. The only kind of religion that means anything is that which cannot only forgive but can also transform. You understand that? Tozer said, "I have not said that religion without power makes no changes in a man's life, only that it makes no fundamental difference. Water may change from liquid to vapor, from vapor to snow and back to liquid again and still be fundamentally the same. So powerless religion may put a man through many surface changes and leave him exactly where he was before," end quote. And you can't change the man by just saying different things about him. No, our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not leave us with an incurable disease, it makes us acceptable to God and therefore He declares that we are acceptable. Now we have a great Savior who has given us a great salvation.

Now let's go back and just finish up the last few thoughts on Romans 3. Now we have seen what salvation does for us. I just went through it. But in this passage from verse 25 on, the first half is what it does for us, 21 to 25a; 25b to 31 is what it does for God. And salvation is important toward us, it's even more important toward God. And four great things are stated here.

First of all, Jesus' death on the cross declared God's righteousness. Verse 25 says, "To declare His righteousness." That's why Christ died, to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. And we've explained that now for several weeks. In other words, Jesus had to die on the cross in order that God would manifest His righteous hatred of sin. If God just passed by sin, just forgave men, saved them, took them to heaven and nobody paid the penalty, then God could be accused of being an unjust God because a just God demands a penalty for sin. So when Jesus died on the cross, it is a declaration of the righteousness of God.

Secondly, the cross exalts God's grace...the cross exalts God's grace. After verse 26 in which he reaffirms what he said in 25, he then says, "Where is boasting? It is excluded. By what principle? The principle of works? No, because works would ... if we got saved by our works, we would boast. But by the principle of faith." So we conclude that a man is made right with God by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Now, if you're not saved by what you do, you're saved by what God did and that exalts God's grace, doesn't it? Because you couldn't do anything to earn it. G. S. Bishop said years ago, "Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen that they cannot lift the axe of justice, so corrupt that they cannot change their own natures, so averse to God that they cannot turn to Him so blind that they cannot see Him, so deaf they cannot hear Him, and so dead He Himself must open their grave," end quote.

God reaches out in grace to save so that the cross exalts His righteousness because it shows us how He demanded a penalty even if He had to pay it Himself and His grace, because He extends salvation to those who could never earn it and never deserve it.

Now the last three verses. The cross also reveals God's consistency. And I could have used several words, that might not even be the best one, but I think you'll understand. Verse 29, "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one God." We'll stop there.

Now justification by faith, Paul preached. The Jews believed you were justified by ... what? By works, or law. Now this verse attacks that in a very interesting way. Do you know the fundamental verity, the fundamental truth of all Judaism? Do you know what every Jew first of all knows as the definition of his religion? It's Deuteronomy 6:4, "The Lord our God is one God." That is the essence of all Jewish faith. That is the first article of the manifesto of Judaism.. "The Lord our God is one God." And that is repeated throughout the Old Testament Scripture. God is one God. There are no other gods. God will



tolerate no other worship. All the other idols are wood and stone and so forth that cannot answer. There are no other gods, only the one God, the true God. Isaiah 45:5, "I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside Me." And then in verse 6, "That they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside Me, I am the Lord, and there is none else." "Look unto Me and be saved all the ends of the earth." Listen to this, "For I am, God and there is none else."

Now, if people are to look unto Him and be saved, He's the only God, then He's the only way to be saved, right? Now that's what he's saying here. He says to the Jews, "Look, is God the God of the Jews only?" And they're going to have to say no. Because there's only one God and He is the only God and they know it from the articles of their faith, He is the God of everybody. And that's basic. Is He not the God of the Gentiles? And he answers as if he were answering for the Jews. "Yes, He's the God of the Gentiles, seeing He's one God." He's everybody's God. You've only got one God and He's everybody's God. There are no other gods. Now that was basic to their understanding.

First Corinthians 8:5 says: "For though there be that are called gods, and maybe some called gods, whether in heaven or in earth as there are gods many and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things." There may be some called gods, but there's only one.

Now, watch this reasoning. If there's only one God and all Israel would have to affirm this, if there's only one God then He must be the God of the Jew and the Gentile. Now this is very hard for the Jews to handle because they didn't like to think that the Gentiles got in on their God. That, you see, was Jonah's problem. When God said - Go to Nineveh and preach - it wasn't that Jonah was afraid to preach, he didn't mind that. It wasn't that Jonah was lazy. It wasn't that Jonah wanted to stay home with his wife and kids. It wasn't that Jonah didn't think he'd get a big enough love offering. You see, the reason Jonah did not want to go to preach in Nineveh was he did not want Gentiles getting converted and making claims on his God. That's how narrow their perspective had become. He ran because he really didn't want to see Gentile salvation. You think that's not true? Listen to Jonah 4:2, "He prayed to the Lord and said, I pray, Thee O Lord, I fled for I knew that Thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repentest thee of thee evil." I knew if I went there You'd save those crummy Gentiles. That's what he said. And I really couldn't handle it. Really hard for them. But they knew God was the God of the Gentiles. He was the God of everybody.

And the Old Testament, oh my it's so loaded with it. And Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave Thee, or to turn away from following after Thee, for where Thou goest, I will go, and where Thou lodgest I will lodge, Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." And she was a Gentile. God had always been the God of the Gentiles. He was the God of everybody. Look at Naaman the Syrian, Dr. Barnhouse use to say Naaman was the Hitler of his era, and Naaman the Syrian, who to received leprosy, came to worship the true God. He is the God of everybody.

Now listen, if God is the God of the Jew and the Gentile, then God has a mode of salvation that is the same for both. Follow this. And it can't be keeping the law because the Gentiles ... what? ... they don't have the law... they don't have it. So if God is going to justify the circumcision, it's going to be by faith and the uncircumcision, it's going to be by faith because one God has one mode of salvation. It's interesting reasoning. If there were many gods, there could be many religions, but there's only one God, there can only be one way to approach Him. "Go into all the world," said Jesus, "and preach the gospel to ... whom? ... every creature." The same gospel for every creature. "Neither is there any other name given among men whereby we must be saved." No other name-"No man comes unto the Father but by Me," said Jesus. Only one way, one God, one mode, one approach--that's it. God is the God of everybody and God doesn't have a works system for Jews and a faith system for Gentiles. And that may have been what they were sort of coming to--"Well, maybe He does save some of those people by their faith, who haven't heard, who don't really know, who just can trust, sort of in what ever limited perceptions they have, but for us it's law." And he is saying No, there are not two ways, there's one God and that's basic to your faith and justification by faith comes to those who come to that one God, whether they be Jew or Gentile. So salvation must be apart from keeping the law, it must be apart from works for God to be consistent. Heathen and religionist alike are saved by faith in Christ.... very basic, very basic.

And you can find that same principle throughout the New Testament. There is no other way to be saved than by faith in Jesus Christ ... no other way. Be you a religious Jew or a heathen Bushman... there is one God, 1 Timothy 2:5, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.

If indeed then, look at verse 30, God is one, and He is, then He will justify--and the future tense means a permanent purpose from now on, He will continue to justify, make right with Him--those who are the circumcision (that's the Jews) and those who are the uncircumcision the same way through faith. John Murray calls this "The ethnic universalism of the gospel." The whole human race, listen to me, is reduced to the same level in verse 19--see it there? The whole world is guilty of sin so they're reduced to the same level in the doctrine of sin and here in verse 29 and 30, they are reduced to the same level in the doctrine of salvation. It's exactly what was said in 1:16 of Romans, "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." It's the same. It's the same. God is utterly consistent. He is glorified by the revelation of His absolute, unwavering consistency.

So, God is on display at the cross. I mean, you know, when you see the mass of religions all over the world and you see the complexities of all of those religions, and then you look at Christianity--one God, one Mediator, I think of what Ephesians says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all." one way to Him and that's so direct and so clear and how it glorifies God, utterly consistent, one way through faith. And He never changes.

People say, "Well, were you saved by faith in the Old Testament?" You better believe it. That's the only way anybody's ever been saved. God has never altered His method one wit. You say, "Well, weren't they saved by works in the Old Testament?" No, no one could ever be saved by works. They were responsible to live a life of righteousness just as we are, but they were brought into the capacity to do that by believing God. Noah, Genesis 6:8, people say, "Oh, we're in the dispensation of grace, grace didn't begin till the New Testament." You want to bet? I don't bet, but I'll still bet you that. Genesis 6, are you ready for Genesis 6? "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." And if he hadn't found grace there, he would have been drowned like everybody else.

Moses, Exodus 33, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Romans 4:3, Abraham was saved by faith. Romans 4 will also teach us that David was saved by faith. And that's before Israel. That's pre-Israel. That's way back ... Noah, Moses, Abraham.

Then you move into the Israel ... the period of the national theocracy, and the same thing is true. The prophet Habakkuk says the just shall live by what? By faith. And you read Hebrews 11 some time. Read it. It starts all the way back with Enoch... by faith Enoch. And by faith all these heroes, all the way to the eleventh chapter. And then you come into chapter 12 and it says, "Seeing we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses," and that is not talking about people sitting in an arena somewhere, those people are witnessing to the beauty of faith, to the reality of faith, to the life of faith. And if you have this many people testifying to the reality of faith as the only way to God, then that's the way we ought to live, by faith. Never been any different. Men are redeemed always, past-present-future, by believing God. And in that time they had to believe all that God had revealed and now we believe all that God had revealed which is all that He'd -revealed then and all that He's revealed in His Son ... but we still believe all that He revealed.

And in this age in which we live, just as before Israel, during Israel's time and now as Israel's been set aside, we are redeemed by faith, by believing. But as James says, "Saving faith will manifest fruitfulness." There's no question about that.

You say, "Well, if you're not saved by works and you're not saved by keeping the law, doesn't this mean that the law is useless?" And that's the last argument he deals with in chapter 3. Look at it in verse 31. "Do we then make useless the law through faith? me genoito, no, no, no, no, no, We establish the law." We don't make it void. You see, this takes us to the fourth point. The cross of Jesus Christ declares God's righteousness; it exalts God's grace, reveals God's consistency and finally, confirms God's law.

You say, "Well, now wait a minute! That's a legitimate question. I mean, if you can't get saved by keeping the law, then what good is the law?" And you know, the Jew at this point may have been reaching back to some of his Old Testament roots. Psalm 119:126 says, "They have made void the

law." In Jeremiah 8 it says, "How do ye say, We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain He made it. The pen of the scribes is in vain." There had been others then who had sort of said - "Well, Your law is void, it's useless." If the law can't save us, then it's useless. All its efforts are zero.

No, no, no, no, no. No, no he says. "It is established." How can that be so? Listen very closely. Because the law was never given to do ... what? ... to save you. You say, "What was it given for?" It was given to show you, you needed to be saved. Big difference. It was given to demonstrate your sinfulness, not to save you from it. It was given to drive you to God in faith, to drive you to the point where you said, "I can't ... I can't live up to Your standards, God, I can't live up to Your standard. What will I do?" And at that point, God intervenes in His mercy and grace and says, "I think you see your sin, I think you're broken over your sin and repentant for your sin and I offer you through faith grace and forgiveness and healing."

So, the death of Christ on the cross doesn't make void the law, it establishes it. Now just sum it up in three simple thoughts. First of all, it establishes the law by the-penalty. You want to know how voi ... how valid the law was? It had to be **exacted**. Jesus had to die. The law was established in the cross of Christ. The law said - you sin, you die - and somebody had to die. That affirmed the law. The law said sin brings death and it had to be. The law is not useless, the law is not void. When Jesus died, He was saying - This law is in effect ... it must have its demands met. In Matthew 5:17 when Jesus said, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill them," I think He was particularly looking at the cross and saying, "I'm coming to verify the law by showing you that it must have its due."

So, in the death of Jesus Christ for salvation, the penalty of the law was paid and it established the validity of the law. Secondly, not only the penalty, but the purpose. You see, the law only had one purpose, and that was to bring us to Christ. Look at verse 20 of chapter 3 and I could take you to about a half a dozen but I won't. But this one says, at the end of verse 24, "...By the law comes the knowledge of ... what? ... of sin." In Romans 7, Paul says, "When I saw the law, then I saw my sin and I saw my death." I mean, if I didn't know the rules then I wouldn't know I was breaking them, right? So the law is your schoolmaster, Galatians 3 says, to drive you to Christ. It is your disciplinarian. It strikes blows against you...to show you your inadequacy, your inability. The law worked in Paul and all it did was stir up sin. When the law goes to work it just stirs up sin, sin, sin, sin, it can't cure it, it just makes it manifest. But it has to start the process of salvation at that point.

You say, "Well, why can't the law save you?" Because James 2:10 says, "If you keep the whole law and offend in one small point, you're done." So nobody can be saved by the law, all it does is stir up sin... stir up sin.

So, the law has a good use. And when Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, it's so masterful, laid down His law, He said, "I say this ... and I say this ... and I say this ... and I say this ... and here's what you ought to do ... and here's what you ought to do .... and here's what you ought to do," and you don't do any of it, and He said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," and "Your righteousness better exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees or you're finished," you better keep all God's law. And why was He telling them that? Some people say, "Oh well, that's how it's going to be, we're going to do that in the future and so forth." No, no, He was telling them that so they could see the impossibility of it all. Remember when He first gave them the law? They said, "Oh, we'll do all that." Remember that in the Old Testament? "We'll keep all those commandments." And so you know what the Lord did? He just kept piling them on till they couldn't even figure them out, let alone keep them. People say to me, "Well, why are all those laws in the Old Testament? So many little laws and all?" I think some of the stuff is there just to show them the absolute impossibility of doing it. And the whole point was to drive them to the need of a Savior. But it isn't void, believe me, it's valid.

And finally is the thought of potential--penalty, purpose and potential. When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, then you can fulfill the law, right? Then you can. Romans 8:3, "For what the law couldn't do in that it was weak through the flesh." In other words, the law in your flesh couldn't do anything. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." But we couldn't do it in our humanness, but we can do it through Christ, "If we walk not after the flesh but after ... what? ... the Spirit." Isn't that great?

Justification by faith does not make void the law; it makes the keeping of the law a possibility. The law is not useless. It had to have its just dessert and Christ die. It was there to drive us to Christ and it is there now to be fulfilled in the energy and Dower of the blessed Holy Spirit. So, the law is confirmed and when you look at the cross and you see Christ dying, see there the exaltation of God's law, His righteous wrath is coming down on Christ because His law demands it. And see there, also, the penalty for sin so that you understand that the law will drive you to see yoursinfulness. And then see in the sufficiency of Jesus Christ in the granting of His Holy Spirit, a new ability to keep the law.

The cross exalts God four ways: His righteousness, His grace, His consistency, and His law. I think of the hymn, "O what a Savior is mine; In Him God's mercies combine; His love will never decline; And most of all, He loves me." What a priceless treasure.

You've probably heard it said that if you work in a barnyard, you smell like a pig. You want to know something? God worked His salvation in the muck of this barnyard called earth and He came in human flesh and rubbed shoulders with pigs and went away without a stench ... only spotless glory for Himself. That's what Paul is saying. Look what salvation does for us. Look what it did to glorify our blessed God. And so, the Reformers said, "Salvation is *sole la gratia*, by grace alone... *sole a fidei*-by faith alone ... *sole Deo* glories--for the glory of God alone." Let's pray.

It's been a great joy to have shared these truths in this chapter. I suppose every preacher of the Word of God longs to teach this section because of its profound richness ... and yet is at the same time somewhat threatened by the awesomeness of the task, but what a joy it's been to delineate the doctrine of salvation as it glorifies God. And our great prayer, of course, is that God would be glorified in our lives as we affirm that salvation, as we believe in Jesus Christ, as we receive Him. And my prayer tonight is that if there is anyone who has not done that, that you would embrace the one who died for you, that you would see your sin as over against the law of God and that you would come to the one who alone can save you from that inevitable judgment. In your heart, all you need do is believe and open your faith to Christ and with all of the misgivings and all of the things you may not understand, He'll embrace your commitment at that point, fill in all the gaps, if you'll offer Him your life.

Father, we pray to this end for Christ's sake, Amen.

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