

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

God's Glory Displayed in Christ's Cross

Scripture: Romans 3:25-31

Code: 80-294

Open your Bible to Romans chapter 3, Romans chapter 3, and I want to read you verses 21 to 31. I'm going to read verses 21 to 31, just catch what you can as we go through this very important passage, Romans 3:21:

"Now apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe, for there is no distinction 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, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded by what kind of Law? Of works, no but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law, or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be, on the contrary, we establish the Law."

Now we love to talk about the fact that Christ died for us. It's not wrong to preach on Christ died for you. But that is not the subject that I want you to see this morning. Most people think of salvation only as it refers to us. And here we are at the beginning of Passion Week, here we are looking right at Good Friday and I want us to take a different look at the cross, different than the normal look that we take. We look at the cross and we see there the personal benefit. We see Christ dying for us and blessing us with the gift of salvation and eternal life, and we tend to sort of stop at that and think that that is the main issue. But you remember, don't you, that the main purpose for us being redeemed is so that we can worship God, right? God seeks true worshipers who worship Him in spirit and in truth. We'll spend our entire life both here and throughout eternity worshiping and glorifying God. And so in the truest sense, in the primary sense and not the secondary sense, in the primary sense Christ died for God. He died for the glory of God. He died for the honor of God. Salvation secondarily is for us, primarily for God.

And that is not inconsistent, but rather consistent with everything the Bible says. Psalm 115 verse 1, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but to Your name give glory because of Your loving kindness."

Whatever God does for us is for His glory. In Romans 1:5, says that the apostles went out and proclaimed the gospel for the sake of the name, that is for the glory of the Lord. And in Third John 7 it says that they went and preached for the sake of the name. It's all about the glory of God.

In Romans chapter 1 through 11 is the great treatise on salvation. All those eleven chapters focus on salvation. The gospel, which Paul is bound to preach, then human depravity, sin, fallenness, then comes the wonderful redemption that is in Christ which is explained through chapter 6, then sanctification in chapter 7 and glorification in chapter 8, and chapters 9 through 11, salvation is illustrated in the case of Israel and the Gentile church as well, and you go through all of the glories of salvation. You come to the end of chapter 11, the last verse, and it says, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." All of salvation is intended to glorify God. And so when you come to the cross, it's not just about being thankful for what's been done in your life, not just about celebrating blessing that has come to you, but it is about glorifying God. And that is what we will do forever and ever and ever.

So as we enter this week and we think about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, looking at His death and His sacrifice for sin, I want you to see it not from your side but from God's side. I want you to see how the death of Christ glorifies God, how Christ died for God. Now as I said, this is consistent with everything in Scripture. When you look at Scripture, even in the Old Testament, and you are confronted with God as a Savior as you are in the Old Testament, you read things like this, Isaiah 45:5, "I am the Lord, there is no other beside Me, there is no God." In the same chapter you drop down to verse 21, "There is no other God beside Me, a righteous God and a Savior, there is none except Me, turn to Me, be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God, there is no other. In the Lord, all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will glory." Everything redounds to the glory of the one true God.

In John 17 as Jesus came to the end of His ministry and He prayed that great prayer, He said, "I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work which You gave Me to do." And He said that over and over again that He came to glorify His Father, to glorify His Father. Philippians 2 tells us that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Second Corinthians 4:15, Paul preaches so that people can believe and give glory to God. First Peter 4:11, "So that in all things God may be glorified through Christ and it is to God that all glory and all dominion belongs forever and ever. Amen," says Peter.

So in the end, everything is to glorify God. And even the cross of Jesus Christ while it is secondarily about you is primarily about putting God's glory on display. We might not even know about the relatively obscure missionary, David Brainard, a wonderful missionary in our own nation, but

Jonathan Edwards made him precious to all of us because Jonathan Edwards wrote a massive biographical work on his life in which he incorporated many of David Brainard's own thoughts from his immense diary. Brainard died before he was thirty years of age and this is what he wrote, "I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give glory to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there, but to live and please and glorify God. My heaven is to please God and glorify Him and give all to Him and be wholly devoted to His glory." The eternal purpose of salvation is so that we can forever glorify God. And the very purpose of the cross was to put God on display. Most people look at the cross and see only Jesus. You need to look at the cross and see God maybe in ways you haven't thought about Him before. We look at a crucifix, we see a Christ hanging there. We look at some representation of the cross and it focuses on the agony and the suffering and the pain of Jesus. We sing hymns about all of that. But I want to take you behind that and I want to take you to a vision of God, the invisible God made visible in the fullness of glory on the cross. And it all really starts for us in verse 25...in verse 25, where it says, speaking of Christ Jesus at the end of verse 24, "Christ Jesus whom God displayed publicly." It was God who displayed Jesus on the cross. It was by His determinate counsel and foreknowledge that Christ was crucified. It was God displaying Christ.

Displaying Him as what? "As a propitiation." What does that big word mean? As a satisfaction...as a satisfaction. As a satisfaction in His blood, that is to say as a satisfaction by death, blood being a euphemism for death. It is God putting Christ on the cross, putting Him to death as a satisfaction. For what reason? Verse 25, "This was to demonstrate His righteousness." Wow...what a statement! God puts Jesus on the cross as a satisfaction through death to display His own righteousness. In that sense, the death of Christ was a death for God. He died for God. God was the one offended by sin. God was the one violated by sin. God was the one dishonored and blasphemed by sin and sinners. God is the one who determined how sin's debt could be paid. And He determined that the debt could be paid by the substitutionary death of His Son. And so, Jesus goes to the cross to die the death that God determined would be satisfactory. That's what propitiate means. God by the death of Jesus was finally and completely and fully satisfied that the penalty for sin had been paid in full on behalf of all who would ever believe. This is something, by the way, that all the hundreds of thousands of prior sacrifices in the Jewish systems...system could not do. They were just symbolic. But God publicly displays Christ as the satisfaction for sin and the sin of all who would ever believe.

Christ's death then was a satisfaction for God. But it was more than a satisfaction for God, it was something very, very important going on. Please notice back at verse 25, why did God need to do this? Because He wanted to demonstrate His righteousness. Verse 21 talks about the righteousness of God. It says there that it's apart from the law. Verse 22 talks about the righteousness of God, it says there it's through faith, as we notice also in verse 25. The righteousness of God here is the big issue...it's the big issue. And God publicly displays Jesus on the cross as a satisfaction to demonstrate His righteousness, because...look at the end of verse 25, here's the key...in the forbearance of God, or in the patience of God, or better, in the tolerance of God He passed over the

sins previously committed. He passed over the sins previously committed.

Now what are we talking about here? First of all, here's what I want you to understand. I'm going to show you in this text four ways in which the death of Christ glorifies God...four ways in which the death of Christ puts God's glory on display. The first one is that it declares God's righteousness...it declares God's righteousness. And God's righteousness needed to be declared because...back to verse 25...in His tolerance He passed over the sins previously committed.

Back in Exodus 34 Moses said, "Show me Your glory," you remember. And God said, "Well, I'll let all My goodness and My mercy and My lovingkindness and My truth and My compassion pass before you." And He said, "I will by no means clear the guilty." Wow, what a statement! God is loving, compassionate, merciful, gracious and righteous and He will not clear the guilty. You know something? That wasn't really clear in the Old Testament. Critics look at the Old Testament and they say this, they say, "Well, it's kind of hard to see a God of love in the Old Testament." That's not true. That's exactly the opposite of the truth. What's hard to see in the Old Testament, get this, is a God of righteousness, that's what's hard to see. Why? Because God forgives people their sins. In fact, the prophet says, "Who is a pardoning God like You? The Old Testament says, "God removes sin as far as the east is from the west, buries it in the depth of the sea, remembers it no more." The Old Testament clearly indicates that God is a forgiving God. He will forgive. He does forgive. And the saints of the Old Testament found forgiveness. And the Old Testament records that, how many of them became believers and friends of God and received righteousness and reconciliation and redemption and a relationship with God.

Really, the thing that you don't see in the Old Testament is the absolute justice of God. Occasionally you see Him act and the ground swallows somebody or a plague hits some people or Israel is used as an instrument of judgment against a pagan nation, or even a flood destroys the world. But mostly what you see in the Old Testament is the patience of God and the tolerance of God, sinners live, sinners prosper, sinners flourish, sinners get wealthy. Before the Flood they lived almost a thousand years. After the Flood they continued to live the full span of life. And the question is, if God is so holy and God is so righteous, the real question that's pervasive in the Old Testament is how could He be just? The thing that's hidden, the veil over God in the Old Testament is not over His love, it's not over His grace, it's not over His mercy, it's not over His compassion, His forgiveness, that, you see, again and again and again and again. If God can just find a handful of people who are righteous, He'll spare a whole city. The veil is over His justice. The veil is over His righteousness. In fact, He even seems to be a bit capricious. He seems to be a little willy-nilly in the way He decides to destroy this person and that person. On the other hand, people who are just as bad or worse survive.

So God literally, throughout the whole Old Testament, had a veil over His righteousness. Now God has to bear I suppose in some ways the reproach that some cast on Him for this veil because it is then easy to compare God with the rest of the gods, because the rest of the gods are capricious too. The gods of the making of men and demons are a mixture of inconsistency. I mean, they are short on compassion for sure and short on mercy for sure, and their justice is mingled with some measure of tolerance. And so God can get thrown into the same bag with all the rest of the deities who seem to respond to the issues of life in a willy-nilly haphazard somewhat capricious manner. If God is so absolutely righteous then where do we see the display of that righteousness? In Acts chapter 17 and verse 30, Paul is preaching there in the Areopagus in Athens and he says, "The times of this ignorance God overlooked." How could God overlook sin and be righteous?

In Acts 14 Paul is preaching there to those who wanted to worship him as a god, along with Barnabas, and he says, "Look, God has allowed the nations to go their own way. You know, and He's let His rain fall on the just and unjust, and life goes on." And you see the compelling question to ask about the Old Testament is not about God's love, that ought to be evident. Sinners live, sinners survive and believing sinners are forgiven and given salvation and given the Holy Spirit even. And the question is, how can God do this and be just and righteous? The whole Old Testament is a picture of God overlooking, of God tolerating. In fact, it was such a dominant reality that the Jews in Malachi's day became critical of God. This is what they said. "Everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delights in them." In other words, they saw the evil people prosper to the degree that they became cynical and sarcastic...that's sarcasm, and they mocked God saying, "Everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delights in them." And then they said, "Where is the God of justice?" We can't see Your justice.

That is the compelling question of the Old Testament and it's the absolute opposite question that the critics seem to always pose. Listen to Psalm 78:38, "He being compassionate forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse His wrath." That was the big question.

You say, "Well wait a minute. When He withheld His judgment on those who believed, it was because the sacrifices provided atonement. It was because they made their sacrifices and didn't the animal take the judgment?" The answer to that is no, not at all. No animal ever, ever was a substitute for sin. Listen to Hebrews 10 verse 11, "Every priest stands daily ministering, offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins...never....never. For by the blood of bulls and goats shall no flesh be justified." You say, "Well what was that all about?" Those were all pictures, pictures of a sacrifice that would take away sin. And they were illustrations of how deadly sin was and that it would produce death and that it would picture one who would come and finally be the satisfying death that would propitiate God.

So when you look at the Old Testament, I mean, get it right. You don't have any difficulty finding a God who is loving. You don't have any difficulty finding a God who is patient. Just look at how He handled Israel and how He handled all the nations around. What you do have trouble with is the justice of God and the righteousness of God and that God does right. Look, cheap forgiveness is a moral evil. I mean, a judge would be considered unjust and he would lose his job if he allowed a criminal to be pronounced right before the law just because he loved him without justice being served by a proper penalty exacted according to the law. Cheap forgiveness is a moral issue. So in the Old Testament there's this thick veil over the justice and righteousness of God because He's so forgiving. How can He be forgiving? The question is posed really at the end of verse 26. "How can He be just, or righteous," *dikaios*, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus?" On this side of the cross...How can God still be just and justify sinners? And in the Old Testament before Jesus, you don't even have a sacrifice that propitiates or satisfies God.

There's a real sense in which for thousands of years up until Christ, there was...there was a moral scandal in the universe. There was a moral scandal going on, divine righteousness seemed to be sleeping. And some might have even asked if it existed, where is the God of justice? Men sin and they live, and You decide to forgive some who believe in You and repent and what happens to Your justice? That's...that's to some cheap forgiveness which, as I said, is a moral evil. Where's the wages of sin?

Well, you see, the death of Christ solves this issue. Go back to verse 25. God displays Jesus publicly as a satisfaction in His blood to demonstrate His righteousness because in the forbearance of God, or the tolerance of God He had passed over the sins previously committed, He says it again, "For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time." Finally, at the present time Paul says God has displayed His righteousness. God is so righteous that even though He forgives sin, He punishes it. Those He forgave have their sins punished in Christ. So God is both just and the justifier of the one who believes. The death of Christ then is for God, it propitiates God, it satisfies God. That's one. Two, it puts His righteousness on display. God is not slack in dealing with the sins of those who believed in the past. He doesn't give sort of a capricious forgiveness to whomever He will without the satisfaction of justice. His justice is satisfied in Christ so that when Christ died all the sins of all the past believers were paid for. And now for us who believe, all our sins paid for as well. Therefore, Christ is the apex of redemptive history, all the sins of the past, all the sins since gathered in Christ. That's why the Bible says He's the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, before there was time, before there was a past and present and a future in the eternal counsel and determination of God, the sacrifice of Christ which was to occur in history was applicable throughout all time. And in a very real sense, you look at the cross and you finally can say, "Ah yes, God is so righteous that if He doesn't punish the sinner, He will punish His own Son for the sin of that sinner

who believed."

You see the glory of the cross is the display of God's righteousness. You notice in verse 25 he talks about sin previously committed and God being tolerant. And then he says it was at the cross He demonstrated His righteousness at the present time.

And for always since then, we look to the cross not only as a place where we are saved, but as a place where God's righteousness is on display. And that's important, folks. The Old Testament says, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" We want to make sure we have a God who always does what is right. And we can glorify Him and honor Him and worship Him and praise Him and thank Him that He is absolutely righteous, always does and only does what is right. The cross reaches back, reaches ahead, gathers up all the sins of all who have ever been forgiven by God through faith. In the Old Testament, obviously they couldn't have faith in Jesus Christ cause they didn't know about Him, but they had faith in God and they knew they couldn't be saved by Law and they cried out for God to forgive as a saving God. All those who believed in the Old, all those who believed in the New and until Jesus comes look to the cross as the satisfaction where the Son of God made purification for our sins as Hebrews 1:3. Hebrews 10 says, "By one offering He sanctified us all forever." And so, verse 25, He passed over until the present time, the sins. But in Christ they were paid for, His righteousness is on display. The conclusion is, He is just...He is just as well as the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Justice then and mercy meet at the cross. Psalm 85:10, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

So the cross takes the veil of God's righteousness away. The cross defends God against the charge that He excused sin, tolerated sin, overlooked sin. He forgave Old Testament believers because He knew Christ would pay the penalty. He forgives New Testament believers because He knows Christ has paid the penalty. The cross then puts His righteousness on display, the veil is gone. It is clear our God is a righteous God. He always does what is right. He is consistent with His own Law.

The second thing that the cross does, Christ died for God to display His righteousness as well as to satisfy God, the next thing is that the death of Christ puts God's grace on display...it puts God's grace on display. Look at verse 27. "Where then is boasting...where then is boasting?" It's excluded. It's excluded. You make no contribution to this, it is God who is offended, it is God to whom the debt is owed, it is God who is the lawgiver, it is God who is the judge, it is God who is the determiner of what will propitiate Him, or satisfy Him. It is all about God. And since it is all about God, where then is boasting? It is excluded. In this work of salvation, in this cross there is nothing upon which we can boast. There can be no place for self-congratulation, only God can make the provision, only God can determine the satisfaction. All we can do is believe, the middle of verse 25, through faith, end of verse 26, "The one who has faith in Jesus." We can only believe. Only God can make the provision. We can only believe in it. There's no place for us to be proud, we make no contribution. Everything

was designed by God and achieved through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the cross is all grace.

You look at the cross, it's all grace. There's no works there. And he goes on to say that in verse 27 that boasting is excluded. "By what kind of law...or better...what kind of principle, or what kind of method...the word can mean that...works? No, but by the principle of faith." You see, it's all about faith. Back in verse 21, "Apart from the law the righteousness of God is manifest." Verse 22, "The righteousness of God through faith." Verse 24, "Justified as a gift by His grace." It's about faith and grace. It's a gift of grace, all we do is believe. We make no contribution.

So we ask...what...by what kind of principle, or what kind of method does this happen? Works? Well if that was the case then we would boast. No, but by the principle of faith, therefore boasting is eliminated. Why is that important? Because, all the glory goes to whom? To God.

So the point is this, the cross is to glorify God for His righteousness and to glorify God for His grace. We make no contribution to His righteousness at all at the cross. I think we're pretty well aware of that. Therefore if we can make no contribution to our salvation by any human righteousness, it is then all of grace and not of works. So what you see in bold, clear relief is the righteousness of God displayed and the grace of God displayed. Christ dies then to put God on display so that His righteousness and His grace may be made manifest. Ephesians 2:8 and 9, "For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it's a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast." So when you look at the cross, see God. It is a time for worshiping God, not just being thankful for your salvation, not just rejoicing in what Christ has done, but seeing there the absolute righteousness of God being displayed in that He must punish your sin and the sins of all He's ever forgiven if He has to do it in His Son, therein is His righteousness revealed and the grace of God, since we make no contribution to that salvation, it is His pure grace on display. What grace it is that condescends all the way down to redeem those who are His enemies.

This cuts the ground under all of that kind of stuff that says, "Well, I always do the best I can, I live a decent life. I'm sure I'll make it." No you won't. It's not about works. It's not about your achievement. It is a place where God's holy righteousness is displayed and His holy grace is displayed as well. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, that is the best that I can offer, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Now what does it mean to believe because we've seen faith, faith, faith, faith, faith? The question is, what do you do when you believe, how do you know if you really believe? Well, let me just tell you some things you need to think about. What is saving faith? What...what would be a way to sort of evaluate your faith? Second Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves whether your faith is real." So let's ask some questions.

First of all, some things that don't prove your salvation, okay? They neither prove or disprove. Number one, visible morality...visible morality. It doesn't prove anything. The Pharisees had that down to a fine art and they were whited sepulchers, painted tombs, inside full of filth. It isn't about visible morality. That's not evidence of anything. Visible morality may manifest true salvation but then on the other hand it may only be superficial and hypocritical.

Secondly, intellectual knowledge. Intellectual knowledge, what does that mean? Knowing the gospel just qualifies you to be a demon. They believe and tremble. Knowledge of the truth, well it's necessary for salvation, it doesn't equal salvation.

A third thing would be, I guess, religious involvement. Paul says they have a form of godliness without any power. And there's an emptiness even though there is an outward religious involvement. I mean, Balaam was a prophet but he was an enemy of righteousness. Judas was an Apostle but he was a son of hell. So you aren't going to be able to verify your faith by looking at some visible outward morality or by assessing how much knowledge you have of the gospel, or by looking at your involvement in the church or in ministry.

Let me give you another one. You can't trust conviction of sin...you can't trust conviction of sin. Felix trembled under the preaching of Paul, never left his idols. The Holy Spirit convicts many people of sin who never respond with true repentance. This world, you know, is just filled with people who just have massive guilt. They kill themselves. Troubled people, people that are overwhelmed that hate their very existence, they feel such oppression from sin. I was just thinking, I was reminded this morning, a couple of years ago on an Easter Sunday, I came in at six o'clock, or six thirty to get ready for the early hour, such as next Sunday when we start at seven. There happened to be a guy who had hold up in my office over night with a big spear and he came in to threaten me and I was in there by myself. And the Lord was gracious and protected me even though later we learned from his brother his intent was to send me to heaven. Anyway, it all worked out fine and here I am. But this guy was just...and I was able to sort of lead him a little bit, talk him through some things and as the story went on we found how terribly troubled he is. I believe people like that are under such a horrific captivity to their sin that they become literally a dwelling place of demons and they hate their very existence. I just heard this morning from our security staff that recently he was involved in a shoot out with the police and the end of it all was he killed himself. And you know, it's such a sad reality. Look, just because somebody feels the weight of sin and the horrible oppression of Satan and demons and who knows what, feeling bad about your life is pretty common stuff, isn't it? It's no proof of anything.

I'll add another one to my little list, assurance of salvation. I'm just saying you can think you're a Christian and not be one. There are many people who think they're saved. They'll argue about it. They'll fight about it. The whole society of legalists who believe they are saved. A lot of folks with a superficial knowledge of the gospel believe they're saved. A recent survey in America, I can't remember the exact figure, but it said 75 to 80 percent of Americans say they're Christians. When they were asked further questions and they were asked, "Do you have a biblical world view?" And they started specifically talking about obeying the Scripture, believing it's the Word of God, believing the realities of Christ, etc., etc.....the figure dropped to nine percent. So nine percent of the Christians in America have a Christian biblical world view. Who are these people? They are assured enough that they're Christians to fill out a form and say they're Christians...that doesn't mean anything. In fact, one of the things you do in evangelism, one of the necessities, and I get into a lot of trouble with people doing this, is to make people who think they're Christians aware that they're not if it's a delusion, right? If to be strongly convinced that you are a Christian makes you a Christian, then there's no such thing as being deceived. But we know there's such a thing as being deceived because many are going to say, "Lord, Lord," He's going to say, "Depart from Me I never knew you." So you can't count on conviction of sin, you can't count on assurance, you can't count on visible morality, you can't count on knowledge, you can't count on religious activity to verify your faith. And you can't count on...here's another one...on time of decision, a prayer prayed some time, an aisle walked, an emotional experience, many have come forward, prayed, been baptized. You can't look at a past event.

What do you look for? Oh, I'll just give you a quick list. Love for God, love for God...a desire to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, ongoing repentance for sin, a brokenness, a certain longing to be freed from sin, grieving over sin, hating the flesh, that's an evidence of the transformed life. Genuine humility, a sweetness and a grace, self-denial, a beatitude attitude, the attitude of the prodigal father, "I'm not worthy to be called your son," sort of overwhelmed with the goodness and grace of God that humbles you. Another one is devotion to the glory of God, doing whatever you do whether you eat or drink, doing it all to the glory of God. Another is humble submissive prayer that expresses your true faith and trust in God. Another is selfless love for others, "By this shall all men know that you're My disciples, you have love for each other," John 13. Separation from the world, "Whoever loves the world doesn't have the love of the Father in him." Spiritual growth, progressing in Christ's likeness...that's another one. Obedience to the Word of God, love for the Word of God. Those are the kinds of things that mark you if your faith is the real thing. And if there's any question about the character of your faith, you need to plead with God to grant you that faith that saves because that's the only way you appropriate salvation. It is all of grace. The cross is intended to display the grace of God as well as the righteousness of God.

Two other things quickly. At the cross God's righteousness is put on display that He might be glorified at the cross. His grace is put on display that He might be glorified. At the cross His consistency...I guess you could say His integrity is put on display that He might be glorified. Look at verse 29. "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one." People think, "Well, in the Old Testament, the Jews, you know, they were justified by the Law because they had the Law. And the Gentiles must have been judged by God without the Law so they must have had a way to be justified without the Law." Does God have two standards? You hear that today. You know, we who have the gospel and have the Word of God, you know, God's going to judge us on that. But for those people and those nations and those places in the world who don't have that, God's going to judge them on the basis of what they do have. That's a very popular booming kind of theology now even in quote/unquote evangelicalism. Does God have two standards?

No....no. Look, if salvation is by faith, if it's by faith that levels everything because even the people who don't have the Law can exercise faith. If the Law is not what saves, then the Jews don't have any advantage in salvation. They have an advantage, Romans 3:1 says, and what is the advantage the Jews have? They have the Law, that's an advantage, they know the mind and the will of God. But when it comes to salvation, since you're not saved by the Law, the advantage you get from the Law is you know you're sinful. The advantage that comes to the Jews is they have a better understanding of their own sin but there's no advantage in the Law for salvation. Therefore the way to translate verse 29 would be to take the...verse 30 actually, the beginning and the end, "Since indeed God...then jump to the end...who is one...God who is one will justify that circumcised, the Jews by faith, the uncircumcised, the Gentiles, through faith." It's the same for everyone. There's only one way to be saved, there was in the old time, there is now. God doesn't have two standards, He is a merciful God and He will save Jew and Gentile alike through faith. If they have the Law, it's still through faith. If they don't have the Law, it's still through faith...it's through faith. God is the God of all men, Jew and Gentile. Romans 1 Paul says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, chronologically, and also to the Gentile." Isaiah 54:5, "The God of the whole earth shall He be called." Jeremiah 16:19, "The nations shall come to Thee from the ends of the earth." Zachariah 2:11, "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord and shall be My people." God intended to save not just Israel. Israel was simply the caretakers of God's Law and His evangelist nation. Obviously they were unfaithful to that down to the prophet Jonah who is a classic illustration of how much they hated to evangelize Gentiles. And there was a new people called the church and we have been given this responsibility. But in the end there's only one way to be saved, that's by faith. That's why Ephesians 4 says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all."

It doesn't matter Jew or Gentile, God is absolutely consistent. There's only one way to be saved, and that is why we who have the gospel are told in the Great Commission to go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature because only by faith in the Lord of the gospel can anybody be saved, no matter who he is. God is one. Again, you can construct the verse this way, verse 30, "Since indeed God is one there is only one way to be saved and it's by faith whether you're circumcised or uncircumcised, whether you have the Law or don't have the Law." There's one God and He's the God of the Jew and the Gentile and He will justify, He will make righteous Jew and Gentile only by faith."

I hear so much today about God's going to save people without believing in Christ, without knowing Christ, without believing the gospel. It's not true. That's why Israel was to go to the world, that's why we're to go to the world. In the Old Testament they were saved when they believed the Word of God as much as He had revealed Himself. In the New Testament we are to believe the revelation of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. He spoke in time past through the prophets by the fathers, now He speaks in His Son and He calls us to believe what He has said. No one is, has, or ever will be saved any other way than by faith in the truth that God has revealed, that's why we have to take them that truth. God is glorified in the cross, there His justice is on display, His righteousness. There His grace is on display as we respond only by faith without works. And there His consistency is on display, it is the same offer of salvation by faith to all.

A final point. The cross puts God's holiness on display. The cross puts God's holiness on display. Verse 31 asks the question, "Do we then nullify the law through faith?" Because salvation is by faith do we nullify the Law? And then *me genetain* the Greek, the strongest negative, "May it never be, no, no, no, no way, impossible, outrageous, on the contrary we establish the Law."

Listen, if salvation by faith meant that God didn't care about His Law, He wouldn't be holy, right? All God's Law is is a reflection of His holiness. All God's Law is is a reflection of His holiness. The cross displays His holiness. How? Because His holiness demands a sacrifice. His holiness demands a payment for the violation of His Law. So it is at the cross where His holiness is satisfied. It is also at the cross where sinners are converted and regenerated so that we can now as new creatures by the power of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8, fulfill the law. We aren't saved to ignore the Law, we are saved to fulfill the Law. And we say with David, "O how I love Your Law." We love the Word, we long to obey.

The Law is on display at the cross. It is the Law that brings you to the cross. The Law was never designed to save, it was designed to show you how sinful you are. It's the Law that brings you there so everyone who is ever saved is affirming the glory of the Law. And being saved you now then affirm the glory of the Law not because it showed you your sin, but now because it shows you how to live and you have the power by the Spirit to live according to the Law. And that all happens because Jesus dies the death the holy Law requires. The law then is confirmed in every way at the cross and

therefore the holiness of God is confirmed.

When we come to worship God at the cross, what we are doing is seeing His righteousness on display, His grace on display. We are seeing His consistency on display. And we're seeing His holiness on display. God is fully glorified in the death of His Son. As we come this week to look at the cross, let's look at it the way we ought to look at it, Christ died for the glory of God. Let's pray.

All we can do, our Father, is express appreciation and say with the psalmist, "You are the Most High forever." All we can say is that we want to give to the Lord the glory due His name, to worship our God in the beauty of holiness, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Father, when we stand before Your throne, dressed in beauty not our own, when we see You as You are and love You with unsinning hearts, then will we fully know, and not until, how much we owe. God, we want to glorify You in the cross and Your Son for this great salvation. O, our God, we glorify You and we worship You and praise You and adore You for displaying Your blazing glory in the cross. And may this reign in our hearts through this week as we contemplate gathering again on Friday to celebrate that greatest of events in which our redemption was secured because You were satisfied. We thank You in the name of Christ. Amen.

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