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

The Gospel Satisfies God's Demands
Scripture: Romans 3:25-31
Code: TM11-3

Truth Matters 2011

Romans chapter 3, and we pick it up at verse 25, and in the first section that we looked at the idea was to demonstrate to you that the need of every sinner has been satisfied, because the righteousness of God is made available to the sinner through faith and that righteousness has been made available because of the sacrifice of Christ. When Christ died on the cross, He paid the ransom. Now, just to clarify something I didn't say, the ransom was paid to God. Some people think Jesus paid a price to Satan. No, He paid the price to God. The one who destroys both soul and body in hell is not Satan. The one who destroys soul and body in hell is God, the Judge is God. God has been offended. God's Law has been violated. The sinner's culpability is related to God. God's justice has to be satisfied; Christ offers the sacrifice that satisfies the justice of God. And therefore, the sinner's need is satisfied in the sacrifice of Christ which becomes the redemption price or the ransom price paid to God so that His justice is satisfied and the righteousness of God can come down from heaven to the sinner. So, the sinner's need is satisfied.

At the same time, Paul makes a point starting in the middle of verse 25 and going to the end of the chapter, that God is also satisfied. The sinner's need is satisfied, that Christ died for sinners. We know that. The Bible says that. The New Testament says Christ died for sinners. But what people may not think about is that Christ also died for God, that He died for God. This is such a grandiose theme that it is virtually inexhaustible. Christ died for God. In the first chapter of Romans and the fifth verse, it says, Paul giving a personal word of testimony along with the other apostles and preachers of the gospel, "We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles," this last line is the key, "for His namesake, for His namesake."

Ultimately, salvation is for the glory of God, the honor of God, the exaltation of God. Third John chapter 7, John says that the evangelists went out for the sake of the name, for the sake of the name. Can I introduce something into your mind you may have never thought of? The reason for salvation is not primarily for your benefit; it is for the glory of God. We are a means to an end. We are not the end. God does not save sinners because they're so lovable. God isn't overwhelmed with unconditional love for wretched sinners. He's overwhelmed with His own glory and He has found in His saving of sinners a means to His eternal glory before the holy angels and before all the redeemed.

When Paul completes the 11th chapter of Romans, and you can turn to the end of the 11th chapter, He comes to the end of this great treatise of salvation; it goes from chapter 1 to chapter 11. He comes to the end of it and as he often does in his letters, he bursts into a doxology. He's had all these sanctified reasonings, all of this linear, rational argument for the wonder of the gospel. And in the end, he bursts forth in doxological praise, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." He cannot help but give glory to God for God's wisdom and God's knowledge demonstrated in salvation. "How unsearchable are His judgments and fathomable His ways, beyond our comprehension. For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has become His counselor?" God has no advisors, did you know that? God has no advisors. Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again. He also has no debtors. He owes nothing to anyone. He gets information from no one. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

The whole purpose of salvation is to accrue to the glory of God. When the Lord in the councils of eternity, before creation, convened a Trinitarian meeting, the Father proclaimed His love to the Son. And He said to the Son, "I want to give you a redeemed humanity. I want to give you a redeemed humanity because I love You and love gives and divine love gives divinely without limits infinitely." And the Father in an expression of love to the Son, determined that He would create a world that He would allow that world to fall into sin, that He would recover from that world a redeemed humanity, that He would give that redeemed humanity as a bride to His Son so that that redeemed humanity forever and ever and ever could glorify His Son.

And Paul in 1 Corinthians tells us that when it's complete, and the redeemed humanity is completely filled, that God the Father will give them to the Son as His bride. And according to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the Son will then take the redeemed humanity along with Himself and give Himself and the redeemed humanity back to the Father in a reciprocal act of love. You are, in some sense, an incidental part of a great act of love that is within the Trinity. Everything is to the glory of God, absolutely everything, ultimately redounds to the glory of God. Everything resolves into the final major chord of glory to God; so that the doxology at the end of the 11th chapter is the peak of the book. Starting in chapter 12, again the word "therefore," and by the way, the structure, the structure of the book of Romans is built on a series of therefores. But from 12 on, is consequent behavior in light of such a glorious, glorious salvation.

So, in a general sense, it needs to be said that the whole purpose of salvation is for the glory of God. Jesus said in John 17 when He was praying that great High Priestly prayer, "I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which You gave Me to do. Now, glorify Me with the glory I had with You before the world began." It's all about divine glory. The whole redemptive plan is about divine glory. Every person who is ever converted is a love gift from the Father to the Son. "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me," right? John 6, "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me and I will lose none of them." Why? The Father chooses, the Father gives, the Son receives, the Son keeps,

the Son raises. And the glorified humanity then becomes the eternal hallelujah chorus that offers praise to God forever and ever and ever. We will be lost in wonder, love and praise, as the old hymn said it.

David Brainerd, great missionary to the American Indians, who so captured the heart of Jonathan Edwards wrote, “I do not go to heaven to be advanced. 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, it is no matter whether I have a higher low seat there, only to live and please and glorify God.” My heaven is to please God, glorify Him and to be wholly devoted to His glory forever.” And Brainerd died and realized the fulfillment of that. The eternal purpose of salvation is to make us capable of glorifying God forever, forever.

Now, we talked about how the sinner is satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ. So, let’s talk now about how God is satisfied in the sacrifice of Christ, how God is glorified. I’ll give you maybe four points to think about that flow out of this text. Back now to the third chapter of Romans. Let me read verses 25 the B, down to the end, just to put it back in your mind. “This was to demonstrate this propitiation through the blood of Christ. This was to demonstrate His righteousness because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of Law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith, apart from works of the Law, or is God the God of the 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.” How then does the death of Christ glorify God? How does it satisfy God? How does it put God on display?

Number one, the death of Christ declares God’s righteousness, it declares God’s righteousness. There’s an open question before the cross. There’s an open question floating loose in the world and it is this question: How can God forgive sinners? We understand His mercy. We understand His compassion. But on what basis does God forgive, for example, Abraham? How can God deposit to Abraham’s account divine righteousness by faith? How can God do that? How can God declare Noah and his family to be righteous? How can He dispense to them the righteousness of God? How can He do it for Enoch to the point that Enoch walks with God? How can He do it for Elijah who was taken into heaven in a chariot, or any other believer in the Old Testament? How can God do that without being unrighteous? That’s the big question. How can God forgive sinners, grant them His righteousness without being accused of being unrighteous?

It’s a prevailing and important question. God’s righteousness could be suspect. And by the way, that is one of the things that irritated the Pharisees because, of course, it irritated those who were listening to the apostle Paul who were Jewish legalists. They just couldn’t live with the fact that God could just deposit His righteousness by faith on some sinner. And they would reach back to the Old Testament

and they would say that God has declared Himself to be holy, He is too holy to look on evil, can't tolerate iniquity. When God sees iniquity in the Old Testament, He judges it, He punishes it. Look, pagans had gods that were capricious. Pagans had gods that were inconsistent. Pagans had gods that could supposedly be appeased by religious ceremonies, religious offerings, sacrifices, certain moral conduct. But how in the world could you expect from the infinitely holy God that He would deposit His righteousness on a confessed sinner? You see, in Judaism the dominant form of Judaism designed by the Pharisees, you offered God your holiness. You didn't fall before God, beat on your breast and say, "Give me mercy for my sin." You showed up before God like the Pharisee in Luke 18 and you said, "I thank You that I'm not like this guy. I tithe, I pray, I fast. I offer You my righteousness." And that they could understand. But how in the world could Jesus hang around prostitutes, petty criminals, tax collectors, thieves, and all the riff-raff that went with the societal outcasts, the unsynagogued Jews who had been divested of their social identity because of their iniquities? How in the world could He be comfortable with them?

He was accused, wasn't He, of being a friend of sinners, and drunkards, and evil people. One time at a meal at the house of a Pharisee, a woman who must have been a woman of the street of ill repute comes in and starts to wash the feet of Jesus with her hair, an open court house, she must have come along, seen Jesus, and wanted to demonstrate her love to Him. And the Pharisee conducting the event is so outraged and knows that if Jesus was God, He would know what kind of woman this was and He wouldn't allow that woman to touch Him. This just was totally outside the box of how they viewed righteousness before God. And so, when the gospel comes along, and Jesus says, "I offer you forgiveness," and He forgave sin. Remember the man lowered down in the roof, and "Your sins be forgiven." And they were just floored by that because their theology said the reason the man had the problem he had was because he was a sinner, like the man born blind in John 9. How could He just do this? This strikes a blow at the pure righteousness of God.

So, the broad question is this. God tolerated sin throughout human history. They couldn't deny that. God tolerated sin through history. They knew in their own hearts that He tolerated their sin; they were still breathing. And many unrighteous people seem to prosper. In fact, the religious leadership of Israel was all unrighteousness. God had overlooked the sins of people throughout all human history. How could He do that? How could He forgive Abraham? How could He forgive Moses? How could He forgive anybody in the past? On the basis of what? Then comes the cross. Then comes the covering, the propitiation through the blood of Christ, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed. Do you see the picture now? You have to explain the fact that there had never been any just punishment of all the past forgiven sins. You say, "What about the animals?" No, the animals were not sacrifices that atone for sin. They were sacrifices that pointed to the need for an atoning for sin, but none of them ever did it. That's why they were done again and again and again and again, every morning, every night, all the time. The question is: how do you explain the patient forbearance, the patient tolerance of God, the past forgiveness through the whole Old Testament era? How do you explain that? Sins that are past,

before Christ.

Through all man's sinful history, God passed over their sins, forgave them, had compassion on them. When they repented and came to Him, Acts 17:30 says, "The times of ignorance God overlooked." He didn't actively interfere. He didn't bring about the required judgment. The question is: how can God do that and still be holy? The Jews in Malachi's day actually accused God. They said, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them." Where is the God of justice? You know, these legalists hate grace. They hate it. That's why the older brother got mad when the father forgave the younger brother in the story of the prodigal. Why? He got mad because he's a legalist. Legalists hate grace. They had compassion. They hate mercy. They hate forgiveness. And so, in Malachi's day, they actually said, "Everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord," they could see the forgiveness of God being rendered and God is delighting in those that do evil, delighting in forgiving them and they ask: where is the God of justice?

So, anytime you preach grace in the environment of legalism, it's going to be resented. And it was when it was preached by Jesus and it was when it was preached by Paul. Listen to Psalm 78:38, "But He, the Most High God, their Redeemer, He being compassionate forgave their iniquity, did not destroy them. He often retained, or restrained His anger, He often restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath." You remember what Micah the prophet said? "Who is a pardoning God like You?" Micah 7. Who is a pardoning God like You? Never heard of such a deity. Whoever heard of such a deity? There is no such thing in all the religions of the world's history as a pardoning God, as a merciful, compassionate God. You're not going to find that. Gods are all about wrath and retribution, and judgment, and vengeance. Who's a pardoning God like You? Never heard of such a guy. And the question then has been lingering throughout all of history, how can He do it? How can He possibly do this? And the words here in verse 26 frame the issue. How can He be just and the justifier of sinners who have faith in Jesus Christ? How can God be just and the justifier? That is a dilemma. How can they understand God to be gracious and merciful and at the same time holy and righteous? Cheap forgiveness, everybody knows cheap forgiveness is a moral evil. The judge is unjust. If he allows a criminal to be pronounced innocent when he knows he's guilty, he won't be a judge very long if he just lets the criminal go because he feels compassion on him. Because the judge's responsibility is to uphold the Law, right?

So, in the Old Testament there is this thick veil over the justice of God. And He is known as a God of compassion. Back to Exodus 34, "I'll let My compassion and My mercy pass by you." His mercy is shown to thousands upon thousands, the Scripture says. How can He do that and be just? The death of Christ answers that. The death of Christ is that which points to the righteousness and justice of God. Someone must die.

I often say it this way. Every sin ever committed by every person who has ever lived will be paid for, every sin. No sin will go unpunished. Every sin will be paid for. Either the sinner will pay for it in

eternal judgment and never be able to pay for it in full, or it was paid for in full in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But every sin will be paid for. God is so committed to mercy that He forgives. He is so committed to justice that He puts His Son on a cross as the perfect sacrifice what His justice requires.

So, Paul looks at past history and he sets the record straight: the cross reaches backward to cover sin. People say, “How are people in the Old Testament saved?” They were saved because they believed in the true and living God. They knew they were sinful. They were crushed under the weight of the Law and the inability to keep it. They had no confidence in their own works. They pleaded for mercy and forgiveness, and grace and compassion from God and He gave it based upon the sacrifice that hadn’t yet happened. But remember, Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In the economy of the eternal God, there is no time. The sacrifice of Christ stretches into the past and the future.

So, how can God pronounce a sinner just? The wisdom of man could never have solved the dilemma, never. So, verse 26 says, as, pick me up on verse 25, demonstrate His righteousness, “For the demonstration,” verse 26, “I say of His righteousness at the present time.” The present time meaning the time of the New Testament. God has hidden this in the past, it is now revealed in the present time. This is why Paul calls the gospel the mystery, right? The *mustrion*, not something you can’t figure out, but mystery in Pauline language means something hidden, now revealed. So, when you look at the cross, what’s going on at the cross? God is being vindicated as holy. God is being vindicated as just. God is being vindicated as righteous. Therefore, the cross was for God. It was to display His righteousness and it happened at that time so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Salvation then, accomplished by Christ on the cross, salvation’s provision, salvation’s means, the propitiation, the sacrifice, the covering is for God, so that God could never be accused of being unjust.

How could God be accused of being unjust when He went to the extremity of executing His own beloved Son? And anybody who understood the Old Testament sacrificial system, as we saw in Leviticus 1, could have anticipated this because there were literally millions of animal sacrifices in which the death of an innocent substitute demonstrated the need for a final sacrifice by a sinless substitute. The cross then demonstrates the righteousness of God, puts the justice of God on display by showing that He couldn’t pass over sin, He couldn’t pass over sin’s just judgment.

The cross glorifies God in a second way, and we’ll talk more about that one when we get to tomorrow morning sessions. Secondly, the cross not only glorifies God by declaring His righteousness, but by demonstrating His grace, demonstrating His grace. Verses 27 and 28, “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 the works of the Law.” There is no place to boast, there’s no place to take credit, no place for self-congratulation, only God can make such a provision. It is essential, it is foundational in understanding the gospel that the one offended has to design the terms to remove the

offense, right? And God is the one who has been offended. God is the one who established the means by which the offense could be removed. God is the one who cursed the world. God is the one who declared us to be sinners. God is the one whose Law has been violated, whose name has been blasphemed. God is the one then who determines the means by which that can be reversed, and erased, and eliminated. He has devised the plan and He has made it by faith, faith being the means by which we are justified apart from the works of the Law. This is an act of pure grace, pure grace.

And we've already talked about that in the first half of the verse, but do you understand that we need to look at it from God's vantage point? It's not only how wonderful grace is for us because it satisfies our need, but how wonderful it is to understand that God is a God of great grace. God's grace is on display on the cross, to such an extent that He puts His own Son there.

You know, as we were finishing up the gospel of Mark, we went back through the agonies of Passion Week in the life of our Lord Jesus and we relived all the issues of the cross. And I never do that but what my heart is just completely moved, profoundly moved by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and what a horrendous thing it was. In the Garden, you know, His capillaries are disintegrating so blood's coming out of His sweat glands because the stress of bearing sin, being alienated from the Father, being punished is so massive that it literally shows up in His physiology. And then, He prays this prayer, "Father, let this cup pass from Me," and some people have said, "Well, that's a moment of weakness." No, it's not a moment of weakness. "Let this cup pass from Me" is the only possible appropriate comment for someone who has never known sin. If He didn't say that, we would think there was something wrong with Him. Don't tell me that's a moment of weakness. This is so alien to Him that it's inconceivable to Him, and to show something of the horrors. And I believe it was in the darkness from noon to 3:00, in those three hours, that He bore fully the sins of all who would ever believe in three hours.

You say, "Well, how in the world could He bear in three hours all the punishment from God for all the sins of all who would ever believe when all those people if they didn't believe couldn't bear the weight of their own punishment throughout all eternity? How could Jesus in three hours bear the full punishment of millions of souls who couldn't bear it forever in hell? Answer? He has an infinite capacity to bear the judgment of God because He is Himself an infinite person. The grace bound up in this is staggering, staggering. This is reminiscent, of course, when I wrote the book on "The Tale of Two Sons" and preached through that series of the father running and embracing the filthy sinner. This is a condescension that is just absolutely staggering.

So, when you look at the cross, you see not only how it satisfies man's need, but how it satisfies God, puts His righteousness on display. And the fact that He makes this righteousness available by faith, and not by Law and not by works, puts His grace on display.

Thirdly, the cross reveals God's consistency, His consistency. We've already sort of touched on this and Paul's re-circling a little bit here to pick up these great truths. The cross points to God's righteousness, it points to God's grace, and it points to His consistency. Verse 29, verse 28 says, "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works through the Law," and then verse 29 comes, "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." Are there two ways to salvation? Is there a Jewish way and a Gentile way? Were the Jews justified by Law? And the Gentiles justified by faith? That's been suggested by a lot of people. If you come from a traditional dispensational background, you may have been taught that. But this verse establishes, verse 29, that God is the God of all men, Jew and Gentile. Isaiah 54:5 says, "The God of the whole earth shall He be called." Jeremiah 16:19, "The nation shall come to Thee from the ends of the earth and the middle wall of partition is torn down," And there's neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ. We know all that. God is the God of all. He's the only God. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it's the power of God to salvation, to the Jew and also to the Gentile."

And so, verse 30 says, "God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one." All that middle is modifying. God is one. One God means He's the God of all. There is no other God. This is monotheism. Deuteronomy 6:4, right? "The Lord our God is one." He will save all men by faith through grace. He will justify all who believe, Jew or Gentile. He saves all the same way through all human history. I don't know what you think about quote-unquote dispensations, but if you're stuck in the past on that, you have to understand that in all periods of human history, the same God, one God, saved people one way, by grace through faith. Always by faith. Always apart from works. Always a gracious act. Always by depositing to their account His own righteousness though they are unworthy of it as a gift of grace.

Before Israel was even identified, we read, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." "Moses found grace." "Abraham appropriated a gracious salvation by faith." So, that has always been God's way, and God cannot be accused of deviation. "I am the Lord, I change not," right? This is the immutability of God and it works out in all of His operations.

One final point. The cross then satisfies God. Christ died for God in the sense that the cross declares God's justice, God's grace, God's consistency and it also confirms God's Law, it confirms God's Law. If God said, "You know what? I feel so sorry for you. I'm just going to forgive you." You hear this, "God loves you unconditionally." Really? I don't think so. But the idea of the gospel today is, you know, you just pray this little prayer and, boom, it's all over with. What about the Law of God? You break the Law of God, you die, right? "The wages of sin is," what? "Death." "The soul that sins, it shall die." If you, Galatians chapter 3, you know, "Cursed is everyone who breaks the Law." What about that? When we say that God forgives by grace and forgives those who believe and deposits His righteousness, verse 31 asks, "Do we then nullify the Law?" What about the Law? What about the requirement? What about a just punishment? "O may it never be, on the contrary we establish the

Law.” We establish the Law.

When you look at the gospel, you understand that you cannot break God’s Law without activating holy justice. And it either falls on you, or it falls on Christ. The hymn writer many years ago said, “O what a Savior is mine. In Him God’s mercies combine.” I love to look at the cross from the sinner’s view. But I think I love more to look at the cross from the view of God. The cross of Christ puts the righteousness of God on display, the grace of God on display, the consistency of God on display, and the sanctity of the Law of God on display. This is Paul’s gospel. This is his gospel. This is the beauty and the magnificence of it. And it produces anything but a superficial response, does it not? You know, when you came last night, and you began to listen to the music, you realized they were singing praise to God, right? There was nothing personal about that stuff. That was praise to God in the loftiest way, in the loudest way we possibly can. Because God deserves praise for this salvation.

Father, we thank You for Your Word again, and so refreshing this morning. We just want to honor You, we adore You, we love You, we praise You. Thank You for all Your good gifts to us. Give us a wonderful, wonderful day. We pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

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