

"The Doctrine of Justification"

Romans 3:21-5:11

Part 3

Introduction: In our study of Romans tonight it is my goal to take you on a journey to the cross where we shall plunge into depths which many believers have never visited. Our study tonight will come from just two verses but the Truth within these two verses is completely inexhaustible. Before we get to the verses let us refresh our memories on some of what we looked at last week for this will all tie together tonight. In the section we are in Paul has been answering the greatest question ever asked, **"How can sinful man be justified before a righteous God?"**

Last week we looked at the subject of justification.

Notice Romans 3:24

The word "justified" means that we have been declared righteous before God. You see, when we came to Jesus Christ and rested our faith in Him we were forgiven of all our sin and we were then declared to be RIGHTEOUS before God. One teacher defines "justification" this way:

*"The word for **justify**" means to declare the rightness of something or someone. **Justification** is God's declaration that all the demands of the law are fulfilled on behalf of the believing sinner through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. **Justification** is a wholly forensic, or legal, transaction. It changes the judicial standing of the sinner before God. In **justification**, God imputes (reckons, places on one's "account") the perfect righteousness of Christ to the believer's account, then declares the redeemed one fully righteous."*

Justification deals with our standing before God. It is something that happens the moment we are saved, and it is impossible to reverse.

Notice Romans 3:24 again.

Our justification is FREE by GRACE, and it is completely based upon the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. In other words, we are justified/declared to be righteous because Jesus died on the cross to pay our complete sin debt. Therefore, our justification is not based upon our works, but it is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the

cross on our behalf. Justification is FREE to us, but it cost Jesus His Life's BLOOD so that we could stand before God covered in His righteousness.

Now, as we move on to the next verse Paul keeps Jesus Christ and His death at the front of his mind and in these next two verses we shall dive deep into the depths of the cross.

I. The Provision for Man's Greatest Need
Part 3

Notice Romans 3:25

The first point we see as we come to this verse is that God is the Author of our salvation. It is God who set Christ forth to be the propitiation for our sins. Salvation is completely of God and it was not an afterthought with God. God knew before man was ever created that He would send His Son to the cross to die for the sins of the entire world.

Revelation 13:8

⁸ *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Man is not the author of salvation and we can be sure this is true for if salvation was of man, he would design it based upon works because that would appeal to man's pride. Man would have never come up with the idea of God becoming a man and going to the cross to die to pay the sin debt of sinful man. Before the foundation of the world God knew man would sin and He knew that His only begotten Son would hang upon the cross to pay the penalty of sin.

Notice Romans 3:25 again.

There is a word here that is very important, and it is the word "propitiation". We need to understand the meaning of this word in order to understand what Paul is saying in this verse. Notice the words of an unknown Bible teacher:

*"Hilasterion means a sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the end and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor. God has set the sinner free through Christ, but He has not done so by setting aside the rules. He has set the sinner free in Christ by **satisfying the demands** of God's justice in Christ. Due to sin, a penalty was to be meted out and a price was to be paid. Christ paid that price and suffered that penalty ("redemption"). God's divine wrath had to be appeased, due to man's sin; Christ has appeased that wrath ("propitiation")."*

Notice the words of another teacher:

"Propitiation is not placating a vengeful God but, rather, it is satisfying the righteousness and just wrath of a holy God, thereby making it possible for Him to show mercy righteously. God can now be just (His law says sin demands death) and can at the same time be the Justifier dealing with men graciously and benevolently. The concepts of "redemption" and "propitiation" are used to demonstrate and draw our attention to the justice of God. God has set the sinner free through Christ (justified by grace through faith), but He has not done so by setting aside the rules (His justice). Instead, God has set the sinner free in Christ by satisfying the demands of His justice in Christ. Sin incurs a penalty which must be meted out. Christ paid the price of the "debt" our sins had accrued on our personal account and suffered the required penalty in our place. Thus, He paid the price to secure our redemption or liberation as the result of paying the price in full. God's divine wrath had to be appeased, due to our sin and Christ appeased God's wrath ("propitiation")."

To put the definition into plain words it could be stated as follows, when God forgave our sins he did not set aside His righteousness nor was He being unjust. His righteousness demands that sin must be penalized and for God to forgive our sins and set that Truth aside would make Him unjust.

Illustration:

It would be like a criminal standing before a judge and the judge knowing that he committed some very serious crimes and then the judge would say, "I like this man, so I am going to set him free." That judge would not be exercising justice because the law states that there are penalties for the crimes committed. The judge would need to sentence the man and the crimes would need to be paid for or the judge is not worthy to hold the office. The same is true of God. He is just/righteous and holy, and His Word demands that sin carries a penalty. For Him to forgive sin without the payment being made would make Him unjust.

So, Jesus Christ died, and His death satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf. When He forgives us, He is not setting judgment and justice aside for judgment and justice were satisfied at the cross. Someone has said that mercy and justice kissed at the cross.

Notice Romans 3:25 again.

When God "set Jesus forth" it means He sacrificed Jesus so that the world could see. Paul then goes on to tell us why. **"To declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God."**

Now, let me explain what Paul is saying here. God knew that there would be people who would accuse Him of being unjust because of the sins that were passed over in the Old

Testament. The word "REMISSION" here in this verse means "TO PASS OVER". In the Old Testament God "passed over sin" in the sense that it was not judged. Let me give you a few examples.

Genesis 9:5-6

⁵ And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

⁶ Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Capital punishment was to be exercised on all who took an innocent life.

Leviticus 20:10

¹⁰ And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

God's Law was very clear that adultery brought death upon the guilty party.

Then we read about David. He had an affair with Bathsheba and then when she was found to be pregnant he had her husband placed in the front lines of the battle so that he would be killed. Therefore, David was guilty of adultery and murder. Under the Law of God, he was to be put to death. But that never happened. God passed over his sin.

Notice the conversation between David and Nathan.

2 Samuel 12:9-13

⁹ Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

¹¹ Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

¹² For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

¹³ And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

We could go back further to the Garden of Eden and look at what God had said to Adam.

Genesis 2:17

¹⁷ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Adam ate the forbidden fruit, but he and Eve did not die that day.

Genesis 3:21

²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

God killed animals and He allowed both Adam and Eve to live. The sin was passed over because we know that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. From Adam to Christ God passed over sin, not judged and put away sin.

Hebrews 10:4

⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Now let me get you back to the thought. There are people who say that God is unjust because there are sins that He passed over while His Word says that sin must be judged. They may say, "You tell me your God is righteous and holy and that He will not ignore sin but what about those in the Old Testament? How did David escape as well as many others? That just proves that God is unjust?" This same view of God existed in Malachi's day.

Malachi 2:17

¹⁷ Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

Then there are the words of Psalm 78.

Psalm 78:38

³⁸ But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Then there are people today who claim that God will wink at sin. They believe His love is greater than His justice and so they believe God will accept most everyone into heaven.

What are the answers to these statements made by the critics today?

Notice Romans 2:25 again.

Jesus died for the past sins and His death is the declaration of the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God. He may have passed over the sins in the Old Testament, but He had not forgotten them. His justice would never allow the sins to go unjudged. In the Old Testament God's forbearance allowed those sins to be passed over but when Jesus hung upon the cross God the Father placed every one of the sins upon His Son and they were paid for upon the cross. God justice and righteousness were openly declared upon the cross when Jesus died.

For those who think that God is unjust or that His love is greater than His justice they need to look closely at the cross. The cross is a demonstration that NO SIN will go unjudged. If God sacrificed His only begotten/one of a kind and unique, Son for the payment of sins, then the world can be sure they will not get away with sin. Calvary shouts to the world, "GOD IS A GOD OF JUSTICE!"

Notice Romans 3:26

The death of Jesus Christ declares that God is just/righteous and that He is the JUSTIFIER of him who rests his faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ died on the cross to satisfy the righteous demands of God. He died to declare the righteousness of God. When we think of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross we think that He died for us. He did but He first died to declare the righteousness of God to prove that God is JUST and the JUSTIFIER of all who will come to Jesus Christ.

Now let me get us back to the main thought here in Romans.

When God justifies the sinner, who comes to Jesus Christ He can do so because the judgement for the sinner's sins was satisfied by the death of Jesus Christ. God is not setting the sinner's sins aside without His justice being carried out for it was carried out on behalf of the sinner when Jesus died.

Psalm 85:10

¹⁰ Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Notice the words of **Wuest**:

"It was this passing by of sin before the Cross in the sense that God saved believing sinners without having their sins paid for, thus bestowing mercy without having justice satisfied, which would make God appear as if He condoned sin, that had to be set right in the thinking of the human race. The matter was always right in God's eyes, for He looked forward to the satisfaction of the broken law at the Cross. It makes no difference with

God whether He saves sinners before or after the Cross. The Cross is an eternal fact in the reckoning of God. Of course, the Cross had to come, for a righteous God could not pass by sin, but must require that sin be paid for. His justice must be satisfied and His government maintained.

*The Cross not only exonerated God from the charge that He passed by sin before the crucifixion, but also demonstrated that when He declared a believing sinner righteous, He all the time maintained His righteousness. It was a just as well as a merciful act for God to save a sinner, for mercy was bestowed upon the basis of justice satisfied. The demands of the broken law were satisfied. Sin was paid for, not condoned. Thus, the believing sinner is saved not only by the mercy of God, but by the righteousness of God, for his salvation rests upon the fact that his sins are paid for and justice has been maintained. Thus, God is just and at the same time **the One who justifies** the believing sinner."*

Conclusion:

I will close with a poem by Albert Midlane;

The perfect righteousness of God
Is witnessed in the Savior's blood;
'Tis in the cross of Christ we trace
His righteousness, yet wondrous grace.
God could not pass the sinner by,
His sin demands that he must die;
But in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be.
The sin is on the Savior laid,
'Tis in His blood sin's debt is paid;
Stern justice can demand no more,
And mercy can dispense her store.
The sinner who believes is free,
Can say, "The Savior died for me";
Can point to the atoning blood,
And say, "That made my peace with God."