

The Finished Work of Christ

Romans 1-3

I'm as CONFIDENT in the LORD as When He opened my Heart early 1970's
CONFIDENCE in UNCHANGING Christ > esp FINISHED Work of CHRIST

As sun traveled GLOBE this Lord's Day – Xtians gathering in EVERY NATION
SYMBOL probably find in Every Meeting – Wall, Vestments, Bible, Neck, Tattoo?
CROSS! – Just celebrated 1st Advent/COMING > CAME to GO to the CROSS
NAMED – 'Jesus' = GOD Saves > because He will DIE for His People's Sins

GROUND Zero of our Salvation > Outside City Walls of Jerusalem GOLGOTHA
God's High Priest offers Final and Full SACRIFICE for Sin > Sins of WORLD
Sacrifice Finished > Priesthood is Closed > Soon Herod's Temple is Destroyed

This Morning > CHERRY Pick from ROMANS > Finished Work X

Romans – like ALL 27 books NT > Accomplished Work given by FATHER RISEN X will be RETURNING X

1. Problem - Romans 1-3

REASON Gospel Such GREAT News > Only SOLUTION to Greatest PROBLEM
Paul the Apostle GOD'S Prosecuting Attorney of Human Race > Verdict GUILTY

Ch 1 – So-Called ATHEISTS – MADE Religion of IDOLS > THINGS – Yourself
KNOW God but Suppress – Deny – Exchange IMMORTAL for MEANINGLESS

Ch 2 – MORALIST – “I am better than Others” > BUT Not Kept OWN Standards
MAY Be NEW Movie WANT to See > NOT want to See Your Life BIG Screen
GOD = Cinematographer > VIDEO Worst Moments / AUDIO Your Judgements
“That's Wrong! - People should NEVER Do That! - I would NEVER do THAT!”
Perfectly SPLICED > Practice what you PREACH Against! Faithfully!!

Chs 2 & 3 – Paul – God's PROSECUTOR address 3rd Category GLOBAL Citizens
RELIGIONIST – Scoffing PAGANS & MORALISTS > 'we have Religion'
We TRUST in Prayers – Penance – Performance – Priests – Payments
> ALL 3 Grps – Even tho SINCERE > Sincerely WRONG > Guilty/Guilty/Guilty

Paul quotes PSALMIST: vs. 10-12 “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

2. Purchase – Romans 3.21-26

MOST Important PARAGRAPH in Most Important Letter of ROMANS - Ch 3

vs. 21-26 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteous -ness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Back in CH 1.17 “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed...”

THEN > Paul ELABORATES just WHY GOSPEL is So NECESSARY

Back Theme > 3.21 BUT NOW a righteousness from God...has been made known

NOW live in “Day of the Lord” > Covenant fulfilled > Salvation Accomplished

v. 21-26 Six Tightly Packed Vss / “center and heart of the letter”

LEON MORRIS “possibly the most important single paragraph ever written”

FOUR IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS IN THIS PARAGRAPH

Justification – Redemption – Propitiation – Vindication

JUSTIFICATION >> WORD – comes from LAW COURTS

v. 24 justified freely by his grace

v. 26 GOD justifies those who have faith in Jesus

v. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith

JUSTIFICATION is an ACT – Not PROCESS – God DECLARES us Justified

MORE THAN PARDON – Pardon is NEGATIVE – Removal of Penalty or Debt

Justification is POSITIVE – Receiving a Righteous Status / Restored Relationships

Pardon says “You may go” / Justification says “You may come”

Pardon removes Punishment / Justification means no ground for punishment exists

CALVIN – Justification is “the main hinge on which salvation turns”

v. 24 (all) are justified freely by his grace

“freely” = WITHOUT A CAUSE / Nothing in us to Merit Salvation > GRACE

ALL OTHER Religions “DO” – Ceremony, Study, Pilgrimage, Prayers, Payment

ONLY Jesus says “DONE” – Only HE has Finished Work of SALVATION

The only thing we add to the plan of salvation is the sin to make it necessary. Eric Alexander

CLIMACTIC Word of Jesus from CROSS: Jesus said, "It is finished." John 19:30

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
John 19.30

‘It is FINISHED’ > English Suggests DEFEAT >> lit. It is ACCOMPLISHED!

Greek Word > TETELESTAI > Wide Usage in EVERYDAY LIFE

SERVANT > Reporting back to MASTER – tetelestai – COMPLETED Job

PRIEST > Examined ANIMAL for Sacrifice – tetelestai – FAULTLESS

ARTIST – Finished Picture or WRITER a Manuscript – tetelestai – DONE!

MERCHANT – Completes BUSINESS Transaction – tetelestai – PAID in FULL

DEATH was ATONEMENT – PAYMENT for SIN – NOT Just EXAMPLE

2nd Word: Redemption – commercial term, borrowed from the marketplace

v 24 justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

REDEEMED – set free through payment of a price / frequent OT word, not so NT

OT – used in setting Slaves Free > Israel redeemed from Egypt, Babylon

BECAUSE JESUS PAID THE PRICE OF OUR SIN > We Belong to Him

3rd Word: Propitiation - Religious term, borrowed from the temples

vs. 24,25 redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood ESV

SOME Translations Not Use “Propitiation” - word appears 4 times in NT

NIV v. 25 “a sacrifice of atonement” / NIV Note “turn aside his wrath”

Some believers are embarrassed, even shocked, that this word is applied to God

REASON WHY – term is Unpopular with Some > WRATH of God

“Expiate” – means Cover over Sin – some see as more comfortable thought

“Propitiate” – turn away God’s wrath, protect from God’s wrath

BUT WE NEED NOTHING LESS than PROPITIATION

IF 1.18 “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men”

AND IF 2.5 “you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath”

AND IF 3.5 “God is...bringing his wrath on us”

THEN WE NEED NOTHING LESS THAN A FULL REMOVAL of His WRATH

God’s Wrath is PERFECT, PERSONAL, and PUNITIVE

PERFECT – He punishes sinners with clean hands, He remains holy and just

PERSONAL – God is grieved by sin, it is a slap in His face, He responds in wrath

PUNITIVE – just penalty for our sins and offenses

JOHN STOTT “It would be hard to exaggerate the differences between the pagan and the Christian views of propitiation. In the pagan perspective, human beings try to placate their bad tempered deities with their own paltry offerings. According to the Christian revelation, God’s own great love, propitiated, his own holy wrath through the gift of his own dear Son, who took our place, bore our sin and died our death. Thus God himself gave himself to save us from himself.”

4th Word: Vindication or Demonstration / PUBLIC Revelation of God’s Justice

v. 25 He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished, he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just & the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus

LAW RIGHTEOUSNESS = Reward for Works

GOSPEL RIGHTEOUSNESS = Gift through Faith

CROSS accomplished our Justification, Redemption, and Propitiation

AND the Cross Vindicated and Demonstrated God’s Just Nature

CROSS reveals God’s Justice (attribute) and His Justification (saving activity)

NO WONDER THAT THOSE WHO GET TO HEAVEN WILL PRAISE HIM!

What price must we pay for this four-fold gift of Salvation? What sacrifice give?

v. 22 righteousness from God comes thru faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe

v. 25 through faith in his blood

v. 26 justifies those who have faith in Jesus

v. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith

Definition: Faith > Forsaking All I Trust Him

FAITH is not a WORK > Faith has NO MERIT before God

FAITH OF ITSELF IS EMPTY – Issue: Who or What is your faith in?

FAITH is only AS GOOD AS ITS OBJECT > the Lord Jesus Christ

Justification by Faith Alone = Justification by Christ Alone

JAMES BOICE “Christianity is distinguished categorically from every other human religion. All religions have their distinguishing points, of course. Some call God, the Supreme Being, by a different name. Some emphasize one path to God, some another. Some are mystical, some very ritualistic. But all except Christianity, suppose that there is something human beings can do for the Deity to convince him to save them. They teach a human way to achieve eternity, a man-made ladder to the bliss of the life to come. Only Christianity humbles man by insisting that there is nothing at all we can do to work out our salvation.”

3. Patience - Romans 4

Ch. 4 – Justification Illust from Israel’s Greatest Patriarch / FATHER ABRAHAM

Justification is by GRACE thru FAITH --- NOT by WORKS

ABE - Esteemed Highly by Jewish Rabbis > TAUGHT he was Saved by his Works

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING TODAY – Bible = BOOK OF HEROES

God Sees GOOD PEOPLE and Blesses them FOR THEIR GOODNESS

ABE was SO GOOD that he DESERVES GOD’S BLESSING – Wrong!!!

Faith is NOT ALTERNATIVE to Righteousness / but Means of RECEIVING IT

Abe BELIEVED in the PROMISES – God: Promise MAKER AND KEEPER

Promises were not Fulfilled Immediately

Everything in his EXPERIENCE FLIES IN FACE OF GOD’S PROMISES

v. 18 “Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead.”

NOT AN ESCAPE from Reality> Without weakening in his faith, he faced FACTS

Behind Promise is Character of Promise Maker > Abe walked, Confidence Grew

Faith looks at Problems in the light of God's Promises > God is Worthy of Trust

v. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

Confidence in God's Power - God who Promised is ABLE – willing and able

Out of this Couple's DOUBLE DEATH God brought New Life

Birth of Isaac was at the same time an act of Creation and Resurrection

Certainty of God's Plan – Paul jumps 2000 yrs forward from Abe to Jesus

WE HAVE STRONGER CERTAINTY – birth of Isaac AND the Empty Tomb!

Friend Hawaii Kai “Mark, when you preach in our church talk about Now/NotYet”

HAVE PROMISES but NOT YET Possess ALL of THEM

Abe & Sarah PROMISED Son – Lots of FACTS made that Seem IMPOSSIBLE!

Sometimes we can be PARALYZED with UNCERTAINTY

Rabbi Harold Kushner writes about 2 Funerals he conducted Boston WINTER

One Son “if only I had sent my mother to FLORIDA to get out of this SNOW”

Next “if only NOT sent mom to Florida and she would have been with US!”

Cannot INTERPRET Providence – Only PROMISES of God be Fully TRUSTED

JOHN STOTT “There are degrees of faith, from weak in to strong. How then does (faith) grow? Above all through the use of our minds. Faith is not burying our heads in the sand, screwing ourselves up to believe what we know is not true, or even whistling in the dark to keep our spirits up. On the contrary faith is reasoning trust. There can be no believing without thinking. On the one hand we need to think about the problems that face us. But on the other hand Abraham reflected on the promises of God and character of the God who made them...And as his mind played on the promises, the problems shrank accordingly.”

4. Peace - Romans 5

5.1-5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

New Standing "JUSTIFIED" - NOT GUILTY - PARDONED - ACQUITTED

LAW says man must BEHAVE / GOSPEL says BELIEVE, Behavior Results

PEACE WITH GOD - RECONCILIATION - GOD'S ANGER APPEASED

GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND - Joy, Love, and Forgiveness

HOPE OF GLORY - Confident Expectation of Heaven

WHERE IS IT? SUFFERINGS AND PROBLEMS - DEATH

WE REJOICE IN SUFFERINGS? ABSURD? INSANE?

NOT MASOCISTS - WHO ENJOY BEING HURT

NOT STOICS - WHO GRIT THEIR TEETH AND ENDURE

CHRISTIANS - HAVE HEAVENLY FATHER - WORKING OUT ALL THINGS

FOR HIS GOOD AND OUR GLORY

SUFFERING PRODUCES ENDURANCE

ENDURANCE PRODUCES CHARACTER

CHARACTER PRODUCES HOPE

HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT - LOVE IN OUR HEARTS - HOLY SPIRIT

UNQUESTIONABLE PROOF OF GOD'S LOVE - CROSS & RESURRECTION

WILLIAM COWPER had Miserable Childhood – 6 yrs old Mother DIED

Sent to Orphanage – Small & Sensitive Boy – Badgered, Bullied, & Beaten

Early Years filled with TERRORS and FEARS – Mind Failed / 2 Suicide Attempts

Cowper cried through many dark nights of the soul - "My sin! My sin! Oh for some fountain open for my cleansing!" BUT THERE WAS NO FOUNTAIN

1756 – 25 year old William Cowper committed to Asylum run by Dr. Cotton

At that time in England – Most Asylums were known for Terrible Treatment

Dr. Cotton – WONDERFUL EXCEPTION – Gracious, Kind, Christian Gentleman

Led Cowper to the Lord Jesus – Our Justification, Our Redeemer, Our Propitiation

COWPER “The happy period which was to shake off my fetters and afford me a clear opening to the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verses I saw were on the third chapter of Romans: ‘Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to manifest his righteousness.’ Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone on me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon in his blood, and the fullness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed and received the gospel.”

Then Cowper wrote his hymn of testimony –

“There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day;
and there have I, as vile as he, Washed all my sins away.

E’er since by faith I saw the stream, Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die.

Today you can come boldly to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ and find grace to help your need. You do not have to make a pilgrimage to present your sacrifice. You do not need to change your race. All that you have to do is abandon your efforts at salvation and come alone by faith in Him who declared Himself to be the way, the truth, and the life – Trust His finished work! James Boice