

Romans 3

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, February 11, 2018

You can go ahead and turn in your Bibles to the Book of Romans. And as you are doing that, this morning we are in a series called “The Book of Romans in 3 Months”, where we are looking at the Book of Romans in a 3-month or a 12-week period of time. There are 16 chapters in the book, so we are moving quickly to finish it by then. We are covering one chapter a week, and we will do more as the series goes on.

But we are doing this because we want you to understand the gospel. Paul starts out the Book of Romans this way in 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation...” Romans is about the gospel. It’s about the Good News that Jesus died for us. And specifically, it is about the power of that message. It is about the power of Jesus Christ to change lives.

To say that another way, some of you don’t know when your life was changed by Jesus Christ. You don’t know when you first felt this power. You didn’t see a light shining down from heaven. You didn’t have a “Damascus Road Experience” or a radical change of heart. It was gradual for you. It took time. You don’t know the day or the hour when you became a Christian. But that’s okay, because you know that you are a Christian when you read the Book of Romans. You know that God saved when you study this book. Because that’s what it is all about. It tells you how you were saved.

On the other hand, some of you know when you were saved. You had a “Damascus Road Experience”. You saw a light shining down from heaven, and you had a radical change of heart. But your heart doesn’t feel changed now. You don’t feel the light now. You can’t break free from sin. You can’t get victory over it. You try and you try and your try, but you keep giving into the same temptations and the same lusts. But that’s okay, because the Book of Romans tells you how to deal with that too. T tells you how to get victory over sin.

If you remember, it is about “the power of God for salvation.” If you remember, it is all about power – the power of God. And if that power saved you once, it can save you again. If it gave you victory once, it can do it again.

Some of you had a radical change of heart and you had a “Damascus Road Experience”. You saw the light and experienced victory over sin. But you are struggling with something else today. You are struggling with legalism. You are struggling with comparing yourself to others and saying you are better than them. Like the Pharisees, you look at the alcoholics and drug users, you look at the tax collectors and thieves and say you are better than them. You are up here, while they are down here. You are the “have’s”, while they are the “have-not’s”. And you know that is wrong. You know you shouldn’t do that. So what do you do? How do you beat that kind of thinking? Read the Book of Romans, and it will tell you.

It was written by the greatest legalist of all time. It was written by a guy who looked down on everybody and thought he was better than them. Until God showed him that “all have sinned, and

fallen short of the glory of God.” Until God showed him that “there is none righteous, not even one”, which we will talk about this morning. But my point is that Romans covers everything in the Christian life. No matter what you are going through, no matter where you are in your walk with Christ, it tells you everything you need to know to please God and honour Christ. This is why we are studying it at Grace Fellowship Church, because we want you to please God and follow Christ. We want you to know the power of God for salvation. We want you to understand what it is all about.

I have learned throughout the years that you can’t assume anything in a church. You can’t assume that everyone is saved just because are here. You can’t assume that they know what it’s all about just because they came week in and week out. Some do, and some don’t. So you have to take them by the hand and show them. You have got to open up the Bible and lay it out for them. This is what we are doing right now in this series.

Robert Haldane, the famous Scottish pastor was walking through a park once when he heard a group of young talking about the Bible. And he discovered that they were seminary students. They went to Divinity School, but from what he could tell, they were lost. They didn’t understand what they were talking about. So he asked if they would like to study the Book of Romans, which they did. Over the course of a year, every one of them was saved. They were all converted. They went on to become missionaries and pastors and evangelists – all over the world.

That’s what I want to see happen in the life of our church. I want to see you saved by the power of God. I want to see you converted, if not already so. You don’t have to be missionaries and pastors and evangelists (although that would be fine), but you do have to saved, right? I don’t think it is unfair to say that you do have to be right with God. It is no secret that that’s what we want for you. I can think of no better way to talk that than to study the Book of Romans.

I have told you before that Romans has been called “the introduction to the Christian faith.” Alva J. McClain says,

Romans tells us what Christianity is. Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians tell us about the Body of Christ; and 1 & 2 Thessalonians deal with the coming of the Lord. But Romans comes first because it is the introduction to the Christian faith. It all starts here.” McClain says. “This is where it all begins.

John MacArthur says,

Romans answers just about every question we have concerning God and man. Some of the more significant questions it answers are: What is the Good News of God? Is Jesus really God? And what is God like? It also tells us: Why does God condemn people to Hell and how can someone be forgiven for that? What is the importance of Christ’s death and resurrection? And for whom did He die? And where can we find real peace and hope? Where can we find true freedom and victory over sin?

Romans tells us all of that. It answers just about every question we have.

And just a quick reminder of what we have looked at so far in this book, if you are joining us for the first time today, this is our fourth week in the study. And so far, we have looked chapters one and two. 1:18 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...” In other words, God is angry with unrighteous men. That is the point of Romans 1: God is angry with the godless, with those who suppress the truth and try to push it away. They want to pretend like there is no God.

Then, to balance that out, Paul says in Romans 2:3, “But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?” In other words, God is angry with righteous men too. That is the point of chapter one: He is angry with those who look down on the people in chapter one and judge them. They say: “We are the ‘have’s’ while you are the ‘have not’s.’” “We are up here while you are down there.” “They will face the wrath of God too,” Paul says. “They will be judged like everyone else.” This brings us to chapter three.

In Romans three, Paul starts dealing with objections people have to all of this. He deals with concerns people have to all of this talk about sin and wrath and judgment. Because, as you know, when you talk about judgment, people don’t like it, do they? They have some objections. When you talk to them about wrath, they protest because they don’t want to hear it. And Paul deals with that in chapter three very quickly, and so will we.

The first objection is this: what is the point of being righteous then? If all of this is true, Paul, if the righteous man is no better off than the unrighteous, the Jew then the Gentile, what is the point of being righteous? And he answers in verses 1-2: “1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.” That phrase “oracles of God” is another way of saying, “the Word of God” or “the Law of God”. “You wouldn’t even have the Law if it were not for the Jews,” Paul says. “You wouldn’t even have the Bible if it were not for the righteous people. So don’t forget that. Don’t count them out.”

Then he comes in with a second objection: will their sinfulness cancel out the promises of God? Will they lose their salvation? People often ask me, “Can I lose my salvation? If God is angry with righteous people, can I sin to the point of no return? Can I be saved?” And Paul answers that question in verses 3-4: “3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? 4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar...” In other words, your salvation doesn’t depend on you. It depends on God. It doesn’t depend on your promises. It depends on His. And God keeps His promises. Let God be true and every man be a liar. God will do what He said. You can guarantee it. If it said He will save you, He will save you.

And then he comes to a third objection: is God “unrighteous”? Does He approve of sin? This is the most devious one in the list. It is pretty evil. But it goes like this, “Okay Paul, if all of this is true, and God saves us in spite of our sin, is God glorified by sin then? Does He like to see us do it? Does it bring Him pleasure? Is He an unrighteous God? And Paul answers that question in verse 6, “May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?” And he says at the end

of verse 8, "...their condemnation is just." "That question is not worth answering," Paul says. It condemns itself. Then he writes in verse 9:

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; 12 all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one."

Now I want to stop there and point out as you read that, that the words "non" or "all" are repeated several times in this passage. If you look down in verses 9-18, you see it multiple times. "Jews and Greeks are all under sin." "There is none righteous, not even one." "There is none who understands." "There is none who seeks God." "All have turned aside." And Paul's point is that the objections are useless, because you all have broken the Law. They are pointless, because you have sinned and you can't deny that. You can't protest it away.

So you need to be silent. That is actually Paul's point in verse 19. After giving a long explanation to the phrase, "There is none righteous," Paul says in verse 19: "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;" In other words, "Shut your mouth when you stand in the presence of God. Don't say a word." After the sermon last week, Jim Soldan said we all need to be silent for a minute and take this in. That's what Paul says here" we need to be silent in the presence of God. We need to be quiet as we take this in.

I can't tell you how many times I have witnessed to somebody and told them about the Law and the first thing they do is object. They say, "Yeah, but..." Does anybody know what I'm talking about? Have you ever experienced that before? You show them their sin, and how they have broken the Commandments and how they have lied, lusted and stolen. It is as plain as the nose of their face, and they can't deny it. They can't say one word against it. But what is the first thing out of their mouth? "Yeah, but..." "Yeah, but I don't like this." "Yeah, but what about this?" "Yeah, but what about that?" And Paul says, "No more of that. No more 'yeah buts.'" There needs to be silence in the presence of God. Every mouth should be closed as we take this in.

It was said that after the French Philosopher Rousseau left his wife and abandoned his children to an orphanage, he said: "I will stand before God and defend my conduct." No you won't. No you won't. You won't stand before God and defend anything. You won't stand before God and say a word. You will be silent. Your mouth will be closed. Here is the frightening thing about this, when it comes to the Law of God, we don't have a leg to stand on, do we? We don't have an objection. There is nothing more to say, because we have blown it. We haven't done what it says. You can get a speeding ticket and argue with the judge, but you are still going to have to pay the ticket, aren't you? You are still going to have to pay the fine. And you are still going to have to pay this. The whole world is. Verse 20 says, "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

But here is the Good News friends. Here is the hope that we have as Christians. Verse 21 starts off with, "But now." These are two of the most encouraging words in the Book of Romans. They

change the whole direction of everything. Yes, you have broken the Law. Yes, you will have to answer for it, “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.” In other words, there is a solution to all of this. There is hope. There is a way to be right with God, which is what the word “righteousness” means.

And that’s what I want to talk to you about this morning. Because in Romans three, Paul tells us how Jesus saves us from the wrath of God. If you are taking notes, in Romans 3:21-26, Paul tells us how Jesus saves us from the wrath of God. Romans one and two is bad news, isn’t it? “There is none righteous, not even one,” and that is bad news. There is not much to look forward to. But there is a lot to look forward to here. This is the light at the end of the tunnel, because it tells us how Jesus saves us.

And it starts off like this: He saves us apart from the Law (or apart from our keeping the law). That is first way that Jesus saves us from the wrath of God. He does it apart from the Law. “Apart from our keeping the Law” is the idea here. Someone had to keep the Law for you to be saved. I you get that. Someone had to meet its requirements. As R.C. Sproul says, “You will be saved by works. Either you will be saved by Jesus’ works and go to heaven, or you will trust in your own work and go to hell.” But, “You will be saved by works... You will be saved by righteousness.”

And that’s what Paul says here. If you read verse 21 again, it says, “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.” I have already said a few words about this. But if you notice, Paul mentions “the righteousness of God” here, or, “the righteousness that comes from God,” “the righteousness that God approves of.” That word is *dikaiousune* in Greek, which means, “righteousness” or “justice”. It is the same word used for “just” or “justified” later in the chapter. That is two words in English, but one word in Greek. Because, if you remember, Romans one and two are all about the justice of God, aren’t they? They are all about the fact that we have sinned, and God will hold us accountable. He will have His justice. “But now...”, Paul says, “Apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested...” In other words, Jesus was righteous for you. He kept the Law in your place so that you can be right Him. God can look on you and see Him.

The verse says, “this was witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets” or the Old Testament. “The Law and the Prophets” was another way of saying, the Old Testament. There were several prophecies in the Old Testament that talked about the righteousness of Christ. In Isaiah 53:9 say, “He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.” That’s another way of saying Jesus is righteous. He never lied, and He did no violence. He was perfectly holy. Because of this, Jeremiah 33:15 called Him, “the righteous branch”, and Isaiah 9:7 says, “He will uphold the world in righteousness and justice.” You get the idea. As the Son of God, He pleased God in every way. As God Himself, Jesus did everything the Law commanded.

And now He offers it to you, which is what Paul says in verse 22: “even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe...” God’s righteousness is available through faith. All of this is available if you will just believe in Jesus, which we will talk about in a moment. But this is a mind-blowing idea, isn’t it? This is unbelievable. And let me stop here and tell you what that means. That means that you can be saved right now. If you come to Christ

and believe in His name. This means that you can be saved right now. You don't have to earn your way to heaven. You don't have to work your way there. The work has already been done for you. Jesus has already met the requirements. All you have to do is trust in Him, and you can be saved right now – today.

One of my professors lived in a very rough area of Los Angeles. And he tells the story of witnessing to a man who said, "I will believe all of that stuff later." He was a pretty sinful person, and he loved that lifestyle. He wanted to hold onto that, so he said, "I will get it that later." "I will do it on my deathbed." "For now, I want to sin." So my professor said, "Okay, do me a favour then: don't die. Because if you die, you will go to Hell. If you die, you will face the wrath of God. So, whatever you do, don't die. Stay alive until we meet again. And he said that the next Sunday, when he went to church, he saw the man pacing back and forth in the lobby, after the service. And he came running up to him to say, "I don't want to die! Can you tell me how to get to heaven?" And my professor did, and that man was saved right away.

My friends, you can be saved right away this morning. You can go to heaven right now. You don't have to be afraid of dying. You don't have to fear the wrath of God. You don't have to let it keep you up at night. Because Jesus has come to deliver you. The righteousness of God has been manifested in Him. God looked at Him and saw no wrath, and He looked at you and saw only wrath. And Jesus offers to trade places with you, if you will believe in Him.

And let me tell you what else this means. This also means that you can be saved for sure. This also means that you can be saved for sure. Salvation can be a sure thing for you. It can be certain. You can know without a shadow of a doubt that you are saved. It doesn't have to be a "maybe I am in, maybe I am not." "Maybe God loves me, maybe He doesn't." You can know that God loves you, if you trust in Jesus, because God loves Him. He has God's righteousness.

Remember, it is not about your righteousness, it is about His. It is not about your good works, it is about His. And God loves His good works. To say it another way, salvation doesn't depend on you. It depends on Him, right? And He won't lose it. He will never mess it up. Is anybody afraid of messing it up with God this morning? I am. Is anybody afraid of blowing it? I am so afraid of getting so far and God says, "That's it! I have had enough of you. You have sinned too much." Let me tell you, God will never say that, if you are in Christ, because Jesus won't mess up. He will never say that, if you are in Him, because Jesus won't blow it.

I don't leave my money in my pocket, because I know I will blow it. I will mess it all up. So I put it in the bank. My friends, you need to put your souls in the bank of heaven, and God won't lose them. Jesus says, "This is the will of Him Who sent Me...that I will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day."

This is the problem with all the religions in the world, by the way. They can't say that. They can't guarantee that you won't lose your salvation, because it all depends on you. Whether it is the Five Pillars of Islam, or the Five Precepts of Buddhism; whether it is the four gods of Hinduism, or the seven Holy Sacraments, you have to do it all. You have to earn your way to heaven, and therefore you can lose it. They can't guarantee that you will get there.

A Christian was once riding on a plane next to a Muslim, when he asked him, “How do you know how you are saved? How do you know you are going to heaven?” And the man said, “I don’t know.” He was being honest. He said, “I have no idea whether I am going to heaven or not.” Listen, you don’t have to talk like that, if you have trusted in Jesus. You can know for sure that you are going there, because Jesus is going there. In fact, He is already there waiting for you. Trust in Him, and you will get there too.

It has been said that God’s pencil has no eraser on it, because He makes no mistakes. And if He writes you into the Book of Life, you stay there - you don’t go anywhere. And if He gives you Jesus’ righteousness, that stays there too. Charles Spurgeon says,

If one dear saint of God had perished, so might all perish. If one covenant promise be lost, so might all be lost...I would be an unbeliever if I could believe that a single Christian could fall away from the faith but I don’t believe this. If God hath loved me once, He will love me forever.

And that leads to another way that Jesus rescues us from the wrath of God. (We will spend a little more time on this one). That is: through a gift. Jesus rescues us through a gift. He rescues us apart from the Law, and He rescues us through a gift. If Jesus does it all, then salvation is a gift, isn’t it? It is given to us freely. You can’t buy something that has already been bought, can you? You can’t pay for something that has already been paid for. And in a similar way, Jesus has already paid for your sin. And now all you have to do is receive it as a gift.

Paul writes in verses 21-24,

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

There are a lot of prepositions and adverbs in there which make it hard to read. But they all modify the phrase, “the righteousness of God has been manifested.” They explain what it means for Jesus to be righteous for us. And let me point out a few things here.

For one, you can see the word “all” repeated a couple of times here. That’s what we saw earlier in the chapter, in verse nine Paul said, “For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.” Now he says in verse 22 that, “God’s righteousness is available for all who believe.” The gift is available for “all”. It is not just available to the righteous man, it is available to the unrighteous man too. It is not just available to the Jew, it is available for the Gentile. All are going to Hell, and now all can be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

Another thing to point out here is that this gift is available “through faith”. Verse 22 says, “the righteousness of God is available through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe...” If you think about it, everyone can believe, can’t they? If you have a soul, you can believe. If you have a brain, you can believe. A Jew can believe, and a Gentile can believe. A righteousness man can

do it, and an unrighteous man can do it. A child can believe, and an adult can believe. A man can do it, and a woman can do it. A rich person can do it, and a poor person can do it. A disabled person can do it, and a healthy person can do it. This means that if you don't believe in Jesus, it is your fault. If you don't trust in Him, the blame is entirely your own. God has done everything else for you but believe. So if you won't do that, you have no excuse, which is a frightening thing to think about.

Finally, one more thing to point out here. Paul says that it was given for our redemption. The gift was given for our redemption. Verse 24 says, "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" Redemption was a business term in the First Century. It referred to buying something back that was lost or purchasing something that had been taken from you. And it referred specifically to slaves.

If you were sold as a slave back then, someone could step in and redeem you. They would march down to the slave market and buy you back. And Paul says that's what Jesus did. He marched into the slave market of sin and He bought us back. He paid the price for us. He said, "How much for this one?" And He paid it. And "How much for that one?" And He paid it. He said, "How much do I have to give?" And He gave it. "How much do I have to do?" And He did it to redeem us and buy us back.

In the 18th Century, a couple of Moravian missionaries learned about an island off the coast of the Caribbean that was full of slaves who had never heard the gospel. They had never heard about Jesus and all this stuff we are talking about in Romans. So they contacted the owner of the island and asked if they could come preach to the slaves. They asked if they could come witness to them. And the owner said, "No. Only slaves can come to my island." So what they did is sold themselves into slavery, so they could come to the island and do that. They gave up their lives, so they could go save the lives of others.

My friends, Jesus did that for you. He gave up His life to save yours. He sold Himself into slavery to buy you back from sin, if you believe in Him. This means that you should be grateful, shouldn't you? That probably goes without saying. You should be thankful that Jesus would do this for you. You can't be proud about this. You can't be smug about it. You should also be generous in light of this. You should be selfless.

I have talked with people who have visited our church and said, "I am not a Christian." But, "These people sure are selfless. They sure are generous with what they have. They give and give and give and expect nothing in return. They love and love and love and ask for nothing back." Why? This is because God has given this to us. This is because He has loved us like this. He spared no expense with us, and now we want to spare no expense with you. He gave us all He had, and now, we want to give you all we have in return. He gave with no strings attached, and now we want to do the same.

And that leads to the next way Jesus saves us from the wrath of God. And that is: through propitiation, or we might say "punishment". If you are wondering how to spell it, it is right there in verse 25. Jesus saves us through "propitiation." This means that: He took our punishment on

Himself. He was punished on our behalf, because justice requires punishment, doesn't it? It requires that someone must pay for breaking the Law, which is what Jesus did for us.

And if you read on in verses 24-25, it says, "24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 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;" The word "propitiation" there is the Greek word *ilaseirion*, which means "to appease someone's anger" or "satisfy their wrath." If you remember in Romans 1:18, it says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven..." This is how God appeases that. This is how He deals with it for Christians. For those who are not Christians, He will deal with it in hell. But for those who are saved, He does it through this.

And then he goes on to say that, "This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;" If you remember the Jews killed animals to pay for sin. They killed bulls and goats and lambs, but that wasn't enough. God had to pass over the sins previously committed. As Hebrews 10:3 says, "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." So God had to send something greater. He had to do something more. He had to provide "propitiation in His blood through faith."

"Blood" there is a synonym for life. It means that Jesus had to die for us. In order to pay for this He had to give up His life. If you remember, at the cross, Jesus said, "It is..." what? "It is finished." What does that mean? It means that the wrath of God is finished. It means that the price of sin is finished for the those who believe.

The author of Hebrews says in Hebrews 10:12: "But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God..." Why did He sit down? Because the work was done. Why did He stop? Because there was nothing more to do. The wrath of God was satisfied in Him. To get the whole context of that verse, Hebrews 10:11-14 says,

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, "sat down at the right hand of God," 13 waiting from that time onward "until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet." 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

This offering took care of it all. "He purified for all time those who are sanctified", which is another way of saying that He made them righteous. He took away their guilt.

I think that one of the biggest problems in our world today is how to deal with guilt. People simply don't know what to do with it. They try to drink it away, but that doesn't work. Then they try to drug it away, but that doesn't work, either. They try to eat it away, and that doesn't help. Then they try to pretend like it isn't there, and that does no good. It is still there. Let me tell you, only Jesus can take away guilt. Only He can make propitiation for our sins.

I remember talking with a young man, several years ago, about this. And I told him that Jesus died for my sin; that He bore the wrath of God in my place. And he said, "That is some heavy

stuff, man.” I think he was a hippie. But he said, “How do you live with that heavy stuff?” And I said, “I don’t feel heavy, because I am free. My guilt has been taken away.”

I don’t know how I could live with myself if I thought my guilt was still there. I don’t know what I would do if I thought that I had to pay God back for my sin. That would be terrible. That would be awful. Where would you even start with that?

That was the problem the Jews had. They had to keep paying God for their sin. Every time they sinned, every time they messed up, they had to go back to the priest, back to the altar and kill something. It was said that the Jews would never say, “It is finished.” They could never say, “it is over.” Because there was always something more to pay. There was always something more to kill. The Jewish priests have even been called “professional butchers”, because that’s what they did all day long. They butchered animals. You don’t have to live that way if you are a Christian. You don’t have to kill anything, because it has already been done. Your sin has been punished. All of that is over, because Jesus is your propitiation.

And that leads to a final way Jesus saves us from the wrath of God. And this one brings it all together: by justifying us. He saves us from the wrath of God apart from the Law, through a gift, through propitiation and He saves us from the wrath of God through justification or through making us just with God. This brings us back to where we started all of this. This takes us back to the beginning. Because as we have said over and over and over again, God’s Law will be kept. His commands must be obeyed, if you want to get to heaven.

And that’s what this is referring to, because Paul says in the middle of verse 25: “...This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 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.” That phrase “just and the justifier” really captures the meaning of this passage. Because in doing this to Jesus, God is just. Because He kept the Law. He made someone pay for sin. And in doing this to us, in giving us the rewards of this through faith, He is the Justifier, because He makes us just too. He treats us as if we never sinned, or as if we kept all the Law ourselves.

Make no mistakes: it was the Law that killed Jesus. It was the Law that drove Him to the cross. It was grace too. But He did it to uphold the Law, which the rest of this passage says, “27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.” And then Paul writes in verse 31, “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.” When you trust in Jesus, you establish the Law. When you trust in Him, you believe that He kept it all, and was punished for it in your place.

A pastor once spoke to a man at the end of the service who said, “Pastor, I don’t believe all of that stuff about Jesus being my Saviour. I don’t like all this tuff about sin and judgment. I just want to follow Him as my example.” So the pastor said, “Jesus was sinless. Can you follow that example?” To which the man replied, “No, I can’t. I can’t do that.” So the pastor said, “Then you need Jesus as your Saviour then.”

My friends, we all do this morning. We all need Him to take our place on the cross. We all need Him to keep the Law. We all need Him to take our sin. We need someone to be just and the Justifier. And that is exactly what He came to do. Do you believe that today? Do you believe He is your Justifier? Do you understand that you don't have to earn it, that the gift is free? And you don't have to beat yourself up over it. Do you know that Jesus paid it all? That He swallowed all of God's wrath for your sin? Do you know that He redeemed, that He bought you back from slavery? If you don't believe that, I want to encourage you to do that today. There is no better time than now. Like I said, you can be saved today. You can go to heaven now. The Book of Romans will unpackage this for you. We will be talking about it more in the weeks to come and learning what it means. But there is no better time to believe than the present. There is no better time to experience the power of God than today. There is no better time to find a Saviour. Will you do that now, if you haven't? Will you find Him? Let me pray for you to do that. Let's pray.