

God is a Just God - November 2nd

Y'all ready? So, this one is going to be kind of a more lengthier one, and I apologize straight away, but it will be fun. So, we all know that Pastor Will and Autumn, they are in Wales, and they're having a blast. So, Pastor Will, he preached already about nine, 10 hours ago.

Do you want to know something though, Crete and Prairie? They're just loving the castles, and I guess everything is going really well there. Sure do miss those guys. I don't know about you guys, but I already miss the Parsons.

But anyways, a couple of weeks ago, Pastor Will showed us really something very unique in the book of Hebrews. I don't know if you guys caught it, but I never saw it. He showed us in Hebrews chapter 10 verses 38.

He said, that just shall live by faith. Amen. That is a transition statement, between chapter 11 and on from chapters 1-10.

Then we also heard, now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Amen. So, who are the just, and what is faith? Thankfully, Pastor Will answered those questions for us by walking us through the previous 10 chapters of the book of Hebrews, right? Yeah.

We know that Christ is better than the prophets, he's better than the priests, he's better than the angels, he's better than Joshua, Aaron, Moses, and even a better covenant, right? We remember that from the first 10 chapters. It's all through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and ascension into heaven, that we are justified to enter into the throne room, and to have relationship with God. Amen.

All things that Pastor Will has been telling us. We are preserved in Christ. We are kept in Christ.

Amen. We can hold fast to our faith, to stay near to God, to press through those trials and tribulations that life will throw us. Amen.

It's because we are justified through Christ. Amen. All right.

Everybody on board with that? Faith is a substance of things hoped for, and evidence of the things not seen. How many of you can see gravity? None of us, right? By how many, his righteousness, his provision and protection. Amen.

So for me to show you that God is a just God, we're going to take a look at three different examples from the word of God. Amen. All right.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you.

Lord Jesus, we humble ourselves before your throne room, and we thank you, Christ, that you are our direct access to a right relationship with God the Father. Pause right there and reflect on that. God never goes back on his word.

He upholds his promises. His word never returns void, just like how the snow hits the ground and returns back to the sky and hits the snow, hits the ground again in the form of precipitation. God's word does not return void.

Amen. So in Genesis 12, 4-5, so Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and a lot went with him, and Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abraham took Sarah, his wife, and Lot,

his brother's son, and all of their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan.

So they came to that land of Canaan. Abraham obeyed the Lord, took his wife, took his nephew, Lot, and everything else that they needed, and they traversed the land and went to Canaan. Now, we know that they've already done that.

Now, they're settled up in Canaan, and we're going to fast forward to Genesis Chapter 13. Abraham and Lot, they were both very, very rich in all their resources, and all of their herds, and everything that they had. They were very rich.

So much so, where the land could not support them both. So Abraham and Lot, they agreed there was no strife between the two, but they agreed to go ahead and split in part ways, as they didn't want any strife between the herdsmen. So Abraham, he said, "Hey, Lot, you know what? You get first pick.

Where do you want to go? Where do you want to settle down in?" Lot, he scans land, and of course, he's going to find the place with most water, and the best of the best of land. So he can do his harvesting, and all that kind of good stuff. So look to the plain of Jordan, there is plenty of water, and plenty of excellent soil.

Guess where he ends up in? Sodom. Yes, that's right. So he departed, he ends up over there, and Abraham, he continued to dwell in Canaan.

The Lord, he made another visit to Abraham, and he reminded Abraham of his promise, "You will be a father of many nations, you will have a son." So Abraham, he moved yet once again. Now, we jump into Genesis Chapter 14. Now, there are four kings who decided to make war against Sodom.

You know what? Those four kings kidnapped Lot. Now, Lot is in trouble. What's he ever going to do? He's going to call on uncle Abraham, who sends out his 318 special forces men to go rescue Lot.

318 special forces guys took care of that. So later, Abraham, he was again visited by the Lord. He was visited by Melchizedek actually, and he was reminded yet once again of the promise, "He will become the father of many nations." Fast forward all the way to Genesis 17.

Now, there's a whole lot of stuff that happened in between, but we won't go there. Abraham is now 99 years old. The Lord appeared before him again, and reminded him of that covenant promise, and changed his name from Abram to Abraham.

The one condition, however, was that all the male children would be circumcised. This was a sign, a symbol of the covenant. Abraham and Sarah, they were promised yet again a child.

Now, they're beyond childbearing years. Amen. We jump all the way to Genesis 18.

Abraham was visited by three men. We do know one of these men was indeed, in fact, the Lord himself. As the event begins with, then the Lord appeared before him.

So we know that, yep, one of these men, one of these three was the Lord. As these men appeared, Abraham, he bowed down to the ground, and he began to offer them water to wash their feet, and offer them food to refresh them. They agreed to sit.

Absolutely, Abraham, go ahead. So Abraham, he rules out the red carpet, gets the best of the best food, the best of the best water, and he takes excellent care of these guys. Hospitality was Abraham's favorite thing to do at this point.

They conversed, and they told Abraham that Sarah would be with child. Sarah, you guys remember this part, Sarah laughed, right? She's like, ha ha, you're right. I am well beyond childbearing age, and there's just no way.

So the Lord, you know what? He challenged Sarah's unbelief, and he said, is there anything too hard for the Lord? Guys, is there anything too hard for the Lord? No, there's not, and he continued to state that a year from that point, they will have a child. Amen? So we jump into Genesis 18, 16 through 33, records Abraham's intercession for Lot. Now, the Lord, as they're sitting there, they're talking, and the promise is being handed to him, the blessings and all this kind of stuff.

Now, the Lord, he told Abraham how he's gonna go over there and demolish this sin-filled, nasty city of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham, he began to intercede for Lot. Hey, would you destroy it if there are 100 people that are righteous or justified or righteous? How about 50, how about, and he started down the whole list.

Well, he was like, really didn't want Lot to be destroyed and mixed up into all this destruction and this wrath that's gonna be poured out. So the Lord, he followed through his promise. Lot got to escape.

He still destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, but Lot was able to escape. He was commanded to flee. He did so, didn't look back, however his wife did.

We know the rest of the story on that. And what we have here, you guys, is a two-edged sword, more like a double-coin deal. God is a just God, amen? He's gonna rain down his justice on sin.

He's gonna pour out his wrath on sin. We see it right there. But also, do you see what happened with Lot? God is a just God.

There's justification for Lot, amen? Let's develop this a little bit stronger. Let's dive into the New Testament and look at the cross. You guys will remember this one.

Comes out of Luke 23, 39, and 43. Then Jesus is on the cross. You got the two criminals, one to the left and right.

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Jesus, saying, if you are the Christ, save yourself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, do you not fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive our due reward for our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong.

Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, assuredly, I say to you today that you will be in paradise with me. Wow.

So the criminal who rebuked the first criminal was promised by Jesus eternal life. Remember the position that Jesus is in at this time. He can barely breathe.

He's being crucified. Every breath hurts to take in. Notice he didn't waste any breath on the criminal who is all blasphemous and everything.

But notice he justified the criminal that pretty much asked him to save him. Amen? Amen. Jesus gave breath to that and assured this guy, you will be with me in paradise.

This guy really believed that Jesus is the son of God, that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Amen? So for the criminal who blasphemed Jesus denied eternal life and most likely was served his justice. Amen? God provides us a way of rescue from our sin to brevity through Jesus Christ.

We are justified through Christ. We are beloved of God the Father and we are kept in Christ. Amen? Jesus' unconditional, sacrificial, selfless love was absolutely on display that day on the cross concerning that robber that asked him, can I be in the kingdom with you, Jesus? That was on display.

And guess what, you guys? It's on display for you and I. We witness how God justified Abraham by fulfilling his promise to Abraham. Abraham became a father of many nations, right? And then we also witness how he justified Lot and saved Lot, provided him a way of escape out of what was about to be done in Sodom and Gomorrah. We know that that place was completely destroyed.

How many of you have ever been to Jerusalem or been to Israel? Yeah, you've seen the salt, right? We witness now that Jesus justified the criminal who realized he needed eternal life and that Christ is the Son of God. We also witness how God poured out his wrath on that sin-filled Sodom and Gomorrah but also did not give any breath to the other criminal who blasphemed Jesus. How many of you like a good transformational story? A good, like, you see somebody who makes this 180-degree change, break free from addiction, break free from whatever it is? You know, so I'm a certified personal trainer and I absolutely love walking people through transformation.

It is so fun to get them stronger, get them healthier, get them leaner, things like that. It is so fun to take and watch somebody's transformation take root. You and I get to see the best transformational story I think ever known in history is Paul, Saul to Paul.

If you wanna join me in Philippians, you can. I'm actually gonna start with the Philippians 3, verses one through three and then we'll jump into four through six with the Bible in the sky. But before we start into that, I want you guys to remember, Saul, Paul, really, really, really thought that he was saved.

He really thought that by doing all of these things, by persecuting the church, that he was actually saved and that he was actually right with God before his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. And so let's hear what he actually has to say as the author of Philippians. He says, finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord for me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of mutilation, for we are the circumcised who worship God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. So this is just kind of like the prelude of this passage that I wanna show you guys. When we are interpreting the word of God, we want to make sure we read the scriptures before and after our scripture of study.

That's really important to be able to capture the full meaning of it. So Paul, at this point, he is reminding his audience to beware of false garbage, beware of false doctrine and to hold fast to what they are and who they are in Christ Jesus, amen. He also says and drives us home, do not have confidence in your flesh.

Do not be self-reliant. So let's continue into Philippians three, four through six. And that says, though I also might have confidence in the flesh, if anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so circumcise the eighth day of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews concerning the law, a Pharisee concerning zeal, persecuting the church concerning the righteousness which is in the law blameless.

But what things were gained to me, these I have counted as loss for Christ. Yet indeed, I also count all things lost for the excellence of knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them all as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that of which is through faith in Christ, that righteousness which is from God by faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death, if by any means I may attain the resurrection from the dead. So what we see here, you guys, Paul is talking about who he was before his encounter with Christ to who he is after his encounter with Christ.

If you want the full story of the actual event, the road to Damascus, his encounter with Christ, look in Acts chapter nine, but it's here in Philippians three that Paul describes how he viewed himself prior to his encounter. In other words, prior to being saved by Christ and after being saved in Christ, being justified in Christ. So I'm gonna give you a couple of those pointers.

So Paul, he really believed that he was saved through circumcision. Did you guys catch that? He really believed that he was saved through the ritual of being circumcised. You know, there was two reasons why circumcision took place and back in the ancient days, well, one of them, very minor, was for male personal hygiene health reasons, but the second and the most major is that circumcision is a symbol of spiritual cleansing of the heart.

Then we fast forward into the New Testament, the Jews and the religious ritual belief system, they really believed that circumcision was their way to salvation, okay? Because it was a spiritual cleansing. And they really felt like it was required of them because they knew they were born into sin. So if we're circumcised, we're saved.

That was the thing. That couldn't be further from the truth. Paul, he really believed that he was saved by his race.

He says, I am of the stock of Israel. I'm a Hebrew of Hebrews. He really believed that because he was a Jew, the Jews are God's chosen people, that he was saved just by being circumcised by his race.

He also believed that he was saved by his privilege. How many of you, and you can be honest, skip that part in the Bible of which it starts talking about genealogy, starts talking about who begot who, and how many centuries on down it goes? We all skip that, right? Well, how many of you know anything about the tribe of Benjamin? Such a noble tribe. Check this out.

All right, the younger son of Rachel, Jacob's, he loved Rachel so much. You guys remember the thing between Rachel and Leah and how much Jacob loved Rachel, but he ended up with Leah and Rachel? Well, Benjamin was the younger son of Rachel. Jacob had 12 sons.

You guys remember that? And guess what? They became the 12 tribes of Israel, right? And then Benjamin, he was the only son born in the promised land. Catch that. And then the soldiers of the Benjamin tribe, these guys were bold, they were courageous, always out in front during any military operation.

Did you know that Israel's first king, Saul, was actually from the tribe of Benjamin? Wow, yes, good. And then, do you guys remember Mordecai from the Book of Esther? When genocide was on, and guess who, guess what tribe Mordecai was from? Benjamin, that is crazy, right? The city of Jerusalem was in the territory of the Benjamin territory, in the Benjamin area, located with the Benjamin territory. Okay, the tribe of Benjamin was also very loyal to King David, especially when the kingdom split.

Guess who stayed in the south? The tribe of Benjamin and Judea, amen? So as we can tell through all of that, Benjamin, that tribe, is very, very noble. And Paul, he says, I'm from the tribe of Benjamin. That is privilege, right? Paul believed that he was saved because of ritual, his race, his privilege.

Now, through religion and tradition, he also believed because he was the Pharisee of Pharisees. He went to the best of schools, school of Galilee. He studied the best of the best, with the best of the best, knew everything.

And he followed the law very strictly. Every jot, every tittle, he followed that law strictly. Why do you think we see so much talk from Paul in the 13 letters books that he wrote about legalism and grace? Because he knew them both really, really well.

Paul also believed that he was saved through his zeal and persecuting those who did not agree with the religious beliefs of that day. He was so zealous. So, what am I trying to say, guys? Paul honestly believed that he was saved through all of these things, until he had his huge encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

He was off to go persecute another church, and all of a sudden, he is encountered by Jesus Christ himself. And Paul, he realized, wow, I'm not saved through all of these things. Paul, he spent nearly 35 years placing his credentials as a Pharisee into that prophet column, much like an accountant would.

But in a single moment, all of that was moved to the loss. All of his work as a Pharisee drove him deeper and deeper into depravity, deeper, deeper into darkness, and further and further away from the truth. At the point of his encounter with Jesus, Paul received a covering of Christ's righteousness, and he entered into a right relationship with God.

Paul also received the power of Christ's resurrection. And he tells us that at the last part of the Philippians that we read. Paul desired power.

Did you guys catch that? Paul desired power. That's why he was always building these credentials up, and that, also, he believed he was saved through it. But you know what? As he was a very influential man, he was very powerful.

He's a Pharisee of Pharisees. All that stuff became lost, but he found true power through the resurrection of Christ. He found his power over sin.

He found his power over temptation, over addiction, over error, over everything, and especially power to work in and through ministry. He knew his life, actually, was starting to build up to count for something. Through this transformation of Saul to Paul, we notice that God is a just God through Jesus's justification of Paul.

Do you guys understand all the things that Saul to Paul did prior to his encounter with Jesus? It was religious stuff dug deeper and deeper and deeper into the hole of depravity. Jesus Christ justified him, too, just as he justified the robber on the cross, just as he justified Lot's way of escape from destruction. Do you guys see that? God is a just God.

You know, God poured out his wrath on that, he poured out his wrath on his son, Jesus Christ, right? We always talk about how Jesus takes our sin on and washes our sin away from us. He took that on for us. God's wrath was poured out on Jesus that day on the cross, and God will pour out his wrath one day on all sin, but here's what's really cool.

Because of Jesus Christ's works on the cross, you and I are justified, but there's one thing we have to do. Same thing what Paul did. Gotta go through a transformation.

We gotta believe and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and as I did with Tom one day during faith journeys, I handed him a \$20 bill and said, here you go, Tom, and you know, Tom, he took it just so freely, you know, which was great. Little secret, he gave it back to me, but he did take it, and he took it freely with no problem, and that is exactly how we are to receive salvation, the free gift of life, eternal life, the free gift of justification. We are justified through Christ.

We have faith in Christ who makes us justified before God the Father. Do you remember where Jesus, he says, if you confess my name, I'll confess your name before my Father. I'll confess your name before my Father.

We are justified through Christ. That is so amazing. But you know what? It's nothing that you and I earn or deserve.

It's by grace through faith, and we've all been dealt a measure of faith. You've ever heard that saying before? Well, yeah, because it's in the Word. We've all been dealt a measure of faith for our justification.

Amen? So what do we need to do with all this stuff? What are we to do with all this stuff? You're like, why is she talking about God is just God, and Jesus justified us, and all this good stuff? Well, I talk about it because there's something really special that we have as a church, you guys. We are the bride of Christ, amen? Everybody knows Ephesians chapter five, where Paul tells those husbands, husbands, love your wives as Jesus loves the church. Have you ever thought about that? How does Jesus love the church? How does Jesus love the church? He gave his life for her, that's right.

He provides, he protects, washes over her in the Word, ministers to her in the Word. Guess what, you guys? This is a cool part, and I'm so glad I got to pick this out and share it with you guys. We are in this little sweet period called grace.

I like to liken it to a period of engagement. As you all know, Bone and I are engaged, and so I definitely get to really relate this. Engagement, think about an engagement period.

We've all been engaged, well. Okay, so an engagement period is a period of joy. It's filled with joy, it's filled with love, it's filled with grace, it's filled with excitement and that zeal of, I don't know what's next, but I know it's gonna be really, really awesome.

And we are the bride of Christ, amen? And guess what? Our home is not here. As we all know, our home is with Jesus. And he has gone to a place to prepare a place for us in the Father's house.

We're not gonna be on North Fee and 3rd Street. We're going to be in the Father's house with Jesus. And we have that excitement to look forward to, amen? Then we're in that engagement period, that joy, that love, that grace, that life is gonna throw us throat punches all the time.

Everybody feels it all the time. Oh my goodness, the pressures of life, the anxiety, the depression, the throat punches from life. But you and I have this amazing hope.

We cling to and hang on to the Holy Spirit. We cling to and hang on to the very fact that we have been justified in Christ Jesus. We know God is a just God.

He is gonna pour out his wrath on all sin. But you and I, we are justified in Christ. And we get to enjoy that very fact that one day, whether Jesus comes back in our time period, he is coming back.

We know that we're a little bit closer every day, right? We're closer today than we were yesterday. But we get to wait and wait and wait in that hope. And wait in that love, wait in that joy.

We talk about, well, what is joy? How can you have joy during a storm? There it is right there. We know this isn't home. Our home is with Jesus, amen? So why do we drive this stuff home? Because you and I, we know the truth.

And the truth has set us free, amen? The truth has set us free. And we know where we're going to be, but do our families, do our people around us know? Do our inner circles know? Do our circles around us know? Do our coworkers know? Think about that person, especially as we enter into this holiday season. You and I, we are representatives of Christ because we've been justified.

We are in Christ, and Christ is in us. We are representatives of that light. And guess what? We get to go out and be that light, be that love, and be that joy to those who have not yet known Jesus Christ as personal

Lord and Savior, amen? So I challenge us to continue to pray over those people who you know have not yet received Christ as personal Lord and Savior, whether it's family, and I'll tell you what, family is probably the hardest, right? And then it's coworkers or it's close friends.

You want to see them in heaven. You want to see them in that mansion with us, right? Let's make it big. All right, I got a couple more things, and then we're going to go eat some chili.

You guys ready for some chili? Yeah, all right, let's pray. Heavenly Father, I seriously pray, Lord Jesus, and give thanks for your justification. I thank you, Lord God, that you are a just God, and we do not have to worry about what is going to happen later on down the road because we are justified in you, Christ Jesus.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for all of your mercy and all of your mighty works on the cross. We thank you that it is in your love, through your love, that we have victory and that we have freedom. We thank you that we can come before your throne room ever so boldly but ever so humbly and worship you, be with you, commune with you, fellowship with you.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you love us with a love that never fails. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you provide for us, that you protect us, and that you continue to grow us and sanctify us every single day. We thank you, mighty God, that you are a just God and that we are justified in and through you, Christ Jesus.

We do pray for each and every one of those family members that we have, coworkers, or those close friends that we have that may not know you yet, Jesus. We ask, Holy Spirit, that you would speak to us, reveal to us these people,