

God is a Just God (PMJ 2 Nov, 25)

SLIDE 1 Welcome

SLIDE 2 Pastor Will and Autumn in Wales

Intro: Short review from Pastor Will's last few sermons

A couple weeks ago, **Pastor Will** showed us the transition statement **"The Just shall live by Faith"** in Hebrews 10:38 and followed it up last Sunday with Hebrews 11:1, **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"**.

So, **who are the just and what is faith?** Thankfully **Pastor Will** answered those two questions by walking us through the previous 10 chapters.

Christ is better than the prophets, priests, angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Melchizedek, and a better Covenant. It is all **through Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension** that we are justified to enter into the throne room and in the presence of our God.

We are preserved in Christ, (Jude 1) and it is because of this **we can hold fast to our faith, stay near to God, and press on through the trials.** We are **justified in and through Christ.**

Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen and comes by hearing the Word of God.

To quote **Pastor Will**: **"True Biblical Faith is Confident obedience to God and His Word despite convenience or circumstance"**. And **The substance of our Faith is eternity with Jesus.**

We took **longer to review** these **truths** because our **main point** for today is that **God is a Just God.**

We know who Christ is, and that **He is better than all the prophets, priests, angels and His Covenant is way better than any previous covenant.**

We know where we stand with God because of the works of Jesus Christ.

We are **justified, saved, rescued, redeemed, loved, cherished and preserved in Christ.** It is not something we earn or deserve; we earn and deserve death because of our dirty filthy sinful nature. **We are in Christ and Christ has imputed** to us **eternal life, victory, freedom, provision, protection, righteousness** and much more.

To show that **God is a Just God**, we will look at **three different Biblical events**; one from **Genesis 12-19**, second from **Jesus on the cross involving the two robbers**, and the third **Saul's transitions to Paul.**

Prayer:

SLIDE 3 Genesis 12:1-3 Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”.

This is the **first promise to Abram**. **God was** pretty **direct** and clear when He told Abram that He will **make Abram a great nation**. As we all know, **Abram did become a great nation and he was blessed just as God promised him**.

God never goes back on His Word, and His Word never returns void.

SLIDE 4 Genesis 12:4-5 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai 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 the land of Canaan.

Abram obeyed the Lord and departed. **He took his wife, nephew** and everything else that he needed and departed Heren for Canaan.

Fast forward to Genesis 13

Abram and Lot were both **rich in herds and resources**. The **Land was unable to support** them both and some strife occurred within the herdsmen. Both **Abram and Lot agreed** that it would be best to **separate**. **Abram gave Lot the first choice** of which direction to go. **Lot** looked around, **studied the land** and saw that all the **plain of Jordan had plenty of water and good ground for his herds**. **He departed from Abram and pitched his tent as far as Sodom** while **Abram dwelt in Canaan**.

The **Lord** paid another **visit to Abram** and **reminded Abram of His promise**. Abram moved to Hebron and constructed an alter there to the Lord.

Jumping into Genesis 14

Four kings made war with the **kings of Sodom, Gomorrah** and two other kings within the region. **Lot was kidnapped** and **Abram sent in his 318 special forces to rescue Lot**. **Later, Abram** was **visited by Melchizedek** and again was **reminded of the Promise from the Lord**.

Fast Forward to Genesis 17

Abram was **ninety-nine** years old. The **Lord** appeared before Abram to **remind him of the covenant promise**, and **changed his name to Abraham**. The **one condition** was that **all male children** was to be **circumcised** as this was a **sign of the covenant**.

Abraham and Sarah were promised a child even though they were beyond childbearing and rearing age.

We jump to Genesis 18

Abraham was visited by three men. We do know that **one of these three men was the Lord** as the **event begins with “Then the Lord appeared to him...”**

As these three men appeared, **Abraham bowed** himself to the ground and **offered water to wash their feet, give them rest and bread to refresh their hearts.** They **agreed and Abraham rolled out the red carpet and served the best food.**

They conversed and **told Abraham that Sarah will be with child within the year.** Sarah laughed within her heart knowing that she was well beyond childbearing years. **The Lord challenged Sarah’s unbelief** by asking **“Is there anything too hard for the Lord”** and continued on stating that **she would be with child within the year.**

Genesis 18:16-33 records Abraham’s intercession for Lot.

The Lord told Abraham of how He was going to demolish the wicked people and land of Sodom. **Abraham interceded for Lot,** his nephew, who was residing in Sodom. **The Lord followed through His promises as to allow a way of escape for Lot and his household.** **Lot was commanded to flee** as fast as humanly possible and **not to look back.** **His wife also knew** not to look back. We know the rest of that story. However, we can take note here that Lot was required to obey as not to be destroyed with the wicked people of Sodom.

What we see here is a two-edged sword of how God is a Just God

On one hand we see His blessing and the other an outpouring of His wrath. **Abraham is justified while God’s justice was served to Sodom and Gomorrah.**

Abraham was blessed with the reminder of the Conventual promise of being a father of many nations and promise to have a child within the year. Nothing but blessings and promises were poured out on Abraham.

The Lord shifted His attention to dealing with the wickedness of Sodom. He poured out His wrath and it and demolished Sodom and Gomorrah. Today we know it as the pillar of salt.

Let’s dive into the NT and look at the cross. This presents the ultimate two-edged sword of how God is a Just God.

Let’s turn to section of **Luke’s Gospel** in which **Jesus was on the cross.**

SLIDE 5 **Luke 23:39-43** Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, **“If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”** But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying,

“Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we received the due reward of 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 you will be with Me in Paradise.”

The criminal, who rebuked the first criminal, was promised by Jesus’ eternal life with Him. For this criminal, the cross of Jesus was a blessing and justification to enter into eternal life with Jesus. Jesus assured and affirmed that he would be in Paradise with Him on that day.

For the criminal who blasphemed Jesus denied eternal life and was most likely served justice.

God provides us a way of rescue from our sin depravity through Jesus Christ. He calls us out of death and into life. We are beloved of God the Father, and we are kept by and in Jesus Christ. Jesus unconditional, sacrificial and selfless love was on display the day that He died on the cross. He went anywhere did anything and died for us, His Church, so that we would have new life.

We witness how God justified Abraham by fulfilling His promise to Abraham. We witness how Jesus justified the criminal who realized that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. That criminal who asked Jesus to remember him was saved from eternal death that day.

God poured out His wrath on the very sin-filled nation of Sodom. The nation of Sodom and Gomora was a recipient of God’s wrath against sin. The cross of Jesus also served as justice for the unrepentant sinners along with the criminal who blasphemed Jesus while on the cross.

Let’s look at the best transformation story history. The one of Paul.

As Saul, he sincerely believed that he was doing right as a Pharisee. Let him explain as we turn to Philippians chapter 3. (read verses 1-3, but use PPT for verses 4-11)

Philippians 3:1-3 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 the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

This is just a way to get us all on track as to where we are in Philippians. Always remember when interpreting the Word of God to read the text prior to and after the text of study to capture the full meaning.

Paul is reminding his audience to beware of the false garbage, and to hold fast to who they are in Christ what they are to do. Paul begins to drive home his point, DO NOT HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH, DO NOT BE SELF-RELIANT.

Let’s continue with the next text (slide).

SLIDE 6 Philippians 3:4-6 Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised 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.

SLIDE 7 Philippians 3:7-9 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, that righteousness which is from God by faith;

SLIDE 8 Philippians 3:10-11 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 to the resurrection from the dead.

If we want to see the **full story of Paul's encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus**, we can look at **Acts 9**. It is here in **Philippians 3** that **Pual describes** how he **viewed himself prior** to his encounter with Jesus and transformation **and how he views himself in Christ**.

Pual really believed that he was saved because of these major points that he outlines in this passage.

1. Paul believed that he was saved through **Circumcision/Ritual**: There were **two reasons** for circumcision. A minor reason was simply **male personal hygiene and health**. The second and the major of the two reasons is that **circumcision was a symbol of a spiritual cleansing**.

Fast forward to the **NT Jews and their religious ritual belief system**. They believed that **circumcision meant salvation because it was a symbol of spiritual cleansing that was required from being born into sin**. Paul aligned himself with this belief

2. Paul believed that he was saved by his **race: "Of the stock of Israel"** The Jews believed that **by being Jews, being God's chosen people**, they are saved.

3. Pual believed that he was saved by **Privilege**: A **brief history on the Tribe of Benjamin**. Recall the **OT reference and the genealogy sections** that most people skip when reading their Bibles.

Benjamin was the **younger son of Rachel, Jacob's favored wife**. **Jacob had 12 sons**, which became the **12 tribes of Israel**. Benjamin was the **only son born in the Promised Land**. The **soldiers** of the Benjamin tribe were very **bold and courageous** as they were always **out in front during any military operation**. **Israel's first King, Saul**, came from the tribe of Benjamin. Remember **Mordeci** from the book of Esther, he was also **from the tribe of Benjamin** and became a great **deliverer of Israel during their time of genocide**. The **city of Jerusalem** was

located in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin was **loyal to King David when the kingdom split**. Only two tribes remained in the south, Judah and Benjamin. It is evident that this was a noble tribe. **Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin**.

4. Paul believed that he was saved through **religion and tradition**: **Paul was a Pharisee right down to the core**. He was **schooled in the best of the best schools** and he **followed the law**. Now we understand **why Paul wrote so much about law and grace**.

5. Paul believed that he was saved through his **zeal in persecuting those who did not agree with the law and traditions**.

Paul honestly did not realize the depravity that he was actually in until his encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus. He sincerely believed with every bone in his body that **salvation was by ritual, race, privilege, tradition, religion, zeal, and morality**. He lived his life **accumulating all of the credentials**.

Paul spent **close to 35 years** placing his **credentials as a Pharisee into the profit column** much like an accountant would. **In a single moment it all moved into the loss column**. **All of his work as a Pharisee drove him deeper into sin depravity and further away from the truth**.

At the point of his encounter with Jesus, Paul received the **covering of Christ's righteousness, and entered into a relationship with God through Christ**. Paul also **received the power of Christ's resurrection**.

Paul desired power and became a very powerful influence in the Jewish religious community. He exercised this power over many as he was predominated, **but this all became loss**.

Paul found the **true power through the resurrection of Christ**. **Power over sin, temptation, error, power for ministry** and power to make his life count.

Through this transformation of Sual to Paul, we notice that **God is a just God through Jesus' justification of Paul**. Paul was really in a bad way driven deeply into the depravity of sin.

What is our take away for today?

We witness how God justified Abraham by fulfilling His promise to Abraham. **We witness how Jesus justified the criminal who realized that Jesus was indeed the Son of God**.

God poured out His wrath on the very sin-filled nation of Sodom. **The cross of Jesus also served as justice for the unrepentant sinners along with the criminal who blasphemed Jesus while on the cross**.

We witnessed **the transformation in Paul from someone who honestly thought that religion and law was the way, to someone who walked in the righteousness of Jesus and in Relationship with Him.**

God is a Just God who will pour out His wrath against all sin in the end. But God is a just God who provides a way of rescue through Jesus Christ.

We are justified through Christ, and we have this faith in Christ who makes us justified before God the Father. Not by anything that we can say or do, or don't say or don't do. But only through Christ. **We have that faith by grace, we have been dealt a measure of faith for our justification. We are the Just who shall live by Faith.**

We are in a very special season as the Church. We are in what I like to call the **engagement period.** We are the Bride, and Jesus is our Groom. He is preparing a place for us in His Father's house and He is preparing us. We are in that **sweet grace filled, love driven engagement phase looking forward to the day of His return or until we go home.** What do we do during in engagement phase in a marriage? **We walk in joy, we walk in love, we are not derailed by life's throat punches or the enemies' tactics.** We enjoy the season. **Church, we ought to enjoy this season filled with grace, love, and joy as we walk in our justification as Christ's Bride and Kingdom kids.**

Prayer

Keep these in mind as you read Hebrews 11 and 12 for preparation in Pastor Will's next sermons.

Through the blood of Christ, we are able to boldly and confidently enter into God's presence which allows us to know Him personally.

We are able to hold fast to our confession of hope in Christ and cling to the Holy Spirit and our church community, so that we do not derail from our faith.

We can stay near to God by facing our trials and tribulations with each other in our church family which fosters fellowship, compassion, and resilience.

We are encouraged to press on in order to maintain endurance by connecting to God's Word and our church family.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen and comes by hearing the Word of God.

To quote Pastor Will: "True Biblical Faith is Confident obedience to God and His Word despite convenience or circumstance". And The substance of our Faith is eternity with Jesus

Let's go get **Chili and cornbread**. The **winners along with people choice will be announced next week** by yours truly, **Bree!**