

Christ Died for God

Scripture: Romans 3:25–31

Code: 80-345

Tonight we're going to look at Romans chapter 3 again and I'm always blessed to have the privilege of doing this. I'm grateful for the new life that we know about in our church, the people who are being baptized every Sunday, the people who are coming into our church constantly. And I realize how foundational and important this particular section of Romans is so that everybody understands the reality of the doctrine of salvation in its fullness and in its richness.

The text I want you to look at is Romans chapter 3 and verse 25...Romans chapter 3 and verse 25, and we'll read down to verse 31.

This is speaking of Christ Jesus and His redemption as indicated in verse 24, "Christ Jesus 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 for the demonstration, I say, for His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Or works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be. On the contrary, we establish the Law."

Now in the mind of the Apostle Paul, there is a rather compelling issue that he faces in unfolding the doctrine of the cross, the doctrine of salvation and the work of Christ. He has to explain something. He has to explain something that is massive in its significance and has been an issue throughout all of redemptive history. And it is this, how is it that in the past God has forgiven sin? How is it that in the past God has overlooked sin? How is it that if He has done that He is righteous?

If you notice verse 25, the issue here is, at the end of the verse, "In the forbearance of God, in the tolerance of God, in the patience of God, He passed over the sins previously committed." How can He do that and still be righteous?

The pagans had their gods. The pagans had their deities. They were capricious, they were utterly inconsistent on the one hand, demanding compliance with their rules and ceremonies and laws. And on the other hand, doing what was seemingly unrighteous in their own realms. Clearly in the Greek and Roman world, God's reviewed as a mixture of good and evil. And so it was easy to throw the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, at least at first anyway in to the same box with the rest of the deities, seemingly very inconsistent, laying demands on people by virtue of their divine laws, expecting righteous behavior and yet for themselves being inconsistent and capricious.

Now why would such an accusation be thrown at the God of Scripture? Because God had tolerated

sin all through man's history. And many unrighteous people seemed to prosper. And many unrighteous people were actually blessed by God, they entered into a relationship with God, they enjoyed the salvation of God and the promise of being a part of His eternal Kingdom. And the only way that that could happen would be if God overlooked their sin.

Now the Old Testament says God is merciful and that God is gracious and He demonstrates loving kindness, as we heard read, Old Testament word *chesed* which means loving kindness which is a synonym for grace and mercy. We understand that. And that is the meaning of the phrase at the end of verse 25, the forbearance of God by which He passed over sins previously committed. The word *anache*(???) is tolerance, passed sins meaning before Christ, before the cross, God subjected Himself in all of that redemptive history before Christ to certain accusations...accusations that had to do with His righteousness. They're all of man's sinful history since the Fall, wherever people believed on the true God, He passed over their sin. He even did it in Egypt and that's where the word Passover comes from. He withheld judgment in tolerant patience.

Similar language is given in the seventeenth chapter of Acts and verse 30 where it says, "In time past, God overlooked sin." It means He did not actively interfere by special judgment as should have been required. Judgment, divine judgment as such, defined as such, revealed as such was only occasional. And so there is an absence throughout redemptive history of a one-to-one act of divine judgment on sinners and for those who believe, there is a passing over their sin seemingly all together. The question is then , how can God so long overlook sin? How can God so long let it go unpunished? How can He actually forgive it and bring blessing and the promise of salvation and heaven and still be just? That is the question.

The Jews of Malachi's day actually accused God of injustice. They cried, "Everyone that does evil is good in Your sight and the Lord delights in them. Where is the God of justice? they cried. Where is the God of justice?"

In the seventy-eighth Psalm and verse 38, we read this, "But He being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath." And so at this point, someone asks, "How can God simply pass over sin and still be righteous, and still be just, and still be holy?" Someone else will hasten to answer the question with this answer, "Well, the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, the animal sacrifices which were ubiquitous in the Old Covenant, they took the judgment of God." The animals bore the judgment of God. The animals died in the place of sinners. That has all too frequently been suggested, however, that's really a bad answer. Animals could not take the judgment of God for men since Hebrews 10:14 says it in terms that are unmistakable, it says regarding Jesus, "By one offering, He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

That in contrast of verse 4, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." There never was a sacrifice that could take away sin. There never was a sacrifice, an animal sacrifice that could satisfy the judgment of God.

So if you look at the Old Testament and think that the Old Testament sacrificial system actually took the judgment for sin on the part of all who believe, then you misunderstand that system. All it did was picture the sacrifice, that is of Christ as I read in 10:14 of Hebrews, that would be the one offering that will take away all sin for all who believe for all time.

Now when you go back to Romans 3 and verse 25, it says, "God displayed Christ Jesus publicly as a propitiation." That is a satisfaction. He is the only satisfactory sacrifice. He is the Mercy Seat. He is the covering. He is the one who placates God, that's what the verb propitiate means, to satisfy, to placate. He is the one who propitiates God, satisfies God in His blood. In that sense, and this is what I want to talk about tonight, Christ died for God. Christ died for God. Most people think of salvation as Christ dying for us, and there is, of course, a sense in which that is absolutely true and completely true and not at all untrue, but it is not the full picture. The only way that Christ could die for us would be to die satisfactorily for God Christ then died, first of all, to satisfy God and once God was satisfied, then His death could be applied to us.

So God displayed Christ publicly as a sacrifice, a propitiation, a satisfaction for Himself because He had to demonstrate His heretofore undemonstrated righteousness. There isn't really anything in the Old Testament that demonstrates the righteousness of God the way the cross does.

You say, "Well what about the Law?" Well the Law demonstrates God's righteous standard, but it doesn't tell us exactly how righteous He was. That is why in Romans 10 it says that the Jews, not understanding the righteousness of God, went about to establish their own righteousness. Well the Law is a perfect reflection of the morality of God and the righteousness of God and the justice of God. The one thing the Law doesn't do is show you how absolutely righteous He is by demonstrating that the only way He can forgive anybody is when there is a satisfactory sacrifice because in the Old Testament there is no satisfactory sacrifice. That's why sacrifices were made every morning, every day for millennia. The priests were just butchers, slaughtering animal after animal day after day after day, and month after month and year after year, century after century.

God says, "Now it's time to put My justice and My righteousness on display." And so it's repeated in verse 26. Christ is displayed publicly as a propitiation, a satisfaction to God in His blood, in His death to demonstrate, verse 25, His righteousness. And again He says it in verse 26, "For the demonstration I say of His righteousness at the present time, as over against the past time when there was no such demonstration.

Frankly, if you were, let's say, living among the Israelites in Egypt and you sprinkled blood on the doorposts and the lentil and the angel of death passed by, and you were delivered from death, you would experience the deliverance of God, the salvation of God, God passing over and yet the question in your mind would be...How can a righteous and just God pass by this house which is just as sinful as the next house, or any other house, and still be just? And that comes in to direct connection with verse 26, "For the demonstration I say of His righteousness as at the present time...here it is...so that He would be just and at the same time the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. How can God declare righteous an unrighteous sinner? How can He forgive sin and still be just?

That is the question behind this passage. It's at the very heart of the Christian gospel. The death of Christ then was for God. And the first point I want to make is that it was to demonstrate the righteousness of God...to demonstrate the righteousness of God.

And as I said, up until the death of Christ, there was no satisfactory final demonstration of the righteousness of God. You could see how righteous God was by His Law. You could see how

righteous God was by occasional acts of divine judgment. But the question was still in the minds of people, how can God justify sinners saying, as He did to Abraham and to Noah, that by grace, by faith they are declared righteous...how can He do that and remain just if their sin has not been paid for? Christ's death then is the act by which God demonstrates His righteousness.

He shows that He is very different from the capricious gods of the pagan world...very different. He has overlooked sin in the past. He has forgiven sin through all of redemptive history. He has set people on a course to heaven and invited them to come, and they are there. The heaven is occupied before Christ even comes. God is just and the justifier of sinners. How can He be both? Because Christ becomes a satisfactory substitute.

Now we've said this many times through the years...a judge is unjust if he allows a criminal to be pronounced righteous just because he wants to without justice being served by a proper penalty and the proper penalty is the only thing that is the hilastrion, the satisfaction, the propitiation. And then that sacrifice of Christ becomes that satisfaction.

So in the Old Testament, a thick veil is over the justice of God. In fact, actually in the Old Testament, there is not a veil over the grace of God, there is not a veil over the mercy of God. In fact, at the end of Micah chapter 7 and verse 18, the prophet clearly says, "Who is a God like You who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of his possession?" A God who delights in unchanging love, a God who will have compassion, who will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea...who is a God like You? A God of grace, a God of mercy, a God of forgiveness, a God of compassion. God even introduces Himself as that, doesn't He, in Exodus when Moses sees Him on the mount and says, "I'll let all My mercy and all My compassion pass before you."

One of my favorite commentators is the French commentator of generation past by the name of Gooday(?). He says this, "For thousands of years, the spectacle presented by mankind to the whole moral universe was, so to speak, a continual scandal. Divine righteousness seemed to sleep. One might even have asked if it existed, men sinned here below and yet they lived. They sinned on and yet reached in safety an old age. Where were the wages of sin? It was this relative impunity which rendered a solemn manifestation of righteousness necessary. Jesus died for men but in a much more striking way, He died for God." Well the death of Christ solves the problem. Look at Galatians chapter 3 for a moment...Galatians chapter 3 and verse 13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us." He became a curse for us. That is, He bore the curse in our place. Or in the language of 1 Peter 1:18, "You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your empty way of life, inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, the blood of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

And how did John the Baptist introduce Jesus in John 1:29? "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." That's why the writer of Hebrews says, 10:14 as I read earlier, "By one offering He perfected forever them that are sanctified. And after the sacrifice of Christ, the priesthood came to an end. All sacrifices came to an end because there was nothing left to point toward because the final sacrifice had been made. The veil of the temple ripped from top to bottom and God was satisfied.

So Paul sets the record straight. Christ died for God in the sense that He died to make public, to make open, to demonstrate...he uses that word a couple of times...His righteousness at the present time and to show that He can be righteous, same word as just, dikaios, and He can be the justifier of

sinner who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Zechariah said this about God, Zechariah 9:9 said of God, "He is righteous and endowed with salvation. He is both righteous and the forgiver of sins."

So the cross is a work of God that reaches back in its application. It is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross that is the satisfaction that God required for the sins of everybody who believed in Him from Adam on. And in Hebrews it says, "He made a purification for sins, it was all the sins of the past as well as all the sins of the future, those that have been committed, those that are being committed and those that will be committed by all who will believe in Christ." He is therefore the Lamb, Scripture says slain from before the foundation of the world. And so justice and mercy meet at the cross, as Psalm 85:10 says, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

And this takes us, of course, to that verse that we quote so often, 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made Christ to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." God is saved from condemnation by His own standard of justice by exacting the just requirement for sin on a substitute, namely Christ. I love the way 1 Peter 2:24 says it, "He Himself bore His sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, and then...as it were, borrowing from Isaiah 53...by His wounds, you were healed."

Now to whom is this applied? Go back to the text of Romans 3, end of verse 26, "The one who has faith in Jesus." From the time of Jesus on, you must put your faith in Him. In past time, God overlooked that. But now since Christ has come and died and risen from the dead, Acts 17 says, "God commands all men everywhere to repent and put their trust in Christ." The cross then demonstrates the justice of God, that all the sins of all past believers will be and were paid for on the cross by Christ. God could not just pass over sin, God could not just forgive it and not punish it, it would have its fit punishment and that punishment came on Christ. In that sense then, Christ died to satisfy the righteous requirement of God and only when God was satisfied could we reap the benefits of His death. There was never any spiritual benefit from any death of any animal. In fact, I think it was the relentlessness of that, the frustration of that, that caused people to have such a strong desire for a final sacrifice that came only in Christ.

So the cross then is for God, is to the glory of God because it reveals God's righteousness. Secondly, the cross also exalts God's grace...it exalts God's grace. If salvation is a free gift from God by grace, if it is given to the one who has faith, and if it is given from God who has been satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ, verse 27 then asks, "Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of Law, or what kind of method, or what kind of means of works? No, but by a method or means or principle or law of faith, for we maintain that a man is justified, declared righteous by faith apart from works of the Law."

Paul is simply adding to the fact that the cross is a work of Christ for God that brings God glory by demonstrating the righteousness of God and also making it clear that salvation is purely by grace, it is a work that God has done in Christ that we can not earn but only receive. There's no place therefore for self-congratulation. Only God can make such a provision, only God can determine the terms. He's the one offended. He's the one slighted. He's the righteous and holy one who has been assaulted by our sins, only He can determine the satisfaction that He requires. And it goes all the way back to the Old Testament, that the only thing that's going to satisfy God is blood and the blood

of a perfect sacrifice, namely Christ. It is a gift of His grace, it is given to those who do nothing but receive it by faith.

And so, Paul asks then in verse 27, "Where then is boasting? It is nowhere." It is excluded. There's nothing for us to boast about for by grace are you saved through faith, Ephesians 2:8 and 9, that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. Nothing to boast about because it operates on a principle. What kind of principle? What kind of means? What kind of method does salvation operate on? Works? No, but a principle, a method, a means of faith. Would works/salvation eliminate boasting? No. If you did anything to earn your salvation, if you did anything to achieve your salvation, then you would have a right to boast. This is a sweeping concept.

Since salvation is designed to glorify God, since salvation is designed to bring honor to God, praise to God, worship to God, God has therefore designed it in such a way as to exclude boasting. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, we read about the preaching of the foolishness of the cross, to the Jews it is a stumbling block, verse 23, and to the Gentiles it is foolishness. On that basis neither the Jews or the Gentiles would believe. The Gentiles would see the whole story of the cross as folly. The Jews see the story of the cross as scandalous, blasphemous.

So it is really beyond their ability to accept, therefore the only way people could be saved would be if God intervened by His sovereign grace. And so God has chosen the foolish things of the world, God has chosen the weak things of the world, God has chosen the base things of the world, God has chosen the things that are not so that...verse 29...no man may boast before God.

"But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." It all comes from God. Wisdom from God, righteousness from God, sanctification from God, redemption from God so that no man may boast before God so that just as it is written, verse 31, but him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Again, this is simply another reflection on the sovereignty of salvation and the reason that God has designed it this way is so that He gets all the glory. Psalm 115:1, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but to Thy name give glory because of Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth." Everything resolves in the glory of God.

Romans 1:5 says that we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all Gentiles for His namesake...that is, for His glory. Romans 11 ends with this, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Him be the glory forever, amen." And that's after eleven chapters of the presentation of the glories of salvation. It is the doxology that responds to the whole section on salvation.

It was David Brainerd(?) great missionary to the American Indians who died in his late twenties, who said, "I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give glory to God. It is no matter where I'll be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there, but to live and please and glorify God. My heaven is to please God. My heaven is to glorify Him and to be wholly devoted to His glory."

The eternal purpose of salvation then is to make us capable of glorifying God forever. And we can readily do that when we understand that the salvation we have received is not by any means of works, any method of works, any principle of works, any law of works, but rather simply by an act of

faith. Verse 28, "We maintain that a man is justified, declared right with God by faith apart from works of the Law." So the Apostle Paul says, "Christ died for God in, first of all, the sense that He displays the righteousness of God in and through His death, and secondly, He displays the grace of God in and through His death." Paul is showing us that God is on display in the death of Christ and God is satisfied with that sacrifice. "My hope is built, says the song, on nothing less than Jesus' blood, and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, the best of humans, but wholly lean on Jesus' name."

What kind of faith does it take? What kind of faith is saving faith? That's been an important aspect of ministry through the centuries, really, to sort out saving faith from non-saving faith. Still a massive issue today. I've preached on it. I've written on it. And I'm not alone, it's been a topic of all faithful ministers through all the centuries. It is essential to examine ourselves, 2 Corinthians 13:5, to see if we have the faith that is truly the faith in Jesus, referred to at the end of verse 26.

What is saving faith? How do you know if you have the real deal?

Well let me give you some things that neither prove it or disprove it. Number one, visible morality. Visible morality doesn't necessarily prove it. Many from the Pharisees had visible morality. On the outside, they looked very moral. Jesus even said that. "You're painted white, you're whitewashed on the outside." Visible morality may be the manifestation of a believer, but then again there is superficial morality, we know that as well as anyone would know it. There are hypocrites all over the place. There is the sowing of tares among the wheat. There is no necessary true holiness in outward morality.

Secondly, intellectual knowledge. That doesn't prove true faith either. The devils have an absolutely accurate theology. They get it right. And they even have the sense to shake because of the fierceness of divine judgment. While knowledge of the truth is necessary for salvation, knowledge of the truth doesn't equal salvation. Many will say, "Lord, Lord, we did this in Your name and that in Your name," and they are affirming some kind of knowledge of Christ and they are rejected. Many who know the scriptures very well are headed for hell.

Thirdly, religious involvement. Religious involvement isn't necessarily an indication of true faith. Second Timothy 3 talks about those who have a form of godliness but no power.

Active ministry...active ministry...Judas was a public preacher and an apostate. And again, Matthew chapter 7, we've done this and done that in Your name. Even conviction of sin. Felix trembled under the preaching of Paul, but never left his idols. The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin and righteousness and judgment and convicts many who never repent. Some will even superficially confess their sins as those who came down to be baptized by John the Baptist, openly repenting and confessing their sins, and accepting that baptism. And by the time you come to the upper room on the day of Pentecost, all that could be gathered from Judea in the name of Jesus Christ totals 120 people. They must have felt some conviction of sin under the preaching of John the Baptist, and perhaps even under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, but it never blossomed into real saving faith.

Another false measure is assurance...assurance. Many people feel they're saved. They may feel that way because they've been baptized. They may feel that way because they have sympathetic feelings toward Jesus. They may feel that way because they think they're quote/unquote spiritual. And the

whole world of legalists must believe they are saved or they wouldn't go through the compunctions of their legalism. All the narrow minded Pharisees and fastidious orthodox Jews and all the people who go to their religious occasions and events and subscribe their lives to these performances of ritual and morality must believe that they're being saved by these things and have some measure of assurance. But to be strongly persuaded that you're a Christian does not mean you are a Christian. There are people, I suppose, more convinced by their supposed goodness that they're Christians than anything else.

Another false evidence would be time of decision because you can identify a moment when you quote/unquote made a decision, prayed a prayer doesn't make the decision valid. Many people have come forward, prayed a prayer, we've heard it, haven't we?, Sunday night after Sunday night we hear about people...I was baptized in the past...I thought I was a Christian, and they're not possessors of a genuine saving faith.

Now these things mark saving faith. I think there is a moment, a crisis moment of genuine salvation. I believe that if you're a true Christian, you have an assurance of it. I believe you've gone through the conviction of sin. All these things are part of the experience of a true believer, but in and of themselves are not sufficient evidence. These things will mark saving faith but they can't stand alone.

If you want to do a little inventory on whether your's is a faith that saves and therefore enjoys the gift of grace, here are some true tests.

One, love for God...love for God. Romans 8:7 says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God. The regenerate mind is liberated from hostility toward God and seeks to love the Lord with all heart, soul, mind and strength. The believer finds his delight in the excellencies of God who is the first and highest affection of his renewed and regenerated soul. God is his chief happiness. Christ is his chief joy. There's a great difference between such love and the selfish attitude that focuses on one's happiness being given by Christ.

To put it another way. In Matthew 10:37 Jesus said this, "If you love father, mother more than Me, you're not worthy of Me." Do you love God? Do you love His nature? Do you love His person? Do you love His glory? Do you love His Kingdom? Do you love His holiness? Do you long to do His will? The supreme love for God is the decisive evidence of transforming genuine saving faith. The psalmist put it this way, "Like the deer pants after the water brook, so pants my soul after You, O God."

Second evidence of saving faith is repentance, an ongoing constant brokenness over one's sinfulness. A proper love for God involves a consequential and opposing hatred of sin. So how do you know when you're a true believer? Because all your affections and desires and longings go toward God and away from sin. Sure sin is present, sin is there, it is powerful in us, but we hate it. We resist it. We resent it. This is the backside of loving God. That's what makes David cry out in Psalm 51, "Against Thee only have I sinned." And the agony of his repentance is that he has offended the one he loves. True repentance involves a constant confession and turning from sin. It is a constant state of brokenness.

I was telling the young people at the Master's College on Friday, I did a week-long series in chapel there last week and we talked about one of the great realities is that we are righteous and sinful at

the same time. But that a true believer has such holy aspirations and holy longings that lives in Romans 7, and he delights in the Law of God and he longs to do the things that honor God and he finds a principle operated in his humanness, in his flesh that drags him down and debilitates him and he hates the sin that is in him and he sees it as wretchedness and says, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this corpse that's attached to me?"

We say that if a true faith exists, it will be driven by love for God and constant grief over sin. True penitence are true believers. Do I possess a settled conviction of the evil of sin? Does sin appear to me to be an evil thing, a bitter thing? Does conviction of evil increase in my life consistently? Do I have an increasingly greater love for the love and a greater hatred of sin? Do you hate it merely because of its effects? Or do you hate it because it offends the God you love? What grieves you more, your sins or your misfortunes? What exercises you more, your sins or the things that don't go the way you want them to go in your life? What sacrifices are you willing to make to be delivered from your sins? Do your sins appear as many and aggravated? Do you discover sin in a thousand forms? Do you mourn over the sins of your heart? Do you battle against the ignorance that is in you, the self-justifying tendencies of your flesh? The rejection of the fact that sin is so deceitful that if you don't look deeply and honestly into your heart, you will think yourself to be better than you are. Do you mourn over your vain thoughts and carnal affections? Does it grieve you in your heart that you have sinned against God? Because when God touches a heart, He breaks that heart. He pours in it the Spirit of grace. There are not just a few transient sighs against sin. There's a heart-rendering pang of sorrow against sin that never goes away and only grows stronger and stronger.

So how do you know your faith is real? Your love for God, your hatred of sin and thirdly, genuine humility...genuine humility. Where there is true saving faith, there is a beatitude attitude. Along with brokenness and mourning over your sin, there is meekness...meekness. Jesus said, "If anybody will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." The Lord receives the one with the broken and contrite spirit. He rejects the proud, James says, and gives grace to the humble. We all need to be like the prodigal in Luke 15 verse 21 who came back and said, "I'm not worthy to be your son." There's a real humility. There's a real brokenness. It's the kind of humility that disdains to ever offend the Lord, ever bring any reproach on His name.

Fourthly, the kind of faith that saves, the kind that is God-given saving faith is devoted to the glory of God. It seeks the glory of God in everything. True saving faith reflects itself in a life that is set toward bringing honor to God every way possible, living for His glory. And we can say that benediction at the end of Romans 11, "We give all glory to Him." We can say it the way it's repeated again and again in the New Testament, Philippians chapter 1...Philippians chapter 3...Ephesians chapter 3, "All glory to Him...All glory to Him." This is the other side of humility. The hatred of sin is the other side of loving God and devotion to God's glory is the other side of being humble. Selfless love would be another thing to say, if you're putting a list together. People who have a saving faith manifests that saving faith in love for others, separation of the world, that would be another evidence. First Corinthians 2:12, "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." Or in the language of 1 John 2, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him." Conversely, if the love of the Father is in you, you will not love the world.

Another evidence, a true evidence is spiritual progress, spiritual growth, spiritual maturing. If you don't have a concern to be more like Christ, there's a real question about whether your's is a saving faith.

And then maybe lastly, just summing it all up, obedience...obedience. "If you continue in My Word then you're My real disciple." And the implication is if you continue to hear and obey My Word. These are the marks of the real Christian. And the real Christian is the one who has faith in Jesus. It's not something you can earn, it's only a gift you can receive by grace through faith.

So back to Romans 3. That was just a little digression, but an important one. Christ died for God, to put God's righteousness on display. Christ died for God to put His grace on display. It's a gift to be received only by faith and never earned. Christ died for God to put God's consistency on display. Verses 29 and 30, "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one." Literally, God is one and then therefore He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. There aren't two standards, there aren't two ways of salvation. If God is a merciful saving God, if God is a gracious God and there are no works, then you don't have to become a Jew and keep the Law to be saved. That's the point. There are not two ways to be saved. Jews aren't saved by keeping the Law and Gentiles saved some other way. God is the God of all men, Jew and Gentile. Isaiah 54:5 says, "The God of the whole earth shall He be called." Jeremiah 16:19, "The nations shall come to You from the ends of the earth." Zechariah 2:11, "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord and shall be My people."

God is the God of all people because God is one. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, Romans 1:16, for it is the power of God and salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew and also to the Gentile. One God must mean that there is one way of salvation. If God is the one God, He is then the God of all men, Jew and Gentile. Therefore you cannot be saved by keeping the Law. The Jews thought that they were the only ones who could be saved because they had the Law. But God rather will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith because God is one and therefore has one way of salvation.

There are people today in the quote/unquote evangelical world who believe that we need to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ but Jews are saved by keeping the Law. There's only one God, there's only one way of salvation. Noah was saved because he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Moses was saved because he found grace. Abraham was saved by faith. It was a gift of grace to those who believed in God, who repented of their sin and believed that God was a forgiving God and cried out to Him to forgive their sin, even though they didn't know who would be the sacrifice long in the future who would satisfy the justice of God.

Read the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, "By faith...by faith...by faith...by faith...by faith." What is that, a nebula's faith? No, faith in the true and living God and His revelation. Never been any other way to be saved than by faith.

So, the cross is the one sacrifice that saves Jew and Gentile, demonstrating God's consistency. The death of Christ which provides salvation for all who simply believe demonstrates His grace, and of course the sacrifice of Christ in behalf of sinners, past, present and future, demonstrates His righteousness.

And finally, the cross, the death of Christ confirms or demonstrates God's Law. Verse 31 asks the question, "Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be." *Me Genitos(???)*, the strongest negative in the Greek language...no, no, no, no. We're just saying you're not to be saved by Law. We're not saying the Law is bad. We're not saying pay no attention to the Law, the Law is holy, just

and good, the Law is as pure and righteous as God's nature because it's a reflection of His will. It doesn't nullify the Law. Rather we establish the Law. How does salvation by grace establish the Law? How does the death of Christ establish the Law? It establishes it in this way, and you're back to where we started...the Law is so pure and so holy that it requires punishment on every single violation. Say it another way, Every sin ever committed by every person who has ever lived in the history of the world will be punished. That's how inviolable the Law is...every sin ever committed will be punished, either the sinner himself will be punished or the substitute Christ was punished in behalf of the sinner, but every sin will be punished. Because salvation doesn't come by Law doesn't nullify the Law, the Law has held up a righteous standard demanding every sin to be punished, the Law is established and therefore every sinner impenitent, unbelieving sinner will be punished for his sin, but among those who believe, every sin was punished in Christ who in a few hours when the darkness came at Calvary, as we saw in our study of Luke, absorbed infinite punishment because He is an infinite person. Nothing is more reflective of God's glory than His holy Law.

So when you look at the death of Jesus Christ, you see that it was for God, to give Him glory as righteous. To give Him glory as gracious. To give Him glory as consistent and to give Him glory as holy, as holy is His Law is holy. Christ then satisfied God and because He died a satisfactory death for God, God gives us salvation.

Lord, we thank You again tonight for Your truth, for Your precious Word. It is unendingly a joy, a privilege to open its truths and let it capture our hearts afresh and anew. Thank You for these precious, precious people. What a privilege it is to be among those who love You, love Your truth. Lord, it is certainly true, however, that there are some here tonight who may be have a false faith that doesn't save and are counting on superficial things, are feeling secure when they should not. Lord, we just pray that the things that were said, the things that are true might capture their hearts and they might be awakened from the tragic and dangerous slumber of a false faith to come to a true faith in Christ. We thank You, O God, that You are satisfied with Christ and thus You are satisfied with those who are by faith in Christ. We thank You for our fellowship today. What a wonderful day it's been. We thank You that You have met us and You have disclosed Yourself to us through Your Word. Minister to us through Your people. Now use us as we part, we pray in Your Son's name. Amen.

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