

Series: Romans

Title: To Declare God's Righteousness

Text: Rom 3: 25-26

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What is the chief reason Christ laid down his life on the cross? Most would say it was to manifest God's love. Some might say it was to show God's great grace. A few will say it was to save his people. But while those things are reasons God sent his Son to lay down his life, none of those are the chief reason. The chief reason Christ laid down his life on the cross is found in our text this morning.

Romans 3: 25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Proposition: The chief reason Christ died on the cross is to manifest the righteousness of God.

GOD'S CHIEF ATTRIBUTE

God's chief attribute is righteousness/holiness. It means God always and only does right. God will not pour out his wrath and justice on *the righteous*.

Genesis 18: 23: And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24: Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein? 25: That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

God spared Sodom until he got one man out, that righteous man Lot. God will not pour out justice on the righteous because God is righteous. The Judge of all the earth only does right.

Likewise, God will not spare *the guilty*.

Exodus 34: 7: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

God will not sweep your sins under the rug. Everything God does in judgment is done in righteousness. Therefore, God will not spare the guilty sinner.

The whole reason that God sent his only Son into the world was to declare God's righteousness. God sent his Son to manifest that God is a righteous and just Judge. Listen carefully to what God says his righteousness make him do:

Proverbs 17: 15: He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.

Proverbs 24:24: He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:

Beholding how God commanded the earthly judges to judge, we see how God judges. This is the only way God will judge. It is the only way God can judge because he is holy. God only judges just judgment even as he commanded the judges,

Deuteronomy 16: 18: Judges...shall judge the people with just judgment. 19: Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words [the judgment] of the righteous. 20: That which is altogether just shalt thou follow,...

So you and I have a problem. We came into this world guilty sinners.

Romans 3: 10: As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

We cannot justify ourselves by working out our own righteousness under the law.

Romans 3: 19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

But there is another problem. Every elect child who God determined to save are guilty and God will by no means clear the guilty. How then can God be just and Justify his guilty people? That is exactly the righteousness God sent Christ to declare. God the Father sent his Son to manifest "*how God can be just.*" God sent his Son to manifest how God can kill all his people under his justice so that his law is honored. And God sent his Son to manifest how, at the same time, "*God can be the Justifier.*" He sent Christ to declare how God can be merciful to his people and actually be the one who justified us, while

God executes us under the unyielding wrath of his holy justice. This is the gospel. When men miss this then they miss the gospel. When men do not preach this then they do not preach the gospel. The manifestation of God's righteousness is the very reason he sent forth his Son.

THE ANSWER TO THE DILEMMA

Romans 3: 22:..the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ...25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The answer to the dilemma of how God can slay his people in justice and, at the same time, justify his people is Christ Jesus the Son of God. Like as Adam represented his body, his family, the Son of God is the last Adam, the Head of God's elect.

Colossians 1: 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Ephesians 5: 23:...Christ is the Head of the church and he is the Savior of the body...Christ...loved the church and gave himself for it.

Hebrews 2: 9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every [all God's elect]...11: For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,...14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16: For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. [God's elect] 17: Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

"In all things it behoved Christ to be made like unto his brethren." *We were flesh*—the invisible Son of God was made holy, sinless flesh that he might be the one fit man who could take the place of his people, the spotless Lamb of God. *We were under the law*—he was made under the law that he might redeem his people from the law. *We were sin*—he hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. *We were a curse*—he was made a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law. It behoved Christ to be made like unto his brethren in all things.

For the honor of our Redeemer, we dare not pass over this lightly. We dare not reduce this to only a legal transaction, though it was a legal matter. But we dare not reduce this to a teaching, an argument, a debate, a cold formula. Christ was made to bear sin and everything that comes with sin, except corruption, in order to make it just for God to pour out justice on him. Then by being made a curse Christ bore everything required to pay sin's penalty so that the justice of the law was honored. All this Christ did to declare God perfectly righteous. This he did to justify his people and put away our sin forever.

The shame of sin—sin is the most shameful thing there is. Our dear Savior bore sin when he bore the wrath of sinful men. He was despised and rejected of men. His own disciples hid their faces from him. He became the song of the drunkards. Men spat upon him and mocked him and cursed him. He bore the shame of sin as he experienced all the effects of sin in his own body on the tree being touched with all the same feeling of sin's infirmities that you and I are touched with. Worst of all before holy God his Father, he himself owned our sin to be his alone and God the Judge owned it to be his alone. He was fully constituted sin and thus, he who knew no sin, became sin and became guilty before God the Father and his holy, righteous law. It is the only way a holy and righteous God says that he can or will pour out justice on anyone. God says, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." How could God manifest his perfect righteousness if he commanded every earthly judge never condemn a righteous man then he turned around and did what he told judges was unjust for a judge to do? But oh what faithfulness, scripture says Christ bore the cross, despising the shame.

Another part of sin and its penalty is sorrow—Christ said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He was so sorrowful it made him sweat blood. He said, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." Christ cries to you and me, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

Another part of sin and its penalty is that it requires God's desertion—he cried, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me!" The world went dark!

Sin and its penalty is death—Christ Jesus died unto sin once. That one statement should settle it for us that Christ was really made sin. Christ Jesus died. He died unto sin. But thank God men only do so once and it is done!

Never forget his person—that one who bore all of this is God over all. God purchased the church with his own blood. While as yet he bore our sin in his body on the tree so that God was just to punish him, in his person, in his heart, he himself bore up

under all sin's temptation, under all the devils temptation and Christ Jesus remained faithful, looking to God his Father and his covenant. Christ remained without sin. The holy, harmless, undefiled, faithful Lord Jesus never transgressed the righteousness of the law himself. His heart remained set on God his Father so that his heart was pure while as yet God made him bear our sin and our guilt before the bar of justice so that God could be just to pour out justice on our one Head rather than his people.

By his suffering and death as the Substitute for his people God's righteousness is clearly, openly manifest for all to see—*God is just and God is the Justifier of him which believeth in the Lord Jesus.*

Here is the good news for Christ's people, like as Adam was head of all who have and shall be born of him, Christ is Head of all who have and shall be born of him. So as we were in Adam and did what he did and became sin and died, all God's elect were in Christ and did what he did and were made righteous and alive forevermore.

Romans 5: 19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Romans 6: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST

Romans 3: 25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

What does it mean that Christ declared his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God?

One, it means due to Christ being Surety for his people from before the foundation of the world, God was righteous to justify every believer even before Christ died. The blood of bulls and goats never put away sin. But Christ is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The one reason God forebear so that he did not destroy the world when Adam sinned is because Christ has entered covenant with God the Father to honor God's law and justify his people. Therefore, because it was impossible for Christ to fail, in the mind and purpose of God, it was done! He is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. God is eternal and so is Christ's redemption. His people were and are justified *in purpose* from eternity in Christ's Suretyship, justified *in deed* at the cross in Christ laying down his life, justified *experimentally* when Christ is formed in us and God gives us faith to believe on Christ and justified *finally* when stand robed in Christ's righteousness and God says enter into my glory my good and faithful servant.

Also, it means God is righteous to pass over all our sins. The moment we sin, our sins are past sins. But God is just to remit all our sins by the blood of Christ.

1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Therefore, understand, every sinner that has ever been saved past, present and future has and shall be justified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. All who God justified in Christ, God shall regenerate to spiritual life and grant faith to believe on Christ. Through faith God imputes the righteousness of Christ because Christ has made his people righteous by his obedience.

Sinner, have you found yourself believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he your only righteousness before God? If so, here is the good news.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

God says to every believer,

Isaiah 43:25: I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Amen!