

Romans 3:21-31

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3. We're going to be in verses 21 through 31. We're finishing up the third chapter.

The book of Romans in Romans chapter 3, verses 21 through 31. I am excited to get to this point in the book of Romans because up to this point, we have really been laying out the problem of man, the condition of man, the reason why man is in this condition.

And now as we find, this is a repetitive theme that we find through the book of Romans, Paul makes a transition. There are a number of transitions in the book of Romans because he addresses a number of things.

I have told you every Sunday that we have gathered together that Romans serves as the foundation for every major doctrine of the Christian faith. This is the foundation of our doctrines of faith.

A lot of things that we believe and we claim to believe, they find their root in the book of Romans. He is writing to a vibrant church, a multi-location church, a church that was founded by an average lay person, not a church founded by an apostle or even by a missionary.

[1 : 15] This was founded by someone who happened to be in Jerusalem, most accounts say, during Peter's Pentecostal message. And they heard the message of Christ. They believed in Jesus Christ.

And they went back to Rome and they had to tell other people about Jesus Christ. And thus we have the church at Rome. No one knows who started the church at Rome. And Paul writes to this church, giving them not how to deal with an issue that the church is facing because Paul had never seen the church.

The church had never seen Paul. They didn't know one another personally, though Paul knew people from the church. In all of his missionary travels, he encountered people who had left Rome and said, Paul, you've got to hear about the church in Rome.

It's amazing what God is doing. And Paul began to be concerned, as was his major theme throughout his life after coming to Christ, is being concerned about the believers and wanting them to live authentically but also living accurately.

So he writes to this church, laying out not how to address problems as he would to the church at Corinth or Thessalonica or anything else, those letters, but really how to believe, how to know what you believe and to believe what you know.

[2 : 23] He was laying out the doctrines of the faith. And he started in the first three chapters the condition of man. But he is making a transition. There are a number of those now as we'll get to it in this third chapter in verse 21.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God in Romans chapter 3 starting in verse 21 and going to the end of the chapter which gets us down to verse 31.

Paul writes, But now apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.

For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in 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, of His righteousness at the present time so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

[3 : 37] Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the 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. Let's pray. Lord, we thank You so much for giving this opportunity to us that we have come, we have worshipped You in song, we have worshipped You in fellowship.

We pray now, Lord, that our attention and our focus would be upon You in the preaching of the Word. We pray that it would not be the opinions or the thoughts of man, Lord, that there would be no stumbling block found within myself, but the clear truth of Scripture would be revealed to us by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that we would accept these truths, that these truths would have an impact upon our lives, that they would mold and shape us to become more like Your image, to live for Your glory. And we ask it in Jesus' name.

[4 : 44] Amen. You may be seated. Paul is taking the first two chapters and half of the third chapter, really the opening paragraphs of his letter to the church at Rome.

And he has very clearly demonstrated the problem of man. Man's chief problem, if we had to put it in a sentence or we had to put it in a nutshell, is not necessarily all the bad things that man does. It is not a list of sins. It is not a list of activities. Man's chief problem is that God created man as the pinnacle of His creation so that man would glorify His Creator.

But rather than glorifying His Creator, man has glorified himself. Man's problem is that he was created to bring glory to the Creator, but he hijacked that purpose and now uses it to glorify Himself. It is really the problem of self-focus. Every action of man, every harmful action, every good action that is not necessarily right, every sin of man boils down to this one great truth.

[6 : 01] Man thinks more of himself than he thinks of his Creator. Man has suppressed the truth, he has suppressed the knowledge of the truth, and he has suppressed the clearly revealed truth that there is someone he is accountable to.

And in pushing all of that down, he has focused more on himself than any other thing throughout all of creation. And this has made man deviate and move from his created purpose.

Genesis 3 tells us very clearly that you were created to honor God, to obey God, and to glorify God.

And apart from those things, we are living outside of the purpose of our creation.

The problem is that our parents, the ones going all the way back to the garden, Adam and Eve, chose to rebel against the clearly revealed purposes and plans of God and chose to live for themselves.

The fall, as we call it, was really, if you look at it, they saw with their own eyes they thought with their own mind. And it looked good to them, so they did it.

[7 : 05] And in so doing it, they broke fellowship with God. And that's what's happened. And Paul reveals that it's not just the Gentiles, it's not just the barbarous, unbelieving people, but he said even the Jewish people, the people who have the covenants, the people who have the centers, he says every one of us think more of ourselves than we think of our Creator.

And the question that he is now transitioning to now is how God deals with those. Romans 3, verse 21, to the end of Romans chapter 8, deal with this major theme of how God is going to handle the problem of man.

Romans really follows the entirety of the Old Testament. Genesis 1 through 11 tell us every problem that man has, tell us every sin. Genesis 12 to the end of the book of Revelation tells us how God deals with the problems of man.

How God has a plan for the problems of man. And Romans is much the same way. Romans 1, 2, and half of 3 tell us man's condition. Starting in Romans 3, 21, Paul makes a transition and begins to talk to us about how God addresses man's condition.

In Romans 9, chapters 9, 10, and 11, he tells us how God deals with the people of his choosing, that is the nation of Israel. And then he tells us in Romans 12 through 16 how we should live in light of these truths, how we should practice what we believe because belief without practice is really not belief at all.

[8 : 37] And this is kind of a rough outline of Romans. Now you can subdivide Romans 3, 21, to the end of Romans 8, into two more sections. Now this is important, stay with me, okay?

Because in Romans 3, verse 21, until the end of chapter 5, Paul deals with the sins, S-I-N-S, of man.

How God deals with the bad things we do. Okay? We all do bad things. We all mess up. We all falter. When the Bible says you shouldn't lie and we tell a little white lie, well that's a major bad thing in the sight of God, right?

When it says you shouldn't steal and you take a paper clip, well that's a major offense in the eyes of God. And Romans 3, 21, to the end of chapter 5, deals with how God deals with the bad stuff we do.

Romans 6, 7, and 8 deal with the sin, S-I-N, problem of man. Now, our sin is much different than our sins.

[9 : 38] Okay? There is a major transition in chapter 5. Now, stay with me. Sins are all the bad things we do. Sin is just what we are. We can't help to do bad things because we have something bad within us and that is called sin, our sin nature.

But now Paul is going to tell us, since we are what he tells us we are, the news doesn't stop there. God has a way of dealing with the things we have done.

We now come to the question in Romans 3, verse 21. And the best way to pose it is like this. Can a holy God who is absolutely perfect be fair in forgiving man?

To put it in human terms, is a judge fair if he knows that the person before him has done all of these horrendous deeds and he lets him go, is he a fair judge?

Can a holy God who demands perfection, who is absolutely pure, in whose presence sin cannot exist in, is there any hope for man?

[10 : 51] Is God fair if he looks over it? Is God fair if he says, well, let's just forget you did all those things? Can God really forgive us?

And that's the question we have before us. But we see here in Romans 3, 21 through 31, the manifested righteousness of God. Now I want you to stay with me because this passage gets very deep and it gets very deep very quick.

But, it is so important to what we believe. It is so important because we're trying to answer the question, can we be forgiven?

We look at Romans 1, 2, and 3 and we have to shake our head and go, you know what? God is right. We've messed up. God is absolutely right.

I've fallen. There is none who does right. No, not one. There is none who seeks after righteousness. No, not one. Every tongue has said things that it shouldn't say. Every feet have gone places they shouldn't go. Every man who has ever been created has done things which he knows he should not do and even his own conscience within him tells him he's messed up.

[11 : 57] And now we say, so is it useless? Is it beyond hope? If that's the case, can God do anything? Because if he just forgave me, would he be fair?

Is that even right? Because God has set the standard so high. We have to see here the manifested righteousness of God. God has shown himself as being righteous.

Righteousness, when it is attributed to God, is so much different than righteousness attributed to us. It means that God is absolutely fair and he's absolutely right and he lives up to his own standards. Okay, we're getting into the heart of the gospel.

It means God is fair, God is right, God will do what he said he's going to do. He said for the wages of sin is what? Death. We see that later in the book of Romans. He told Adam and Eve that the moment you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will what?

Die. That in your rebellion you will die. And all these things happen and we see this over and over and over again. But we can say that God can offer us forgiveness and still have the same holy standard that he holds.

[13 : 04] And it is because God has revealed to us his righteousness. And when God has shown himself as both fair and both loving and both caring, because his fairness, by the way, is not based upon our standard.

Isn't it amazing, parents, how what your kids think is fair and what you think is fair is two totally different things. You know, well it's not fair, it's not fair, it's not fair. There's a lot of things that aren't fair in my house but they seem very fair to me.

When we come before God we say, well God it's not fair that you won't forgive me. I mean God, I only messed up a little bit. Well where do we draw the line? Where is the fairness? Where is our

measure? I want you to see just three things this morning.

Number one, I want you to see the possibility this manifested, this declared, to be manifested means to be revealed, this manifested righteousness of God. I want you to see the possibility it affords man.

The opportunity it gives us, the possibility it does. Look it says here, but now, but now, that word there is so important because Paul has just went into this great discourse talking about how bad we are.

[14 : 04] He ends in verse 20 of chapter 3, because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. He says pretty much you can't be good enough but now, but now, I'm so thankful for all the buts or the therefores or the wait a minute or if and the but nows of scripture.

I'm so thankful, not for top buttons and shirts ever, not ever really thankful for those, but I'm so thankful for all those glorious interruptions that we find throughout scripture. He says, but now, at this time, at this moment, at this perfect opportunity, this something that didn't happen in the past, but it is available to us now, he says.

He is at this great divide here. He is looking back at Old Testament Judaism and he is looking forward to New Testament Christianity and he says, but now, it is possible that God can both be fair and forgiving at the same time.

That God can live by his standards and he can hold a holy standard and he cannot forsake his own holiness and he can still welcome you into his presence. But now, it is possible.

We ought to praise God that it is a possibility. Look at the possibility it affords us. But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. All he is saying here is that God's fairness or his rightness or his accuracy is something that is testified by all of the Old Testament.

[15 : 29] The prophets and the law, they just point to Genesis through the book of Malachi. If you go read Genesis through the book of Malachi, so many people shy away from the Old Testament because they think it's difficult and there are some difficult passages in the Old Testament.

There are. There are some trying things in the Old Testament but what you find also in the Old Testament is the Old Testament shows us of a God who is holy, who is perfect and he is also a God who forgives the imperfect.

And it testifies to that God can at one time be fair and forgiving. That God can be holy and welcoming because just like our brother shared this morning, the thought of sinful man running into, it's called Elohim in the book of Genesis.

Elohim, that is the great creator who spoke everything into existence in prayer or even in person, the thought of us running into his presence should shake us to our core.

I mean, he is the God that the book of Job says created something out of nothing and hung it on nothing and told it to stay there. You ever thought about that? That God spoke the world into existence, he hung it in space on nothing and told it to stay there and it did.

[16 : 34] That makes you go, wow. And that's the guy or the God that you want to run into his presence and say, hey, I'm here when you know you can't live by his standards. But the Old Testament testifies to the fact he welcomes you into his presence.

And he has this welcoming attitude towards sinful man who has rejected him over and over again even as we read the book of the prophets and we see the destruction of God and people shy away from the book of prophecy because it seems so harsh but over and over again you find this theme, it is this great theme, striking but healing.

It is revealed a number of times in Scripture. He strikes them so that he may heal them. The whole purpose for his judgment is for reconciliation because he wants man into his presence and we're looking at the possibility that it affords us.

It says in verse 22, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We'll get to that in just a minute. Here you go, look at this. For all those who believe, for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Here is the good news of the gospel. The good news of the gospel is that it is possible for all those who have sinned to all come into his presence.

[17 : 48] Do you understand that? This is something that is just magnificently possible. It tells us in Scripture that it is possible for God to be righteous, for him still to be perfect, and it is absolutely possible for him to welcome imperfect humanity into his presence.

It is possible, it says, not just for some, not just for the select few, not just for a little bit over here, for all those who believe. Now there is a stipulation in there who believe.

We'll get to that in just a little bit, but here is the possibility that to manifest it, the revealed righteousness of God shows us that all who have sinned, that's everybody, have the opportunity and before them the possibility to be welcomed in his presence.

Now this puts us forward with a quandary. That if there is none righteous, no, not one, if all have done wrong, if all men have went astray, and if everybody is standing on equal ground, and we are, then there is no one out there any worse than us.

There's no one out there any better than us. And the possibility that is offered us is a possibility that is offered them. That's amazing.

[19 : 07] There is no one throughout all of history, throughout all of time, who has ever done worse to keep him further from the possibilities God offers him than I have.

Now you say, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. I know this person. I can read about this person. I know this person. I know the atrocities of this person. I know all that. Those are all actions, sins. Those are the things they do.

And one sin, one sinful action, is just as horrendous in the sight of a holy God as the next sinful action. Jesus says, if you hate someone, you have done just as much as the person who murdered someone.

Wow. But he says, the good news of the gospel is that the possibility of God's righteousness, he says, it is available for all those who believe.

There is this conditional statement, who believe, for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by his grace. We'll get to this in just a minute. Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

[20 : 07] I just want you to see here that because God has shown himself fair, he has revealed his righteousness. Because he is doing it, and we're going to say how he revealed it, he revealed it in his son Jesus Christ.

That because God manifested his righteousness, he fulfilled his own expectations. He fulfilled his own requirements. God said, this is what it takes to get to me.

And then he took the initiative and fulfilled every one of them. He has now made it possible for all those who have broke every one of those commandments to come before him. It is a possibility that is afforded man.

But now, now that Jesus Christ is hung on the cross, now that he has paid the price for man's sins, now that the law of God has been fulfilled, now that Jesus has paid every bit of it, now where it says paid in full, nailed it to the cross, as Paul would write elsewhere, now at this time, it is absolutely possible for whosoever will, for all that have sinned, for all that have fallen short, it is absolutely possible that God can welcome them into his presence if they would just believe.

You know why this is good news? It's because when I was reading the book of Romans, I told you I came to faith in Christ through reading the book of Romans. When I read chapters 1, 2, and 3, I saw within me everything Paul was talking about.

[21 : 26] And I began to kind of be beaten down like, you know what, he's right, Paul is absolutely right. Paul's estimation of me is right. I didn't say Paul's estimation of everybody else is right.

I said, you know what, Paul is holding a mirror up and I see myself in it. And I had within me something going, what hope is there? What hope? If Paul is right, I mean, if there's no hope, then hey, eat, drink, be merry for tomorrow we die, right?

Isn't that what Paul said? If we don't have any hope, if we don't have anything to cling to, let's just forget it. Let's just do whatever we want to do. But he doesn't say that.

He said there's this divine possibility that for all that have sinned, and that's me, for all that have fallen short, and that's me, that you can be welcomed into the presence of God if you believe. And guess what? That's me.

And that's you. And that's your neighbors, and that's your friends, and that's your enemies. That's the ones you don't want to share this news with. That's the ones you should share this news with. That's the ones who've done you wrong. That's the ones who have failed the greatest.

[22 : 26] That's the ones who have messed up the most, and that's the ones who have tried to be the best. It is a possibility that it is afforded to all men that now, because God has met his own standard for the man who believes he can be welcomed into his presence.

And what a divine possibility. Number two, not only do we see the possibility that it affords man, number two, we see the position that it grants him, and this is so good. I want you to see this, okay? Because not only is it possible to be welcomed into God's presence, now because of this possibility we are given a new position.

Okay? It says, it says, for all who believe. So there you go. It has to be believing in what? In Jesus Christ. Not just believing in God. You find a lot of people, by the way, throughout history and even a lot of people throughout our world today who believe in God.

A lot of people want to talk about this God, that there is a creator. They look out there because most people would agree with science saying that you can't get something from nothing. Okay?

And since we are surrounded by a lot of somethings, it had to come from something other than nothing. So we really don't have a hard time acknowledging there has to be something out there. Some people refer to it as theistic evolution, meaning there was a God who created all this stuff and he kind of flicked it like you would a top and he set the world in motion and then he went away and sitting around by the far side now just watching it go, not really involved in creation.

[23 : 41] He just kind of set it in motion and left it alone. There are a lot of people who acknowledge because it is very convenient to acknowledge there has to be something bigger than us. But it doesn't say here that for those who believe in God, it says for those who believe in Jesus Christ because the possibility is only afforded to those who are believing in the right way.

The road to this position that we are given is through his son, Jesus Christ. Now we go on. It says here in verse 24, for all have sinned, verse 23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But for those who have faith in Christ, they are being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith.

Now, okay, there are three words I want you to see here. Justified, redemption, and propitiation. Those are three big words, but there are three words you need to understand.

Justified, redemption, and propitiation. Okay? Number one, justified here. This is so important because this is our position. The word justified means to be counted as right, to be counted as good.

[24 : 48] It's a legal term because Paul is addressing can God legally forgive sinful man? Now, the word justified, I've shared it with you before in here and I think I shared it on Wednesday night as well, but it's so important that we be reminded of this great truth because our justification being justified through faith does not mean that God makes us right.

Okay? It does not mean that God makes us perfect. It does not mean that God takes away all of our problems and all of a sudden we are perfect because if that is the case then we have a major problem because I have never met a perfect Christian.

I have never met someone who genuinely has faith in Jesus Christ and they never mess up. I've met a lot of people who genuinely have faith in Jesus Christ and they mess up quite often. I meet one every morning when I wake up.

I go, hey Billy Joe, how are you doing? And it doesn't take me long before some of you thought my wife. Right now I get up long before her. I have to wake her up. So usually somewhere between my bed and the coffee maker I mess up.

I hit the wall. I grumble. It says do all things without grumbling and complaining and every time my alarm goes off I'm like, I'm grumbling. I'm already complaining. And God doesn't make me perfect.

[25 : 59] If we thought justification meant God made us perfect then Satan would always point our faults out to us. Some of us are going here and always cause us to doubt our own salvation. You ever wonder how Satan gets into your head?

He reminds you of the way you mess up. So I thought you were justified. I thought you were made perfect. Wait a minute. Justified doesn't mean that. Justified means that God looks at us as if we are perfect.

Now that's totally different. God looks at us as if we are perfect even though we are not perfect. God looks upon us and says, Man, look how perfect they are.

Look how good they are. Look how much they have it together. Why? Because when he looks at us he is looking through the blood of Jesus Christ. He is not looking at the person in the flesh.

He met the requirements of the law when Jesus shed his blood upon the cross. And now he looks at us who have faith in Jesus Christ as if we are perfect even though we are not perfect.

[26 : 56] That's what justified means. It is the law of double jeopardy that one person can't pay the sins and you can't pay for it twice. Right? Somebody has to pay for a sin. Somebody has to pay for the crime.

The crime was committed. I committed the crime. I rebelled against a holy God. Jesus paid the price of my crime and now God looks at me as if I didn't commit the crime because the price has already been paid in full.

And that, my friend, is what justified is. That I am a messed up individual and I have faults and I stumble and I falter but the glory of God is that in Jesus Christ he looks at me as if I am perfect. Even though when he knows and I know and I can tell Satan I know I am not perfect. Praise be to God in his eyes through Christ I am perfect. He has justified me.

He has justified me. The second word is redemption. Whom he has redeemed. Now redemption, each of these carry meaning. Justified means God looks at you as if you are perfect even though you are not perfect.

[27 : 59] That is his grace. Freely through his grace he says you have been justified. It is a free gift of God. You didn't earn it. You didn't do enough. You couldn't pay the price enough. He gave it to you free. Redemption. Redemption is the price of purchase.

You have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. That word is so prominent in the time of Rome that Paul is writing because the Romans would understand redemption. It was when a slave was put on the auction block and somebody paid the price of that slave and therefore took ownership of that slave.

Jesus Christ has redeemed you which means he's paid the price for you. He is now master of you. He is now lord of you. He has lordship and authority over you. You are justified.

God looks at you as if you are perfect but you are also owned which means you have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Redeemed how I love to proclaim it. Redeemed how I love to sing it.

And friend, be careful what we say because redemption implies lordship. And if we want to say we are redeemed then we must also say in the same breath, therefore I submit to my Lord and my Master.

[29 : 02] He is my Master. He is my Savior. This is why I'm so careful how I use the name of my Lord. How I use the name of my Savior. Just think about this just for a minute my friend.

It would be hard for me to imagine those who are under the yoke of slavery just casting aside their Master whom they love because not everyone in slavery hated their Master. Some people dearly loved their Master.

As a matter of fact it said in the Old Testament that if a slave so loves his Master then in the year of Jubilee when all slaves were to be set free that slave may not want to be set free. He may say you know what it's better in my Master's house than it is out of my Master's house.

And that slave may say I like where I'm living and I want to stay here. I want to continue to submit to my Master. So they would take that slave take him up to the door and they would take an awl and pierce his ear and show ownership.

Now he would not derogatory his name of his Master whom he loved because that man was the one who provided for him who took care of him who gave to him who was everything to him. His whole worth was found in he who ruled over him.

[30 : 05] That is redemption. You have been purchased by someone who loves you more than you love yourself. He has pierced your ear. He has called you his own and he saw you worth more than anybody else.

I am now reading through the book of Hosea in my daily reading and it's amazing. I don't know how long it's been since you read the book of Hosea but what a story the book of Hosea is.

God tells the prophet Hosea to go take this prostitute as a wife so he goes and takes the prostitute as a wife but she's unfaithful to him. She's a prostitute. He has kids by her.

They have children together but she says I can't just love one man. I love all men. So she goes out and she plays the harlot with all these other men and she runs away from Hosea who loves her and she leaves Hosea behind and she goes somewhere else and then those people who were playing around they said they didn't have any need for his wife anymore so they put her on the auction block and they sold Hosea's wife off.

Now here's the beautiful picture. Hosea went to the auction and paid an unbelievable price for a wife that left him. He paid more than anybody else would for a wife that cheated on him ran away from him and forsook him and then God says this is me and my people.

[31 : 31] I am Hosea. You are my wife. I'm going to buy you back. That's redemption. I'm not just going to pay enough. I'm going to bid so high everybody else will be quiet and walk away.

That's redemption. The last one is propitiation. We're talking about our position. We are justified which means God looks at us as if we are perfect. We are redeemed which means we are his and here is the propitiation whom God displayed publicly.

Jesus Christ whom God displayed publicly as the propitiation for our sins. Now propitiation is a very difficult word but it literally means the covering up of sins. Okay? In the Old Testament you had the tabernacle and in the tabernacle you had what was called the Holy of Holies and inside the Holy of Holies there was the Ark of the Covenant and there was one man one time a year who went into the Holy of Holies that was the high priest and he would go into the Holy of Holies before the Ark of the Covenant and he would be there which was considered the presence of God and above the Ark of the Covenant there was this thing the cherubim.

You remember the cherubim with their wings outstretched but right there there was something called the mercy seat and on the mercy seat which covered the Ark of the Covenant which was a demonstration of the presence of God the high priest would walk in with the blood that was killed the blood that came out of the animal that's on the altar.

He would get the blood from that animal he would tie a rope around his ankles he would wear a long garment with bells around it and as he walked in the bells would jingle and the rope would drag behind him and the rope was long enough that if the bells stopped jingling because he died in the presence of God the people outside the Holy of Holies could drag his body out.

[33 : 09] That's how powerful it was to go into the presence of God and he would take this blood from the altar and he would walk into the Holy of Holies and he would walk into the very presence of God and there's this mercy seat and he would take this blood and he would spread it over the mercy seat and he would send this blood of this sacrifice is covering the mercy seat so that God you would have mercy and you would allow me to stay in your presence and I'd be able to walk out.

Now the word for that mercy seat is propitiation. Jesus Christ is our mercy seat. Jesus Christ is where we come to and we find the blood covering it.

That cross it's a bloody nasty ugly torturous instrument. That cross it's a place of suffering it's a place of ugliness it's a place of blood stained it's a place of agony because that cross that's our mercy seat.

That's where the blood is smeared all over it so that we can come into his presence and be welcome there because God has publicly displayed him so that we can be in the position of his presence.

Now look at this he says if you want to see the price of your sins and mine why did God have to make such a display of Jesus his son to be our mercy seat?

[34 : 38] This is kind of a side note but this is why the latter half of verse 25 this was to demonstrate his righteousness because in the forbearance of God he passed over the sins previously committed for the demonstration I say of his righteousness at the present time so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

You know what the cross is? The cross is what our sin demands. That gory nasty hideous death that Jesus died on the cross is what every one of our actions legally demands.

That flesh being ripped apart that suffering servant the hair being plucked out all of the ugliness of that blood stained cross that's what man's actions deserve.

But it says God put him on public display because God had passed over that consequence up to that time. He hadn't made man pay that price.

He hadn't made man suffer like that. Listen but now you will either trust in that mercy seat or you will try to come before God without a mercy seat.

[35 : 52] That's the price of our actions. Praise be to God through the gospel we find that we are granted a new position because of Jesus Christ. Now I've got one more third and final one and I'm through I promise.

The profession it produces in man. I just want to be quick. The profession that it produces what we profess because of these truths. Can God legally forgive us?

The answer to that is yes. Why? Because he paid the price himself in his son Jesus Christ. That Jesus paid the full price that our sins deserve and by faith in him he can look upon us as if we are perfect.

And now so what do we say? Paul asks the question where then is boasting? He says my friend my Jewish audience my religious people you people who know all the truths you people who can quote the Old Testament you people who probably can quote in entirety the book of Deuteronomy you people who can tell me all the manifested realizations of God throughout time and history where then is your bragging?

Are you going to boast because you're doing right? Are you going to boast because you don't go anywhere on the Sabbath? Are you going to boast because you give the right sacrifices? Are you going to boast because you don't carry anything over a coffee mug on the Sabbath?

[37 : 01] Where is your boasting my friend? He says it's useless. You can't brag. You can't boast. because the God who forgives the law keeper by faith is the same God who forgives the unlawful by faith.

He says it's not that you've done enough. It's not that you're good enough. It's not that you had the right stock, the right heritage. It's not that your family taught you well enough. It's not he said you can't brag because the only reason we're welcomed into his presence is because of what he did. Not because of what we earned. Look at what he says. Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law of works? No, but by law of faith. For we maintain.

Now this is so important. This is where Martin Luther and so many others came to this verse and they came to the realization they had it all wrong. For we maintain that a man is justified. That is, he is looked at as being perfect and complete.

He is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. He is saying you can't do anything that God would look at you and go, you know what?

[38 : 15] He is all together. But you can believe in someone and God can look at you that way. By faith apart from the works of the law, is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, the Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised that is the law-haver, by faith and the uncircumcised that is the unlawful, through faith is one.

Do we now? He is making a transition to how he is going to show us this lived out in practical sense in chapter four. But here it is, here is the profession. We can't boast in ourselves.

We must say, the only reason I am redeemed, the only reason I am forgiven, the only reason I am even welcomed into the presence of a holy God, is because he did it all.

He did it all. It is not that I am doing good enough, it is not that I am going to be good enough.

Listen, we are talking about redemption and justification. Sanctification is a whole other thing.

Sanctification is the way we behave.

We get to that later. But redemption and justification means God did it all. And I can't brag, and I can't boast, and I can't go, man, you know what, I did this, and I did that, and I did this, and I earned this, and now God has to forgive me.

[39 : 28] That is boasting. Boasting and faith are both exclusive. You cannot boast and have faith, and you cannot have faith and boast. Because having faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior means you have nothing in yourself to brag about.

Paul says, if I'm going to boast in anything, I'm going to boast in my Lord. I'm going to boast in my Savior. I'm going to boast in my Redeemer. I'm going to tell you what He did. I'm not going to tell you what I did. Because everything I did earned me the cross.

Everything He did took on the cross. that's our profession. Whoever, wherever, can have the same position we do. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank You. We come with so much love, so much adoration for all You've done. Lord, You paid a price that we deserve. And God, You are absolutely right and innocent and forgiving man.

You have legal grounds to forgive us because of the price that Jesus paid. Lord, we know that we must trust in that payment. We must accept that payment. So Lord, You know every heart.

[40 : 36] You know every mind. Lord, I pray if there's one here today who has never accepted the payment for their sin on the cross of Calvary, that You would show us just how much You paid so that we could be Yours.

Lord, for those of us who have accepted that, I pray that our life would be radically shaped and radically changed because of who we are, because of the position You have mercifully and

gracefully granted us.

Lord, may we live for Your glory. May we live for Your honor. May You have Your own way. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.