

## Romans 3:1–20

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer. Father, Father, you know how we can live our lives, our entire lives with ourselves, and yet often we don't understand ourselves at all. And you know, Father, how this comes out when your Word describes to us how we really are. And we don't like the description. We don't recognize ourselves. We think we see other people, but not ourselves. So Father, we ask that you would, in your kindness and mercy and goodness towards us, that your Holy Spirit would gently bring the words of your words into our hearts, into the center of who we are, into our imaginations, our memories, our minds, our wills, our desires, and our hearts, and our hearts. So that we might not only recognize ourselves, but more and more recognize our profound and deep need for Jesus, for who He is and all that He accomplished for us on the cross. And so we ask that your Holy Spirit would do that gentle but important work in each of our lives. And we ask this in Jesus's name. Amen. Please be seated.

[ 2 : 26 ] So, very few knew this at the time. And since then, I don't know how many people know about this, but I had a cancer scare at the end of January. I was sick off and on, like sort of getting better, and then a little bit worse, and off and on. I had a cold, obviously, you know, all the way through January, it seemed. And then towards the end of January, I can't remember the dates, it doesn't really matter. You know, my wife said, George, you should go see a doctor. It might be something more than just, you know, having a cold that just doesn't go away, or that grandkids keep giving back to you.

You know, grandkids are perfectly designed germ disposal units, actually. But I went to a doctor on a Monday in the afternoon, and he looked at me, listened to my chest, said, you got pneumonia. But he said to make sure you should go have an x-ray. So, I went on Tuesday around five-ish to get an x-ray. And I discovered the next day, that's Thursday, but I discovered on Wednesday, as soon as my doctor saw the x-rays, he called up the Queensway-Carleton Hospital for me to have a CT scan.

Because, yeah, I definitely had pneumonia, but I might also have had some type of thing in there that could be sinister. And I didn't discover this until Thursday, because I missed an email from him. But I got a call from the Queensway-Carleton Hospital saying that the doctor had requested that I get a CT scan, and the earliest they could give me one was a week after that.

So, obviously, I was in shock. I've been around people for a long time. I've been a minister for 40 years. And I know many, many stories of people going in for an x-ray, and then getting immediately, the doctor wanting something, calling them into the hospital or something really quick. Generally, when you go really quick from an x-ray to something like a CT scan really quick, the news isn't good as a general rule. And so, I confess, I was shocked. I said I wanted to call out my doctor's office. And I'm not going to tell you that I'm just a perfectly always balanced stoic type of guy. It was a

blow, like getting a punch in the stomach. And I was in shock a bit about it.

[ 4 : 49 ] Called my doctor's office. They had my doctor text me. I accepted the appointment. And then after that, I think I was pretty calm about it, at least on the surface. Probably at a deeper level, I was more worried about it. But they wanted to have a CT scan. And just to cut to the end of it, by the way, I'm telling you all of this because it's, this story is going to actually really help us to understand this very difficult text that we're going to look at in a moment. But just so you know, it turned out that with the CT scan, I didn't have a lump. I didn't have cancer. And my kids knew, and my wife knew obviously, I didn't tell people in the congregation, by and large. I didn't want people to call me up every day and ask me whether I had it. My attitude during it was a little bit, although I'm sure at one level, I was worried that I, if, first of all, I prayed that the cancer go away. So who knows, maybe in heaven, we'll find out that there was cancer there. And I prayed that it would go away. And it did, where my kids did, that went away. And we'll find that out in heaven, just when they did the CT scan, there was no, no, nothing there. No, no bat, no foreign thing that shouldn't be there was there. I also would have just taken it as part of God's providence that he used the pneumonia to find something early that could then be, be more likely to be healed.

But I'm going to return to this as we go into the sermon. But this whole thing of a diagnosis and a CT scan and seen accurately is really important for us to understand what is on the surface, quite a difficult text. So it'd be very helpful to me if you would take your Bibles out and we're going to look at Romans chapter three, verses one to 20. Romans chapter three, verses one to 20.

And, um, uh, where it is, right, uh, is, uh, there's some opening remarks, then the summary statement, uh, the summary statement is the, the gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes and then, uh, about how to be made right with God and God showing to be just. And then immediately from verse 18 to the end of this chapter three, verse 20, Paul sells the problem. Why is it that human beings, what is it about human beings? What is it about the human condition that means that we really need God to have done something for us and that that can come with his power to change us?

Why is it that we need this? And so what Paul has been doing has been selling the problem. And this is sort of the conclusion of him selling the problem. And interestingly enough, even at, well, let's just look how he begins. It begins in a way that we don't realize that even this, everything that Paul does is an attempt to help us to understand the human condition.

And when I say the human condition, I mean, I don't mean your condition. I mean, I do mean your condition. I also mean my condition. Like, what am I really like? And so look how it begins. Chapter three, verse one, then what advantage has the Jew, the Jewish person, or what is the value of circumcision? Uh, the way that you become a Jew and the mark that you're Jewish, uh, at least for men, it's a mark of the Jewish community. Uh, then what advantage has the Jew? Well, here's the thing.

[ 7 : 56 ] It's a really interesting thing, the way he, he words this right towards the end, because what he's done, if you follow through and you try to listen to the sermons and you read it, he's really, he said, listen, here's the thing about it. Everybody has a basic sense that there has to be a God that does exist. Every human being denies this. Every human being represses it. Every human being exchanges the truth about God for a lie and for idols. And we're all idol worshippers. And that even if God used your own standards to judge you, you can't even live up to your own standards. And even good people, their hypocrisy isn't just an accidental thing about a human, that those particular human beings, that hypocrisy is a sign of the human condition. And, and he's really been just showing time and time again, how, uh, you know, we're not nearly as good as we think we are. And we really are very, very far from God. He's given a moral list of 21 different, uh, vices and no human being could look at those vices and think that they haven't broken many of them many, many, many, many times.

And so now he comes and he's even now showing that good people need the gospel, very moral people and religious and spiritual people need the gospel. And so the next thing that he's sort of just imagining what the average human being would say is, okay, well, okay, Jewish people, like, do they have an advantage? Well, why do they say that? If you could put up the first point clear, that would be helpful. Humans seek advantage and benefit and complain about advantage and benefit. Uh, uh, uh, advantage and benefit. Now you might think, I don't know, George, I don't even know what you're talking about. Well, I'll illustrate what I mean by this.

Let's say one of you, uh, you develop a really, really, really seriously bad knee condition or hip condition, and you need to get a knee replacement or a hip replacement. And then the doctors saying, I don't know, this being Canada, well, I don't know, uh, given that your pain level and giving the waiting list, uh, the good news is in two and a half years, you can have surgery. That's the good news. Two and a half years surgery. I mean, the really good news is it's going to be free, but you're gonna have to wait two and a half years. Well, meanwhile, day by day, you're going through the pain of your knee or the pain of your hip. And then one day you discover that my daughter has moved back to, by the way, I'm just, my daughter, my daughter is not a surgeon, but I'm just using this as an illustration. One day you discover that my daughter has moved back to Ottawa and my daughter is the best orthopedic surgeon in Canada. The best orthopedic surgeon in Canada. And you discover that.

[10:33] And you know me, I'm your pastor, and you think I can get an advantage. Pastor, could you introduce me to your daughter, the orthopedic surgeon, to see if she would maybe move me from two and a half years to two and a half weeks? Now, of course, none of us would do this, of course. Like, none of us would even have that enter our mind. In fact, all of us would say to the doctors, hey, listen, other people probably need the knee surgery more than us. I'll wait five years, right? That's what we'd all think. No. We'd want advantage. And what always goes with advantage is benefit, which Paul's going to mention again in a few verses. It's implied. Now, here's the other thing. We all, if the rubber hits the road, we all want advantage and to benefit from it. But here's the other thing about it. What do we think about a system where certain people have advantage and benefits? Systems corrupt. It's not fair. Why on earth is there a system where, you know,

I'm going to get in really trouble. This isn't a political comment. Years ago, a doctor friend of mine said, of course, Canada has two-tier medical. And I said, no, it doesn't. He said, yeah, yeah, yeah. Why did he ever notice that hockey players don't have to wait as long for an MRI as you do? We're politicians. We have an unofficial two-tier health system in Canada. Anyway, that's the end of it. I've now gotten in trouble. You've all gone off on a whole. I should probably have not said that. But here's the thing. That's exactly what we would think, right? That on one hand, if we can get that advantage and benefit, we get it. But on the other hand, if we hear that our neighbor got it, because in fact, George doesn't have a daughter who's a surgeon, the top orthopedic surgeon in Canada, we think there's something wrong with the system. And so this is very interesting. He's once again revealing something about the human condition. We hear all of these things. Our situation is dismal. Okay, but maybe there's an advantage I can get. Like I heard about these Jewish people, and maybe if I just become Jewish, I get that advantage and benefit. So how does Paul handle that? And that whole back and forth, it all comes up in the next few verses. Look how he does it. Both the idea of maybe I can get it. And also that if I don't get it, it's a problem with God, right? Because he gives it to other people. And Paul really handles this very beautifully. Look at, read again from verse one.

[13:04] Then what advantage has the Jew, the person who's Jewish? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. Oh, our hopes go up. But he then surprises us to begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. And that literally means the very words of God.

It's once again why historically Christians believe that when you read the Bible, you're reading the actual words that God wanted to have spoken. And of all of the words in all of the world that have ever been spoken, only the words in the Bible are the words that God actually wanted to speak. And that's what we're hearing. And he said, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. And then verse three, what if some were unfaithful? So some people might say, okay, one moment, how is this an advantage? Like, okay, that's their advantage? But if that's an advantage, well, look what they're thinking. What if some were unfaithful? And then Paul says, or they, Paul says back, does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means. Let God be true, though everyone were a liar. As it is written, and he quotes the Bible, that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged. Now, what Paul is doing here is he's setting up, in a sense, the God's logic of redemption, and God's logic towards freedom and wholeness and hope. And he's starting to introduce this, how God's logic works, not how human logic works, but how God's logic works.

Human logic, well, you know, if you put up the second point, that would be very helpful. What he's just said, he's acknowledged that, I mean, you read the Old Testament, the Old Testament regularly says to the Jewish people, by the way, just so you know, God didn't choose you because you're the smartest, the best, the wisest, or anything like that. That's not why I chose you, you know? In fact,

it's an early advantage of how God chooses the weak and the small to shame the strong and the powerful.

It's a very part of God's logic. But here's the thing. What he's just said is that despite human beings being sinful, disinterested, and hostile to God, and hostile, God caused his word written to be a public revelation. I'll say that again. Despite humans being sinful, disinterested, and hostile to God, God caused his word written to be a public revelation. That's what he's saying here.

That, and by the way, a bit of an aside, this is part of the reason why Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are confused about thinking you have to have a sort of a, sometimes almost like a perfect church to receive God's word, is that God makes it clear here that it's sinful, fallen human beings that recognize public revelation, because it's God who does it. It's not because he needs us to be perfect in any type of way whatsoever. Despite our sinfulness, despite our hostility to God, despite at other times when we're completely, utterly disinterested, God was able to make sure that his word was spoken, recognized, and preserved. And his word is a public revelation.

[16:29] That's, I don't talk about this enough, but it's spectacular news. It's not some type of private meditation thing that just comes to the enlightened and the anointed, some secret thing that he just touches some people and they have a mystical experience and then they hear from God. No, no, no.

You know, if you get the Bible app, I think the Bible app now makes the Bible available in like almost 1900 translations. Like it's completely public and open. Kids can read it. Intellectuals can read it.

Concrete finishers can read it. It's not secret and hidden and protected by some institution. It's a public revelation. And that's what's so beautiful here. Now, the next thing though, in terms of how they respond, it's really interesting. It's a very, very clever way of responding, but it also opens the door to a profoundly Canadian problem. Because the way Canadians think about morality, the way most Canadians think about right and wrong, they have a Jeffrey Epstein problem on steroids. You know, Jeffrey Epstein, the one who's convicted of luring and trafficking of underage girls and others to the rich and the powerful. Look at verse 5. But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? I speak in a human way.

By no means, for then how could God judge the world? But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come? As some people slanderously charges with saying their condemnation is just. Shortly before he went into jail, Jeffrey Epstein did an interview, and in that interview, he basically said he's a good man.

[18:29] And why is he a good man? Well, how is it that the average Canadian thinks about right and wrong? The average Canadian thinks about right and wrong is you can take my acts, and even those things that I do that are wrong. And you need to look at the good consequences, and you balance the good consequences and the bad consequences.

Another way is you can't really think of right and wrong as really being any type of absolute. You've got to look in terms of the overall good or the overall bad that flows from it. And that's how you determine what is right and wrong. And that's how most Canadians think.

They get very uncomfortable when people like Christians, like us, say, well, actually, no, some things are right and some things are wrong. It doesn't matter if you do a wrong thing.

And I mean, it matters on one level, but not in terms of the wrongness of it, if good things follow.

And Jeffrey Epstein, believe it or not, said, now, he probably was lying about this, by the way, but he said, I funded, I've done major funding to try to eradicate childhood polio in Pakistan and India.

And if you balance all of the good that comes from that with the evil I've done, you will have to conclude that I'm a good man. Canadians' understanding of right and wrong has a Jeffrey Epstein problem.

[19:50] Because our gut would say, no, no, no, no, no, no, what he did was wrong. What he did was absolutely, horrifically, terribly wrong. It is wrong, wrong, wrong.

If you don't say that, you're wrong. And I don't even know if you really believe it. And in a sense, as soon as somebody says, in the face of a Jeffrey Epstein, and maybe claiming that the amount of good he brings by trying to eradicate childhood polio in Pakistan and India outweighs the horrible things he did and furthered, and you want to say that it's wrong, you're on the Christian side of the playing field.

You're understanding that ultimately, it's because there is a God who's good at all things, who is good, and that goodness determines what is good and what is bad. And it's just bad. And if you start to actually really think that it's always a matter of benefits and all, and you can see increasingly in our press, there's things wrong in our justice system with discounting things because of certain types of racial things or, you know, making a hard, like, there's things which are just increasingly out of whack.

I mean, I guess things are always out of whack and have to be reformed. But Paul just says very correctly, listen, if you actually really think that it's just a matter of weighing good and bad, how can you ever judge anybody?

[ 21 : 12 ] And you all want to judge people, at least at some point in time, and maybe not for a whole pile of things that should be judged, but at least at some point in time, you want to really just say, you know, listen, you sexually abuse a little kid, that is wrong.

And you should go to jail for it and more. And it's just wrong. It's just wrong. Murdering innocent is just wrong.

Russians targeting innocent citizens in Ukraine. It's just wrong. It's just wrong. You're speaking like a Christian.

Or a biblical person. Orthodox Jews as well. So what Paul is saying here is, and then in the end, he says, listen, you guys even think, if you know anything at all about me, and the book of Romans is going to show it, the book of Romans is going to show how we're really far worse than we really think we are, and the gospel is really unbelievably better than we think we are, and when we give our lives to Christ, it's something that only God, only God can make us right with him, but when he makes us right with him, he makes us right with him to live a moral life.

Read the whole book of Romans. So it's not at all, it's all, it's not about, that's what, that's what God desires. I mean, the fact is that, that you and I were originally designed by God for goodness and beauty and truth.

[ 22 : 46 ] Goodness is the food we need to thrive. Beauty is the food we need to thrive. Truth, our mind needs truth to thrive.

Our affections need beauty for us to thrive. Our wills need goodness to thrive. And salvation is restoring us to what would cause us to truly thrive.

Now, the Bible goes on to say something which is a bit shocking.

It's maybe the part that you noticed that Josiah read about nobody being righteous, no one understanding. And Paul is going to be bringing things to conclusion. He's just tried to reveal and show that God could have his word written, revealed to human beings, despite whatever we might do to disregard it, to have it lost, to have it be quenched, to have it be banned.

We can do all those things, but God still calls his word to be spoken, to be recognized, and to be preserved. And now he deals with this particular beginning thing.

[ 24 : 12 ] He closes the loop about us seeking advantage, and we seek advantage because we want to get something, a benefit from it. And that's what he begins to say in verse 9 with this shocking stuff as he's bringing things to a conclusion.

What then are we Jews? Any better off? Because Paul, writing this, is Jewish. No, not at all. The advantage of hearing God's word, it doesn't give us a benefit in the type of benefit we think we do about escaping the human condition.

And then it says here, read verse 9 again, what then are we Jews better off? No, not at all, for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.

And in some ways, this is almost the end of this whole section about trying to describe the human condition and why we need the gospel.

That human beings are under sin. It's as if we dwell in sin. It's not because I do wrong things that I'm a sinner, it's because I'm sin and I dwell under it, I live in it, that I sin.

[ 25 : 26 ] If you could put up the third point, that would be helpful, Claire. You are under sin. Another way I could have put it is humans are under sin, but once again, if I just said humans are under sin, that's completely true.

But it's a more pointed thing. You are under sin. Now this sounds a little bit too depressing and a little bit too extreme.

But he's going to pack it out a little bit. Let's look at how he unpacks it and look at it in its full extremity and then I'll go back and try to say how it actually describes us more than we want to

acknowledge.

So he's going to quote 13 scripture passages in the next few verses, mainly from Psalms, but also from Ecclesiastes, I can't remember what the other, Proverbs, and I can't remember what the other one is.

Wrote down my notes. I didn't have it on my thing right in front of me. But listen to this list. And it's, by the way, a lot of times for people who hear this list, I think it's just too extreme.

[ 26 : 35 ] But I'm going to show you why it's not and its context. As it is written, none is righteous, no, not one. No one understands.

No one seeks God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave.

They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

In their paths are ruin and misery. In the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now it's a sobering list but I think and it's really hard because I don't know about what books you parents are reading about your children but one of the problems with most child-rearing books that are written today is they all work on the assumption that children are basically good.

Not. You know, how do you know when a child has reached the age of moral discernment? Might be two, three.

[ 27 : 53 ] You know, there's a certain point in time. I, you know, my oldest son, if he was here he would just laugh at and make it, make tell funny stories about himself. If there was a basket of laundry he could crawl there amazingly fast and immediately throw the entire basket of laundry all over the floor.

We had bookshelves. You could not have any books on a bookshelf that was beyond his reach because he delighted in taking all of the books off and throwing them on the floor.

He's just being a kid. He wasn't bad. He was just being a kid. But there comes a point in time when the kid, when you say something like don't touch that and they look at you and they look at that and you say to them again don't touch that they look at you and they touch that.

Now if you think you have a kid that hasn't done that you need therapy because your kids do that too.

Okay? Or did it. And so on one hand we think that human beings are basically good and I think partially what that's dealing I won't go into why that's dealing with it but here's the thing.

[ 29 : 08 ] a simple illustration. One of the reasons I've used this before but I'll use it again. One of the reasons people like zombie movies or aliens invading and about to take over the entire world is that on one hand they see how you see how people are revealed and there's looting and there's destruction and one of the things about zombie movies is that not only you have to fear the zombies you almost have to fear human beings more because they just want to steal and they hurt people and they enslave people and that's what human beings do and then there's the moral person in it who's not like that and one of the reasons people like those movies is because they imagine themselves as the moral person not the bad people and in fact I'm sure I'd be willing to bet money that if you were to ask them about let's say all their co-workers or their neighbours if they know their neighbours well enough to know their neighbours on ten sides ten houses either way or on the you know in the whole building and if you were to say to them how many of your neighbours do you think would be moral like you and how many would be like the hordes out there you know doing the stealing and the theft and all of that and you'd say well

I mean I'd be one of the moral people actually I don't know how many of my I don't know how many of my other co-workers would actually be moral like me like I actually think they'd be out there lying and stealing and not knowing the way of peace I actually think that's what would happen if everything broke down and there were zombies and it just came down to them them or the other right now here's the here's the problem with the thought experiment if you asked each one of the co-workers the same question all of them would probably say well I'd be one of the moral people but I'm not sure about all my other co-workers and they would include you in that by the way your co-workers would not be sure whether you would be one of the moral people in the zombie apocalypse or whether you'd be one of the people not knowing the way of peace and lying and stealing and do whatever you had to live see as the psalmist says very truly we flatter ourselves too much to detect our hate our own sin and and you know in fact here's the other thing about it a

couple of weeks ago

I used the example about how many of us labor under the problem of thinking that the more other people get to know me the less they'll like me it's a very and I talked about how that's why we have to preach the gospel to ourselves but here's the other aspect of it nobody thinks I'll rephrase this if somebody said to me or you after the service you know George used that example that the more people got to know me the less they'd like me and I don't know I didn't know that that was the problem I mean the fact of the matter is is the more if the more people get to know me the more they'd think I'm perfect another person needing therapy right like if people might actually believe that you know they're completely deluded I mean the fact is I mean that's that's one of the hard parts about long-term relationships it's one of the hard parts about marriage is that you get married and you discover you married a sinner and they discover they married a sinner as well as one person's perfect and the other person's a sinner both are sinners right and so the fact is that there's something which is very very very profound about this and in it

Paul has been very clever he's touched seven areas he said at the level of our standing before God sin has touched us at the level of our minds sin has touched us at the level of our motives sin has touched us at the level of our wills sin has touched us at the level of words sin has touched us at the level of relationships sin has touched us and the level of our relationship to God sin has touched us sin has touched us it's not saying by the way that every single thing you do as a human being is bad and terrible it's not a despairing type of thing it just means that every part of who you are has been touched by rebellion against God and your own God project and self-centeredness there's no part of who you are that has not been touched by it and well the text has already shown this is part of the logic of redemption that God is over everything and if he wants to have his word spoken it will be and even to people under sin

God who is over sin can still have his word to be spoken and it's part of the hint that there might be hope and it's because God is over all things that even though human beings have had sin touch every area of their lives God in his common grace has made it that it does not completely overwhelm them we do not become Mordor we do not become orcs God restrains this in the hope that we would turn to him and repent and this by the way helps us to see something so what he's really beginning to communicate here by this long list is that you are actually every human being is actually far worse than they ever realized and if that's all that Paul was going to say it would just be very depressing but remember he begins by saying there's this profound announcement by God of a great victory that he has won and has accomplished and it comes with power from him to make you right with God and so Paul is trying to set the stage to realize that no matter how depressed or how guilty you ever feel or down on yourself that you ever feel you actually haven't plumbed the depths of how bad you are which is unbelievably depressing unless it goes with the message of the gospel that even the world's most spectacular narcissist cannot possibly imagine how profoundly loved they are by God how profoundly loved they are by God so he goes on we're going to come back to this in a moment

[ 35 : 22 ] I have to start wrapping things up you turn down to verse 19 now we know that whatever the law says that's the moral law it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God and if you could put up the point this is just saying that in the face of God's perfect justice point four in the face of God's perfect justice and his perfect sentence against you there will be nothing you can say in the face of God's perfect justice and in the face of his perfect sentence against you there will be nothing you can say the case is airtight you can't complain that maybe you know you should give me a pass because me speaking lies meant that your truth shines brighter or me doing wrong things meant that you looking makes you look good or you know or there's this or that or there's some type of excuse there's nothing like that that's going to work you see one of the things which is mainly different that this is all showing coming up to this like about the law and being under the law and doing good things going to come up in a moment is that one of the big differences between a

Christian who's been instructed by the Bible and the gospel and those outside the Christian faith is how we view our good works and how we view our good works is not that we shouldn't be doing them but that they're never enough to make us right with God that's what he goes right here and says in verse 20 and this is the end of the bad news for by the works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight justified here means made right in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin if you could put up the fifth point that would be helpful God's revelation of what is

right and wrong reveals your sin and your need but it cannot make you right with him God's revelation of what is right and wrong reveals your sin and your need but it cannot make you right with him think back now to my CT scan there was a development of revelation and first there was my own perception that I was sick then there's

Louise's perception that it might be something more than just a cold and then there's the doctor looking at me and listening to my chest and saying I have pneumonia and then there's the x-ray which brings more clarity both that there is pneumonia but there might also be something else and now you go to a more powerful level of revelation so to speak the CT scan and the CT scan is able to show that I do have pneumonia but in fact I don't have anything that looks like a tumor and so it's a bit of a model about how the more moral you become the more moral clarity you have you'll be able to perceive things better and the right and wrong in your life you'll be able to perceive it better and better but here's the thing if the doctor had found cancer a tumorous cancer or a cancer that he thought might be tumorous I can't say okay well that's really hard news put me back in the CT scanner because that will make me better you go no no you don't understand CT scanners don't make you better they just show you what's there no no no put me back in the CT scanner maybe do I have to go in ten times

I'll go in ten times I don't mind getting things stuck in my arm and iodine like just keep putting me in that and in that and in that and in that and in that and in that no no CT scanners don't make you better they don't make you better and it's so the law what Paul is saying here is the more moral clarity you have the moral clarity is really important to be able to understand yourself and more importantly it's really important because it makes you understand your need for God but it doesn't actually ever heal and it doesn't actually ever heal it just reveals and God Paul doesn't bring us to this point in time just to give us a depressing diagnosis I don't know if I'm pronouncing this correctly but there have been people in our congregation whose loved ones have had Crutzfeld-Jakob disease and if you get a diagnosis of Crutzfeld-Jakob disease the doctor has to say to you I have really really hard news all of the tests have revealed that you have Jacob Crutzfeld disease and there's absolutely no cure whatsoever and you will be dead probably within a year maybe two and they can describe what will happen to you but what Paul is doing here is not giving you a diagnosis like this and his profound diagnosis of the human condition is making you aware of the fact that you shouldn't have false hope that you shouldn't say well if I just follow this religion and their rules or if I just learn how to do this type of meditation and do these types of things or if I go and get a second opinion about this or if I just ignore all of these things and just spend my time living a completely secular self centered life and all of these types of things and the purpose of the diagnosis is that you have something which is unbelievably serious that you cannot heal for yourself so you should not have false hope and it's not a case that there's no hope but it's just that you should have no false hope but there is hope and what is the hope the hope is already pointed at in several ways it's hope if you put up the sixth point that would be really helpful despite human beings being sinful disinterested and hostile despite human beings being sinful disinterested and hostile towards God

[ 41 : 15 ] God accomplished real eternal salvation in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ he did it with his word which reveals and he does it with salvation which heals and you put your faith in Christ there's this wonderful text that Paul writes around the same time in 2nd Corinthians 5 verse 21 God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God there's a whole book of theology there but the very very basic lesson is this that when we put what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross he is the sinless the sinless perfect human being and he comes fully human to die upon the cross that the things which the life I should have lived and I couldn't he lived and the punishment that I deserved he takes and when I put my hands in the hands of Christ he takes me into himself I enter into union with him and well here's what it's like here's this example I think a year or two ago I'll use it again imagine there was a childhood version of

Jacob of Crutzfeld Jacob disease but at the same time that they discovered that there was this terrible version of this disease they also discovered one and only one cure and so they come to my family and they tell one of my kids that their eight-year-old daughter has this thing which will kill them within a year or two and then they'll say there is a cure it's rare and it depends upon there being a perfect match but it might be that there's I mean what that would really involve is that we would hook somebody up to your child and there would be tubes having the blood going back and

forward and if that person who's the match and can identify if we'll take their blood and everything and their health will go out of them into the eight-year-old girl and the eight-year-old girl's deadly disease will go in to the donor and they do a research and they find out that my wife is a perfect match for her eight-year-old granddaughter she would not hesitate to say yes she would not hesitate she would say I will be connected to you so you can live

I will take your illness and I will die in your place my wife is a wonderful person but we have an even more wonderful savior who has done that sacrifice for you and if you go in union with him all of this human condition goes into him all of your under sinness goes to him and what you get is under grace you get his health and he takes your sickness and that is why you need to hear that God has done something that human beings cannot do and it comes to you as a message that you are included and it comes with his power and when you put your hands in the hands of

Jesus that power comes to you that's what you get that's why you need the gospel that's why I need it so you know here's the thing if you put up the seventh point this is really important for you to also understand the gospel shapes the Christian to be more deeply penitent and more deeply hopeful you see as the truth of the gospel becomes more and more real to your heart that that's what Christ has done Jesus has done this for you that when you put your hands in him and trust in him and believe into him he enters into you and you!

enter into him and there is this wonderful transfusion and because he rose from the dead in this example I gave my wife at the end of it would be dead but at the end of it with Jesus he is resurrected after his sacrifice and you now share in his life and you have this profound hope of heaven and you now live in the already not yet God chose!

[ 45 : 50 ] chose to be in such a way that the second let's say Laurier puts his faith in Christ or William does or something like that it doesn't mean immediately just taken out to heaven they continue to live and we live in the already not yet we live on one hand that this is our destiny and this is the truth about us and the other hand we still have to struggle with our sin which is for you to be completely cut to the heart by the injustice in your life the hard words that you've said in your life the things that you've done the things that you fail to do and you can look at those things and you can begin to have moral clarity about them and not evade God and choose lies and choose idols the gospel begins to form you to be able to that

Christ has done it all and when he says on the cross it is finished it is finished far more penitent and far more hopeful and then a Christian can look at Romans chapter 3 verses 10 to 18 and we can approach it like you do an alcoholic in an AA meeting how does an alcoholic introduce himself at an AA meeting I'm George I'm an alcoholic and how can we as Christians begin in the security of the gospel I can say I'm George in my flesh I am not righteous I don't understand I don't seek God I have turned aside I don't do good my throat is an open grave my tongue deceive my lips deceive I'm filled with curses and bitterness and my feet are shift to spread blood and I am redeemed that is me and my savior is great and

I hope you know the savior the gospel forms you not to be self righteous and insecure but as the gospel comes to your heart and you look at the moral law it makes you more deeply penitent secure in what Christ has done and more deeply hopeful I am going to heaven if that cancer diagnosis had been true there are three ways that God would heal me he could heal me instantly by a miracle he could heal me slowly by medicine or he will heal me finally in heaven eternally I will be healed invite you to stand so can you bow our heads in prayer father we give you thanks and praise for your word we give you thanks and praise that you do not reveal to us the real our real condition the human condition the condition not only of ourselves but of our of our friends our children our family our parents our neighbors our co-workers that you reveal the human condition to us not to depress us not to cause us to despair but that we might turn to

Jesus and be saved and be born again to come into union with him we give you thanks and praise for what he accomplished for us on the cross and we give you thanks and praise that his finished work comes to us with your saving power to make us right with you we ask father that you would help the gospel to become more and more real to our hearts more and more real to our hearts that we can deal with the things in our lives that are bad and seek to repent and amend our lives and that we will more and more be filled with a humble hope of the final word how your word at the goodness but because of the greatness of our savior and we ask these things in the name of Jesus your son and our savior and all God's people said amen