

# PM Romans 3:9-31

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Please turn with me in the Bible to Romans chapter 3. That's on page 1133 of the Bible. Page 1133, Romans chapter 3. And we're going to read from verse 9 of the chapter. What then? Are we Jews any better off?
- No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. As it is written, none is righteous.
- No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for 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.
- [ 1 : 13 ] Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. In their paths are ruin and misery.
- And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law.
- So that every mouth may be stopped. So that every mouth may be stopped. And the whole world may be accountable to God. For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight.
- Since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.
- Although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.
- [ 2 : 18 ] For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And are justified by his grace as a gift.
- Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood. To be received by faith.
- This was to show God's righteousness. Because in his divine foreparents. He had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time.
- So that he might be just. And the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting?
- It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No. But by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith.
- [ 3 : 27 ] Apart from works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?
- Yes, of Gentiles also. Since God is one. Who will justify the circumcised by faith. And the uncircumcised through faith.
- Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means. On the contrary. We uphold the law.

Amen. May God bless the reading of his word to us all. That we read together from Romans chapter 3.

I want us to focus on just one verse in this remarkable chapter. The verse is verse 24 of chapter 3.

[ 4 : 29 ] Where the apostle says, That's our text.

But perhaps I should say something by way of context. The apostle in the letter to the Romans is making one of the clearest and lengthiest statements of the gospel that he proclaims.

Anywhere found in scripture. And he begins the letter, or the theme of the letter proper, in verse 16 of chapter 1.

Where he says, And then he proceeds from there, having made this great statement of his gospel in a nutshell.

That's like the overture to a symphony. It has the notes that are going to be developed later on in the symphony already present in it. And he's going to take these various themes up in the rest of his epistle and develop them and then apply them towards the end of his letter.

[ 5 : 58 ] But he immediately goes on to explain why he is so proud of the gospel. Why he's not ashamed of it. Why he's so proud of it. It's because the gospel is the power of God for salvation.

Why do people need to be saved? You might ask. And he goes on to explain why. By telling us of the wrath of God. Of the wrath of God that is presently being revealed from heaven.

Against what he calls all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And you notice the order in which he puts those words. Ungodliness comes first.

Then comes unrighteousness. The real heart of the problem is the ungodliness of men and women since the fall.

Their estrangement from God. Their alienation from God. Their hatred of God. Leads to all forms of unrighteousness. And so many approaches in the world for centuries have been to focus on the unrighteousness of mankind.

[ 7 : 10 ] And ignoring from where this righteousness springs. It springs from man's ungodliness. His alienation from God.

His fall from grace. His heart needs to be put right first. Otherwise what we're doing is we're simply medicating the symptoms.

But not curing the disease. So in the rest of chapter 1 Paul outlines how the world in general has fallen.

And has not only fallen but has engaged in so much wickedness of various kinds. And not only that but suppresses he says the truth by their unrighteousness.

There is not only a free for all when it comes to unrighteous living and practice and thinking and speaking. But combined with that free for all there is this unified attempt by mankind to suppress the truth of God.

[ 8 : 30 ] Whether that be the truth of God found in scripture. Or whether that be the truth of God that is implanted within us in our consciences. And men and women and you know this from your own experience I'm sure.

When you were alienated from God. The last thing you wanted to think about was that little voice in the back of your mind. Telling you what was right. And telling you what was wrong.

You sought to suppress that at every opportunity. You wouldn't want to come to church to sit under the sound of the gospel. Because it made you uncomfortable.

Because even though you disagreed with it. And even though you wanted to live your own kind of life. And not bow to God's will and God's law. You knew it was true.

And it made you uncomfortable. And you sought to suppress it in any way you could. And the chapter goes on to speak about how God.

[ 9 : 39 ] In his judgment. Often gives people over. To what they want. And to what they desire. Some people think.

Well you know I. I spoke profanity. Or I did this evil act. And I'm still standing. I haven't been struck by lightning. There isn't a God therefore.

And this idea of judgments. All a fallacy and a lie. And yet this passage tells us. That one of the forms that God's wrath takes.

Is to give people over. To what they themselves want to do. To almost as it were. To withdraw his influences from their lives.

And to let them get on. With how they want to live. And to reap the consequences. Of their actions. Isn't that what we're seeing today. In so many parts of the world.

[ 10 : 40 ] God giving them over. God giving them up. In the lusts of their hearts. To impurity.

To the dishonoring of their bodies. Among themselves. Because they exchanged the truth about God. For a lie. And worshipped and served the creature. Rather than the creator. Who is blessed forever.

And so forth. And then having dealt with the world in general. He then turns his attention. To the Jewish people. Who. To a certain extent.

Stood apart from the rest of the world. Because of the privileges that God. Had given to them. And in chapter 2. He addresses the Jew. Particularly the Jew.

Who was. Confident in his own self-righteousness. He was one of the chosen people of God. He had received the word of God.

[ 11 : 35 ] He had received the signs of the covenant of God. Circumcision. Circumcision. Surely they were better than the rest of mankind.

Because of these things. And Paul goes on to show. In some detail in the rest of chapter 2. In the first part of chapter 3. That it's not possessing these privileges.

That is the important thing. It is what you are in your heart. That is the important thing. It's not whether you're a Jew outwardly.

It's whether you're a Jew inwardly. It's not possessing the law. It's obeying the law. That really matters. And he shows very convincingly.

In these chapters. That even the Jew. With all his privileges. Has fallen short. Of the light.

[ 12 : 38 ] He has received. Of the standard that God has set. And so. In our reading. From verse 9. Of chapter 3. He says.

What then are we Jews any better off? No not at all. For we have already charged. That all. Both Jews and Greeks. Are under sin. As it is written.

And look at these quotations. From the Old Testament. Which are. Exclusive. None. Is righteous. No.

Not. One. No one. Understands. No one. Seeks for God. All. Have turned aside. Together. Gentile.

Jew. Together. They have become worthless. No one. Not one. Does good. Not. Even. One. And the rest of the quotations.

- [ 13 : 37 ] Again. Drawn from the Old Testament scriptures. Indicate. That the whole. Of humanity. Has been marred. And tainted. And marked. By sin.
- The throat. The tongue. The lips. The mouth. The feet. The eyes.
- Before which there is no fear of God. God. And then he brings this. Series of accusations.
- To a conclusion. By saying. Now we know that. Whatever the law says. It speaks to those who are under the law. So that every mouth may be stopped. And the whole world.
- May be accountable. To God. In other words. If we truly understand. The law. And its purpose. If we measure ourselves.
- [ 14 : 34 ] Not just to the letter of the law. But to the spirit of the law. If we think of Jesus' teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount. Where he. Shows the spiritual meaning of the law.
- That it's not just. If you commit adultery. But if you look at a woman. With intent. In your heart. With lossful intent. You have already committed adultery.
- And when we understand the law. In that sense. And measure ourselves. Up to the standard. We realize.
- We are crooked. The law is straight. And we are crooked. The law is high. And we have fallen short. And the only conclusion.
- That we can come to is. For by the works of the law. No human being. Will be justified. In his sight. The law.
- [ 15 : 31 ] Properly understood. Brings us. To the experiential. Knowledge of sin. We know.
- By experience. What sin is. When we measure ourselves. Against the righteous standards. Of God's law. And that leads.
- To the position. Where. Every mouth. Is stopped. Left without excuse. No plea bargaining.
- We are guilty. And we know. We are guilty. And before God. We have got nothing to say.
- By way of mitigation. And it is at that point. In his argument. That the apostle. Brings us. To the gospel. But now.
- [ 16 : 31 ] The righteousness of God. Has been manifested. Where? In the coming. Into this world. Of a savior. Jesus Christ.
- But now. The righteousness of God. Has been manifested. Apart from law. In other words. It is not about us. Keeping the law. The righteousness of God.
- Has been manifested. In this person. Who has kept. The law. In our room. And stead. For us. As our. Vicarious.
- Substitute. But the law. And the prophets. You notice. They are in capital letters here. Because the translators. Want to. Show you. There is a distinction.
- In Paul's argument. Between. The law. As a law of works. And the law. As a body of. Instruction. The five books of Moses. Often referred to. As the law.
- [ 17 : 25 ] With a capital letter. The law. And the prophets. That other part. Of the Old Testament scriptures. That contain. The prophetic writings. The Old Testament scriptures.
- Of the law of Moses. And the writings. Of the prophets. Testified. Spoke about. Predicted. The coming. Of this.
- Manifestation. Of the righteousness of God. In the person. Of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of God. Through faith. In Jesus Christ. For all.
- Who believe. And then again. He. He. He makes the point clear. There is no distinction. Since. All have sinned. And fall short of the glory of God.

All are sinners. They're all. Going to be saved. In the same manner. No distinction. The Jew needs to be saved. And he's saved through Jesus Christ. The Gentile needs to be saved.

[ 18 : 23 ] And he's saved through Jesus Christ. And then we have this. Wonderful verse. Which is. One of those great.

Stand alone verses. That. Is comparable to. John 3.16. For God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten son. That whoever believes in him.

Should not perish. But have everlasting life. And here we have this great verse. And are justified. By his grace. As a gift. Through the redemption.

That is in Christ Jesus. It's the whole gospel. In a single. Sentence. And.

To think about it. For the last few minutes. Of our service. Think of it. Under three. Very simple headings. What salvation is.

[ 19 : 19 ] Salvation. Salvation. Salvation. Salvation. Is. Being. Justified. And. Are. Justified.

That's what salvation is. And it's important that we grasp what that means. Because if you grasp what that means. You have the key to everlasting happiness.

Second heading is. How does this salvation come to us? It comes to us by his grace. As a gift.

And in the third place. How does God make this possible? Through the redemption. That is in Christ Jesus.

Three very simple. Statements. Questions. Headings. And they'll help us. To think. Through the teaching. Of this.

[ 20 : 18 ] Important verse. What is salvation? And. The Bible tells us here. That amongst other things. Salvation is nothing less.

Than being justified. And you say. What does that mean? Explain what that means. Well there's really two parts.

I think to justification. Put very simply. In the crudest terms. It's about being forgiven. But it's more than forgiveness. It's about being declared.

To be righteous. In the sight of God. So those two things. Are involved in justification. Our sins are forgiven. Taken away.

Think of some of those great statements. In the Old Testament. God removes our transgressions from us. As far as the east. Is from the west. Forgiven.

[ 21 : 19 ] The slate. Wiped. Clean. Our sins taken from us. And plunged. Into the depths. Of the sea. Never to be seen again.

Our sins taken. And blotted out. Like a thick cloud. Hidden from sight. That's what God does.

In justification. He forgives. Us. Our sin. But he does more than that. Because if he forgives us our sin. We're left in a kind of neutral state.

We may be forgiven. But. We don't have any. Righteousness. To stand. And enter. Into the presence of God. We would.

Still be consumed. By his holiness. And righteousness. And so he does something else. For us. He provides us with. The righteousness.

[ 22 : 26 ] Of Jesus Christ. Very crudely. He says. Take off those filthy garments. Here is a perfectly.

Spotless. Beautiful. Beautiful. Garment. For you to wear. That fits you. To come into my presence. Justification.

Is something that is. Very wonderful. But so. Easily. Confused. Christ. So I need to say something. About the nature. Of the righteousness.

Which the Lord. Gives to us. The righteousness. That he gives. To us. Is the righteousness. Of Christ. And it is put.

To our account. As it were. It doesn't. Make us righteous. In and of ourselves. And that's where the confusion lies.

[ 23 : 28 ] Because. A. Newborn Christian. Can often feel. Not long after his conversion. That sin. Is still present. Within him. And of course it is. Indwelling sin.

Needs to be dealt with. By the spirit. It needs to be put to death. On a daily basis. Uncleaness. But those feelings. Of sin. And guilt.

And uncleaness. May lead. The newborn Christian. To think. Perhaps I'm no longer. Justified in the sight of God. Because.

Of this sin. And guilt. And uncleaness. That I feel. But he's confusing. Justification. With sanctification. Justification.

Has to do with our standing. In the sight of God. Not with our condition. Before God. And as far as our standing. Is concerned. As I say.

[ 24 : 25 ] He forgives us our sin. And then he puts the righteousness. The perfect. Spotless. Unblemished. Righteousness. Of Jesus Christ. To our account. And he says.

You. Are justified. In my sight. Not for anything. That you have done. Not for anything. That's in you.

Not for anything. That you may do. In the future. But only. And all because. Of what my son.

Has done for you. In your room instead. I've taken. I've taken your sin. And placed it upon him. And I have constituted him a sinner.

And my wrath has fallen upon him. And he has taken his righteousness. And put it upon you. And I have constituted you righteous. In my sight.

[ 25 : 24 ] He. He. Now. Is treated as a sinner. And deserves to die. Even though he had no sin of his own. And you. Once a sinner.

But now. Clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Christ. I treat you. And reward you. And bless you.

And give you all the privileges. Of a righteous. Perfectly righteous person. The great exchange. He made him.

Who knew no sin. To be sin for us. That we might become. The righteousness of God. In him. So we're still sinners.

The spirit of God. Will take care of that. For the rest of our lives. Until ultimately. We are glorified. At death. And enter into the presence of God. But. From the day.

[ 26 : 26 ] We trust in Christ. We are righteous. In the sight of God. We are justified. And we cannot be more justified. One day.

And less justified. The next. We are justified. That's. Do you notice the. The tense that is used there. In verse 24. It's in the present.

It's a. A present. Continuous thing. We are. Justified. So tomorrow morning.

You wake up. Oh. What a mood you're in. Monday morning. You got the Monday morning blues. You feel awful. You think. You say. You do things.

That you shouldn't do. And you're ashamed of yourself. You're no less justified for that. If you're trusting in Christ. And then I was.

- [ 27 : 23 ]    Saying in my prayer. About the fears and. Anxieties and worries that we have. We. We know we're sinners. We. We feel at times. Our consciences are on fire.
- For. Things that we've done. Maybe. Many many years in the past. Or maybe just things. That we did yesterday. And we fear. The future. And we fear death.
- And we fear. The sting of death. But this. Truth. Teaches us. That we are no less justified. In the sight of God. Our feelings may come and go. But our standing before God. Never. Changes. The just.
- The righteous. Shall live. By faith. Trusting in Christ. We. Are. Accounted. Righteous. In the sight of God. And it is.
- [ 28 : 25 ]    By that faith in Christ. Who accounts us. Righteous. In. His sight. That enables us. To live. So what.
- Is salvation. On the one hand. It's being. Forgiven. Our sins. And on the other hand. It's being given. This gift. Of righteousness. That is put to our account. And that changes.
- Our legal status. Our. Standing. In the sight of God. In the court. Of God's judgment. The sentence. Pronounced. Is. Not guilty.
- But righteous. Not guilty. But righteous. So how does this salvation. Come to us. And you notice.
- The next part. Of verse 24. Says. In the ESV. By his grace. As a gift. In the old authorized version.
- [ 29 : 25 ]    It says. Freely. Being justified. Freely. By his grace. In both versions. Whether it's freely. By his grace. Or by his grace.
- As a gift. The same thing. Is stated. Twice. For emphasis. Grace. Is one of the great. New Testament words.
- It means. God's. Unmerited. Favor. And kindness. Shown to those. Who deserved. His. Judgment.
- And condemnation. That's what grace is. We deserved. God's. Judgment. We deserved. Damnation. We deserved.
- Hell. But. He has given us. The exact opposite. By his grace.
- [ 30 : 21 ]    He has shown us. Favor. Kindness. Love. That we in no way. Merited. And in the context. Of this verse. The kindness. The grace. The love. That he has shown us. Is the forgiving. Of our sins. And the. Declaring.
- Of us. In his court. Of law. As being righteous. In his sight. That is the kindness. That is the favor. Which we. In no way. Merited.
- But which he. Has shown. Towards us. That's how salvation. Comes to us. By. His grace. Not by works.
- That's the opposite. Not by works. Of the law. Doesn't Paul say. This. Later on. As he draws. Certain conclusions. From the teaching.
- [ 31 : 21 ]    On God's. Free justification. Of sinners. For we hold. He says. In verse. Twenty. Eight. For we hold. That one.
- Is justified. By faith. Apart. From works. Of the law. And when he says. By faith. That's shorthand. For. By.
- Jesus Christ. In whom. We trust. So. It is by. Jesus Christ. In whom.
- We trust. That we are justified. And not. By our own. Efforts. At trying. To do what is right.

In the sight of God. In terms of keeping his law. We can never. Pay for the sins. We have already committed. Even if we were obedient.

[ 32 : 17 ] Every single moment. Of every single day. Of every single month. Of every single year. For the rest of our lives. That's what God demands of us. All the time.

So how can that. Even if we could achieve it. How could that make atonement. For our past sins. The law condemns us. Only the person.

Who can keep the law. In its entirety. All of the time. In letter. As well as spirit. Will live. By keeping such a law.

And there's no man. In this world. Who has done that. Except one. And that's Jesus Christ. And he did it. For others. And the second part of this.

Statement. By his grace. As a gift. Translated in the authorized version. By the word freely. Is a really. Interesting term.

[ 33 : 22 ] Because it's used. Elsewhere in scripture. I think it's John. Chapter 15. Where Jesus speaks. About. The opposition. He experienced. From his fellow countrymen.

From the Jews. Jews. And he said. He said. About them. That they hated me. Without a cause. They hated me. Without a cause.

In other words. There was nothing. In Jesus Christ. That merited. The hatred. He received. At the hands of the Jews. It was. Without a cause.

To be found in him. That they hated him. And you know. That phrase. Without a cause. Or that word. Without a cause. Translated that way. In John 15. Is exactly.

The same word. That in the authorized version. Of Romans 3. 24. Is translated. As freely. And here. In the ESV.

[ 34 : 16 ] As. As a gift. So you give somebody a gift. And they say. What's that for? No reason. I just wanted to give you a gift.

It's free. It's free gift. You don't have to pay me for it. You don't have to. Give me a gift in return. It's a gift. And that's the way God. In the gospel.

Gives us the gift. Of justification. The forgiveness of our sins. Being treated as righteous. In God's sight. That.

Is given to us. As a gift. As a gift. Or freely. Without cost.

Or even better. Without a cause. To be found in us. For that gift. Isn't that.

[ 35 : 16 ] Utterly. Astounding. Unless the spirit of God. Works in us. If you're not a Christian. Unless the spirit of God. Works in us. There's something in us.

That says. I'm not having it. On those terms. I must do something. To merit. This. Thing.

And you may want. This thing. The forgiveness of sins. Being declared. Righteous. In the sight of God. Now. Which affects. The rest of your existence. You may want it.

You may desire it. But there's something. In you. Without the spirit of God's. Operation. That says. I'm not having it. Even though I want it. On those terms.

I find that. Too humiliating. It's like. The mentality. Of Naaman. The leper.

[ 36 : 13 ] The Syrian leper. Commander. Of the king of Assyria's army. Great man. But he had leprosy. But the king. Of Syria. Hears that there's a prophet.

In Samaria. Who can. Heal. Such cases of leprosy. And so he sends a letter. Along with. His general. Naaman. To Elisha the prophet. And. Elisha. Sends his servant. Out.

When. Naaman calls at his house. Tells him to go. And wash. Seven times. In the Jordan river. And he's humiliated. He's humbled.



Should I say. The gospel. Doesn't humiliate us. God isn't in that. Business. But he is in that business. Of humbling the proud. And Naaman.

[ 37 : 10 ] Thinks to himself. I come all this way. To wash in the Jordan. Are there not better rivers. In Syria. I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to stoop. To that.

And all the while. The leprosy. Is eating away. At his body. Until some of his men. Come alongside him.

And. Reason with him. If you'd been told. To do something great. Would you have not done it? Why not do this? Simple thing.

So he goes. And he bathes seven times. In the Jordan. And as he comes up. On the seventh time. His skin is restored. Like the skin.

Of a newborn baby. This is the way. God saves sinners. It magnifies. His grace.

[ 38 : 05 ] It. Highlights. The fact. That salvation. Comes to us. Freely. Without a cause. To be found in us. And it's to be received.

With an open hand. The open hand of faith. As a gift. Is received. And then that brings us. To the last. Question. That we need to look at.

In this. Verse 24. And. And I ask it reverently. I don't ask it. In a flippant way. But. How does God. Make this possible.

How can God do this. And still be God. Still be true to himself. Still be holy. And righteous. Still treat sin. In the way that sin.

Needs to be. Treated. By a holy God. Who is righteous and just. Does he wink at sin. And sweep it under the carpet. How does he forgive us.

[ 39 : 06 ] Does he just pronounce the word. And we're forgiven. How can he treat a sinner. As somebody who's righteous in his sight.

Surely that's a contradiction in God. He can't do that. And remain true to himself. The answer is found. In these last words of the verse. Through.

By means of. By the instrumentality of. The redemption. That is in. Christ Jesus. My friends. It's through the redeeming work of Christ.

Through what Jesus did. As a redeemer. By paying the ransom price. To release us from our bondage and sin.

That ransom price. Was his precious blood. Which is mentioned in the very next verse. It was through. It was through. The redeeming. Blood shedding work of Jesus Christ.

[ 40 : 08 ] That God. Reverently speaking. Is able. To forgive us our sins. To declare us righteous in his sight. And to do it freely.

By his grace. This is the only way. My friends. Of having. Your sins.

Forgiven. This is the only way. That you can stand. In the presence of God. As one. Who is going to be treated. As righteous in his sight. It is only through.

Jesus Christ. The savior. The redeemer. The one who shed his blood. The blood. Of Christ. Being the price. The tremendously high price.

Of our redemption. Back in the church I grew up in. Which was a hymn singing church. One of the hymns. The gospel hymns we used to sing.

[ 41 : 09 ] Not sure how sound it was. But I think the first verse is tremendous. God loved a world of sinners lost. And ruined by the fall.

Salvation. Salvation. Full. At highest cost. He offers. Free. To all. And that's what this verse is all about.

Salvation full. The forgiveness of our sins. Being declared righteous in the sight of God.  
Salvation full. At highest cost.

Through the redemption. The blood shedding. Of Jesus Christ. He offers. Free. To all.

Freely by his grace. By his grace. As a gift. Without a cause. To be found. In the recipient.

[ 42 : 11 ] For this precious gift. That's how it's given. And how it's all made possible. Through what Christ.

Lived. Died. Rose again to do. It's one of the great verses of the Bible. And I hope. It'll be written.

On your heart. And on your memory. You might find yourself in a situation. Where somebody asks. What is this salvation you speak about?

You evangelical Christians. What is this salvation you speak about? Ah. Let me tell you. It's about. Being justified. And it comes to us freely.

By God's grace. Without a cause to be found in us. How marvelous. How wonderful is that? There are millions and millions of people. In this world. Who are laboring under tremendous burdens.

[ 43 : 07 ] Trying to get right. With a God of their own imaginations. When the true and living God. Has provided a way. For the weary and burdened people of this world.

To enter into a right relationship with him. And it's freely by his grace. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You can explain the gospel so simply to them.

But wouldn't it be a tragedy. If you could explain this gospel simply and clearly to them. And yet. You hadn't. Tasted it and experienced it yourself.

It's one thing to pass a catechism exam. Or. A scripture exam. And to pass it even with flying colors and full marks.

And to win the cup and all the rest of it. It's another thing. To know. By experience. The truth. Expressed in your answers.

[ 44 : 14 ] You know one day. Because we're all human. And frail. And mortal. We're all going to perish. And die. But that won't be the end.

Because we'll all meet at the judgment seat of Christ. Christ. And there we will have to give an account for the things done in the body. Whether good or evil. And then those of us who are simply trusting in Jesus Christ.

Will be admitted. Freely. Into heaven. And we'll look around and see. The ones who sat beside us perhaps.

In Dumfries Free Church. On this night in August. 2023. And though they heard the same sermon.

And received the same invitation. They did not. Embrace. The hope. Held out in the gospel.

[ 45 : 22 ] Please. Don't let that happen. When Paul.

Gave his defense. In front of the princes. Of the Roman Empire. One of them said.

Paul. All this learning of yours. Has driven you mad. And Paul responded. In front of him. And in front of all the gathering.

That he wasn't mad. What he was saying was the truth. And his hope and prayer was. That everyone. Who hears him this day. Might become. What he was.

And held up his hands. Apart from these chains. And I think that reveals the heart. Of a true pastor. And a true preacher. Of the gospel.

[ 46 : 25 ] I hope. That all who hear me this day. May become. What I am. A Christian.

A believer in Jesus Christ. Someone whose sins are forgiven. And who is right now. And forever will be. Justified.

Declared righteous. In the sight. Of God. That's my prayer. For all who hear me. This night. In Dumfries Free Church.

May God bless his word to us. Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Gracious and most merciful God. Thank you for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And for commanding through your son. That it is to be preached to every creature under heaven. Amen. We thank you for this message. Which brings us hope. In this dark.

[ 47 : 21 ] And perishing world. Help us. By your grace. In the power of your spirit. To lay hold of this hope. Held out to us in the gospel. To take Jesus Christ.

And to embrace him. As our saviour. By a living. Act of faith. And we pray these things in his name. And for his glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.