

Sin and Glory

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[0 : 00] All right, if you would open up your Bibles to Romans chapter 3.

! Romans chapter 3. This morning we're continuing on in this series, Church Words. We're going to be talking about the words that we have come to use and know as it pertains to our faith in Christ. And this week the word officially is glory, but we're going to be talking about sin and glory.

Which, it's interesting to pair those two together. Sin and glory, but the text does it. Romans 3.23. Romans 3.23.

This is a very familiar verse to many of us. If you're familiar with the Romans road to salvation, then this is a word that, a verse that you've probably used in a gospel presentation. But Romans 3.23.

[1 : 03] For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's a big statement. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, you are kind. Thank you for the opportunity to gather in your name. Oh Lord, I pray that as we study your word, you would be glorified.

That your name would be magnified. That we would praise you through this time of study. We love you, Jesus. It's in your name that we pray. Amen. So if you remember last week, we talked about the whole passage.

Romans 3.21-26. We talked about the concept of righteousness or justification. And I'll read for you Romans 3.21-26. So we have the whole picture again.

And it says, But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the law and prophets. The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction.

[2 : 08] For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God presented him as the mercy seat by his blood through faith to demonstrate his righteousness.

Because in his restraint, God passed over the sins previously committed. God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.

So we talked about the issue of the human heart, which is that we are inherently unrighteous. That if we want to stand before God in the divine courtroom, if you remember the scene, standing in the divine courtroom, if we want to hear the judge, God, declare us innocent, pardoned, if you want to hear him declare us clean and right with him, the only hope that we have is a righteousness not from ourselves.

We are unrighteous. We cannot do any works or enough works of righteousness or goodness to make us right with God. The only hope that we have to be right with God is if another gives us his righteousness.

And thankfully, God set that up for us. God sent his son, Jesus. He lived a perfect life, completely righteous under the law. He died on the cross. And we talked about another church word, if you remember this one, imputation.

[3 : 32] When Jesus on the cross took the punishment for sin, he took our sins from himself on the cross so that after sin was paid for, atoned for, he could give to us his righteousness.

And the way that that righteousness is received is by faith in Jesus. That's a recap of last week. All right? A short recap. It was called... Somebody... He's not in here right now. Anyways, I was told that it was a speech about Martin Luther.

It's not entirely true. I did quote Martin Luther, though. All right? Martin Luther was the Protestant Reformation, the start of the Protestant Reformation. And he was really serious about this idea of

justification by faith alone.

We're only justified by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and faith in him. Nothing else. Nothing else. But this week, we're talking about two more words.

We're going to be talking about sin and glory. And again, it's an interesting pairing with Romans 3.23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[4 : 37] We're going to be talking about these verses because we've got some questions that we have to answer. First of all, when it comes to sin, what is it and why is it such a big deal? And I mean that sincerely.

What is sin? Because we know what sins are, right? We know what acts of sin. We know that lying is a sin. But what is sin itself? And why is sin such a big deal?

And then when we get down to it, we have to also ask, what is the glory of God? For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's an interesting thing to say. What is God's glory? I want you to understand that we cannot understand the depth of our sin until we understand the height of God's glory.

We can't understand how sinful we are until we understand how glorious and perfect and beyond equal God is. And that's why these words are paired together here in this passage.

In fact, it's an interesting thing. If you look at the context of Romans, what the author should have said would have said something like, For all have sinned and fall short of the law of God.

[5 : 42] Or for all have sinned and fall short of the righteousness of God. That would have made a lot of sense. But he said, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Why is that?

Why is sin connected to glory in this way? Well, let's understand a few things about sin. First thing to understand about sin is that sin is universal. Sin is universal.

It's comprehensive. We are all sinners. In fact, the argument from Romans chapter 1 through 3 is that the entire world is sinful under sin.

In Romans chapter 1, the argument is that the Gentile world, the pagan Gentile Greek world is sinful. You see, in chapter 1, verse 18 on, it says, For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. Since what can be known about God is evident among them because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made.

[6 : 51] As a result, people are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless and their senseless hearts were darkened.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. So the Gentile world was sinful. They were guilty before a holy and righteous God because they were unrighteous. God has shown himself through what he has made. God has revealed himself through creation.

And so, because of the fact that there is an objective source of good, and that's God, and he is the creator, there is an objective source for right and wrong.

Okay? An objective morality. Morality, right, what is right, what is wrong? That comes from God. Without God, there is no standard for morality. We have to have an objective standard.

[7 : 50] The Gentile world, those who did not have the direct commands of God, the law of God, as the Jews did, they still had written on their hearts the morality that God has instilled into all humanity by his creation, by his nature.

God has revealed himself in such a way that all of the world knows what is right and what is wrong. All right? So atheists will argue that morality comes from other things.

Like, it's evolutionary. We've learned what works and what doesn't work to live longer. And so we know what is right and wrong because it's all based on, you know, evolution. Or they will say that morality is a social construct, so we know what's right and wrong based on the social, you know, setting that we live in.

There are a lot of errors with that way of thinking, not the least of which being you can't say that someone in another culture or another social context does something right or wrong.

You can't praise someone for their, you know, good things or, you know, say bad things about their bad things if there's no sense of objective morality. This was, there's a story that it gets told by a lot

of apologists about a guy who was having a conversation with his college roommate who was an atheist, a Christian, having a conversation with his college roommate.

[9 : 05] He was trying to convince him that there is an objective source for morality and that it was God. And his roommate said there's no objective morality. No one can say what is right and what is wrong.

So the Christian, the roommate said, okay, I understand. And took his wallet and left. He was like, hey, give that back. You can't take that. It's mine. He's like, hey, there's no morality. This is mine now, you know.

I mean, obviously that's a joke. That's an illustration. But the point is there has to be an objective source of morality. And for the Gentile world, they knew what was right. They knew what was wrong because God himself, the source of right and wrong, instilled it in their hearts.

And they chose to reject him. Now, the Jews, on the other hand, Paul moves on in Romans chapter 2 to explain how the Jews were sinful. They had the direct revelation of God. They had the law.

And they still failed. They still fell short of God's law. They still sinned against the Lord. And so you have this issue where there are people who, whether they have God's law before them or not, are still going to be sinful.

[10 : 05] And why is that? It's because we are all guilty by nature and by choice. There's a sin nature that lives within us. Sin is a corrupting power that lives in the flesh.

It's our nature. Romans chapter 5 talks about the sin nature, how death reigns in humans because of the sin of Adam. And so what all this means is that sin is, yes, it is the decisions that we make, but it's deeper than that.

It's a problem at our very core. We are inherently sinful in the flesh. This is illustrated really, really clearly in the story of David and Bathsheba.

King David of Israel, he committed some pretty grievous acts of sin when he was king. Remember, by the way, David was a man after God's own heart. Let's not lose sight of this, okay?

But still in the flesh, he was corrupt, prone to fail, prone to fall. And so he in 2 Samuel chapter 11, there's this whole scene, okay?

[11 : 06] Here's what happens, short story version. David's men go off to war, but King David stayed back home at his palace. David went out on the balcony of his palace and he saw Bathsheba.

He lusted and he sent for Bathsheba. She was a married woman, married to one of David's soldiers, Uriah the Hittite. So David sends for Bathsheba. She comes to his house.

He sleeps with Bathsheba, okay? So he's committed, he's lusted. He's committed the physical act of adultery. David was a married man. Bathsheba was a married woman. He lusted. He committed adultery.

And then the real problem set in because Bathsheba got pregnant. And she sent to David and said, guess what? I'm pregnant. And David said, okay, no problem. I know how to fix this. So he sent for Uriah to come back from war, the husband of Bathsheba.

And his whole plan was Uriah will go home, spend the night with his wife. She'll be pregnant, but no one will ever know the wiser. It's a great plan, right? Except Uriah was a noble man. He wouldn't go home and spend the night with his wife when his brothers were off at war.

[12 : 07] And so he didn't. Now David's got another problem on his hands because his sin's going to come to light. What would David do? Well, David sent a note with Uriah back to the leader at the battle, at camp.

And he brought this note with him. And the note read for Uriah to be placed on the front line of the battle and then for all the other soldiers to retreat so that Uriah would be killed. So now David has committed lust, adultery, and murder.

That's a pretty bad dude, right? That's a pretty bad setting, pretty bad scene. He's messed up. Well, eventually David thinks that everything's gone, you know, silent. Nobody knows about his sin.

It's not going to be a big deal. And then Nathan the prophet shows up. And there's this parable he tells about a sheep and a rich man. Anyways, one of the best lines in all of scripture, Nathan the prophet tells David, you are that man.

And David is broken over his sin, completely broken over his sin. It's like in the moment that it's brought to light, everything that had been weighing on him in private just completely broke him.

[13:11] And so he was convicted. He was convicted. He knew that he had sinned against Bathsheba, against himself. 1 Corinthians chapter 6 says that all sexual sin is actually a sin against your own body.

And so he knew he had sinned against his own body, Bathsheba, and Uriah. He knew all of those things. And this is his response in Psalm 51. When he was at his lowest point, completely broken over his sin, listen to the words of Psalm 51.

Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love, according to your abundant compassion. Blot out my rebellion, completely wash away my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.

That is the plea of the sinner, by the way. God, I am sinful. You are holy. Please purify me. Cleanse me. For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me.

But then listen to this in verse 4. Remember, who all had he sinned against? At this point, himself, Bathsheba, Uriah. You can argue his men, the soldiers, because he didn't go to war with them. Even the nation, because he was supposed to lead them as God's chosen leader.

[14:19] He is very deep in sin against other people. But then listen to this in verse 4. Against you, you alone, I have sinned and done this evil in your sight.

So you are right when you pass sentence. You are blameless when you judge. Indeed, I was guilty when I was born. I was sinful when my mother conceived me. See, in his brokenness, in the conviction of his sin against other people, David realized something that's really important.

That we have to understand about sin. All sin, whether we do it against another person or against ourselves, all sin is against God.

We can't let our sense of right and wrong come from what seems right and wrong against others.

Right? David wasn't broken because he had sinned against Bathsheba. He was broken because he sinned against God.

He wasn't broken because he had sinned against Uriah. He was devastated and crushed because he realized that in God's sight, he took a precious life that wasn't his to take.

[15:26] David recognized that all sin is against God himself. So sin is universal. It's this intrinsic corruption. And David even said that he was guilty when he was born.

He looked deep in his heart and he recognized that he had the heart of a sinner. It's not just that David committed sins. It's that David was a sinner. And that's true for all of us. It's not just that I've committed sins.

It's that I am a sinner. I'm a sinner. Right? Inherently. That's my flesh. I'm a sinner. And that's true for all of us. The sin problem is deeper than acts of sin that take so much of our focus.

Right? It's not just about stopping lying or being a nicer person or, you know, being more charitable. It's not about stopping the greed. It's about fixing the problem inside ourselves.

We are inherently sinful. Now, the word sin in the Hebrew and in the Greek, it means to miss the mark. To miss the standard.

[16:29] You've probably heard it's an archery term. It's an archery term. So we're going to illustrate what sin is today. And it's a pretty big illustration. So, Steve, why don't you help me out, okay? Don't worry. Before we do this, guys, Steve is a police officer.

This is totally allowed. And he's also a hunter. So it's going to be safe. Right, Steve? Please? Okay. All right. Steve brought his bow.

And we're going to shoot a bow and arrow in here. Hang on. It's a pretty small target. Does anybody want to stand behind it? Oh, okay.

No? Thank you for saying no, Hayden. All right. I'll set it up here. Nobody's back here. Okay. So here's the deal. Let me show you the target, okay?

Let me show you. I did not pass this by Audrey for approval. So if it goes bad, it's all on me, okay? Okay. So this is the target, okay?

[17:25] The center, okay? Sin, this is what sin is. Sin is the distance by which we miss the center of the target, okay? That's what, it's an archery term.

We miss the mark. And so the distance by which we miss the mark, that's what we call, that's what sin is. Okay? So Steve's going to shoot an arrow. Hopefully he doesn't hit the target dead center because that would mess this up.

But he's a really good hunter, so he might. So we're just going to stand here. We're going to, have you ever shot with this many eyes on you, Steve? Don't go, Nick.

Okay. All right. Is it going to be loud? We need to know that so people can hold their ears. Do what? Do you have a whisper biscuit on that thing?

Yes. Okay. Joey, you're talking over there, but you might want to be careful because if that ricochets, dude, I don't know. Okay. Let's see what he's got. Oh, man.

[18:29] Nice shot. All right. Thank you, Steve. Everybody, round of applause. All right. So as you can see, Steve is really close to the target, to the mark, right?

Like he, I mean, like we're talking about less than an inch. Less than an inch. Sin, what sin does, just so you know, sin in ourselves, it's not that we aren't good.

You know, sometimes whenever we shoot, we'll hit over here and we'll hit over here. Sometimes we'll hit really close like Steve just did. Sin, don't think about this arrow as if it's one decision or one action in your life.

Think about this arrow. Oh, my gosh, it's coming through the backside. Okay. Glad I didn't cut myself. Think about this arrow as if it is your life.

No matter how good you are, you still can't hit the center by yourself. There's no way to hit the center. We can't do it. The mark is God, right?

[19:26] It's his glory. Our sin separates us from him. Sometimes it appears like we're really close. But at the end of the day, we've missed his mark no matter what. And so that's the sin problem that we have.

No matter how good we are, we miss the mark. So now let's move on here. Let's look at the word glory. What is God's glory?

Well, in Hebrew, the word is kavod, and in Greek, it's doxa. The word glory in Hebrew, it means weight, which is interesting.

It means weight. It's like a heaviness. So when you think about glory, there's a handful of passages that we can look at, but there's one in particular that we're going to look at. It's in Exodus chapter 33 because I think it shows us something here about God's glory.

See, Moses, whenever he was leading God's people out of Egypt and into the promised land, he saw God do amazing things.

[20:31] He saw God reveal himself in incredible ways. He saw God reveal himself through the plagues in Egypt, through deliverance itself.

He saw God literally reveal himself in the burning bush. He saw God reveal himself in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. He saw God reveal himself.

He saw many of God's attributes. He saw his goodness. He saw his mercy. He saw his care, his love. He saw all of these things. But Moses felt like something was missing.

So in Exodus chapter 33, Moses is on Mount Sinai, okay, to receive the law from the Lord. And he asked God to show him more.

He says, if your presence does not go, this is verse 15, Exodus 33, 15. If your presence does not go, Moses responded to him, don't make us go up from here. And how will it be known that I and your people have found favor with you unless you go with us?

[21:36] I and your people will be distinguished by this from all the other people on the face of the earth. The Lord answered Moses, I will do this very thing that you have asked. In other words, I'll go with you.

I will go before you. For you have found favor with me, and I know you by name. Then Moses said, this is Exodus 33, 18. Please let me see your glory.

Moses wanted to see the glory of God. That's a noble request, by the way, to stand in God's presence, to say, Lord, let me see your glory. That's a bold, bold request, and this is what the Lord said.

He said, I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you. God can withhold parts of his glory from the human eye, and he can reveal parts of his glory to the human eye.

So he said, I will show you this aspect of myself. I'll show you my goodness. All of it will pass before you. And I will proclaim the name, the Lord.

[22:34] In other words, I will say, God says, I will say my own name, the divine name. I'll say that before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

But he added, you cannot see my face, for humans cannot see me and live. So then, if you know the story, the Lord tells Moses to go into this rock and hide in the cleft of a rock on the mountain.

And God passes by. His goodness passes by. And he pronounces his own name. And then Moses goes down to the camp, and everybody's really freaked out because Moses was glowing. After just standing there, hidden, he saw the reflection of the Lord's goodness off of a rock. Rocks, they're not reflective. Okay? This is how bright the goodness of God is. That he saw it reflect off the rock, and it caused him to glow. Okay, so Moses goes down to the camp, and people are freaked out.

Moses wanted to see the Lord's glory. But God's response was fascinating. He said, you can't. Human beings can't see my glory and live. Why is that?

[23 : 39] Because Moses was sinful. Humans are sinful. So our sin separates us from God, not just because we miss the mark of the law, not just because we commit acts of sin, but because we are sinful.

And he is the mark. He is the standard. Right? Like, this is God himself. It's not about doing the right things and focusing so much on the details that we try to live this completely upright life and never commit any acts of sin.

We have to recognize that we are sinners. And because of that, we're separated from God. We can't see him and live. His glory is so far beyond us.

He is the standard himself. God, listen, in the divine courtroom, okay, why does Paul say, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God? Because, listen, in the divine courtroom, the divine judge is judging based on himself.

He's not judging based on an abstract set of laws. Like, if you go to the courtroom today here in Marshall County, or I guess they're closed on Sundays. If you go tomorrow, okay, you go to the courtroom because you got a speeding ticket, and the judge looks at you and says, you're guilty.

[25 : 00] You sped. That judge, two things are true. Number one, that judge may not have kept the law perfectly himself, right? He's a human. He could have sped.

Maybe he even sped on the way to work that morning. But then he could look at you as the judge and say, you are guilty because you did break the law. Now, the second thing is true. Your speeding did not impact that judge personally, did it?

Unless you maybe cut him off or something like that. That your speeding did not impact that judge personally. When we sin against God, and he judges us as innocent or guilty, our sin personally offends him because he is the standard, and he is totally right in passing sentence or passing judgment because he is perfect.

He never broke the law. He is the standard. That is the glory of God. The glory of God is the sum of all God's attributes. It's come to know in how God reveals himself to humanity.

God has revealed parts of his glory, but he can't reveal the whole because we can't stand in his presence because he is totally perfect, and we are completely sinful. The fullness of God's glory is unbearable for a sinful human being.

[26 : 15] So the offense, when we sin, the offense is against an infinite, holy, perfect God. And so his judgment is just.

Romans 6.23 says, For the wages of sin is death. So here's the thing. We all know that we're all sinful, right? For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And that means we've all earned separation from God. Death. That is the just right judgment that God gets to pronounce on sinful people.

Not gets to like he looks forward to it, but must because he is perfect. Thankfully, Romans 6.23 doesn't end there.

Romans 6.23 goes on to say, But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. So we've earned sin, but God graciously offers us life.

[27 : 19] We've earned death, but God graciously offers us life in Jesus Christ. You know, another way that we could have done this illustration would have been if I shot the arrow and, you know, took out one of the panes of the window.

And then Steve shot the arrow and hit it dead center. Because what we need is we need someone else to hit the mark for us. We need someone else to hit the center.

We need someone else to match up to God's perfect standard. And the only one who is able to live a perfect life, and not only live a perfect life, even if, even if I was able to live a perfect life, completely sinless and die, that would only be sufficient for myself.

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived a perfect life, and he's able to apply the benefits of his perfect life. He's able to apply the righteousness that he lived out to our accounts.

We're able to go from unrighteous to righteous because Jesus is perfect. Because Jesus, in his death, is sufficient to cover our sins and to grant us righteousness.

[28 : 32] So when we stand in the divine courtroom, God doesn't say, Hey, you know, Steve, you got pretty close, man. You're about a half an inch away. He says, You're innocent. You're innocent. My son hit the mark for you.

You're innocent. That's the beauty of the grace of God. That is more glorious than anything we can see on this earth because we're still in the flesh.

Our sin still messes us up. We still can't see God's glory in its fullness right now. But one day, we can stand in his presence. He can declare us innocent. And that's why we get to stand in his presence and sing praises to him forever because we couldn't do it, but he did.

And he offers that to us freely. Remember 2 Corinthians 5.21, He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we can be declared righteous by his grace freely. Romans 3.23 says, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[29 : 37] But Romans 3.24 says, They, that means everyone who believes, are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So here's the deal.

Apart from Christ, you are corrupted by this virus, this sin problem. Apart from Christ, we all stand condemned to death.

But by faith in Jesus Christ, we don't have to aim the bow anymore. The mark has been hit.

The standard has been met. And his righteousness is offered freely to us. And now in him, there's life. And that life produces in us the fruit of the Spirit.

It produces in us a life of joy. It produces in us a life to share this message of hope with others. So the question that we have to understand or have to think through today is, are you still trying to hit the mark in your own strength?

[30 : 40] Or are you resting in the grace of Jesus, the one who lived a perfect life, the one who died on the cross for your sins, the one who paid for your sins and now offers you life by his grace?

Please don't leave today without settling this important, eternal, significant matter. Rest in the grace of Jesus.

Stop trying to do the work for yourself. You can't. None of us can. But Jesus did. And he offers you life. Now the Bible says if you pray and ask God to forgive you for your sins, if you believe in Jesus Christ, that he's the Son of God, that he died on the cross and rose again, then you'll be saved.

That you'll be justified. Your sins will be atoned, paid for, wiped clean. You'll be given his righteousness. That's available to you today, right now. I'm gonna pray for us.

We're gonna sing a final song. We're gonna close our time together. But again, don't leave here this morning without settling for certain that you are in the grace that Christ offers, that you have been declared righteous because you've put faith in him.

[31 : 51] If you put faith in Jesus, he'll take away your sin and give you his righteousness. He'll declare you innocent, righteous, and pardoned, free to stand in the presence of God's perfect glory. Let me pray for us.

Lord Jesus, you are good and kind. Thank you that you offer to us a salvation that we could not earn, a salvation that we don't deserve. Thank you that that's offered to us so freely by your grace. Lord, it costs us nothing, but it costs you your very life, and so we thank you. Thank you, O God, that where we can't hit the mark, you do perfectly, and that you offer to us this life of perfection in Jesus.

Lord, I pray for everybody in this room. For those who don't know you, O God, I pray that you would convict their hearts and call them to a relationship with you right now. Free them from the sin that they are bound to.

Free them to life in you, Lord Jesus. God, for the believer in this room, I pray that we would be encouraged, that we would be strengthened, that we would know and rest that our strength means nothing, that all we have is you, that you are our pardon, you are our plea.

[32 : 57] Lord, let us glorify you in this time, in this place. We love you, and it's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.