

# To Absorb the Wrath of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, it's such a privilege to be here to preach to you from God's Word this morning. I wasn't here when Paul and Wayne doled out the Bible passages to be preached from, but when I arrived, I was very, very pleased to see my name next to Romans 3, 21 to 26.

It is, in my opinion, one of the greatest, if not the greatest passages in the Bible. It is an amazing passage that we get to look at this morning.

And there was a time this week in my study where I just put my head down on the desk and praised God for this passage and praising that I might be able to spend some time studying it.

So I hope you're blessed by it as well. I'd like to pray for us. So let's bow our heads. Lord, this is an amazing passage.

It speaks of an amazing truth. I feel utterly inadequate to preach it. But it's your word.

[ 1 : 15 ] And it's your son. It's your righteousness. Your justice. It's your grace. Your gift. Your redemption. It's your sacrifice and atonement.

So I pray, would you please come now and open our hearts. Incline us to your word. Change us. Lord, may we go out of here today praising you for who you are and what you've done for us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Before we get to our passage, I want to look at a sweep of Romans up until this point in chapter 3.

The previous words that Paul has penned in this letter are very interesting. The first 17 verses, he spends kind of greeting and introducing himself.

He speaks briefly about this great gospel that's the power of God unto salvation. And then from 118 right the way through to 320, he kind of descends into this lengthy discourse on the sinfulness of man, the utter depravity of man, and the failure of the law to bring men and women to a place of righteousness.

[ 2 : 42 ] The failure of men and women to be able to keep the law perfectly and so stand as righteous men and women before God. And it kind of crescendos right before our passage culminates into this section where Paul strings together a bunch of quotes from the Old Testament.

I'll read them for you. It's a picture of mankind apart from God. He says, there is no one who is righteous, not even one. There is no one who has understanding.

There is no one who seeks God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless.

There is no one who shows kindness. There is not even one.

Their throats are open graves. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of vipers is under their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

Ruin and misery are in their paths and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Not the kind of passage you'd see on a Christian t-shirt, a greeting card, a magnet for your fridge.

[ 3 : 59 ] But it's the way that Paul sums up the plight of men and women without Jesus. The cultic observance of Israel has failed.

No one can keep the law perfectly. And so we come to our passage. And you'll notice the first two words of our passage are so important.

He starts by saying, but now. But now. Magnificent words. Short words. But magnificent words in the context.

Because they should signal for us that Paul is making a change of direction here. But now. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the great preacher, said that there are no two more wonderful words in all the Bible than these two words.

But now. So why don't we look at it together. Verse 21. Paul says, but now. Apart from the law. The righteousness of God has been disclosed.

[ 5 : 08 ] And is attested by the law and the prophets. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. For all who believe. The question is, after reading the first part of Romans.

And the question is, after reading the Old Testament. Is how will men and women be saved from the wrath of God? How will they stand before God on the day of judgment and not be condemned for eternity?

Because every one of us is unrighteous. And none of us is able to do anything about it by our own works. No one is perfect.

Aside from Jesus Christ. No one has lived a perfect life. Aside from Jesus Christ. And so Paul says, but now. Apart from the law. The righteousness of God has been disclosed.

Or manifested. Or made available to us. The only way that we'll stand before God on the day of judgment. Is if we have his perfect righteousness. And Paul says. It's been made available to us.

[ 6 : 22 ] How? He says. The righteousness of God has been made available through faith in Jesus Christ.

For who? The Jews? A particular group of people? No, he says. Through faith in Jesus Christ. For all who believe. It's every one of you.

Every one of your children. Everyone who's ever lived. Righteousness is available through faith in Jesus Christ.

We'll look at. Why it's available through faith in Jesus Christ. But first we have to ask the question. Why do we need it? Why do we need his righteousness?

Verse 23 tells us. For there is no distinction. Since all have sinned. And fall short of the glory of God. This is a terrible, terrible problem for us.

[ 7 : 30 ] Paul is saying that every one of us has sinned. Fallen short of the glory of God. In early in Romans he said that. All of us have exchanged the glory of God.

For created things. We've committed idolatry. We've chased after other gods. And other things apart from God. I don't need to convince you of this truth.

You know that you're a sinner. Every one of you. You know that you have sinned. Your conscience testifies to it. That you are a sinner.

This is the problem for us. If it's true that God will judge us. In holiness and righteousness.

And the wages for sin is death. And judgment and condemnation. And all of us are sinners. Which we are. Then what's going to happen?

[ 8 : 33 ] I wonder if you're like me. And maybe when you wake up in the morning. Or perhaps as you go to bed at night. I wonder if you ever lay there in bed. And think about your own guilt before God.

And ponder your own sinfulness. Helplessness. Hopelessness. Guilt. Shame.

Condemnation. Do you ever reflect on your own unworthiness? Well. There's good news in this passage friends.

There's great news in this passage. If you read on to verse 24. Yes all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But Paul says they are now.

They are now justified. They are now justified. They are now justified. By his grace. By his grace. As a gift. Through the redemption. That is in Christ Jesus. They are now justified.

[ 9 : 38 ] They are justified. The words righteousness and justice. Jesus. Or right standing with God. Right standing with God. And justified. They are linked in the Greek. And so what Paul is saying is.

These sinners who deserve condemnation. They are now justified. They are now justified. They are made just. They are made right before God. How? They are justified by his grace.

As a gift. Through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus. Can you see here that it's all gift. It's all grace.

It's all given by God. Paul makes. Make sure that there's no. Question about this. If you look at the words.

They're very deliberate. He says you've been justified. That is it happens to us. Passively. That is. It's done for us. We're justified.

[ 10 : 38 ] We're made just. We're made right with God. By God. How? By his grace. There's a language of gift there. As a gift. Just in case you're wondering.

As a gift. Through the redemption. That is you've been bought. Someone's paid a price for you. Someone's redeemed you. Someone's. Brought you out of slavery. Into freedom.

Through the redemption. That is in Christ Jesus. This is an amazing. Word to us.

So what does this mean. Then that. Everyone who has existed. Since the cross. Has benefited from this. Redemption. Has everyone been.

Saved from the. Wrath of God. No. Paul goes on to explain why. And this might be the greatest sentence. In the Bible. Well. I'm willing to arm wrestle over it.

[11:41] After the service. But I think it might be. Verse 25. It's Christ Jesus.

Whom God put forward. As a sacrifice of atonement. By his blood. Effective. Through faith. How easily we gloss over these words. Let's read them again.

God put Jesus Christ forward. As a sacrifice of atonement. By his blood. Effective. Through faith. Now when we read this. I think we're supposed to. Harken back to the Old Testament. We're supposed to remember. The day of atonement. Remember.

The day that God provided. For the. Salvation of his people. For the. So that their sins. Could be forgiven. Once a year. I think it was the. Tenth day of the seventh month.

[12:41] The day of atonement. Would come. And the high priest. Would cleanse himself. Of his sin. Through. Many different rites. And then he'd enter the Holy of Holies. And he'd take. A living creature.

A goat. And kill it. And he'd take. As the blood drained. Out of the beast. He would take that blood. And sprinkle it. On the mercy seat. And God would atone.

For his people. God would. Accept. That their sins were forgiven. The beast died. In the place of the people. It's blood. Atoned. For the sins of the people.

And so what Paul's saying. I think is that. God. Similarly. God put forward. Jesus Christ. Christ. As a sacrifice. As a sacrifice. Of atonement. That as his blood.

Drained out on the cross. He made atonement. For our sins. And the old word. And it might be in some of your. Translations. I think it's a good word. Is propitiation.

[13:40] God put Christ forward. As a propitiation. That is. That God is a righteous God. A holy God. And his anger. And wrath. Burn against. Sin.

And sinners. It burns. Against sinners. And on the. On the cross. Christ. Is. A propitiation. For our sins. That is. He.

Deflects. The wrath of God. That justly. Comes against us. And he. Absorbs it. On himself. Into himself. Why did Jesus die?

To absorb. The wrath of God. God. Put. Christ. Forward. As a sacrifice.

Of atonement. As a propitiation. For our sins. By his blood. For who? For everyone? No. Because.

[14:36] Paul tells us. The sacrifice. Is effective. Through faith. You've got to have faith. In Jesus. You've got to have faith. In what he did for you.

In order that your sins. Be forgiven. In order that God's wrath. Be deflected away from you. God put Jesus forward.

As a sacrifice. And I want to digress. For a moment here. Because. I don't know if you're aware. But there's a. Massive. Attack. On this doctrine.

In the church today. And I'm sure there has been. Since it happened. On the cross. But today.

There is a building. Movement. Against this doctrine.

That God. Would put his son. On the cross. To take. Our. Wrath. That God. Would. Empty. Upon the son. His undiluted. Wrath.

[15:34] And condemnation. For our sins. People like. Steve Chalk. In the UK. Brian McLaren. In the US. Say that this. Doctrine. Is. Incongruous. With a God. Who.

Is loving. Doesn't make sense. That a loving God. Would take his. Innocent son. And punish him. Because of our sins. They say. It's. Town.

And. Town. And. To. Divine. Child. Abuse. Can you believe that? Divine. Child. Abuse. Well.

I'm not a great. Student. But I think that's what this passage says. God put forward Jesus Christ.

As a sacrifice of atonement. Jesus says it himself. Remember John 10. Jesus says. For this reason the father loves me.

[16:31] Because I lay down my life. In order to take it up again. No one takes it from me. The father doesn't abuse the son. The father doesn't force the son.

Onto the cross. No one takes it from me. But I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down. And I have the power to take it up again. Jesus in Gethsemane.

Wrestling. Because he knows that the wrath of God. Is being. Going to be poured out upon him on the cross. And he makes a decision. To go there.

For you. And for me. It's not divine child abuse. It's a magnificent truth. I think that. Kind of thinking. That belittles. God. Comes out of this man-centered view. Of God that we have. A man-centered view of the atonement. We see Jesus on the cross.

[17:31] Mainly for our benefit. That God mainly exists. To appease us. And to do our will. We've created him. In our image. Ironically.

Well we're going to read on. And Paul's going to give us. A very different view. Of the atonement. He's going to show us. A God-centered view. Let's read. Verse 25.

Again. In full. God put forward Jesus Christ. As a sacrifice of atonement. Or a propitiation. By his blood. Effective through faith. Why did he do it?

He did this. To show his righteousness. Because in his divine forbearance. He had passed over sins. Previously committed. It was to prove. At the present time.

That he himself. Is righteous. And that he justifies the one. Who has faith. In Jesus. Why did he do it? Why did God put forward Jesus?

[18:29] Why did. According to Isaiah 53. 10. Why was it. The father's will. To crush him. To bruise him. He did this.

To show his righteousness. Because in his divine forbearance. In his patience. He had passed over the sins. Previously.

Committed. Do you remember this in the Old Testament? You see it frequently. God doesn't reward people. According to their sins. You need to know.

God is righteous. Just. Perfect. He's never made a mistake. All his judgments. Are perfect. He's the perfect judge.

A righteous judge. And yet. And yet. We read in the Old Testament. You remember David? The great King David. Remember what he did?

[19:33] Just being crowned king. Standing up on his balcony. A bit like me. Looking down. On a beautiful woman. Naked. Bathing.

Bathsheba. And instead of mortifying. That lust. In his flesh. He submits to it.

He has her. Brought to him. He sleeps with her. Commits adultery. She's a married woman. She falls pregnant. It's going to be obvious.

That it's not her husband's baby. Because Uriah. The Hittite. Her husband. Is fighting in the war. That he should be fighting in. And so he has him. Killed.

Uriah is killed. On the battlefield. And so he commits adultery. He commits murder. Commits a plethora of sins. And right then at that point.

[20:28] Fire. Brimstone. David. Should be consumed. Condemned. Punished for eternity. By a holy. Righteous God. Who has every right to do it.

What happens? You can find out. Second Samuel. Eleven. God sends Nathan. The prophet. To David. Nathan says.

Why have you despised the word of the Lord? To do what is evil in his sight. You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword. And have taken his wife.

To be your wife. David said to Nathan. I have sinned against the Lord. Nathan said to David.

Now the Lord. Has put away your sin. You shall not die. God passes over his sin. Now is that just?

[21:31] Did David get what he deserved? No. Imagine a judge in this town. Multiple. Rapist.

Murderer. Terrorist. Comes before. The judge. And the judge says. I'm going to pass over this one. The judge will be thrown out of the courtroom.

And God is the perfect judge. So what needs to happen? What needs to happen? For God to be just. For God to be righteous.

He needs to make. An atonement for sin. And so Paul says. God puts forward Jesus. His only begotten son. His perfect son.

As the perfect. Atonement for sin. God. He's the perfect son. He's the perfect son. He's the perfect son. He's the perfect son. He's the perfect son. He's the perfect son. And we see that it's all about God. The whole process is about God.

[22:39] He decided that the cross needed to happen in eternity past. He initiated the sacrifice. God put forward Jesus as a sacrifice.

Jesus was God. And was the sacrifice. He absorbed the wrath of God. It was to show God's righteousness.

That he was righteous in the past. And that he is righteous now. That he is the God who justifies. Sinners like you and me. It's all about God.

We're taught in this passage and in Hebrews. That the people of the Old Testament. Were saved through faith. People in the New Testament.

Saved by faith. You and I are saved by faith. The works of the law can't save us. But having faith in Jesus can. God is the justifier.

[ 23 : 43 ] No one goes to heaven without being justified. You and I will stand on the day of reckoning. When Jesus comes with a sword to do violence against those who are unrighteous.

And we will stand. Or fall. Because of the righteousness that God has given us. No one can stand before God without being justified.

And no one is justified apart from Jesus. What an amazing passage. So then if all of this is true. And you better believe it is. Couple of questions. If you're here and you're a Christian. If you're putting your faith in Jesus' sacrifice.

That's what this passage says you need to do. If you've done that. And I know that many of you have been Christians for a while. And I assume. I haven't.

[ 24 : 53 ] But I assume. After a while it might be easy. To slip into. Trusting in your own righteousness. Your own godly living.

This passage encourages us. And reminds us. That it's by. Faith in God's righteousness.

That you're a Christian. That it's God who justifies. That it's Jesus' blood. That won you redemption. So as you go out today. Glory in that truth.

As you sing songs. Particularly the last hymn. If you think about the words. There couldn't be a more perfect hymn I think. Explains.

The way that you and I should feel. Now that we've been justified by God. If we forget the fact. That it's God's condemnation. That we're being saved from.

[ 25 : 49 ] Perhaps grace doesn't look so. Amazing anymore. We need to be reminded of this great truth. But the main point I think. I want to make is to you.

Who are not Christians. The Bible is clear about your eternal future. Your eternal future is one of. Wrath. Condemnation.

Punishment. By Jesus. In hell. Forever. Because you have offended. An infinitely glorious God. And thus the punishment. Is infinitely. Serious.

Eternal. Conscious. Torment. In the wine press. Of God's. Fury. Jesus says it. Read Matthew 25. It will blow you away. Paul says it. In chapter 2 verse 5. That those who harden their hearts against God. Are building up for themselves wrath.

[ 26 : 47 ] On the day of wrath. When God comes to judge. All of humanity. Wrath. Indignation. Condemnation. Burning.

White. Hot. Anger. At you. Because you rejected. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. This is the truth.

And you have a choice before you this morning. Your sin. Which is your nature. By the way. Not just what you do. But who you are. Your sin.

And unrighteousness. Must be paid for. It must be paid for. And it must be punished.

By God's wrath. Now. You have a choice. You can pay for it. Yourself. In hell. For eternity.

[ 27 : 46 ] Or. You can put your faith in Jesus. Who has already paid for it. On the cross. I want to plead with you.

In the most loving. Way that I can. To please. Put your faith. In Jesus. In his blood. In his atonement.

In his sacrifice. Because he says. Himself. That he won't turn away. Anyone who comes to him. We've seen in this passage.

That this. Sacrifice. Was made for all people. Who would come to him. And confess. That he is Lord. What do you do.

If you're here this morning. And you're not trusting. In Jesus. To pay your debt. To take your wrath. Verse 25.

[ 28 : 47 ] God put forward. Jesus Christ. As a sacrifice. Of atonement. By his blood. Effective. Through faith. Effective.

Through faith. I'd love to talk to you. If you don't have faith. In Jesus. I'd love to talk to you. About what that would look like. For you to put your faith.

In him. See me afterwards. Friends. I'd like to pray for us now. Before I finish. God.  
This is a weighty. Weighty text. And it's the truth. God. God. God. God. God. We know. We know.  
That you are. Perfectly. Righteous God. That your.  
Wrath. Burns. Against sinners. That you hate. Sin. And you hate. Sinners. And we also know. That  
God. So loved the world.  
[ 29 : 42 ] That he gave his only son. That whoever would believe in him. Might not perish. Might not  
have to deal with your wrath. But have eternal life.  
We know that your sacrifice. Is efficacious. For those who. Put their faith in you. And we praise you.  
For making the sacrifice. Not only for enduring the pain.  
And. And the humility. And humiliation. On the cross. But for taking the wrath of God. For us. For  
absorbing it. For deflecting it from us.  
Who have faith in you. Lord. Would you move now. My words will do nothing. But your spirit. Can  
work.  
Please work in the hearts. Of those who don't have faith in you. Bring them to faith. For those of us.  
Who have been Christians. Perhaps for a long time. Give us a new. Renewed. Sense of awe.  
[ 30 : 45 ] For what you've done for us. Help us to praise you. This day. And every day. That we live.  
Before you come. In glory. To judge the living and the dead. We praise you for what you've done.  
In Jesus name. Amen.