

Delivered Up for Our Trespasses

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[0 : 00] All right.

If you've got your Bible, go to Romans chapter four. Romans chapter four is going to be our passage this evening. I think, I'm not for sure, but I think at the end of that last song is the loudest I've heard you sing.

I just, I just stop. You know, there's just times when I just stop and I just listen and it's like I could just hear the room singing, Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain and he washed it white as snow. Well, tonight we're going to look at that great news that we've just been singing about and in all of those songs, actually, we're starting a kind of a two part series this week and next week, which I'm calling Justified.

That's the name of the series. And we're going to base it all out of Romans chapter four. In fact, basically what I'm going to do is one verse over two weeks. Okay. Can you handle that?

[1 : 22] One verse over two weeks. And we'll look at half of the verse this week and half of the verse next week for Eastern. You'll see kind of how that goes together when we read the text tonight.

So Romans four is going to be the passage and I'm going to pick up reading in verse 23 just to kind of get the flow of it. But verse 25 will really be the main focus tonight and next week.

So if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's word. Romans chapter four and verse 23, the apostle Paul is writing this letter to the believers in Rome under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

And in chapter four, verse 23, he says, But the words it was counted to him, that is Abraham, were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also.

So it will be counted to us who believe in him, that is God, who raised from the dead, Jesus, our Lord.

[2 : 26] Now here's the verse we'll camp on the next two weeks. Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Let's pray together. Lord, help me tonight preach the gospel and nothing but the gospel.

Lord, I pray tonight that there would be a hunger in this room to hear the life changing and the victorious message that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lord, I pray that even within this faith family where we talk about the gospel a lot, that tonight it would be a new, that it would be a fresh, that we would like in singing that song, just feel the weight of this great and glorious news.

So come and talk to us. Come and do a work in us, I pray, to the glory of one name. And that is the name of Jesus, who we lift up in this place tonight.

[3 : 32] And we ask it in his name and God's people said, amen. You can be seated. Albert Lynn was just out with a friend, kicking up clouds of dust in the desert in their open top four-wheel drive vehicle.

That was just the kind of thing that that 40-year-old scientist and considered himself a professional adventurer liked to do. It's what he did to relax.

It's what he did to have fun. But on a particular day in September, what Albert experienced was anything but fun. You see, he and his friend were going through the desert at a very high speed.

Albert's friend was driving, and they were going so fast that as they made a turn, it began to tip over. And Albert's natural kind of response to that was to stick out his leg, out the kind of the door opening to try to connect to the ground so he wouldn't fall out of the vehicle.

And when he did, it began to roll on his leg, crushing it. Albert would be taken to the hospital where he would remain there for several weeks. Doctors would try to do everything they could to help him walk again.

[4 : 47] They tried to stabilize his leg. They tried multiple surgeries and ongoing treatments, but nothing that they were able to do was able to prevent the inevitable.

It would have to be amputated. But Albert was resolved that even with the help of others, that he would figure out a new normal somehow, even with a prosthetic leg.

But what he didn't expect is that not long after the surgery, he began to experience some extreme pain. In fact, this is what Albert said, quote, We're not talking about a little bit of pain.

We're talking about level 10 out of 10, excruciating, burning, stabbing, fire-like pain, close quote. But what made this pain so different is that the pain wasn't in his body.

The pain was where his leg used to be. You see, Albert was suffering from something that likely many of you have heard of before.

[5 : 53] It's called phantom limb syndrome. PLS actually occurs when a person's brain acts like the limb they lost is still there.

So what happens is the brain perceives an itch, even though there's not a limb to scratch. The brain experiences extreme pain, even though the body part is not there anymore.

And Albert went on in the article that I read to describe how difficult it was for him after all the surgeries and after the prosthetic leg, after all that had occurred, how difficult it was, listen to me, to deal with the ongoing and excruciating pain of a body part that had been removed.

If I were a betting man, I would bet you that there are people in this room tonight suffering from phantom limb syndrome. Except I'm not talking about the kind of pain that comes from losing a limb.

Listen to me. I'm talking about the kind of phantom pain known as guilt and shame. Here's what the symptoms are.

[7 : 09] That is, there's something in your life that you regret. There's something you wish you could do over. There's something you wish you could change. There's something you wish you could make right. It's that thing you did or the thing you didn't do.

It's the thing you said or the thing you didn't say. It's the deal you made or the deal you didn't make. Now listen to me. Listen. And even though as a Christian, you know, like you know that that guilt and shame has been forgiven by the cross.

You know that that sin has been cast as far as the east is to the west. You know that it has been washed white as snow. You know it has been removed forever.

And yet the lingering pain of guilt remains. Even though the sin has been removed, you still feel times the excruciating phantom pain of that relationship.

You still feel the excruciating pain of that decision you made that night. The excruciating pain of those words you would do anything to take back.

[8 : 26] The pain of that addiction that held you in its grips for years. The pain of wishing that night you had never gotten behind the wheel.

Anybody want to testify tonight? That spiritually you know it's been removed, yet you still struggle with the guilt and the shame.

And here's my goal for the next two weeks because it really seems like I have your attention. And the reason why I think I have your attention is because I think there's a lot of us suffering from phantom limb pain spiritually.

We know intellectually the forgiveness of Christ and yet we still struggle with it. And what I want to do over the next two weeks is I want to offer you medicine. I am a doctor, by the way.

Not that kind of doctor, but I am a doctor. And I want to offer you the only medicine I know to make the phantom limb pain of guilt go away. And that, my friends, is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[9 : 31] It is the only medicine that can make it go away, that can solve it. And I want us to be reminded and I want us to learn anew what Jesus did for us on the cross and through the empty tomb.

And as I prayed, as I said earlier, I want it to be real for you. I want this to be afresh for you. I want this to sink deep into your soul. I want most of all, some of you, maybe for the very first time, to be free.

And I mean actually experience the victory of the cross. That's what I'm going after. That's what I'm preaching to. And I trust that Christ will do that work in us all from one verse.

One verse. And again, verse 25 is the main verse, but let's start back at verse 23 and read down through it. Paul says here, but the words, it was counted to him, and again, he's talking about Abraham, were not written for Abraham's sake alone, but for ours as well.

And it will be counted to us who believe in God, who raised from the dead, Jesus our Lord. And then here's where we're camping. Jesus, who was delivered up for our trespasses, that's A, and then B, and raised for our justification.

[10 : 49] So there's this week and next week. This week is that Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses. Amen. Good news, right?

I'll amen for you. Next week, he was raised for our justification. What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ have to do with our being made right with God?

So that's next week. I trust you'll come back on Easter, all right? This week, let's unpack this phrase that Jesus was delivered up and crucified for our trespasses.

This phrase, our trespasses, points to a problem every single person in this room, including the man on the stage, has. And that is that you and I are sinful.

That was a good place for an amen, okay? We are all sinful. I'm going to keep going until it's the appropriate response.

[11 : 45] We are all sinful. As I say, some of you just need to repent of pride right now. He ain't talking to me. He's talking to somebody else. Every single one of us is sinful.

Every person in this place is broken more than we realize. We are a mess. I'm a mess. You're a mess. And part of the beauty of our culture at Faith Family is we're willing to acknowledge that.

Like, if you're a mess, you're in the right place because you've joined a lot of other people who are a hot mess. Some of you are a cold mess, but whatever.

We're a mess, and we stand before God guilty apart from Jesus Christ. Martin Luther said it this way. I love what Luther says.

He says, quote, We walk around with nails in our pockets. We walk around with nails in our pockets. That is, we and our sin, our guilt, our shame is what crucified Jesus.

[12 : 49] We are, as Paul says, trespassers. You know what trespassing is, right? Somebody has a sign, no trespassing, and instead of obeying the sign, you cross the line.

Like, you're not supposed to be on my property, and you come on my property. Now, where I'm from, that might get you shot, okay? But you come on my property, well, you're trespassing. You're breaking the law.

You're crossing the line. And what Paul means when he says that Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses is he's saying that you and I have constantly and repeatedly gone over God's line.

We're trespassers. And we do this in two different ways. The first way is the most obvious way, and that is we break the rules, right? The sign says no trespassing, and we trespass.

That's breaking the law, breaking the rule. And we do this with the law of God. We do this with the commands of God. Don't raise your hand. How many of you have ever had a sinful thought? How many of you have ever had a sinful action?

[13 : 53] How many of you have ever had a moment of ungodly anger? How many of you have ever stolen something that wasn't yours, looked at someone lustfully, acted on that lust, envied somebody else's lifestyle, talents, or financial status?

Lied to put yourself in a little better light. Wished someone harm. Refused to forgive. Gossiped about something that was none of your business. A little bit self-absorbed.

A lot self-absorbed. Prideful. You want me to keep going? I've got three more pages of a list here. I'll stop. And if most of us were honest, we'd call that Tuesday.

Tuesday. That's how a mess we are. Right? We're trespassers. Like, we've broken the law of God so many times.

And if you're still here struggling with pride, thinking, you know, I'm really not that bad, you're kind of like the rich young ruler saying, Jesus, I don't know what you're talking about. Like, I'm pretty good. Notice this on the screen.

[14 : 52] Even if we haven't broken the rules with our hands, we have broken the rules with our hearts. This is what I love about what Jesus does in the Sermon on the Mount.

And some of you will remember when we went through that series, is Jesus actually takes the law and takes it deeper. So the examples he gives is like this. You've heard it said, don't murder.

And many of us would say, hey, I've never committed murder. But what does Jesus do? I tell you that if you've looked at your brother with anger in your heart, you've murdered him. You've heard it said, don't commit adultery.

But I'm telling you, if you've got lust in your heart, you've committed the same thing. You've heard it said, an eye for an eye. So if somebody takes an eye, you take an eye. But I'm telling you, if somebody takes an eye, you turn the other cheek.

You have heard it said, love your neighbor. I'm telling you, love your enemy. What is Jesus doing?

[15 : 58] He's saying what I just said. Essentially, even if you haven't broken the law with your hands, you've broken it with your heart. The only difference is you haven't acted on it.

But the same root of sin is in you. Every one of us is trespassers. We have broken the law of God.

But breaking the rules is not the only way we're trespassers. The second way that we're trespassers is keeping the rules. Now think, you're like, wait, wait, wait, wait.

If there's a trespassing sign and I don't trespass, how am I a trespasser? Are you thinking with me? How am I breaking the rule if I don't actually break the rule?

Here's how. Listen, listen, listen. This will preach to many of us. In addition to the times you have broken the rules, you trespasser, and me as well, listen, we use the times we don't break the rules as a way of leveraging God.

[16 : 59] It goes like this. Because I didn't trespass, you owe me. Oh, we do this all the time. We do this all. I did this.

Now you, God, do that. You better get me into that school I really want to get into. You better heal my spouse of this disease. You better do what I want you to do.

Why? Because I obeyed. Which is what? A sinful motivation for obedience. It's a sinful motivation for obedience.

Notice this on the screen, Faith Family. We are to obey out of love for God, not in order to leverage God. We do not throw our obedience in His face like He owes us anything.

So we break the law in two ways, by breaking it and by keeping it. Because even in keeping it, we keep it for the wrong motive. We are trespassers.

[18 : 06] Every single one of us. And our trespasses against God have made us debtors to God. Some of you are thinking, I'm really glad I came tonight. This is the most encouraging sermon I've ever heard.

Oh, you got to hear the bad news to enjoy the good news. Amen? And we're getting there. We are debtors to God and the wages of sin is death. We are dead to Him and we are separated from Him.

And we know that our debt to God is because we repeatedly trespass against Him. In fact, we know that we're debtors. That is, we know that our trespasses have built up a debt to God and a separation from God because of one specific word that Jesus uses on the cross.

Look here at John 19. This is John 19 and verse 30. It says this, When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, here's the one word, everybody say it, it is finished.

Now some of you would say, Pastor, your Tennessee math is showing. Okay, there's Tennessee math right there. I had to give you a minute to get it because some of you are like slow at math like me.

[19 : 21] You're like, your Tennessee math is showing here because that's three words. You said it was one word. It is finished.

That's three words, right, Pastor Juan? But actually in the Greek, it's not three words. It's one word. It's the word tetelestai. That's the one Greek word that means it is finished.

It's from the Greek word teleo. It means to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish. It was actually a very common word used in New Testament times, and it would be used in a variety of contexts.

A servant, when they completed a task, tetelestai. A soldier, when they finished battle, or the most common usage would be when a merchant, listen, when a merchant finalized payment on something that they owed, tetelestai.

Just say that with me. Tetelestai. See, you learned Greek tonight. There was one reason for coming, all right? Tetelestai. It's finished. It's accomplished. It's done. And here's my point.

[20 : 25] The very fact that Jesus is using this word on the cross means that our sin and our trespasses incurred a debt to God that resulted in our separation from God.

Jesus is saying, I might get to preaching here in just a moment. I am sweating. It's preacher sweat, right? So it's like holy sweat or something like that, okay? Listen, listen, listen. The fact that Jesus is saying from the cross, it's finished.

It's been paid proves our debt. Tetelestai. And it points to a very familiar parable that illustrates the situation that we're all in.

Matthew 18, verse 23. Matthew 18, verse 23. Notice it here on the screen. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

And when he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him 10,000 talents. And since he could not pay, since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold and his wife and children and all that he had and payment to be made.

[21 : 37] And so the servant fell on his knees imploring him, have patience with me and I will pay you everything. And many of you know this story.

This idea here is a debt that is impossible for this person to pay. One talent is 20 years of income. That's 10,000 talents equals about 200,000 years of income.

It is a debt that is impossible to pay and the man knows it. And so what's the only thing he can do? The only thing this man can do is plead for mercy. There isn't a possibility to pay the debt he owes.

Mercy is his only way out. Pleading for this master to be gracious is his only hope. And what the Bible is saying is that this is our situation spiritually apart from Jesus Christ.

And here is why your debt is, it's why it fits with that Matthew story. It's why it is impossible for you to pay it. It is a 200,000 years of income type of debt.

[22 : 46] Because listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 5 verse 48. Say this with me. Let's just read it together. You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

That's really bad news when you're a mess like you are in a mess like I am. In other words, the only way you can do this, the only way you can pay off your debt is offer to God.

Deliver up to Him perfection. It's your only way. And I think you would agree like I would agree that that debt is a debt that is impossible for us to pay.

It is why the Bible says we fall short of the glory of God. No matter how much of a righteous, good life you live, it's always going to fall short.

Every time I think about that phrase, falling short, I go all the way back to, it's one of the Super Bowls I remember watching growing up because I grew up in Tennessee, as you know, and I'm a Bears fan.

[23 : 50] And people always ask, how did that happen? And I understand, like it's odd to be from Tennessee and be a Bears fan, except that we just like losers. But the reality was, when I grew up, we didn't have the Tennessee Titans.

The Tennessee Titans back then were the, anybody know? The Houston Oilers, that's right. And then they later became the Tennessee Titans. And so one of the first successful teams that the Tennessee Titans had was when they went to Super Bowl 34.

And you'll remember, they played the Rams and the Titans were down by a touchdown. It comes down to the very last play of the game and watch what happens. Probably the final play of the game in regulation.

It is caught by Dyson. Can he get in? No, he cannot. Mike Jones made the tackle. And the Rams have won the Super Bowl.

No lie. The game is over. Now, let me ask you, did after the game, they say, you came really close. So we're still going to give you the trophy too. Right?

[25 : 05] I mean, you are just one yard off. And in this game, close enough counts. Is that how it works? No. You either get in or you don't. And you may be one yard short or you may be 99 yards short.

It doesn't matter. You lose. That's the idea of falling short of the glory of God. Now, don't think you're one yard short from the glory of God because I'll tell you, sweetheart, that ain't happening.

All right? Ain't no chance. The point that I'm getting to is that it's either perfection or nothing. You either get in the end zone or you don't get in at all. There's no halfway.

There's no almost. You're either perfect or you're not. That's the only payment God accepts. Which puts trespassers in a very, very difficult position.

Meaning that mercy is our only way out. Grace is our only way out. And so what Paul is saying to this point is this. We are trespassers. Trespassers.

[26 : 11] We are guilty. We are debtors to God. We are unable to pay. And so here's the second part of this first phrase. What does God do in response to our trespasses?

Read the verse again. Romans 4.25. Who was delivered up. That is, Christ was delivered up for our trespasses.

In fact, it's the same thing that gets paralleled in John 19 verse 30. Look at it as well. When Jesus had received the sour wine and said to Telestai, it is finished.

Watch what happens next. And he bowed his head and what? Gave up his spirit. He's delivering himself up. That is what Paul is saying in Romans 4 is the very thing Jesus is doing in John 19.

Do you see that? We are trespassers and God delivers up his son. Jesus delivers himself up to the father.

[27 : 17] In other words, Jesus makes the payment for our sin. This is the amazing news of the gospel. Namely, that Christ became our payment for our debt.

He became the perfection for our trespasses. This is the language that the New Testament uses. Look at 1 Timothy 2 verse 6. Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all.

Hebrews 7 verse 27. Jesus by his... Hebrews 7 verse 27 says, He has no need like those high priests to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then those of the people, since he did this once for all.

When? When did he do it? He offered up himself. Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses.

By his death, he offered himself up. Listen. Listen to these words. As the full and final payment for our sin. The full and final payment for our sin.

[28 : 30] And I want you to think about those two words. It's a full payment in that nothing more needs to be paid. Nothing else needs to be paid.

It's not Jesus' work and yours. It's not Jesus' death and the best life you can live. His payment is full. But it's not only full, it's also final.

That is to tell us die. It is finished forever. Let that sink into your soul.

It is full. Nothing else needs to be paid. And it is final. It is finished forever. Because our debt demands perfection, Jesus offered up his perfect life as a sacrifice for our trespasses, for our sins.

Listen to Matthew 18 verse 27. Out of pity, the master of the servant released him and forgave him the debt because he couldn't pay.

[29 : 37] There was nothing he could offer. The master being gracious simply said, it's finished. It's paid. And you're free. Listen to Colossians 2 verse 13.

You who were dead in your what? And the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven...

I'm going to slow down so this just sinks in. Having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside nailing it to the cross.

It's finished. It's really, really finished. Peel back all the religious layer and all the things that are churchy talk and let it hit you.

It's over. It's done. It has been accomplished. Why and how? By Jesus being delivered up for your trespasses.

[31 : 04] That's Good Friday. That's the glory of the cross. Amen? I was struck as I was preparing this week by a story of a man by the name of Matt Swatzel from Georgia.

He was driving home from a 24-hour shift as a firefighter and an EMS worker. He'd only been I was going to say go back there's a different picture of Matt.

There's Matt. He was driving home and he'd only been on about 30 minutes of sleep. Been up for a really long time and he was four miles from his home when he heard what he called the most awful sound he'd ever heard.

Matt realized that he'd fallen asleep behind the wheel and that he had crashed into another car and that car in it was 30-year-old June Fitzgerald.

June, who you'll see there on the left, was pregnant and in addition had her 19-month-old daughter named Faith. Faith survived, but June and her unborn baby did not.

[32 : 19] June's husband, a man by the name of Eric, who was also a pastor, as you can imagine, was absolutely devastated. And when it happened, he was very angry with Matt.

I mean, he's lost his wife and unborn baby and he's just grieving and heartbroken and angry towards Matt. And the Lord gave him grace to do what only God can give the grace to do.

Matt, because he was a county official, was going to be facing a felony charge. And here's what Eric did. I mean, this just gripped me. Eric shows up at the sentencing and pleads with the judge to lessen the sentence.

man's and as a result, Matt never served in time. And to make this crazy story even more crazy, guess what?

Eric's forgiveness of Matt turned into a six-year friendship that's still going on today. They go to church together and sit together.

[33 : 31] They meet once every two weeks at a Waffle House. You know your friends if you're meeting at the Waffle House. And listen, the part that gripped me in the story was this.

When Matt was asked about his first encounter with Eric after the loss of his wife and baby, he said, I will never forget Eric's, the first thing Eric said to me was this, quote, Eric said, I have a desire to be a part of your life.

I have a desire to be a part of your life. If you think that story of forgiveness is amazing, how much more the story of the gospel that God looks at you, a trespasser against him, responsible for the death of his son and his first words to you are, I want to be a part of your life.

I want to be reconciled with you. I want to be in a relationship with you. So much so I delivered up my son for your trespasses.

It is finished. This is the glory of the gospel. This is the beauty of the gospel. Romans 5, 8, God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

[35 : 21] 2 Corinthians 5, 21, for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

So what is our response to this? What should our response be to this one phrase that Jesus our Lord was delivered up for our trespasses?

I'll give you three as we close. The first response I think would be appropriate for us tonight is simply rejoice. Like, just don't be Baptist for a minute and get emotional.

Right? Like, just hallelujah, praise God, thank you. Like, I'm not looking for some false response or emotion, I'm just saying, rejoice if you are a Christian, praise him that your debt is no more.

Nothing you have done, nothing you are doing, and nothing you will ever do, I'm getting into next week, come back for that, nothing you've done or ever will do is separating you from God.

[36 : 28] There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and it is all paid for in a full and final payment. So you should praise him. You should rejoice tonight.

I mean, think about it this way, like if you're in the line at Starbucks or Caribou, the lesser coffee, or wherever it is that you like to drink coffee, and somebody pays for your drink ahead of you, you know, sometimes people will do that.

How do you feel? You're like, hey, that's pretty cool. I mean, somebody bought me coffee, that's really sweet. But how do you feel if somebody pays for your meal? Like, you raked up a little bit, right?

I mean, they pay for your meal, and now you're a little more excited, that's awesome. Well, imagine somebody pays your mortgage off. I got a nice, right?

So that's the rejoice. Nice. nice. My point is, the coffee's pretty cool, the meals a little better, the paying off my mortgage is like, who does that?

[37 : 29] That's crazy insane. Now imagine the reality that is reality that God has paid for all of your sin. It's more, and I'm not making fun, I'm not making fun, it's more than nice.

It's like, how can it be? God praise you for what you've done. Oh, rejoice tonight. But see, our gratitude is directly related to the magnitude of our debt.

That's my point. Our gratitude is directly related to the magnitude of our debt. If we feel how much of a transgressor we are, and a trespasser we are, and a debtor we are, the more we will rejoice that it is forgiven and it is finished.

That's the first response I think we should have. The second response I think we should have is rest. Rest. We should rejoice over this truth and we should rest in this truth.

And this is the hard part. I know it's difficult, it's why I started the sermon this way. What I'm going for tonight and next week, and quite frankly, it's every week. I mean, it's a bit weird when I get up here and say we're going to talk about the cross and resurrection the next two weeks.

[38 : 39] We talk about that every week. But play along, okay? This is the hard part, is what I want you to do is to let the medicine of the gospel relieve the phantom limb pain of guilt and shame.

Like, I'm working hard towards your freedom. That that thing that's been lingering with you, you'll finally will rest in the victory of the cross and actually believe this one word to tell us die.

That it really is finished. Never to haunt you again, it is finished forever. So I think we should rejoice and I think we should rest.

And the third is if you're not a Christian, I believe the appropriate response would be to repent. If you are not a Christian, if you have never put your faith in the Lord Jesus, oh that tonight you would repent of your trespasses, you would repent of your sin, that you would repent of all that you have done against God, whether it was keeping the rules or breaking the rules, and look to him by faith.

Because the good news of the gospel is not just that the wages of sin is death, but listen, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[39 : 58] The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God that he would give you tonight if you would repent of your sin and turn to him by faith is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I close with this. How many of you, you don't have to respond, but how many of you have ever heard of the conscience fund? The conscience fund. It's actually a real fund that was established back in 1811 when the government, I think it was the Madison administration, received \$5 from someone who had cheated on their taxes, and they didn't know what to do with it.

And so they decided they'd just start a fund, and the reason they started the fund, and I quote, is to quote, restore amounts which the donor considers to have been wrongfully withheld from the government, and quote, to ease the conscience of those wrongful acts, close quote.

And you can go and you can read it online because everything you read online is true, right? And there's all kinds of crazy examples of what people have done. A lady, remember this is back since 1811, a lady sent in nine cents expressing her sorrow for reusing a three-cent stamp.

Twice. Another person wrote in a letter that said, eight years ago, I stole an item worth \$25. It's been on my mind ever since, so I'm enclosing \$50 to clear my conscience.

[41 : 30] Another one wrote in a letter, here's \$210 for letters I should have never read and food I didn't pay for. One guy who had cheated on his taxes, this is my favorite, mailed in a \$1,000 check with a note that said this, quote, I can't sleep, my conscience is bothering me, here's \$1,000.

And if I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest of the balance. It's about right. That's about right. And here's why, here's why I give you those examples.

Here's why I end tonight with that albeit a humorous example. Here's why I finished with that example and it's because phantom limb pain of the soul is real.

The phantom limb pain of the soul is real. All of us have a real sense of guilt about something.

But what I declare to you tonight is this, while the government may offer you a conscience fund, the gospel offers you something greater. It's called Calvary.

[42 : 44] And it's not for those who have fallen behind on their taxes. It's for those who have fallen short of the glory of God. And at the cross, you don't have to pay anything back.

Because payment was made for you when Jesus was delivered up for your trespasses.

And all God's people said, amen, amen. God, this is why this is the best news in the world. The gospel is the best news in the world.

We believe it. We applaud it. Tonight, I pray we rejoice and rest in it. The phantom pain of guilt and shame is real, God.

We know that you have forgiven us of things, and yet, often that begins to linger in us. And so tonight, we once again go to the medicine of the gospel.

[43 : 51] That God, you delivered up Jesus. And Jesus delivered himself up willingly as a sacrifice for our trespasses and sins.

And Lord, we can't wait next week to rest also in the good news that Jesus was raised for our justification. So set us free.

Free indeed of the lingering of guilt and shame. And that the howling wolf of sin as it haunts us.

And may we rest in the glory of the cross. And may we cling by faith to Tetelestai.

It's finished for good forever. And tonight, we will remember through the elements that you've given us as an ordinance, we will remember this truth of Jesus being delivered up for us as we look to the bread and we look to the juice as symbols of the gospel and what Christ did for us on the cross.

[45 : 09] So may this be these next few moments a real sweet time of worship. May it be a time of rejoicing. May it be a time of resting. And if anyone is in this place and not a believer, then it would be a time of repenting and putting their faith in the Lord Jesus.

In his name we pray. Amen.