

# "But now...!" Romans 3:21-26

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 22 March 2026

Preacher: Rev. Daniel Avitan

[ 0 : 00 ] Our first reading is from Romans chapter 3 and we'll start in the 21st verse. Romans chapter 3 starting in the 21st verse.

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.

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 forbearance 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 apart from works of the law.

[ 1 : 12 ] 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. So in my opinion, one of Tom Hanks' best movies, and if you disagree with me, I'll be at the back waiting. It sounded like I was going to get in a fight. That's not the case at all. I'd argue. Maybe a verbal fight. But I think it's the road to perdition. I love this movie. Early 2000s movie.

It takes place during Prohibition, Illinois. It's also, I think it's Paul Newman's last movie he does before he dies. So it's Prohibition, Illinois.

And it follows Tom Hanks, who seeks revenge on his boss's son. His boss, who is like a father to him. Because his boss's son killed his wife and his young son.

[ 2 : 24 ] Tried to kill the whole family. But Tom Hanks and his older son live. Anyways, the boss, again, played by Paul Newman. He tries to avert the wrath of Tom Hanks, his character Sullivan.

But it can't be appeased. There's nothing he can do. The crimes of Newman's son must be paid for. And it must be paid for in blood.

Definitely not a movie to watch with kids. But it's really, it's a great movie. Anyways, justice must be accomplished.

Mercy is not an option. There's something in this for us to consider. For often, justice and mercy, they are elusive in this life.

And they're elusive for a number of reasons. But a couple are actually quite obvious if you think about it. Justice and mercy are elusive for us because we are both inconsistent and often hypocritical.

[ 3 : 27 ] When we are wronged, we want justice. And we will have justice. And we will have it now. But when we have wronged others, we deserve mercy.

Give us mercy. We deserve it. And we find ourselves neither enjoying justice or mercy because we are inconsistent people.

We are hypocritical people. And we often have neither. So it's an interesting question to think through. Can mercy and justice be enjoyed?

Is this even possible? Are they not exclusive to one another? What do we make sense of it all? Our text this morning will help us to answer this question.

In our text, it is so theologically dense and so important to the entire argument of Paul in Romans.

[ 4 : 27 ] In fact, it could be argued that this is the key text in all of the book. And if Romans is, in many ways, the greatest articulation of the gospel that we have in the Bible.

I don't want to say it's the best book in the Bible. Because I want to say the Bible is a whole, even though it's comprised of other books. But if we want to say it's the finest, most robust articulation of the gospel.

Then what we have this morning is a very, very, very important text to consider. And a text that's going to help us to understand justice and mercy.

We're going to look at the text. And this is how I've broken it down. The text, again, we could spend weeks in it. We're going to spend one. And it's going to, we're going to look at three things.

We're going to look at one glorious declaration that it makes. We're going to look at two essential truths in this text. And finally, three comforting words.

[ 5 : 27 ] And actually, I mean, I'll touch a bit on verses 27 to 31. But we'll spend the majority of our time in verses 21 to 26. So again, one glorious declaration.

Two very essential truths. And three very comforting words as we consider the nature of the gospel in light of justice and mercy. Let's get into it.

Point one. One glorious declaration. So it's, I was away last week. I'll just say this. I was away last week. I had the privilege of being at a young adult's retreat. And, you know, whatever you guys read about, whatever I read about in the media about, I guess it's Generation Z or Zed.

And, you know, these kids were inspiring. Truly, the faith that these 18 to 25-year-olds had. It was really something.

Did they stay up until 4 in the morning? Yes, they did. Did I go to bed at 1130? Yes, I did. So there was some things that made me kind of scratch my head.

[ 6 : 36 ] But overall, incredible. The faith and the love that these guys had. Not just for the Lord, but for one another. It really was something to behold. That's nothing to do with the text.

Only to say that I was in here last week. So it was two weeks since we've been in Romans. So a bit of a reminder. Two weeks ago, we wrapped up this pretty significant section that the Apostle Paul was arguing about why we fall short of the righteousness of God.

And why there is no moral or religious leg that we can stand on. So back in chapter 1, verse 17, 16 and 17, the Apostle Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel.

It's the power of God unto salvation. Verse 17, it says that in the gospel, the righteousness of God has been revealed or manifested. And then from chapter 1, 18 to 3, chapter 3, verse 20, he shows us how we can't even hold a candle to God's righteousness.

That we are in a very, very sad state. And not just one segment of the population, but all. He talks about the religious, the irreligious.

[ 7 : 55 ] He talks about the completely immoral and the morally upright. He talks about Jews. He talks about Greeks. The idea is we could extend it to every person that's ever lived, regardless of where they are from.

Everybody falls short. And I would say that he makes a compelling case. The verdict is in. We are cooked.

We are eternally cooked. The human race has no hope. Except that the argument doesn't end in chapter 3, verse 20.

Because chapter 3, verse 21 says this and everything changes with these two words. Verse 21, but now. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.

Although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. The apostle says, but now. God has done something. And he returns to chapter 1, verse 17, where he says the righteousness of God has been revealed.

[ 9 : 02 ] He is saying, listen, that righteousness of God, he returns to it. It is coming and breaking in. You aren't cooked anymore. Okay? You are not damned. You are not hopeless people.

After feeling the heaviness of sin and the hopelessness of our own situation in life, Paul says that God has revealed himself.

He has revealed his righteousness. And it is in his son, Jesus. And it has happened. It's not something he's talking about. It's not something where he's saying, I'm promising to do it one day, somehow, at some place.

He's saying, now. It's come. Now. This righteousness, it is from heaven. It is from God. And therefore, it means that it is foreign to us.

It is foreign to us. It is also foreign to the law. In that, we cannot keep the law. The law was not designed in such a way that if we keep it, that we would get this righteousness from God.

[10:09] This is a righteousness that emanates from God himself. Paul, he'll talk about that. That does not negate the law. In fact, this is not some new revelation.

The law, the prophets, the writings, the entirety of the Old Testament Bible. It points to what Jesus did on the cross. It points that to this anointed one, this Messiah who would come and to die, even though he was perfect for the sins of the world.

Everything points to Jesus. So this righteousness was revealed through this moment in history, this historical death and resurrection of the Messiah, the anointed one, Christ Jesus, the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings.

And I am no Greek scholar, okay? So, but I read commentaries of people that are. And what's interesting here is that the Greek grammar that the Apostle Paul uses, it is in a perfect tense, which is to say that when Paul is referring to this revelation, in chapter 3, verse 21, that God's righteousness was revealed, it means that it was fully and perfectly revealed at a very specific time, at a very specific place.

And it's referring to the actual crucifixion of Jesus, his literal death, his literal burial, and then three days later, when a body should be decomposing, he literally rises from the grave.

[11:44] That's why for centuries, millennia, we have rightly marked time with Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord.

All of history revolves around the birth and life and death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Why do we do this?

Because in the redemption of Christ, the hopelessness that Paul so perfectly articulates in chapter 1, 18 to 3, 20, has been completely undone.

Human beings are no longer hopeless. All of time revolves around what happened in, at Golgotha, some 2,000 plus years ago.

But there's something even more to it, okay? Because, again, not a Greek scholar, but if we consider the grammar that Paul uses back in chapter 1, verse 17, again, right, he is, this isn't the first time he's talking about the righteousness of God being revealed.

[12:48] He says it back in chapter 1, 17, and the grammar there lends itself to this idea that it's an ongoing revelation of what God is revealing, his righteousness being revealed, which is to say, every time that the gospel is proclaimed, right now, the righteousness of God is being revealed.

It is being proclaimed. Whenever we gather in Christ's name, reminded of the gospel, whenever we hear the words of Scripture proclaimed, where God is lifted high and his Son is glorified, whenever we partake at the Lord's table, whenever we confess our sins and look to Christ for forgiveness and hear those sweet words of absolution and comfort, whenever we read those words of institution where Jesus said, on the night that he was betrayed, he took bread, he broke it, he gave you thanks, same way he took the cup and he gave you thanks, whenever we are proclaiming the gospel, the righteousness of God is being revealed.

So it is to say that it happened in a specific time and in a specific place, but that this revelation of God's righteousness, right, that erases our hopelessness, it pours into every single minute of every single second of every single day, wherever Christ's name is lifted high and his gospel is proclaimed.

It's this very dynamic reality we live in of the righteousness of God being revealed. So when we go back to verse 21 and Paul, again, remember, he has laid out such an airtight, compelling case that we are hopeless people, right?

He gets to verse 21 and he says, but now the righteousness of God is being revealed. It has been revealed in Christ's death and resurrection. It is continuing to be revealed in every time that his name and his gospel is proclaimed.

[14:55] And all of a sudden, we are reminded that we are not hopeless people, but we are people with purpose. We are people that have an eternal place waiting for us. And that's why I think it is a very glorious declaration.

God has revealed his righteous character and plan of salvation to us unrighteous people. And what is that plan of salvation?

That God does not merely reveal his righteousness, but that he will also impart that righteousness. So that this foreign righteousness that is something that we could never attain on our own, but we desperately need, it is for us and that we can take it by faith.

So thinking through this, we need to consider the next point, these two essential truths. I'll be looking at verses 22 to 23. So we've had one glorious declaration and now we have two essential truths connected to it.

The first is that this righteousness is for us when we accept it by faith. Let's look at this first truth and we'll spend just a bit of time in verse 22.

[16:15] And verse 22 says this, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. This foreign righteousness that is imparted to us is only ours if we receive it by faith.

So a very important, crucial follow-up question is what is faith? What is meant by the Apostle Paul when he says it is for all who believe?

What is the nature of faith? What happens importantly when we have these feelings of faith and then we find that these feelings of faith begin to wane? Is this righteousness given to us only when we are feeling kind of vibrant in our Christian walk?

I often think of how my faith has waned and considering is God's salvation contingent upon my faith?

I think of it as like a carnival game or a fair game when you have this little water pistol that you have to shoot in a tiny dollar-sized hole to move like a fake horse down whatever the fake little I don't know what it is okay it's a carnival game I know you guys might have seen it I don't know the name of the carnival game but this idea that okay all of a sudden if our water stream runs out or if we miss the mark or somehow we just give up is that it for us?

[17:55] is salvation over? what is the nature of faith? I think it's important for us to consider that what matters when it comes to faith isn't the amount of faith that we have we all know people that have unbelievable faith that it seems like all hell rages against them and yet they have this resolve that they're going to trust in the Lord and then we have other people in our lives maybe ourselves at times where it's like I stub my toe literally metaphorically and that's it I'm kind of done right I can't believe anymore it's like the straw that broke the camel's back and we have minuscule faith I think that's not the way that the Bible wants to commend us to think about faith but instead to think about the object that our faith is in classic example the person who is deathly afraid of flying deathly afraid of flying they get in the plane and maybe their faith and the integrity of the hull or the sobriety and focus and skill of the pilot it's like this okay they're constantly thinking this five hour flight to the west coast they're thinking what if there is the tiniest of cracks in the hull what if

I don't know maybe the pilot had a couple to drink beforehand they're just constantly in doubt mode well whether or not they believe in the integrity of the plane the skill of the pilot matters in a sense matters not what matters is the object that they have got into this plane and that this plane is going to take them from point A to point B now compare that then to the person who is delusional who has an incredible amount of faith that you know they can fly and they're going to put it to the test they have on their kind of fake wings and they leap from a four story building doesn't matter their faith the degree of faith that they have they're so convinced that they have solved the problem of human flight it doesn't matter the object of their faith is waning it's nothing they fall they die or they get horribly hurt the object of our faith is the thing that matters the object of the faith is the thing that matters because the reality is that whether you are feeling this warmth towards the Lord now that by God's grace you have faith in him that he will get you through any issue eventually it will wane your faith will get shaky you will see something you will experience something you will get tired your faith will hold on by the slightest of threads but even still if your faith is in Christ if it's in the right object then you can trust that although you don't understand how it will work that Christ will hold you fast so what about doubt because James chapter 1 talks about how the doubting person this is a very terrible thing doubt is something that is wrong and actually contrary to the Christian life and I won't go into it in depth only to say that the doubt that James talks about is a functionally dead faith a faith that claims that all that claims all of

Christianity without any of Christ who goes through the motions of what it is to be a Christian but really truly does not have a faith that is indicative of the work of the Holy Spirit in somebody's heart no what we have here when our faith wanes and yet it's still in Christ it's like that father who comes to Jesus who asks him to heal his son and Jesus he says to him listen you have to have faith and the guy says I believe help my unbelief that's the faith that is waning that it is this big that is the size of a mustard seed but it's in the right thing it's in the right object it's in the right person friends faith cannot be a feeling now it at times will feel as though we have faith but it can't be predominantly a feeling because we can be so easily swayed and then whether we keep faith or not becomes the

functional barometer of our salvation but is that not another form of self righteousness that then our salvation rises and falls on how we feel on how we judge the faith that we have

John Stott has been very helpful to me he was an Anglican minister in England he passed away in the 2010s but he says this of faith he says faith is the eye that looks to him the hand that receives his free gift the mouth that drinks the living water which is to say that faith merely receives it merely receives I can't do anything on my own in fact I can't even receive!

[ 23 : 52 ] very well I believe but God help my unbelief this is true faith this is the faith of scripture true faith can only receive righteousness it can't manufacture it and it can't manufacture it because of the second essential truth the second essential truth is this is that the righteousness that God gives it's a gift of grace and it's far greater this gift and it far surpasses the unrighteousness of the entire human race and everybody here today read with me the second part of verse 22 and then all of verse 23 so 22 the second half of it and then verse 23 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 for there is no distinction all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of

God how do we fall short of the glory of God now the apostle Paul has made that clear in verses again chapter 1 verse 18 to 320 but I think it's very important that we consider what it says here in our section of scripture how do we fall short of the glory of God two massive ways one following from the other the first is we fall short of the glory of God in our being of who we are the fancy pants word would be we fall short of the glory of God in our ontology on how we are our being fall short of the glory of God in that we were made to reflect his image we were made in his image to reflect his image but in a way that is free of all sin and blemish but this is no longer the case you see!

Genesis 3 Man Original Sin it looms large over the entirety of Romans and especially in the section that we read in the previous past weeks how could we properly reflect the almighty most perfect God who is the author of all things good true and beautiful if we ourselves are compromised with sin we fall short of reflecting the glory of God because we fall short of as perfect standard it's as if we were a clean and streak free mirror that was designed and made to perfectly reflect the glory of God and very quickly a bunch of fingerprint smudges were all over this mirror maybe the mirror was smeared with streaks of mud or maybe it became chipped and cracked all over you see the mirror is still a mirror but it has lost its integrity it has been compromised and this leads to the second way we fall short of the glory of God it's not just in our being but because we are compromised in our being that means our purpose of which is to glorify

God that is compromised as well so we no longer seek to bring God glory because we instead bring ourselves glory our purpose has shifted it is not about God and lifting up his name it is about Daniel and lifting up his name it's about platforming ourselves if we're to continue the mirror metaphor a mirror should not necessarily be a focal point as if it were an art piece and I know some mirrors are beautiful and they work as good art pieces the metaphor isn't perfect but predominantly a mirror what is it supposed to do to reflect the object facing it however if the mirror becomes itself the focal point then the mirror ceases to have the purpose of a mirror the purpose of the mirror is compromised you see the great tragedy is that we have redefined what glory is we've redefined what it means to be human in that we were designed to be image bearers and to bring glory to God and we forget who God is and instead we no longer see what

God has declared as being the high point of what is righteous and good true and beautiful glorious which is himself instead we see the standard as you and you and you and what we do is we compare ourselves to other people okay I make enough money and therefore I am satisfied because I make more than the average person in my position in my neighborhood or I am satisfied with the life I live in terms of my morality because I'm not a train wreck like her or like them again with a mirror metaphor our mirror is less smudged it's only chipped in the corner there's no mud on it maybe there's a bit of dust okay we can clean that up but overall relatively speaking my life is pretty clear pretty clean pretty okay pretty intact but the point is how how much better your life is in comparison to others it's actually how does your life reflect in comparison with the perfect holy and glorious righteous

[ 30 : 06 ] God that's what the scriptures are really talking about there was a bishop in the 19th century his name was Bishop Wool he was the bishop of Durham and this is what he said about this text he says quote the harlot the liar the murderer are short of God's glory but so are you perhaps they stand at the bottom of a mine and you on the crest of an alp but you are as little able to touch

the stars as they he's a brilliant brilliant articulation of the difference between us and God in terms of righteousness so if we are constantly falling short of our purpose because of our very being being compromised then how are we to be sure that the very righteousness of God that is given for us is truly going to last that it won't be compromised and this will lead to our third and final point the three comforting words of verses 24 and 26 read with me verses 24 and 26 we'll actually back up into verse 22 for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of

God verse 24 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 if this 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 I'll pause really quickly and just to say there's a lot happening there I was talking to somebody this week and a very committed Christian that said this is a word salad and it's hard to disagree there's a lot going on there and it might be an issue of translation but what we're going to do to try to make sense of it is to look at these what I call these three comforting words the first word is justification verse 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus justification it's a big word it's actually a very important word when it! comes to Romans when it comes to our salvation justification is a declaration of God to us that we are no longer condemned we are no longer condemned as guilty because of our sin but now we are free we have been liberated we are no longer under the just judgment of God we are no longer condemned as unrighteous for we have been given the righteousness of Christ and it says that it is a gift of grace it is God restoring our fallenness so that at the end of the age when we meet Christ we will be like him in that we will reflect the glory of God as he already intended it so what is it saying it's saying that one day we will stand before

God at the end of the age and he will judge us perfect righteous holy but what's interesting here is Paul isn't saying listen we need to just trudge through until the end of the age he's saying that reality at the end of the age when every tear is wiped every bad thing is reversed that is our reality now in the present because of Christ because God deems it so and this is what it means to be justified but how does this happen because as reasonable as it may seem a valid pushback could be that such a justification either undermines God's righteousness or permits our unrighteousness this is the stuff of a corrupt or incompetent judge I mean could you imagine we go before a judge we are guilty he says I want you to walk okay I'm just erasing this I'm taking the charges rip rip rip and by the way I'm going to put a word in because of course there's going to be an appeal to a higher court listen that guy's my friend too I'll take care of it we would say that's a dereliction of justice is that what's happening here you know even more than that throughout the old testament God repeatedly states that he will justify the righteous and condemn the wicked proverbs 17 verse 15 says actually even even worse than that he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination of the Lord so what on earth is happening okay Paul is he contradicting the old testament because it seems that what God is doing here at least by Paul's explanation is that he is making righteous the wicked he is justifying those that should be rightly condemned and previously it says that this is a problem so what on earth is justification and how is it held together

[ 35 : 49 ] I would say this it would be a fantastic objection and it would be very clear that the apostle Paul is contradicting what the old testament says if it wasn't for our second comfortable word we'll read verses 24 and 25 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 is the key word in this context upon which the entire verse in this whole section rises and falls and therefore justification is a massive massive contradiction in God's justice and mercy if it was not for this word propitiation so what is it I think it's really helpful to understand what it is not there are so many different and good Bible translations out there into English some of maybe the not so great translations for this section will talk about

God wiping away sin or the fancy pants word is expiate sin this idea that all he is doing he is seeing our ledger it is full of red he is taking out the red okay he is just wiping away he is dry erase erasing our white board okay and that's it but it can't be just that propitiation isn't simply just wiping away the red ink or overlooking our wrong doings I think it's important to consider this because if it were merely that God would not be just why because sin would go unpunished that would also suggest that God is at most just irritated with sin but that he wouldn't have a wrathful hatred against sin and yet throughout scripture God his anger burns against sin his wrath is kindled is kindled against sin he must justly punish evil because he is righteous and to do otherwise isn't just

God being unjust it is to deny himself and God can't deny himself so to propitiate means to avert God's just anger against sin by satisfying his perfect justice through paying the full penalty the full cost of our sin that is what it is except that if we were to pay this penalty ourselves we would be utterly undone we would still be in a hopeless state but because God isn't just perfectly just he is also perfectly merciful it means we have hope and this ties into the intro when I talked about the inability to embrace and enjoy mercy and justice in this life because it is something that only God can truly do propitiation what it does is it recognizes that we are sinful people under the righteous anger of God and therefore it encompasses both

God's forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God this is where the cross becomes central only at the cross of Christ where the perfect savior shed his blood for us can God's mercy and his justice be fulfilled at the same time this is what Paul is saying when he says that God is both the just and the justifier in verse 26 God has not set aside his righteous wrath instead he has directed it towards himself in Christ the judge not skipping over justice he says you are rightly condemned but but even more than that what does it mean it means I'm going to take on the punishment I'm going to wipe away the sins but I'm also going to reconcile you to myself how because now you have the righteousness of Christ that is given to you the cross is central it is central to what it means to be reconciled to God, to have our sins dealt with. So in the cross we have justice, perfect justice, and perfect mercy meeting. Only God is truly righteous, only he is perfect, only he is consistent in everything he does, only he is true and without fault or lie, so therefore only God can satisfy the righteousness that he demands, and yet here we have Christ who is also fully man, he is our head, he is our representative, and he dies upon the cross in our place as our representative, so then, and we're not even going to touch this, but this is why again the incarnation of Christ is key to all of it.

[ 40 : 51 ] But why not do this work of salvation at the very moment sin enters the world? I think it's a good question because we read Genesis 3, sin enters the world, and then it's centuries and millennia that continue and sin grows and festers and seems to be undealt with and unpunished.

Why does God wait so long? And is his waiting not dealing with that sin? Is it not proof that God, he's actually not as just as he says he is? That he condemns some and let others go unpunished? And this, friends, leads to our third and final word of comfort. Look at verses 24 and 25 with me. We won't read 26, just 24 and 25.

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, and that's our word, but show maybe not, might not be the best translation. Maybe better to say demonstrated, okay? This was to demonstrate God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. God's righteousness is demonstrated in his patience. That's what Paul is referring to in his divine forbearance. You see, God is vindicated. He is merciful. In fact, he is so merciful that the penalty for all the sins and the wickedness, it was delayed. And he is so perfectly just that, and that his justice was so perfectly realized that all the sins that had ever been committed, they were placed and laid upon Christ. So it's not just that the righteousness of Christ was where justice and mercy met. It's where God displayed how merciful and how just he was.

[ 43 : 13 ] Nothing went unpunished. Justice and mercy perfectly demonstrated. So as a summary, to put it all together, and it is thick and it is dense, but it is so important to our faith. So to put it all together, God demonstrates his perfect mercy and justice by delaying the penalty of all sins of all time until Christ came. And then when Christ came, he laid upon him the just judgment so that God's holy wrath is satisfied and we are justified, clothed in a righteousness that is foreign to us, and it is all a gift of God's grace. And friends, this is what the gospel is. This is what redemption is.

This is what makes Christianity so unique. Because number one, it's honest about who we are, and it proclaims a God that we could not even fathom how good and grand and glorious he truly is.

This is the only way mercy and justice can exist harmoniously. The late Tim Keller, he says it this way, God gave himself, God himself gave himself to save us from himself.

Let's end with this. Throughout this section and in the section that follows, starting in verse 27, we see constantly faith. If you go through it and just look how many times faith is mentioned.

By faith, those who believe, by faith, faith, faith in, constantly. Faith is recognized, faith is proclaimed. Verse 28, for we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

[ 45 : 02 ] And I think it's said so many times because we are so prone to have misplaced faith. This can't be as good as it seems. I have to do something. I have to take credit for something.

I have to be shown to be worthy of something. And how do we do that? With our own strength, by our own merit, by our own ingenuity, by our own beauty, by our own goodness.

Or we throw up our hands in hopelessness and we say, I'm not worthy. I can't do it. And instead of looking to Christ, we fall into despair.

This text instead is saying, put your faith in Christ. It doesn't have to be like 100% perfect, redlining faith all your days.

But put it in the right object, friends. Every other object will crumble. It will not support the weight of your hopes and your desires.

[ 46 : 08 ] And the reality is, even if you found something that seemed to be a comparable object, as Christ is, which doesn't exist, but say you did.

You would only boast in it and be proud. And you yourself would not be a source of blessing. But you would be somebody who is like a black hole, where life revolves around you.

People exist for your purpose. No, put your faith in Christ. For we hold that one is justified by faith, apart from works of the law.

Find your comfort in the doctrines of God, of justification, of propitiation. Trusting that God has demonstrated his righteousness and he gives it to you by faith as a gift.