

# Glory in His Righteousness

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Date: 02 April 2021

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, now that I have you distracted for a couple of seconds, let's bring your attention back in. I want us to take a look at a passage that is not normally looked at or considered a Good Friday passage, and that is Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3.

Obviously, the focus of Good Friday is the cross. It is the place where Jesus died. It is the place where our salvation was purchased.

But there was something more that happened on that day. When I ask you the question, when you think about the cross, about Good Friday, what do you think about?

If you're a Christian, if you're one who has put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you would rightly answer, it is the place where Jesus died for me.

It is the place where Jesus died for my salvation. It is where Jesus died so that I could have eternal life.

[ 1 : 13 ] It is the place where Jesus died that I could be free from sin. And when we think of it on that level, that aspect of our response to the cross, Good Friday is a somber event.

Because we understand what took place for us to get salvation, to have eternal life, to be free of our sin.

And we would be correct in thinking all of these things. And in that, we rejoice from a personal perspective. But this evening, I want us to take a look at the cross from the perspective of God. The cross from God's perspective. It's easy for us to look at the cross and see its benefits for us. But have we ever thought, what were the benefits for God?

Today, I want to introduce you to what the Bible teaches about the cross. And I believe it is the chief reason for the cross. It is the chief reason why Jesus died.

[ 2 : 28 ] And it is this. It's so that Jesus Christ could bring glory to God the Father. It is the place where Jesus Christ could bring glory to God the Father.

That Jesus died for the glory of God. It's very easy for us to think that Jesus died for our sin, our salvation, our eternal life.

And that is all true. But I also want us to understand that Jesus died for God's glory. Today's text, we're going to be looking at Romans chapter 3, verses 21 through 31.

Now, if you know anything about the book of Romans, it is a dense, thick book that is filled with theology. It is dense.

And sometimes when we read it, some of the concepts kind of go over us. Or we don't even see it. What truly Paul is sometimes arguing. And I just want to give you a little bit of an overview of the book of Romans, just to help you understand.

[ 3 : 40 ] In fact, if you look at the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans, you have a book that deals with the nitty-gritty aspects of salvation, right? It talks about, it begins with how depraved we were.

Like even our early ancestors in their initial falling of Adam and Eve, and how that sin has affected us going forward.

That we were born with sin. It also teaches us what the actual work of Christ accomplishes. Paul argues quite wonderfully to explain to us the intricate truths of the gospel.

Within the book of Romans, we learn about sanctification or holiness, glorification, and even the issue of what it means to be saved as Israel and what it means to be saved as a Gentile.

But the focus of all its teaching is on this cross. This cross which we think about today on Good Friday.

[ 4 : 46 ] It teaches about the wonderful reality of how Jesus placed God's glory, put up God's glory for the world to see. So let's take a look.

Let's take a look. We're going to read in verse 21. I'm going to read through the first 11 verses here, 21 to 31. It says, 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? Is it excluded? By what kind of law? By the law of works? No, by the law of faith.

[ 6 : 21 ] For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works and the law. Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not 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. All right, when we read that, that is a thick, wordy passage.

And just even grammatically how it's put together is kind of confusing in some ways. But there's two things that I want you to pay particular attention to this evening.

The first is verses 23 through 25. All right? Notice, we all know verse 23. If you've been through Sunday school or any type of a one or children's program, we all know, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[ 7 : 27 ] The message is that there is nobody innocent ever in this world. And that there is this glory of God that we are to become. And if we remember a few months ago, I was talking about even in Genesis, when Adam and Eve were created, they were created in the glory of God.

And from how when they sinned, they stained that glory. And it's been a part of our life ever since. We are not truly what we are supposed to be in Christ.

So now we move on to verse 24. So that we were all of sin, fall short of his glory of God. And then we are justified. And what Paul means is we are now made right in God's eyes by his grace, which we understand is something given to us that we do not deserve, as a gift through the redemption that was the payment that is Christ Jesus.

Verse 23, we were sinned, we couldn't do it. God rescued us. He paid for us. He paid the debt of our sin. And because of that, we are now made right in Christ.

Now I want you to pay attention to verse 25. Whom God put forward as a propitiation.

[ 8 : 52 ] That's a big word, right? That's an often misunderstood word. We got to think about it. But what it means is it's satisfying. So it says when God put forward Jesus Christ as a satisfaction for payment to be received by faith.

So God put forward Jesus Christ in order to pay for our sins. And we earn that or not earn it, but it's credited to us by faith.

By believing in Jesus Christ, we're saved. God cleanses us of all unrighteousness. So that's what it's saying there. And this was to show God's righteousness.

I want you to pay attention here. Because in his divine forbearance, he had passed over former sins. All right?

So that's kind of a summary of the gospel in some very theological thick terms. Now the second thing I want you to focus on is the phrase satisfied God's righteousness.

[ 10 : 04 ] And if you note, that word righteousness comes up four times in this passage. We see it in verse 21. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.

And what he was saying there is the law that was given to us does not make us right. But it's going to be through Jesus Christ and his work on the cross that makes us right.

Verse 22. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We get that faith through that righteousness through faith. Verse 25.

This was to show. This is what we're going to focus on. This is what we're going to focus on. God's righteousness in verse 26. It was his righteousness. It was to show his righteousness at the present time.

All right. I want to put it all together because I want you to see something here. I want you to see something that is so glorious and wonderful that this is the pearl of great price.

[ 11 : 05 ] This is the glory that God let occur on Good Friday. So now we're going to look at the cross from God's perspective.

Now another way to think of the word righteousness is justice. Okay. God's righteousness or his justice is going to be shown on the cross.

And when he says at the present time, he's making reference to Good Friday. All right. So what Paul is saying here is that through the death of Jesus his son, God's one and only son, God's justice or his righteousness was satisfied.

Why is this so important? Have you ever had anybody ask you? I know that's a big introduction, but it's going to make sense in a second here, guys.

Has anybody ever asked you, why did Jesus Christ really have to die? Why couldn't God just forgive us?

[ 12 : 15 ] Why couldn't he just be a good hearted grandpa type of God who forgives and overlooks sins all the time? Right. And often people will say, listen, I forgive people.

You know, there's certain people that owe me money. I forgive those debts. And a lot of people think, you know, why couldn't God do that? Why did God have to be some sort of cosmic angry father with his child to put him on the cross to die for us?

Well, Paul's kind of answering that question. One, as we all know, we fall short. We're sinners. And the reality is God is offended by sin.

God is a violation. Sin is a violation to God. Sin dishonors God.

And when we participate in our rebellious acts, which we have been born into, all those things are wretched.

[ 13 : 27 ] And the Bible teaches that God is holy. He's perfect. And to overlook our sin in order to forgive us would mean that God is not righteous.

And for God to be God, to be perfectly God, to be perfectly loving, to be perfectly holy, to be perfect merciful, he has to always be perfectly righteous.

The reality is God made the rules. He created the law. He's the one who determined how our sin debt was to be paid. And so Jesus goes to the cross on Good Friday to die a death that can only satisfy God.

It's what the text says here. Look at verse 21. What he means by this is we cannot work for it.

We cannot earn it. There's no amount of rules or good behavior that would ever happen because of this. But not only that, God desires to display his justice.

[ 14 : 48 ] Because his justice is a perfect justice. It is a glorious justice. It is a wonderful justice. So before the cross, notice how it said in God's forbearance he passed over.

It's almost throughout the whole entire Old Testament, God withheld his righteousness. It was almost as if God was not fully revealed.

All those times that God walked with Adam and Eve, he met Moses and he communicated to Abraham and he set up all his people.

He was God, but there was something, this glory that was held back. And I want you to explain it. I want you to explain it a little bit.

A lot of people shy away from the God of the Old Testament like he's some big bad ogre. But the fact of the matter is it's the complete opposite.

[ 15 : 54 ] Just check out what Moses writes here in Exodus 34. This is God with Moses writing out the commandments. Okay. And he says, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.

Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, the children's children to the fourth, third and fourth generation. Now notice the attributes that God is singling out here.

He is merciful. And we see this. We've just been studying the book of Ruth and we see how God's kindness, tenderness and mercy is demonstrated to Naomi. We also see that God is patient.

When we read the Old Testament, even Noah, when he destroyed the world with a flood, he allowed thousands of years of wickedness to occur.

And there was finally was too much. That was patience. We understand love and we understand God's faithfulness.

[ 17 : 14 ] But we see that God did not initiate his justice or his righteousness until Good Friday.

Notice in the book of Acts, this is Luke is telling the story of the early church. And there's this interesting dialogue that occurs in both Acts 17 and Acts 14.

And this is Paul sharing the gospel truth with people that have no biblical background whatsoever. They do not know anything of the Jewish faith.

They do not know anything about Yahweh. So they don't have any type of background. But he tells them, he says, the times of ignorance God overlooked.

That God was implementing his mercy before the cross. That there was going to come a time where God cannot overlook man's sin anymore.

[ 18 : 21 ] It said in Acts 17, he says, the times of ignorance God overlooked. But now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness.

Earlier, Acts 14, 16, same kind of conversation. He and Barnabas are sharing the gospel and they actually heal a man. And the people are so excited. They actually think the Greek god Zeus, I forget who it was who could speak, would come.

And that these guys were like the living embodiment. And then he just simply says, in past generations, God allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.

So before the cross, there was this mercy that was sent out.

And this patience, this forbearance that God had for his people. But at the cross, something great, glorious, and frightening happens.

[ 19 : 34 ] God is going to now demonstrate his justice. He held back, but now this righteousness is going to be satisfied on the cross.

What's interesting is the psalmist in Psalm 78 says, Yet he, God, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity.

So that was God already atoning for the faithful iniquity and did not destroy them. He restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath.

The wrath, the wrath that was to be poured out, eventually happened on Good Friday.

Even when we look at the Old Testament saints, the sacrifices that happened in the temple, those were never meant, according to Hebrews, to take away man's sin.

[ 20 : 43 ] But they served as images, foreshadowing, as it were, about what was going to come when the perfect Lamb of God arrived on this earth.

So this day, this day we call Good Friday, was the day that God finally revealed his righteousness to the heavens, to the earth.

And in it, there is glory. So what's so great about God's righteousness?

I want to give you three reasons why this is so great for us and why we are to glory in this wonderful truth that God's righteousness was revealed on the cross for us.

One, the first thing that God's righteousness brings for us is forgiveness. And because we can have forgiveness, we are able to have peace with God.

[ 21 : 52 ] Notice in those preceding verses, it was almost God who had this smoldering resentment kind of building up against people. He was forgiving them, but he wasn't going to let the guilty go.

Something had to happen. And what's interesting is this could not happen without the cross. One author I was reading on this subject said the cross was the great, it's the gathering place of all sin in all the universe throughout all time comes together on Good Friday.

From my present sin, past sin, all the sins are kind of like coming to this place. And you and I couldn't hang on that cross to earn God's forgiveness.

So in his glory, he placed his perfect son. And he poured out his perfect, glorious wrath upon him.

We were too imperfect, too sinful to even withstand, even looking at God's glory. But the son, in his willingness and love for God, desired to go to the cross.

[ 23 : 13 ] You see, my friends, this is God's glory on display. Check out what the psalmist states in Psalm 85.10.

He says, Steadfast love and faithfulness meet. Righteousness and peace kiss each other. At that time, think about it.

It's perfect. The righteousness is brought forward. It's paid the penalty. And now you and I are free. We can be forgiven and have this peace with God.

There's no barrier. There's no stink. There's no foolishness about us. We have Jesus Christ's righteousness on us.

And what's interesting is the saints of the Old Testament knew that this had to happen. And that one day, someone would come to make things right for them.

[ 24 : 14 ] That God's justice would prevail. And they were all looking forward to Good Friday. They were looking to Jesus Christ, the perfect son of God.

The prince of peace. And here is this day. And notice it says in verse 22. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

It's for us. By faith, we can claim this righteousness in our own lives now.

You see, this is what forgiveness brings. The second thing that I want to glory in God's righteousness here is its display of God's perfect, glorious grace.

Look at verse 24. And are justified. Let's talk about we. We are made right by God's grace. By God's unmerited favor.

[ 25 : 17 ] Through the redemption that God that is in Christ Jesus. The reality is you and I, we make no contribution to our salvation.

It is God who is the offended party. It is God the one that the debt is owed to. God is both lawgiver and judge. And since it is all about God, there is nothing that we can do to congratulate ourselves in this.

And God, being fully loving, provides the wonderful penalty for us. You see, everything that happens on that cross that day screams God's grace for us.

None of our works are there. And the reason is, it's so God gets all the glory. Now, let me ask you this question.

Or maybe this is a question you've asked yourself. How do you know if you have received God's free gift of grace? The Bible teaches us quite clearly that morality doesn't get us there.

[ 26 : 35 ] Good works. The Pharisees that walked with Jesus who faced his ire, they were good people. They followed the law. They did moral deeds.

That didn't work. Is it, do we know we've received God's grace if we have knowledge? Well, the Bible actually teaches that demons have perfect knowledge to who Jesus Christ is.

They know who he is, but they are not saved. Is it because of, if we experience conviction of sin? Does that mean we are right with God, that we have received God's free gift?

The truth of the matter is, no. Many people are convicted of sin. In fact, Judas was convicted of the fact that he betrayed Jesus Christ, whom he walked with for three years.

And sadly, he tried to redeem himself. He tried to pay back the money, and he ended up hanging himself in shame. What about assurance of salvation?

[ 27 : 43 ] The knowledge that I am right with God because I believe I am right with God. How can we be certain? The reality is, many people proclaim to know that they are right with God, but they are not.

So how is it that you and I can know that this free gift of God has been given to us by faith in Jesus Christ? Well, remember it said, the Bible says, through forgiveness, we receive Christ's righteousness.

This grace allows us to experience. And the final point I want to make is found in verse 31. Do we then overthrow the law by this faith?

By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law. What that is stating is that if you have been forgiven, renewed, and given a new heart in Jesus Christ, you want to keep the law, not because it saves you, but because you love God.

What is the greatest commitment? That you love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and you love others as yourself. That is a perfect picture of what the Ten Commandments are all about.

[ 29 : 05 ] You see, all of God's laws reflect his holiness. At the cross where sinners are saved, where they're regenerated, where they become new creatures by the power of the Holy Spirit, these are the things that we believers in Christ truly love.

The fact of the matter is, our freedom was paid over 2,000 years ago by Jesus Christ, but ultimately by God the Father who placed us on, when he placed himself on that cross.

The fact of the matter is, Jesus Christ paid the debt to satisfy his Father's righteousness.

Sometimes we think of the cross as a shameful place, and it was.

It had to happen for us to be saved. But it also had to happen for God to be completely God, and in that, we could see his perfect glory.

I want us to finish off with a song, and I'm going to ask Dave to lead us in this song. The original words were written by Isaac Watts, and it's called The Wondrous Cross.

[ 30 : 31 ] I'm just going to read the lyrics here, and I want you to see the focus that he places on God and not himself. He simply says, There's that grace element.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God, All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

That's the holiness. See from his head, his hands, his side, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small. Love, so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, and my all.

My prayer for you and for me is that as we look at this cross, this Good Friday, let us look at it from Christ's perspective, where it was the complete realization of the glorious God in his complete glory.

[ 31 : 57 ] And that is who we worship. That is who we give our life to. So let this song be a closing prayer for us this night.

Father, may we truly understand that this cross truly demands our lives, our all. Father, may you use this message of your righteousness.

May we think about it, ponder upon it, meditate, study it, God. What a blessed time that we live in, that we have the realized gospel, this truth of the cross, that we can understand it and live in light of it.

So thank you, Jesus. Thank you, God. In your most holy, precious, and everlasting name.

Amen.