

Objection: When God is Put on Trial

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[0 : 00] All right, please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3. While you are looking there, and by the way, my name is BK. If you are new visiting, welcome.

I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here. I want to draw your attention to the bulletin. There's a little section on Young Life. And in case, and this is kind of an add-on to what Chris was saying about youth.

Many of you are very familiar with Young Life. And it's kind of being rejigged, reimagined. And what is primarily happening is the leadership of the Rock is going to take primary responsibility over the leadership of Young Life in our city.

This is a really good thing. It allows for continuity. It allows for better supervision. So if you would like to attend, there's going to be a meeting coming up.

You can use your phones. There's a QR code. It'll draw you to the website. And there'll be a meeting coming up. I would encourage you to check it out. You know, a lot of you guys have been connected with Young Life.

[1 : 11] It's got a long history here in Squamish. And like any ministries, there's ups and downs. And I'm excited about this decision. If you know Allie Hewitt, she's kind of got a special story in that she was one of the kids saved through Young Life and became one of the leaders.

But now that she's got two young ones and we're going to spend some time praying for her in a bit. But they've just got compromised immunity systems and that type of thing. It's just a lot of work to continue doing.

So they're going to be looking at bringing on another staff member. So a lot of moving parts going on with it. But as far as parachurch ministries goes, that is one of the ones that we're excited about here.

Because it's meant to share the gospel in some of the most harder-reacher places of the city. High school and junior high, right? Those are tough areas. And I always love the fact that we get to combine our resources.

Just as Dave was talking about Grace Kids 99. Just how Grace Church kind of took over that one. Do bring in the leadership. You've obviously met Chris and bringing leadership to the youth.

[2 : 19] So here's an opportunity to reach the unchurched and to bring them the news of Jesus Christ. So I just thought we'd take some time to pray for them as just they're ramping up and getting things in place.

Dear most holy heavenly Lord, we just give you thanks for Pastor Glenn and the leadership that he's brought to the rock. And just his heart to reach those that are unsaved.

And saved I am, to say that I'm ecstatic would be an understatement that they're taking this type of leadership in young life. That they as a church will be providing the leadership and they'll be bringing on support.

And just making sure there's a level of continuity and support for those that serve in that ministry, oh Father. Lord, we give you thanks for every young soul that has heard the gospel.

But we know the task is greater than that. It's not just a matter of sharing the good news. But upon receiving of that good news and accepting the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 24] Or acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior leads to a lifetime of discipleship. And I pray that we continue to work together to honor our Lord and Heavenly Father with these things.

So Father, I just pray you'll give them much wisdom and understanding in how to do this. I pray for continued building together of your church.

That you are the one doing the work. And we're the ones who are testifying to this work here in Squamish, Father. So this morning we ask that you'd bless their Sunday service. You'd bless them as they prepare these things. In your most holy and precious name. Amen. All right. So we're back in the book of Romans.

Romans chapter 3. And if you've been with us for a while, you'd understand that Paul is not teaching in a church. He's actually teaching in a courtroom. And he is dealing with one of mankind's greatest cases.

[4 : 25] Romans 1 describes Paul as this apostle. And he is the crown attorney in God's courtroom. And with that, he's bringing this divine judgment, charging all humanity with sin and rebelling against God.

We read in chapter 1 that he demonstrated that those who were outside the Jewish faith, the Gentiles, the Greeks, so to speak, the barbarians, they were charged as being guilty. Even when they argued, hey, ignorance. We did not have the knowledge of God. We did not have Moses. We didn't have any of these things. But Paul, as we all know, clearly testified that they did know.

Creation speaks loudly for God. They have consciences which testified against them. Last week in chapter 2, Paul dealt with God's covenant people.

Did not deal with the pagan, but the pious. The very ones who nodded their heads in agreement that the Gentiles were indeed guilty.

[5 : 36] Paul turned the tables. He said, you who call yourself a Jew, you with the law, you with the sign of circumcision are guilty as well.

We heard that Paul laid out his case quite clearly. Even though they had religious rituals does not make one righteous. Possessing the law does not protect you from judgment.

Even having, being circumcised, having received the sign of the covenant, if you do not have the substance of faith, you're still condemned.

As I stated last week, this would have been like a nuclear bomb going off in this courtroom. This morning, we're going to hear from the accused.

We're going to hear about the objections. Romans 3 is set against a series of questions that Paul anticipated, that Paul knew were coming.

[6 : 45] The fact is, Paul has been ministering for 13 to 15 years. He's been traveling the known world at that time. He's heard these stories. In fact, Paul, once a Pharisee, who was the Jew of all Jews, who claimed too that he too once foolishly thought that the knowledge of the law and circumcision made him right with God, knows these objections.

He's heard them. He's had them. So this morning, if you can imagine with me, it's almost in this courtroom, the defendants, the Jews, rise up.

They jump up. And they're yelling, Objection, objection. And just like that, this one trial starts firing these questions at God.

We're going to see that these objections are quite typical of us all. When we've been found guilty of an offense, we make up the same objections.

Today's passage is just as much about the human's heart, his final defense when we are caught red-handed.

[8 : 01] In fact, we've been doing these things since the Garden of Eden. We shift the blame. The woman you gave me, God, the serpent deceived me.

It's the, it's not my fault defense. And ultimately, as we're going to see, they, 2,000 years ago, do the exact same thing that we do.

We point the finger at God. We make the statements, if things are so messed up, God, isn't that on you?

If I'm broken, didn't you make me this way? God, if you're sovereign, aren't you responsible?

I don't know how to say this, but I need you to listen to me here. There is no greater arrogance than the creature, the creator, putting the creator on trial.

[9 : 17] What we are reading here is the height of arrogance. We blame God for our pain.

We blame God for our consequences. We accuse God of injustice. We question God's judgment. We murmur and we complain. But as we're going to hear, hear, hear, hear, in Romans 3, Paul dismantles every one of these arguments, or should I say excuses.

In this passage, Paul is not defending himself. Make no mistake. Paul is actually defending the character of Almighty God.

So what we're going to see today is Paul just not confronting sin. He's confronting the insanity of questioning God's righteousness.

[10:27] And if last week was about the guilt of the religious, this week is about the integrity of God. The real question isn't, why does God judge?

The real question is, why do we keep accusing the only one who is truly righteous? So let's look at this text.

Listen closely. Because the courtroom is going to get really animated this morning. So the first objection that they state is, what's the advantage of being Jewish?

This is found in Romans 3, 1, 2. Let's look at verse 1 together. Then, what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?

Now, it's as if someone is saying, hold on, Paul. Hold on here. If you're saying that outward religion doesn't save, that circumcision doesn't count, that we, the chosen people, remember, we're the ones that you called Abraham to set forth.

[11:39] You gave Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then Moses, and all these people, the chosen people. Are you saying we're guilty?

Then what was the point of it all? What was the point of the law? What was the point of circumcision? What was all the point of being called your people?

And let's be honest. This is a great question. This is a very logical question. But here's the thing. It's not just a theological question. It's an identity crisis question.

Like, if we weren't in, who are we? You set us apart. For what? To be condemned?

Just like the Gentiles? God, please help me with this. You see, all their hopes were pinned to this understanding that we're God's people.

[12:39] Now, let's pay attention to what Paul says. His answer is surprising. After what we've heard, you'd expect him to say there is no advantage. But he doesn't. He says much in every way to begin with.

The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. Now, what Paul is doing here, he's affirming their advantage, but he's redefining it.

You see, the value of being Jewish was never in their immunity from judgment. The advantage to the Jew was the proximity to revelation.

What that means is they were close to God. They had the word. They heard his voice. They saw his signs.

They were stewards of his holy words, the oracles of God. But here's the thing. Those things weren't meant to protect them.

[13:47] It was to make sure that they had no excuse. This is massive what's happening here. Never minimize the gift that God gave them.

In a world of pagan ignorance and idol worship, God gave one and only one nation the truth.

And then when we read history, we see how people blindly sacrificed their children just so the hopes that their crops would be fruitful the next day.

That people would know that it was wrong to kill, but they did not know that there was an offense. And how do we respond to those things?

To live with these other gods who did not communicate would have been an extreme form of an anxiety. I don't know about you, but I've had that to a much lesser degree.

[14:57] I remember when I was working with CESIS, I got dumped into a city and said, start the investigation. I had no idea what was going on.

I didn't know who is who. And I was anxious. How do I do things? And it wasn't until my supervisor boss says, hey, come ride with me for a couple of months to learn how to do it.

Without that, no matter how clever, how intelligent, how trained I was, it was never going to make a difference. You see, by God giving the Jews, God gave Israel the greatest blessing.

It was a blessing that wasn't earned. It was a blessing that wasn't deserved. But it was absolutely pure grace. He handed them the law, the covenants, the promises, the prophets.

In fact, Psalm 147 says, he declares his word to Jacob. He has not dealt thus with any other nation.

[16:08] They stood apart. They had the knowledge. They had the book. God spoke to them here. Let me pause here.

Because this isn't any sort of church history. I think if we're completely honest with ourselves, we are more like the Jews of Romans 3 than we realize.

We've got Bibles in our hands. In fact, there's multiple ones in our homes. We have sermons in our earbuds, study notes in our margins, and the opportunity to learn.

We've grown up in churches. We've heard truth our whole lives. We're surrounded literally with the oracles of God. And that, my friends, is a massive privilege.

But here's the thing. It's not a guarantee. Because what Paul is doing here is showing us something that should humble every one of us.

[17:16] You see, access to the truth is not the same as acceptance of the truth. Possessing the word of God is not the same as obeying the word of God.

The Jews had the oracles of God and still rejected the God of the oracles. And today we carry Bibles.

We still live like the world. See, the problem isn't with advantage. The problem is what we've done with it. It's like holding the cure to the disease but never taking it.

It's like having a guaranteed seat on the lifeboat but never climbing in. You see, God's word is not a religious relic.

Scholars get asked all the time, why didn't God save the original manuscripts of the Bible? In case you didn't know, we do not have an original manuscript.

[18:22] And what they believe is if we had them, those manuscripts would be worshipped more than what the words stated, right? We'd put it on display.

Go to Rome. See it. Bow down. Like I said, God's word is not a religious relic. It is the rescue plan. See, when Paul says the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God, that word entrusted means stewardship. They were supposed to guard it, live it, teach it.

But instead they trusted that by having it and not heeding it, they'd be out of danger. It's the same danger for us.

We've heard the word. We've read the word. But the question that I always ask and any pastor will ask is, are you submitted to the word? And this is the first objection Paul tackles.

[19:23] Is there any value in being a Jew? And the answer is absolutely. But God's gifts are not to be worshipped. They're to be stewarded. It's not about who you are ethically, ethnically.

It's about what you've done with what you've been given. In church, if you've been raised around the truth, the question is whether that is a gift.

It is. The real question is, has God's word moved from your shelf or better yet your night table to your soul? Because with great privilege comes great accountability.

This is the first objection. And it is overruled. The second objection is found in verse 3 and 4.

Verse 3 says, What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithfulness nullify the faithfulness of God? Now you need to understand that defendants is scrambling right now.

[20:32] They're cornered. The truth of their own guilt is coming out. And they're reaching for new angles this time. They're not defending themselves, but they're accusing God.

You're saying we were unfaithful, but doesn't that make God unfaithful? And I mean, he gave us promises. He chose us. If we failed, isn't that God's failure?

If we failed at doing these things, should not the blame be on God? You understand what's going on here? God, we're not guilty.

You are. This is known as a dangerous twist. It's the ancient version of a modern lie. If I fall away, it's not my fault.

God let me down. I'm quite sure if you have not said it, you have heard it. We have met many people who've fallen away from the faith, fallen away from church.

[21:36] And somewhere in the story is God let them down. Now, when we read this text, it says by no means.

All right. The Greek phrase used there is actually the strongest possible rejection of that statement. That is literally Paul taking the table and throwing it over. No way. How dare you accuse God of such a things? God forbid.

Absolutely not. How can you even think about it? In fact, Paul uses this term ten times in Roman. It's Paul slamming the gavel, objecting out of order.

Truth, you can't handle the truth. It's that kind of statement. His response would have been like thunder. In the courtroom. By no means.

[22 : 39] Man, that is twisted. Why? Because God's faithfulness doesn't depend on our faithfulness.

Do you get that? God's faithfulness doesn't depend on our faithfulness. Can I get an amen? Amen. Amen. God's promises are rooted in his character, not in our conduct. Verse 4. Let God be true, though everyone were a liar, as it is written, that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged.

Let me explain what that means. That is a quote directly from Psalm 51. If you are not familiar with Psalm 51, it is a wonderful psalm.

It is a psalm related to David after he had been confronted by the prophet Nathan for his adultery against Bathsheba, his murder against her husband.

[23 : 52] That David lied. He schemed. And what's interesting is when the prophet Nathan confronts him, David doesn't defend himself. David doesn't play victim.

David doesn't shift the blame. David simply bowed low and declared, God, you are right and I am wrong.

Forgive me for I am a sinner and I have sinned. Notice it says that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you judge.

What David knew that these Jews are ignoring is that God had every right to judge him. And whatever verdict God handed down, it would be righteous because God is righteous.

And what we read from the tongue of David is that we see that is a mark of true repentance. Here's the thing.

[25 : 03] God's character is never on trial, but ours is. You see, God doesn't shift like shadows. God doesn't lie. God doesn't break covenants.

And even when people are unfaithful, God remains faithful. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2.13, if we are faithless, he remains faithful.

Why? For he cannot deny himself. You get that? His faithfulness is tied to his character. It is who he is. We may break promises, but God never breaks a single promise.

What does that mean? You may walk away from God, but God stays true to his word. You may change, but God never does.

Why is this important? Because if you're a Christian here today and you've blown it, you've failed, you've wandered, you've doubted, listen to me here.

[26 : 21] God's love for you is not built on your performance. You understand that? God's love for you is not built on your performance.

God's covenant with you doesn't rise or fall with your obedience. That doesn't mean there are no consequences.

The fact of the matter, we all know do well. Sin leaves scars, right? We have a saying at my old church, choose to sin, choose to suffer. But it means that God will be faithful to forgive when you truly repent.

That's why the writer of Psalm 103 says, He, being God, does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

And as far as the east from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. Don't let the enemy convince you that God has turned his back on you.

[27 : 26] That is a lie from the pit of hell. If there's distance between you and God, I can assure you, it wasn't God who moved away from you.

The second objection tries to drag God's character down with our failure. But Paul will not have it. Let God be true and every man a liar.

Because even when we fail, even when we walk away, even when we break every vow, God is faithful. Objection over rule.

The third objection, that faithful day of court, happens in verses 5 to 6. Is God unjust to punish us if our sin glorifies him?

Verse 5. But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us?

[28 : 35] And it says, I speak in a human way. Here it is. Another last-ditch effort. The flipping of the narrative again.

It essentially says, if my sin makes God look good, why is he still judging me for it? My friends, what we're hearing here isn't simply bad theology.

It's blasphemy wrapped in clever logic. It's the kind of thinking you hear all the time. God's gracious, right? So me messing up just gives God a chance to show his mercy to me.

My brokenness highlights God's beauty. My sin sets the stage for God's mercy. If God's going to be glorified anyway, why should I be punished?

If my sin causes God's grace to be shown more towards others, isn't that a good thing? Paul hears this logic and he's disgusted.

[29 : 55] Look at what he says. He goes, I speak in a human way. That's Paul's way of saying, this isn't heaven's logic. That is the kind of garbage argument that comes from corrupt human hearts.

And then he hammers the gavel again in verse 6. By no means. For then how could God judge the world? Translation, if your logic were true, no one could ever be judged for anything.

If evil brings about good, then evil becomes good. If sin leads to glory, then sin becomes holy. There's a term for that.

It's called moral insanity. When I was at seminary, you get to meet a lot of different people from different walks of life. And there was a friend of mine who was at seminary and he was afraid to leave his career, but his fiancée at the time says, hey, I will continue working.

She had a job in some industry that would transfer. I'll stick with you. We'll be able to pay for seminary. She told him and we'll be able to go. But one of his fears was he did not want to go as a single man, but during their engagement period, she was unfaithful to him.

[31 : 19] So upon, he had already left his career and now was heading to seminary and she came back with the statement, well, it's okay that I was unfaithful to you because I allowed you to quit your job and commit to go in seminary.

That makes everything okay. That's like saying, your honor, me robbing the bank gave the police a great opportunity to shine. The objection is ridiculous.

It is overruled. What Paul is doing here, he's not simply protecting God's reputation. He's protecting God's right to judge. And if God loses that right, everything falls apart.

If God can't judge righteously, then evil wins. If God can't punish sin, then there's no hope for justice. If God's wrath is unfair, then God isn't holy.

He is compromised. And that is unthinkable. Our God is holy. Our God is just.

[32 : 30] And that means God must judge sin. Now listen, I know we live in a day and age where we struggle with this part of God's character.

We love God's love. We're fine with God's mercy. We're drawn to his compassion. God's grace. We love God's grace.

But God's wrath. God's wrath. God's judgment. Makes me squirm, right? Makes us uncomfortable. Fact is, we want a God who forgives, but not a God who punishes. We want heaven, but we do not want justice. But here's the truth.

You can't have a righteous God who doesn't judge unrighteousness. You can't have a God of truth who ignores lies.

[33 : 33] You can't have a holy God who tolerates evil. God's wrath isn't an overreaction. In fact, it is the right, correct action.

And here's the thing. He will judge perfectly, impartially, and eternally and righteously. Usually, we tell the story if a robber should break into your home and rob you and set off a gun and kill your child.

And you were in court the next month and they were trying him and the judge says, it's okay. I love you, Mr. Robber, now murderer.

I will let you go. How would you feel as the parent in that case? You would know that justice has not occurred. You would no longer trust the judge.

Would you still see God as holy and righteous? No, you wouldn't. Revelation 20, 12, it says, and I saw, this is John the apostle, and I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.

[34 : 55] And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. The fact of the matter is, there is a final court session coming, and no one is going to be excused.

Better yet, no clever defense will stand. There will be no, but God, my sin helped you look good, is going to fly.

In fact, every mouth will be silenced, every heart will be exposed, and every sin will be judged. Unless you're hidden in Christ, the verdict is sealed.

Paul won't let the defendant twist the courtroom into a circus. He's guarding the justice of God because God must be just, or he isn't God at all.

The third objection, overrule. Now we come to the fourth objection. It's simply, if my sin brings God's glory, why am I still being condemned?

[36 : 10] Let's look at verse 7. But if through my lie, God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?

You see, this is no longer an honest question. This is a sarcastic sneer. This is someone standing in the courtroom saying, if my lying makes God look more truthful, if my sin magnifies God's grace, if the gospel gets clear because I am dark, why would you punish me?

Can you hear it? The theological twisting that is going on? You see, this is someone who's been around the truth.

This is someone who's heard the gospel. And instead of receiving it, they pervert it. And in verse 8, they take it further.

And why not do evil that good may come? As some people slanderously charge us with saying, their condemnation is just.

[37 : 21] You see, that's how far this madness goes. It turns the gospel into license. It turns grace into a loophole. It turns sin into strategy.

Let us do evil that good may come. Let me say this as clearly as I can. There is no greater abuse of the gospel than using it to justify sin.

There is no greater abuse of the gospel than using it to justify sin. This is the kind of twisted thinking that says, it's okay if I sin.

God will forgive me anyway. Grace covers everything, so I don't have to fight this temptation. Jesus died for me.

I really don't need to change. See, here's the thing. That's not repentance. That's not discipleship. That's manipulation. That's manipulation. And Paul simply says, their condemnation is just.

[38 : 35] He doesn't argue anymore. He doesn't explain. He doesn't reason with them. He just pronounces the verdict, guilty, condemned, deserving of judgment. Because when you mock God's grace, when you twist the gospel into a license for rebellion, when you use his mercy as fuel for your sin, you're not just confused anymore.

You're corrupt. That's big. Let's bring it to today.

You've heard this thinking. Maybe you've even flirted with it. God will understand. No one is perfect. Everyone messes up.

I know it's wrong, but I'll repent later. If I can tell you in the most unequivocal way, that is exceptionally dangerous thinking.

Why? Because that's not grace-driven faith. That's just simply fire insurance. That's a heart that wants the benefit of God without the authority of God.

[39 : 52] Let's be honest. It isn't a theological thought. It's a deeply personal thought. It's the couple who continually gossip and tear down others, yet seek to serve on Sundays.

It's the woman who talks about Jesus, but hasn't forgiven her sister in 10 years. It's the couple who prays at dinner, but dishonors God with their viewing habits. It's the Christian who sins boldly and then hides behind.

It's all grace. This is what Paul is targeting. Let us do evil that good may come. That's not just bad theology.

That's evil theology. That's the voice of Judas. Yeah, I betrayed him, but God used it, didn't he? It's the voice of the serpent.

Did God really say you won't surely die? In fact, it's the oldest lie in the book, twisting truth to justify sin.

[40 : 58] Here's the warning. You can almost imagine Paul turning to the crowd, those in the courtroom. God's grace is real.

And his forgiveness is deeper than your worst day. But, but, it is never an excuse to keep sinning. That's why later we will come to Romans 6.1. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. Absolutely not.

Here's a quote that I found. It's grace is not a permission slip. It's a rescue rope. It pulls you out. It doesn't let you stay in.

So, if you're here today, and you've been playing that game, living in sin while quoting scripture, mocking God while asking his mercy, stop it.

[42 : 06] Stop it. Paul says it's straight. Your condemnation is just. The courtroom has heard the last objection.

The defense is shredded. Every mouth is silent. And the verdict is just around the corner. The conclusion is the defendant has no defense.

The objections have been raised. The arguments have been answered. And every single objection has been overruled. That's it.

The defense has nothing left to say. The religious defendant, the one who thought his rituals would save him, who thought his knowledge gave him advantage, who thought God owed him mercy, now stands exposed.

His mouth is closed. His case is crushed. And the courtroom waits for the final verdict. But make no mistake, this isn't the story of ancient Israel.

[43 : 22] It's the story of every heart in this room. Every one of us has tried to justify ourselves. At one time or another, we've clung to our religious record.

We've pointed fingers at others. We've made excuses. We've twisted grace. We've questioned God. But in the end, all our objections collapse under the weight of God's righteousness.

This is the truth. God is never the one on trial. We are. God is not unjust.

We are unrepentant. God is not to blame. We are without excuse. You see, this text is not about Paul defending theology.

It's about defending God's glory. So what is the question? What does this beg for us? So what does this mean? It means if you've been hiding behind excuses, it's time to come clean.

[44 : 27] If you've been trusting in your church attendance, your Bible knowledge, your good behavior, perhaps your last name, it's time to repent.

if you've been using grace as a cover for compromise, it's time to surrender.

Because the courtroom is not done yet. Next week, the verdict will be read over all humanity. None is righteous. No, not one.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But we thank God because that is not the end of the story.

The gospel. The gospel. The good news is coming. And here's the thing. And I hope you understand. We're not saved by a loophole.

[45 : 28] We're not saved by a technicality. We are saved because God offered up a substitute in that courtroom for us.

And that was His Son, Jesus Christ, the righteous one who now stands in our place. I don't want to rush there too quickly.

I want to let the silence of the courtroom settle in on you this week. I want your excuses to die. I want your objections to fall away.

And if you're ready to stop arguing, if you're ready to stop accusing, if you're ready to stop performing, then I ask you to fall on your face before the judge and throw yourself on the mercy of the court.

Because the only verdict that leads to life is the one that admits like David did, I am guilty and I need a Savior. God, have mercy on me.

[46 : 39] Let's pray. Father, You know our hearts. You know our stories.

You know our baggage. You know our lies. You know our insecurities. You know our excuses. You see them all.

You know our complaints. You hear our murmuring. Father, let us be David quick to confess, quick to repent. There was a quote last week that resounds in my head that it's the hypocrite who clings to these things, but it's the disciple of Jesus Christ who admits to these things.

And he trusts on the Lord who says that he will forgive. And he ties it to his character that this is my promise.

This is my covenant with you. If you repent, I will forgive. Your sins will not be counted against you. They will be as far from the east as to the west.

[47 : 58] Father, I just ask that Your Word would burrow into our hearts this morning. Would Your Word get into those parts of our minds where we put up walls?

We call them reasons, but they're really excuses. They're really lies, even though we know the truth. We may claim ignorance.

Father, let us fear You. Let us fear Your righteous judgment.

Let that fear drive us to our knees with the knowledge that if we repent, there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.

For those here who are being accosted by the lies of Satan, I ask that You would protect them.

[49 : 06] May they rely on the sword of the Spirit. May they cling to the promises You've given to us. May they hold the shield of faith up, O Father. The greatest weapon that Satan has is these arrows of doubt that He shoots at us.

Father, forgive us for not raising up our shields, for thinking that we can dodge them, hide from them. Look, my good works mean Satan won't bother me anymore.

So, Father, on this day, how apt the song that we sang this morning about how You will hold us fast.

You will hold me fast. If we need to continue to sing that song every minute of every moment this week, let it be so.

We ask these things in Your most tender-hearted, loving grace and righteousness. Amen.