

Bibles???

Honor and pray for Veterans.

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the Book of Romans 3

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to believers in Rome about the fundamentals of Christianity.

What is the Gospel of Grace?

How can we be made right before God?

Why do we need Jesus??

And I have repeatedly used the illustration since we started Romans, that Paul begins the letter by laying the black velvet cloth of the depravity of man apart from Christ.

The sinner who walks in open rebellion to God – he rejects that God is holy, that God will accept him or her just the way they are.

The self-righteous individual who thinks that they are good – certainly they are better than the sinner who walks in open rebellion to God – so God must accept them.

The religious individual who is self-deceived into thinking they have a right standing before God because they follow a list of do's and don't's or because they belong to a certain religion.

All three of these groups have failed to meet God's standard for righteousness – which is perfection.

And therefore – subject to God's righteous judgment – because He is holy and He is just.

So how are we made right before God's eyes?

That is what Paul is going to do in our text this morning as he unveils the diamond – as he reveals God's answer to man's depravity.

And that loved ones – is the gospel of grace.

Let's pray...

Read Text

So – Paul is going to make a transition in our text this morning –

So I want to provide a little background before his transitions –

Let's look back at verse 19

[Rom 3:19-20 NKJV] 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

These two verses sum up all of Ch. 3

All mankind, the whole human race, is condemned under sin

there isn't one person who is perfectly good

Everyone has broken the law of God

whether the law as revealed to Moses and Israel (Jew)

or the law of God written on the heart (gentile)

Everyone stands guilty and condemned before God

Paul says that no one is just in God's sight based on their adherence to the law.

In fact – the law is powerless – because it was never intended to make us righteous.

The law was given to show us that we are sinners, to show us how far short we fall of God's standard.

So – the question is – why is Paul telling us this?

He wants us to feel the pressure; he wants us to see the desperateness of our situation – apart from Christ.

Only when we grasp this, that of ourselves, we are utterly without hope, will we see and understand the greatness of our rescue.

How can God be both perfectly just and still forgive sinners?

That is what Paul is going to show us.

[Rom 3:21-26 NKJV] 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

One of the things that Lord put in my heart this year – as I have studied His Word, is some of the transition words we find in scripture.

For example, on Wednesday night's as we have been going through 1 Kings – we see the word nevertheless repeatedly, and often, it is a transition word that refers to God's grace – even during times when we are unfaithful – God is still faithful.

King Solomon's heart turned against God nevertheless God didn't tear the kingdom from his hands, He tore it from his son's hands.

God's grace.

And here in Romans 3 – we have another transition, "but now"

If I was doing a sermon on big butts of the bible – this verse would be the biggest butt.

Because in verse 21 –

Paul is drawing a contrast between what the law could not do and what the gospel of grace does.

The law reveals man's unrighteousness.

But the gospel of grace reveals God's righteousness .

Under the law, we were guilty – spiritually dead – in need of a savior.

But Paul is going to make the point – that under God's grace,

we are spiritually alive –

we are declared righteous in Christ.

We are forgiven by His blood and are provided salvation by faith in Christ.

Remember, before Jesus died on the cross – (under the law) man attempted to please God through self-effort and self-righteousness.

However, in spite of all man's best efforts and willingness to do what was right – man failed.

Man continued to sin.

And here is the problem with the law –

The law did not allow for disobedience

You break the law – you are a law breaker

The other problem with the law was that the law was powerless to compel anyone to obedience.

This is what Paul has been saying throughout chapter three.

But the problem is that some of the Jews during this time and even some people today – they might acknowledge that, yes, they are sinners – but they are not satisfied with the gospel of grace –

they think that there has to be something more than Jesus

There has to be something more than simply accepting Jesus by faith

There has to be something more that is required to make me righteous before God.

I know – works!

I know – sacrifices!

I know, Jesus + something!!!!

And church – that goes against everything that the scriptures tell us.

Jesus said, “It is finished”

The veil was torn from the top to the bottom

We don't provide our own righteousness

God provides our righteousness

It is a gift

It is like a garment

For those of us who put out faith and trust in Jesus Christ, God removes our filthy garment and He clothes us with a new clean garment that is provided only by Jesus.

This is the righteousness that God demands.

This is the righteousness that God approves.

His righteousness

We need to be right in His eyes.

And I think this is very important for many of us.

Because many times, we think righteousness is approval not from God but approval from our neighbor, our husband, our wife, our children, the society we live in, the church we go to.

And we hear someone tell us -

We don't look like a Christian

We don't walk like a Christian

We don't talk like a Christian

We are still flawed.

I had you make a note of the phrase apart from the law –

Here is why –

What if righteousness isn't something that is always determined by behavior but instead given by God in Christ.

We are so used to thinking that good people are good people on the basis of what they do or what they don't do.

So you are a good person if you do good things and a bad person if you do bad things

But whether we want to admit it or not – the bad things that we do usually outweigh the good things that we do.

And no matter how good we want to be – it will never be good enough to earn the approval that God demands.

But I go to church

But I carry my bible and I highlight the things that pastor tells me to highlight

I serve in the church

I do this, I do that

But the truth is – it doesn't matter how good we are or what we do or how well we do it.

If we are doing it in order to receive approval from God, it will never be enough.

Because there is only one thing that God requires and only one thing that God wants and that is perfection

And so when Paul says that it is a righteousness apart from the law – he is saying it is a righteousness that cannot be earned or achieved.

And what Paul is saying here at the end of verse 1 is that this is not something new –

In the Old Testament,

Enoch walked with God

Noah walked with God and was considered just

Abraham - a man who was declared “righteous” because of his faith, not because of his works.

[Gen 15:6 NKJV] 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

So we see that it is a righteousness that comes by faith and confidence in the promises of God.

All of these were found just by God apart from the law

You see church,

When a sinner by grace through faith put his or her trust on the work on the cross by Jesus

Since the Father is satisfied with His Son

He is also satisfied with those who are His through faith

Turn with me to 1 John 5

[1Jo 5:11-12 NKJV] 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

So for the person who says, I love God but I don't love Jesus or

I love God, I want peace with God, I want to be a good person and I want to do good things, but I don't embrace the gospel and I don't want what Jesus has to offer – they will never experience righteousness.

22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

The righteousness of God comes through the act of putting your faith in Jesus Christ.

God doesn't make a distinction between whether you are Jewish or whether you are Gentile. If you believe, you receive God's righteousness.

And it is a righteousness that is required by all.

But why?

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

All have sinned

All have missed the mark

Since all people are sinners – by nature and by choice, we can't help but sin and continue to sin.

Write these verse down -

[Gal 3:22 NKJV] 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The NLT –

[Gal 3:22 NLT] 22 But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

[1Jo 1:8 NKJV] 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

[Psa 53:3 NKJV] 3 Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; [There is] none who does good, No, not one.

The recurring theme in these verse is sin –

And because of sin, we fall short of the glory of God

We fall short of His standard and we continue to fall short of His standard.

By the way –

The phrase “fall short” is in the present tense

So Paul is saying that everyone in the past has fallen short

Everyone in the present has fallen short

And everyone in the future will continue to fall short

Paul uses a Greek word that is used multiple times in the New Testament with different translations.

In Mark 10:21-

As Jesus confronts the rich young ruler –

[Mar 10:21 NKJV] 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

In the parable of the prodigal son –

[Luk 15:14 NKJV] 14 "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

And John uses the same word in

[Jhn 2:3 NKJV] 3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

To lack, to want, to be in want of

Yet, we have all sinned and because we have all sinned, we can never achieve the perfect standard God desires –

But here is the good news

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

There is nothing in us

There is nothing that we can do to be deserving of being saved. This is very important for us to grasp.

Because there are people in our lives who will say something like this –

I want to be a Christian, I want to have a relationship with God, but I want to clean myself a little before I do.

I have this addiction I want to end or I have this to work on or maybe I will need to go to church for a while and turn my life around – get things in order.

The problem with that is that the bible says that it is not the absence or the presence of anything that we have done or anything we continue to do - we must come to Him by faith.

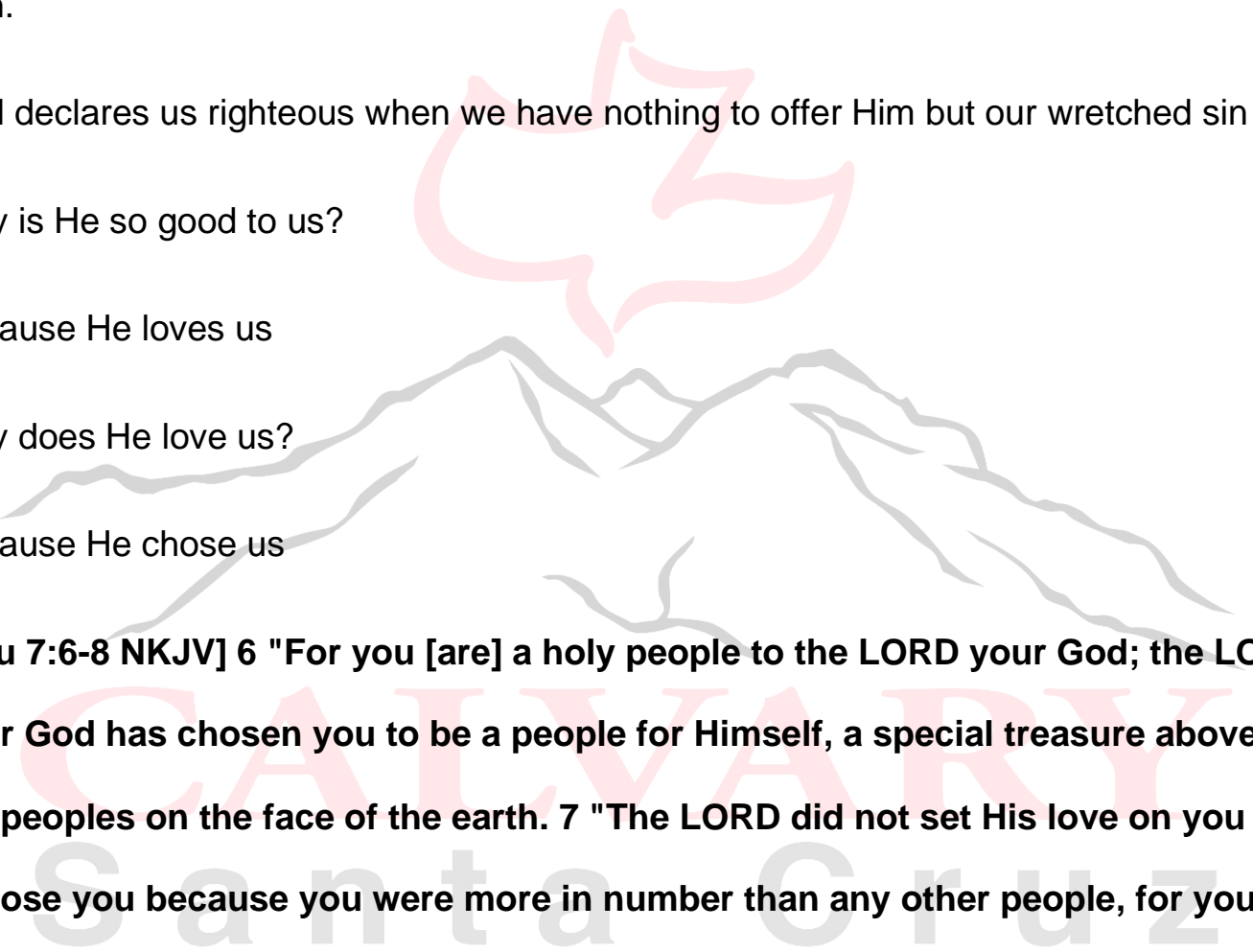
God declares us righteous when we have nothing to offer Him but our wretched sin

Why is He so good to us?

Because He loves us

Why does He love us?

Because He chose us



[Deu 7:6-8 NKJV] 6 "For you [are] a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

For the individual who thinks that the God of the Old Testament is different than the God of the New Testament –

God has always saved people on the basis of grace, on the basis of faith

If we are going to have hope or deliverance, we need to believe that God is going to do it.

God offers salvation to the undeserved

God offers salvation based on His love

God offers salvation on the basis of grace

I had you make a note of the word redemption –

It has the idea in the Greek of paying the ransom in order to be released

Our purchase price is the redemption of Jesus

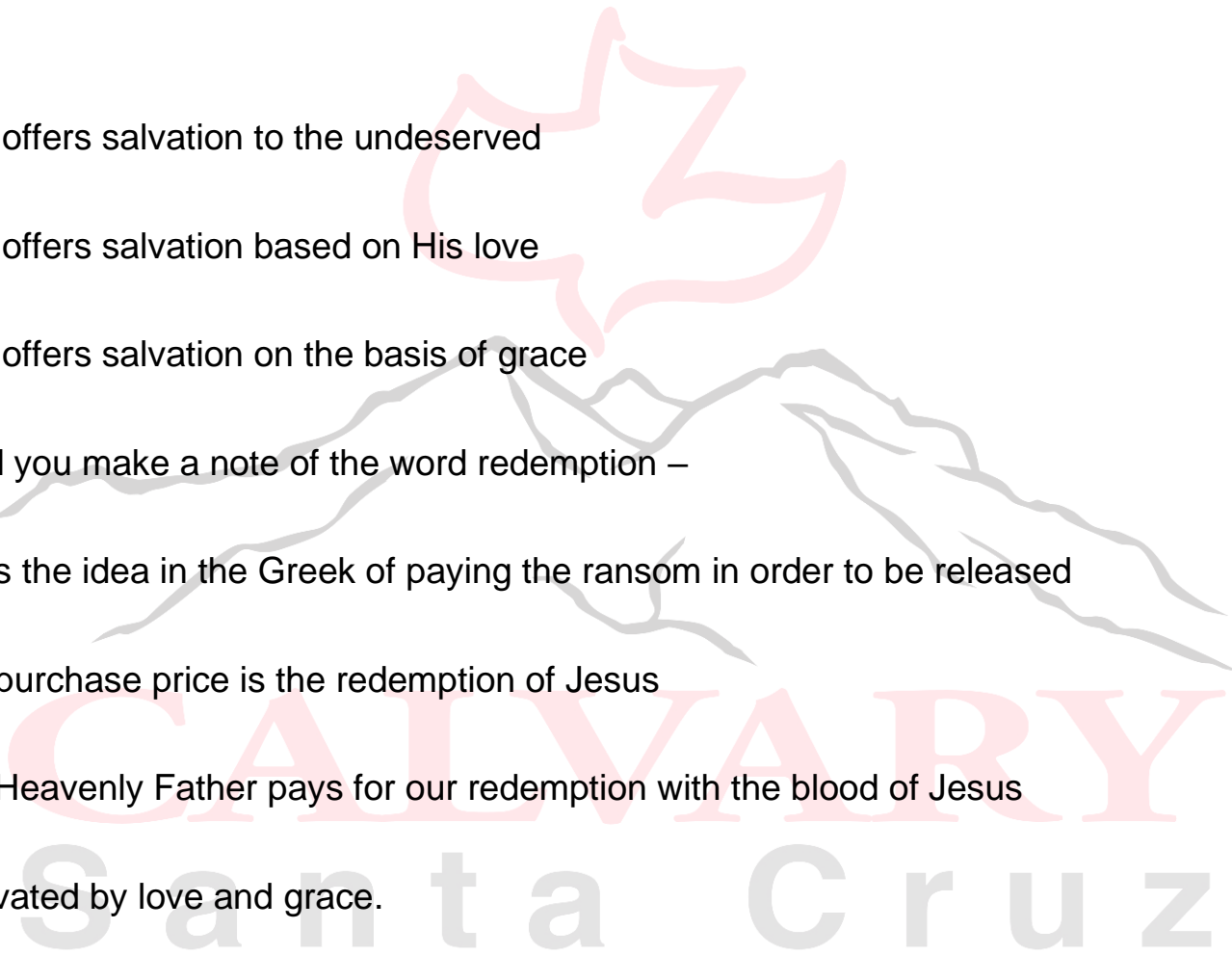
Our Heavenly Father pays for our redemption with the blood of Jesus

Motivated by love and grace.

He decides to purchase us from sin on the basis of a sacrifice

And so we are freed from sin

But there is so much more



Not only are we freed from sin, but now, we enter into service on behalf of God.

25 whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

When Paul says Jesus is our propitiation by His blood, he means that Jesus is our mercy seat.

Remember, the mercy seat was the cover on top of the Ark of the Covenant

He is the one who covers over our sin by offering His perfect life

But what about the sins of those that lived before Jesus died on the cross – the Old Testament saints?

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were meant to be pictures of the coming ultimate sacrifice.

God was tolerant and forgave sins in the Old Testament because there would be a day when Jesus would come and die for all their sins.

God knew that there was going to be a satisfying solution to the problem of sin

God's righteousness is seen in His willingness and His power to forgive sin

God's righteousness is seen in His longsuffering and putting up with man's sin, and putting on man's sin and putting away man's sin

God's righteousness is seen in His perfect justice

And God's righteousness is seen in His willingness and ability and commitment to be the justifier.

God takes care of everything

And because He takes care of everything – He gets all the glory.

And therefore, we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone

Not on the basis of what we have done or haven't done

But on the basis of what Jesus has done

And if we come to Him on those terms – He will accept us.

AMEN!

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'