

Romans Chapter 3: (27-30)

The first start is that we have to understand that we live in a world created by God. God is creator; universe is created in him, through him for him. We are not the center. If God is the center he is the ruler and God's righteousness is most important to Him.

So if we are made in image of God we have got his moral code hardwired to us, man's righteousness is conformity to God's standard of behavior, it is ethical, it is also legal and God's righteousness is simply that He acts within His own character. God's righteousness has a two-edge sword as it were, on one side it is salvation where there is faithfulness to His promises, and on the other hand is judgment too. So if we sin He has to judge and He has to save us as well. Now the whole problem is that we have seen that everyone is under sin, everyone is under the legal position of death.

Because the wrath of God is shown from heaven against unrighteousness of man, it means they break the law.

Why is the gospel powerful?

It is powerful because,

Romans 1:

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

It is a universal offer and it is unlimited.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Gospel is very important to us because it has righteousness in it and this righteousness is to be appropriated by faith.

Romans 3:

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it —

22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:

Previously we talked about that everyone is under sin but now righteousness of God has been manifested, righteousness of God is through Jesus Christ. Righteousness of God is apart from the law although the law and prophets bear witness to it and righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ. There are two aspects; the righteousness of God is related to his law and is related to faith in Jesus Christ. Mosaic Law was given by Moses then we have got all the external signs of the covenant. We have got circumcision as a sign of belonging. Then we have got the food laws, that means they are following the way he wants you to be live to be special. They offer sacrifices for their sins at the tabernacle as well as the temple.

This is exactly the Old Covenant. This is God's righteousness for His people, how they live and how they take care of their sin but offering sacrifices.

God's righteousness has been manifested apart from the law. That means somehow there is a new righteousness that is going to come instead of following the old Mosaic Law there is a discontinuity. On the other hand it says, although the law and prophets bear witness to it, it is discontinuous but is also continuous. To illustrate this, it is like a true Old Covenant, Mosaic Law and traditions, they grew up but up here it is completely different, the New Covenant, faith in Jesus Christ, down at the tree is Mosaic Law and traditions, faith in Jesus Christ is up the tree but it is discontinuous but it is rooted in Old Testament law and tradition, it is not contradictory. It is prophesized, it is anticipated, and it is foretold. It is a continuation of it; it is a fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

So therefore we have got a New Covenant where the righteousness of God is through faith in Christ Jesus. In those days what they did is that they took the Old Covenant and Mosaic Law, they lived according to its stipulations in order to reflect God's glory. On the other hand if they sin then they will offer sacrifices, goats and bulls. Knowing very well that goats and bulls kind of blood will not really cover it but somehow by faith they believe and they follow. Now the righteousness of God is now revealed not through this, it is through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a New Testament, righteousness of God continues in the New Covenant but instead of relying on all those things we now rely on the person of Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit that is how it is foretold. Before we have got roots in the Old Testament and yet it is discontinuous. Now we look at Jesus Christ, every aspect of the law is covered by Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus Christ is God's word. He tells you how to live.
2. Jesus Christ is God's temple. We actually worship God through worshipping Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus Christ is sacrifice for sin.
4. Jesus Christ is a sign of belonging to God as circumcision was in the Old Testament.
5. Baptism.

So every aspect of the Old Testament is actually covered by Jesus Christ. That is why this new way of righteousness is discontinuous, it is different but it also is rooted in the Old Testament.

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

If we look at the Hebrew word for sin is, 'Hata' which means missing the mark, coming up short. So all of us were destined for glory of God but we have actually destined fallen short.

24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 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.

We will actually look at these four words; justified, grace, redemption, propitiation. These are four concepts.

Justified:

The word for righteousness is ‘*Dikaios*’, and we are being made righteous. That means all of us are being made righteous. Now the cross brings more than forgiveness. Forgiveness is you sin against someone and they forgive you but then you go away. Being justified means someone giving you not only forgiveness, but also putting the Medal of Honor on you, even though you never actually deserved it. When God says we are justified it says not only we are forgiven, our record is clean and this is the record given to us by Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

It means we are God’s righteousness. How can we become the righteousness of God? That means we have got somebody else’s record. We have got God’s record; it means we got Jesus Christ record. Jesus Christ came to the world, lived a life which is perfect, God recorded that and gave it to us. That means we do not deserve it.

Richard Hooker is an anglican. He writes, “*Let it be counted folly or frenzy or whatsoever. It is our wisdom and our comfort; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man has sinned and God has suffered; that God has made himself the sin of men and that men are made the righteousness of God. Therefore we are in the sight of the father as is the very son of God himself.*”

It is astounding that means when God looks at us today, he is looking at very own son. This is what the theology means. We are justified; we get a medal of honor. How do we get this? His grace as a gift. Actually the word in Greek is only “*chariti*” which is grace. Grace means it is a free gift. There are two ways to get righteousness, you either earn it or you get it for free. What God is saying is that you get the Medal of Honor for free as a gift.

Why it has to be a gift?

There are three reasons why it has to be free. As far as our works and righteousness are concerned we are already dead in sin. Therefore

1. We cannot possibly earn it.

Romans 3:

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

The second reason.

2. We make God our debtor

Romans 4:

4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

It has to be free because we are going to put God in a position where He must owe us. This is inability because we cannot make God our debtor.

The third reason why righteousness has to be free

3. Our good deeds are never really good.

Romans 3:

11 no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one."

We are judged by our works.

Romans 2:

Does anybody do good works, no absolutely no.

The reason why we do not do good works is because of the nature, we actually have a form for good work to be good work we must follow the form according to God's will and according to the motive for God's glory. If we do it for personal gain then we will never be able to have good works.

So therefore Jesus says,

Luke 18:

17 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Why did Jesus said that aside from the fact that he loved children. Because children recognize that they cannot earn it, children recognize that they cannot make God their debtor, children recognized that there is nothing good that can give you a happy birthday card, they draw bad but we still like it. Children do all things because of love. So the only way to enter the kingdom of God is through like a child, expecting nothing, thinking your good works are worthless.

Now does that mean we have license to sin? If Jesus Christ justifies us, gives us the record free. Now we are justified by His grace as a gift, so we are justified by grace as a gift and now through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The word redemption is basically taken

from slavery. When you have a slave you have to pay a price to redeem and the bible gives us ample examples. One example is Boaz, kinsman redeemer. We got the young lady called Ruth with her mother in law Naomi. She is a Moabites and she comes all the way from a foreign land and she is very vulnerable. She goes to the fields and whatever is left side she glean to take back. It was a very dangerous situation because in those days a single woman gleaning would have been taken away or raped. There was a tradition in the Old Testament where a relative can be a kinsman redeemer. It means that if I am related to you I come, I pay money and buyback your lands. Not only Boaz buyback her lands he also married her. This is something totally undeserved. Boaz married her, something totally undeserved. Not only that she is a foreigner, so God shows through the kinsman redeemer he paid the price and married her.

The other story is of Hosea who was told to marry a prostitute. His wife betrayed him became a common prostitute and God told him to go and redeem her. He went and where she was at the lowest point in her life, he bought her back. Why, because God wanted the people of Israel to see how he felt, betrayed and the wife who defiled she was when she worshiped other gods. So this idea of redemption means buying you from slavery. We were enslaved to sin.

So we cannot have a license to sin because when God bought us back He redeems us from sin that means somehow in the buying back process that you are released from the power of sin. So therefore he justified us freely through redemption, which is paying the price. It frees us from sin. So the Belgic confession of faith says, *"It makes him live a new life and frees him from the slavery of sin. Therefore it is not true that this justifying faith makes man indifferent to living a good and holy life. On the contrary, without it no one would ever do anything out of love for God, but only out of self-love or fear of being condemned."* It means that if you are bought back from a horrible owner, do we want to go back to that owner. It is not likely that we will go back as we are redeemed and there is a gratitude in human nature and that propels us and keeps us there.

Propitiation:

Now the word propitiation actually means averting the wrath of deities, it means satisfying the wrath. When a couple is really upset, not talking to each other and the son came in between and absorb the father wrath and both of them are together as it were. So this is idea of that, but this idea is a pagan idea, averting the wrath of deities. That means those pagan god are angry, merciless, capricious, if they are in a bad mood they will whack you, good mood also they will whack you, they are very unmerciful and unjust. Okay that one has a little bit of pejorative meaning. The other meaning of that particular word is mercy seat. Once a year at Yom Kippur Day the high priest after preparing himself for one week will come and he will wash himself and then we will have the blood of goats and a bull and they come before inside the Holy of Holies and he will sprinkle the blood. So on the mercy seat the blood averted will cover the guilt of the people.

C.H. Dodd a famous theologian preferred to use the word expiation because he says the word is for a mercy seat and the mercy seat covers the sin of the people with the blood and so therefore expiation means covering for sin. C.H. Dodd did not like this idea of God being bad tempered and so therefore he choose another word to make sure God is not so bad tampered and so therefore it is a bit odd having to averting the wrath of God, so therefore he choose this other word, expiation, which is covering of the sin, because he really did not

understand the meaning of the word God's wrath. God's wrath is like a laser beam, it is always predictable, never capricious. John Stott describes it, *"The wrath of God is his steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil in all its forms and manifestations, is a response to holiness to sin."*

This means that God's wrath is like a laser beam, it shoots straight out. It never go left, never go right. It goes straight out. Everything that will come in the way will always be finished but we can stand right next to laser beam and be absolutely perfectly safe because the laser beam never spreads, it is always accurate. That is a picture of God's wrath. God's wrath has to be taken together with his holiness, his righteousness, his wrath and his love. The problem with human beings, they do not like to think about God's wrath because they think God's wrath in itself. God is not only love, aside there should have to be wrath. Love has anger and wrath mixed up inside and wrath is because you are holy, because you are so holy you cannot touch evil. Holiness has righteousness inside. So we have got holiness, righteousness, wrath and love all into one. We cannot take one attribute of God and put to the side. The problem with human being is that they only take one attribute and they are isolated.

So propitiation;

1. Pagan idea is that works of a sinful man to appease an angry god.
2. Biblical idea is the work of God to absorb the divine anger against sinful man. It means God observe himself. So God is not capricious, God does not unjustly condemn, God does it very justly and not only that God absorbs. His own son came and died for human beings.

So propitiation is satisfaction, it means you satisfy something. For example, thirst, it does not matter whether you are standing in the middle of the North Pole or in the Sahara Desert or in Malaysia, if you are thirsty we will want to drink and you will have to have it satisfied.

Matthew 5 says, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. They shall be satisfied. So therefore there is a righteousness inside God that has to be satisfied. Because if we break and cause sin there is an anger that has to be satisfied. It cannot be left unsatisfied. It cannot be left unquenched. Exodus says, the Lord God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding the steadfast love and faithfulness but who will by now means clear the guilty. This applies today, yesterday and forever. He will never clear the guilty. Someone has to pay the price. If you do not have someone to pay the price then God's glory will be impure.

26 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.

What are the former sins? It means the sins committed in the Old Testament. All of Abraham's sin, all of Noah's sin, all of everybody else's sin. Did He punished them immediately, He did not. All the Old Testament saying, what did they did do when they have sin. They go and offer the blood of cows and bulls and all this, but they never paid for sin. When Jesus Christ came, he paid for all that to show that God is perfectly righteous.

John Murray, a commentator says, “*Sin in God’s economy will always ultimately be punished sin — either one day in the hell of a burning fire, or that one Friday in the hell of a Roman cross.*”

So we see Jesus Christ with a full measure of punishment on him and at the end he says he was concerned about his separation from God.

Some people ask did Jesus Christ die for some people or all people. Christ died for all without distinction but not all without exception, because we still have to respond on our side.

How is it fair for the innocent to die for the guilty?

Guilt is specific to the person and punishment of innocent person compounds the injustice, it is not like a fine you can transfer. In our world if a person commits crime then he has to be punished, no one can take on his crime.

Romans 6:

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

There is a special unity, Christ is united with us by faith and whatever happens to him happens to us. Our sins become his sins. It is like when two companies merge together, their all assets and liabilities are shared.

If this is the way we are saved then we should live by faith.

Galatians 2:

20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

How do we live, we live a cruciform life.

Martin Luther in 1518 went to Heidelberg for a lecture. He put forward quite a number of points called the Heidelberg Disputations, point 19, 20 and 21 summarized talks about two kinds of theology; the theology of glory and the theology of the cross. This is how the cross will affect your life. The theology of glory is that we know God by human reason. We remake Him in our own image whether it is power, morality or wisdom but the theology of the cross says that God cannot be known. The only way God can be known is He makes himself known and He makes himself known on the cross. By doing He shows the greatest power in the world. That is a huge-huge paradox. You have a God whose idea of power is actually weakness, you got to get your mind across that because that is going to be ground breaking. Because for us we have made God in our own image, because instead of God showing us we think God is like us. If we are strong, therefore our God is power x 1000

times that is what we think about genie. Genie acts exactly like us but are million times stronger than us. That is why all the Greek gods though exactly are human beings and they are just a multiplication of the idea of power. So therefore when in the Christian church has the theology of glory, it will act in the same way. That is why they fought the crusades. The crusades were about glory, it is about power. Power projection is the same whether it is Christian or non-Christian. So economy of the Christian church cannot be the same of the economy of the world. The theology of this world is theology of glory not the theology of the cross.

When they come and took Jesus Christ, He told Peter.

Matthew 26:

52 Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

Jesus said when all the guys who come in to arrest him and he let himself to be arrested and they tried to stop him. Jesus allowed it to happen, because power is shown in weakness that is the difference. We are all brought up to think we must have power but in the theology of cross God took the most hideous event in the world, the most evil event of the world and he made it the most powerful event by dying on the cross.

So we believe the theology of glory means we want political power, legislative powers, armies, missiles, crusades, political abuse in the church. If we function as a church with the weakness that means our power is hidden in weakness. We believe in the Messiah to rule the world, no, if we believe in the theology of glory it means you want to meet rich people, powerful people, well to do people. If you believe in the theology of the cross then you want to meet poor people, marginalized people. We are the kings and priests but we exercise by serving the poor. If you have the theology of glory means you worship spiritual gifts, miracles and powers like the Corinthians but Jesus Christ talk about love. If you are an elder in the church you will laud it over the people, you have special table to eat, everyone calls you and respects you, the theology of cross means we serve sacrificially.

Corinthian church had this problem, they all had spiritual gifts, miraculous healings, speaking in tongue, prophesy, they thought they are better than any other church. Paul said in

1 Corinthians 13:

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

The theology of the cross looks at wisdom. For example, for us wisdom is intellectual, we get inventions, you write code and do facebook, google, influence clever people, meet people with position, depend on intellect and qualifications, your pride, right doctrine, but real understanding of wisdom is that we reach out to foolish and uneducated people. There are a lot of people who are really blind; they are clever people that are really-really blind. You know nothing but the cross, rely on the word not on our wisdom, knowledge, Paul says knowledge puffs up by love. The economy of the cross changes everything completely.

If we talk about the theology of the glory, people think that God's favor is manifested in successes in life and victories. If we look at the most obedient person, Jesus, in the entire world, he died on the cross. Cross is a blessing. We never see evil as blessing.

God's favor is manifested in Jesus, His suffering, death and resurrection. God is pleased only by Jesus, my actions do not effect anything. So therefore what God is pleased with me, His favor on me is basically based on the cross. Whatever God's favor is because of what already has been done.

If God is pleased by sincere human effort, we will just focus on what we want to do. But Bible says humans are dead in sin, they are incapable of pleasing God. Faith is receptive because God forgives and makes us alive. I reciprocate we are free to love without a hidden motive. So whatever we do know is reciprocation by love. We do not love in order to gain something. God is not pleased by sincere human effort.

If we repent, the theology of glory people say, repentance is sorrow for sin and a determination to sin no more. It means I am sorry for my sin, I promise you God I will not sin anymore, I am going to try as hard as possible, I guarantee 100%. That is not all it is, repentance is sorrow for sin and you turn towards faith in Jesus Christ. "I am sorry for my sin and I leave my sin in Jesus hands and because I trust him I will not say anymore."

Spiritual growth:

Spiritual growth is through different phases. We try harder to get more theology, theology of works, theology of glory. If you know how to grow spiritually, if we look at the cross, spiritual growth is realizing how sinful we are, how horrible His wrath is and the depths of His love on the cross.

Paul says in Ephesians chapter 3

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

By looking at the cross we get to know that. We spiritually grow by reading the bible and understanding how horrible person you are, the more horrible you think you are, the more horrible the wrath is and the more beautiful his love is at the cross. By appreciating all that then we grow. That is the secret to Christian growth.

Worship:

Some people think worship is the way to ascending to God. If we look at theology of glory, "We worship God, we play music instruments, we dress up very well, if we will sing better

God is going to be so happy.” This is not true because God is only pleased with Jesus Christ. So on the other hand worship is receiving the mercies of God in Christ, that means if we actually worship we are just praising God and we are so grateful for what He did for you in Jesus Christ, it is not rising up to get ourselves up and get into God’s better graces. That does not happen because God already love in Jesus Christ.

Good works:

I try to be like God, more loving, more ethical. But if we are Christian the theology of cross teaches us that good works are the fruit of faith, the more affected by the cross, the more we change. The more we are impacted by the cross, the more we will change, not changed because we want to please God. Good works are the fruit of our faith. The more we believe in the cross, the more we will change. According to theology of glory, our religious efforts will make you feel superior to other people; it is like boosting on our achievements.

Nothing we do is of value but Christ works in us. We have to work our salvation in fear and trembling as God works in us.

Cross:

According to the theology of glory, the cross is a speed bump. Our whole idea to get to glory and the entrance level is where the cross is. For theology of cross, we keep going back to the cross in order to have our hearts changed.

Evil:

Evil in the theology of glory is weakness, always bad, we have to overcome it. If bad things happen to us means we have failed or God is punishing us and that is why whenever people have testimony they always talk about. When evil and bad things happen they are perceived to be a curse. Mother Teresa towards the end of her life was spiritually depressed, she even doubted her faith. She was in a very-very depressed situation. She did not shared because she will stumble a lot of people. That is a thinking that God is like us. If we look at the theology of the cross, evil becomes a blessing. God has taken the most evil thing in the whole world, nailing his son on the cross and subverted it to be most wonderful thing in the history of this world. Because of the power of Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross evil can be subverted for good.

Joni Eareckson Tada wants to bring her chair to the heaven. She said, *“Jesus, do you see that wheelchair? You were right when you said that in this world we would have trouble, because that thing was a lot of trouble. But the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. It never would have happened had you not given me the bruising of the blessing of that wheelchair.”*

What she has done and she has taken the wheelchair and has turned evil into good.

When we will understand weakness is power then we will know how to live a Christian life and we will be indestructible.