

## **Justification: From Depravity to Glory**

### **Good Morning OIC.**

To get the flow of Paul's, thus Holy Spirit's, thinking I need to repeat the close of last weeks message.

**Romans 3. 23** *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace* ( unmerited favor/NLT ) *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,....*

As I said last Sunday regarding Romans 3.23 - 24 :

***Similarly from Romans Chapters 1-2, “all have sinned” and the emphasis on justified freely by God's unmerited favor with the word “freely” shows God's attitude and desire for the sinner.***

**God wants more to forgive you, than you want to sin, if you please! Therefore God desires to take men from depravity to Glory.**

In Romans 3.23 to fall short of the *glory of God or, lack the glory of God* , as suggested in the Expositors' Bible Commentary (EBC), is the relational effect of Mankind's sin , separating him from not only fellowship with God but also from being partakers or sharing in His Glory.

### **A few words about GLORY....**

Glory is the very Essence of God's Nature....His Being. Falling short or Lacking God's glory ( Romans 3.23) as the position of total depravity ( Romans 3.9-18 ) has been declared in the Bible. Really only those who have become born-again Christians can receive some of God's glory **now** and in measure, completely **later** when we see Jesus *But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.* ( 1 John 3.2 NLT ). Only Holy Spirit can make a Christian to be like Jesus, in part or in whole. Some commentaries say that believers only in Heaven will share in God's glory. But I strongly disagree for clearly in (2 Corinthians 3.7-8 ) the Apostle Paul wrote:

*7Now if the ministry of death, engraved in letters on stones [the covenant of the Law which led to death because of sin], came with such glory and splendor that the Israelites were not able to look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, [a brilliance] that was fading, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit*

*[the new covenant which allows us to be Spirit-filled] fail to be even more glorious and splendid?*

Paul was speaking of God's Presence not visible brilliance with His adored Children, Believers in Jesus. And in (1 John 4.13 )---

*This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: he has given us of his Spirit.*

*The Third Person of the Trinity testifies of Jesus to us and brings God's glory inside of us Believers now.* Paul will discuss the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians in more detail in Romans Chapter 8. But it is significant to realize that being declared righteous by God (Romans 3.24) allows Him to actually give every Christian His Holy Spirit.

I emphasize this, as Paul and other Apostles did, because Christians need not live with drooping heads and on the edge of despair. They are becoming Sons of God with the earnest, or down payment of Holy Spirit already given.

*v.24 The redemption that is in Christ Jesus –*

Redemption is the Greco-Roman practice of freeing Slaves by the payment of a ransom. Similarly, by His death Jesus paid the ransom necessary to free sinners from the bondage of sin and the resulting curse imposed by the Law.

This word “*justified*” has a more wonderful meaning than only being forgiven for our sins as Believers in Jesus' Redemption. Some of us who have been Christians for some years have realized that one of the most comforting and confidence building concepts is that **in God's sight we Christians are actually in Christ. And my friend, in God's sight is all that ever really matters!**

Maybe we first got such encouragement not from the Bible but from some Christian hymns such as that old 18<sup>th</sup> Century English hymn *Rock of Ages, cleft for me*. These Old English words still have power to a Christian's soul. Let us read together the first verse of this hymn on the overhead:

- Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
- Let me hide myself in Thee;
- Let the water and the blood,
- From Thy riven side which flowed,
- **Be of sin the double cure,**
- **Save me from its guilt and power**

**Cleft** , slit apart as a rock, signifies Christ's being broken as He suffered for our sins on His Cross.

**Water and the Blood** , Jesus' death confirmed on His Cross recorded in ( John 19.34 )

*... one of the soldiers pierced Jesus ' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.*

**Double cure**, trusting Jesus to save us from sin lifts two of sin's burdens on man, sin's guilt and sin's power. This actually points to the Two Main Meanings of Justification:

- 1) Forgiveness is the cure for guilt
- 2) Declared Righteous by God is the cure for the power that makes us unable to resist our old nature and the devil.

Some Christians learn to *pray* this hymn when the walls seem to be closing in on them...troubles become numerous...or as the poet William Shakespeare said in one of his plays: *Troubles don't come as single soldiers, they come as battalions.*

This is good practice in experiential Christianity! Bible Theology also confirms this wondrous experience proving a believers position of **safe** dwelling with his God. You may recall that Paul introduced the word *righteous* in the string of verses condemning mankind in Romans 1.17. Paul continues to emphasize a Christians **safety** from God's judgment in God's Courtroom.

“In Romans 3 .24 the Greek verb used here ( *dikaioō* ) means "are justified" which is a forensic term (that is, the language of the law court, or court room); in both the Older Testament (OT)and Newer Testaments (NT) it means "to acquit". But the idea of "acquittal" expresses only a part of the range of the word, *justified*, for there is a positive side that is even more prominent in the NT—"to consider, or declare to be, righteous." **God not only acquits believers, but he declares them to be righteous in His sight.” (EBC)**

Can we get our mind...no our heart...around this glorious gift of salvation by faith in Jesus. As I just stated, if God decides to declare a believer righteous by *faith alone*, we have the power over all spiritual enemies, Satan and his messengers, and our greatest enemy of all, our old sinful nature. Paul will further expound and define this wonderful truth in Romans 8 often titled *Life In The Spirit*. Let us look at (Romans 8.31- 33 ) as it pertains or applies to justification.

*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ...*

**Roman 3. 25** *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood – to*

*be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished*

The word "presented" reminds me of presenting a gift, like at Christmas. Christmas in God's eyes is recalling His giving His Only Begotten Son as a baby, the best Gift ever given to Mankind. But, the real point and power of this little Baby Jesus, is the grown up Jesus, presented as the "Blood Sacrifice" for all men.

The emphasis on faith in this verse suggests the force of the word "presented," Christ presented by God the Father. It also is **"the proclamation of the Gospel that makes Christ's saving work central—a proclamation emphasizing that Christ, under God, has become "a sacrifice of atonement." (EBC)**

Therefore God's Son Jesus, the *sacrifice of atonement*, *hilasterion* in Greek (Mounce) has been set up before the eyes of the entire world. This Greek word is the same word in the Old Testament for the *mercy seat* or place in the Holy Temple where God would meet the high priest who represented the people. **The mercy of God is available!** Wherever and whenever the Good News of Jesus is preached the Holy Spirit *sets up for show God's sacrifice for sin, Jesus, and keeps the DOOR OPENED TO THE HOLY OF HOLIES TO MEET GOD AT THE MERCY SEAT.* When Jesus released His soul into the Father's Hands at Death:

In (Matthew 27:50-52) we read:

**50** *And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.* **51** *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split* **52** *and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.*

**Therefore this physical sign at the moment of Jesus' Death declared the Holy of Holies with its Mercy Seat was available to all Mankind.**

This physical Holy Temple and Mercy Seat are no longer needed, because of what Christ has established. His death on the Cross was the blood sacrifice acceptable to God thus establishing the Spiritual Meeting Place of God and Mankind.

"It would be strange for Paul to state the remedy for human sin and unrighteousness without indicating that this wrath of God has been satisfactorily met by his own provision. God presented the solution for mankind to meet Him at the *mercy seat*. There is no other term in (Romans 3.21-26) that can convey this idea besides the Greek word, *hilasterion*." (EBC)

Now we read in Romans 3.25 *"Because In his forbearance, God left the sins committed*

*beforehand unpunished.*” From the Asbury Bible Commentary (ABC) “God did this in order to give people a chance to repent (Romans 2.4). This, however, could easily lead to the misunderstanding that God does not care about sin. Now, by presenting Jesus as the propitiation God’s attitude—his righteous wrath toward sin—is clearly demonstrated.”

**NOTE:** Blood Sacrifice, Sacrifice of Atonement , Propitiation : these words all mean almost the same thing. But as stated previously, the Greek translation - “hilasterion” , as written in the Older and Newer Testaments, best define “The Blood Sacrifice” by Jesus because it connects directly to the OT 's *mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies*.

“So the OT period was a time of the **forbearance** of God. For at least four thousand years He held back His judgment on sin. Then in the fullness of time He sent His Son to be the Sin-bearer. When the Lord Jesus took our sins upon Himself, God unleashed the full fury of His righteous, holy wrath on the Son of His love.” from the Believers Bible Commentary (BBC).

**OIC, I used more Christian Commentary References than usual because of the difficulty to grasp these verses in Romans, especially *forbearance* (Romans 3.26).**

**I will attempt to explain in my own words, what I believe *forbearance means*.** Jesus dying as a *blood sacrifice to pay for our sin* ...simple to understand even by a child. Children know that they should be punished when they sin by disobeying parents, how much more so, by disobeying God. The thought that someone else is willing to take my punishment is attractive to a child..... And should be to all adults as well! The difficulty faced in the above comments, is *forbearance*, God's holding back punishment for thousands of years. He obviously punished His own Older Testament people for sins: from the King to the peasant. But, He withheld the *full fury of His wrath from Mankind*. I believe that this truth shows why worldwide natural disasters have increased at least one thousand fold or more since Jesus' Death to forgive the sins of all Mankind. Science data shows there have been more *Earthquakes* in the last 50 years, than in the past Thousand Years. God is letting more of His Wrath be unleashed, as we read in Romans 2, as men year after year reject His Love by refusing to accept His Son's *blood Sacrifice*. God leashed that same *full fury on His own Son on The Cross*. I believe that this increase in *visible wrath* will continue until the Great Tribulation when His wrath will destroy this Earth with fire.

( 2 Peter 3. 10 / AMP) *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will vanish with a [mighty and thunderous] roar, and the [material] elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and the works that are on it will be burned up.*

**Reading 3.27** *Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the 'law' that requires faith.*

Paul uses the word *law* in a new way here. Not *The Law* from God to Moses on Mount Sinai; but, a new method or means to reach God's Mercy Seat, faith in the *Sacrificed Lamb*, *Jesus Christ*.

### **Reading 3.28-29**

Paul repeats *over and over* for he knew the Jews were entrenched in their thinking: *a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law*. Then he goes back, so to speak, to the whole world comprised only of Jews or Gentiles.

**R. v.29 & v.30** And then, the Universal Viewpoint of the Older & Newer Testament: *there is only one God.* in v.30., *who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.*

Paul knows some listeners, either a Jew confronting him, or a Gentile, unfamiliar with the Law, might claim Paul has erased the Law from the Word of God. So, he simply says **R.v.31**. The Lord Jesus also insisted on this teaching. He had become the object of saving faith, replacing the Law as that object which could not save at all. He similarly said:

*“Do not think that I came to do away with or undo the Law [of Moses] or the [writings of the] Prophets; I did not come to destroy but to fulfill”* in (Matthew 5.17/AMP).

## ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

Now Paul starts a long exposition of Abraham, The Father of the Jews' Faith. Paul will show, what he said before, that Abraham is the Father of saving faith for the whole human race, Jew and Gentile.

I intend to put this discourse in next week's message. For now, just a few verses carry much power from God to us all.

**Reading** Romans 4.1-3 Paul is careful to add the adjective phrase *according to the flesh* so as not to give a resisting Jew a point of argument, to make it clear that Abraham is in reality the forefather only of Believers in Jesus in the *Spirit*. Paul reminds his audience that the Lord God Almighty was teaching His pupil Abraham a new concept on planet Earth: *Salvation by Faith and imputed Righteousness*. As simply but powerfully stated in v.3 : *What does Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God , and it was credited to him as righteousness.'*" ( Genesis 15.6 )

The *instant* that a sinner believes "Jesus died on the Cross for my sins," often the most filthy, debased, rotten sin may be in the sinner's focus, God forgives all his sins and credits him with His Own Righteousness. The sinner simply believed Jesus really did it for *him*.

**R, v.4.4** *Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.* Obligation is a word with much *weight and implications*. Paul is covering all humanity for every culture has unique and expected obligations. But he focuses on working for an employer. Your salary or pay for your work makes you obligated to work for the one who pays you. But *salvation is a Gift*. God is offended if we try in even the slightest way to *be obligated to pay Him back for the Gift of His Son Jesus' Blood Sacrifice to buy our forgiveness and declare us righteous in God's sight*. The desire to love Him for the Gift is not an obligation...but a Living Relationship with God that lasts forever. This wonderful relationship is both necessary and Glorious!

Before I pray for OIC together with you all, I have broken my *tradition* of preferring live music, the wonderful OIC Worship Team, for a video from YouTube. This Hymn, *There Is A Redeemer*, written by *Melody Green*, expresses much of these messages from Romans with emphasis on Jesus the Messiah.  
.....(music video on overhead)...

Let us pray.....

## REFERENCES

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