

This We Teach: Salvation (Part 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 August 2016

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0 : 00] Our subject is salvation, and once again what I would like to do is in order to establish!

Of this subject, I want again to look at Hebrews chapter 2 verses 1 through 3. You don't need to turn to it unless you want to. You may have a different translation than what is presented there. But let's read through this again, or let me read through it, and you read silently as you look at the screen or in your copy of God's Word. Hebrews chapter 2 verses 1 through 3 says, We must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard.

That would be the gospel, be the Word of God. We need to give earnest heed to that. And by the way, just to remind you, that's not just simply listen well, it means obedience.

The implication is obedience. And here's one reason why. For if the Word spoken through angels proves steadfast, that is, unalterable.

[1 : 21] If God's Word through angels, angelic messengers, and we can read through the Old Testament and find many examples of that. If that Word is unalterable, spoken by angels, and therefore every transgression to that Word, or every disobedience to that Word of God delivered through angels, if transgression, disobedience received a just reward, and it always did, then what?

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?

It would be the apostles. So great salvation. And salvation is great, isn't it? Absolutely. I think we need to be reminded of that.

And one implication is the very subject of salvation is great. So we shouldn't just kind of, oh, okay, oh, ho-hum, I've heard all this before about salvation.

We ought to, every time we hear about any element of our salvation, we ought to be excited. We ought to be exhilarated. We ought to be taken immediately to a place of worship and praise to our Lord.

[2 : 45] The subject of salvation is great. I mean, think about it, that God would save any one of us, or that God would save anyone is great.

Now, several weeks ago, we looked at what the Bible says about man. By the way, in case you're new, haven't been here for the last hour, however many weeks it's been, we're walking through our five doctrinal statements as a church.

And so it's been several weeks ago that we looked at our doctrinal statement, that is what we teach concerning man or mankind. That's all of us. And what did we learn?

What did we learn from Scripture? What did we know even before that day I taught on the subject? We've learned that we're all sinners, every single one of us, hopelessly separated from God, hopelessly lost.

But God is mighty to save us. And it's only, the only answer to our sin problem is salvation in Jesus Christ.

[3 : 52] The only solution to our wickedness, our sinfulness, the only way that we can be cleansed of that is through salvation in Jesus Christ.

I heard a story about a little boy who'd been playing outside and just like little boys as well as little girls, though I've never had one. Of course, I have noticed that our granddaughters have the same problem when they're playing outside.

But this little boy got dirty, all right? They do that, don't they? They play outside and get dirty, usually all over from head to foot. But when this little boy came into the house, his mother noticed that his hand was covered with mud.

I mean, just covered with it. And she said, when she asked him what he was going to do about that, he said, well, I'll just take the clean hand and rub the dirt off of my other hand.

That makes perfect sense, doesn't it? In the thinking of a little boy. Problem is, he had not quite understood that one dirty hand plus one clean hand equals what?

[5 : 01] Two dirty hands. Now, we know that, don't we? And that in some way illustrates, I think, what a lot of people are thinking when it comes to the problem of sin, when it comes to any thought they might have about getting right with God or salvation or whatever their concept of those things might be.

That their thinking, of course, is, though they acknowledge the fact that they have sinned, most people you meet will acknowledge the truth of that. Yeah, I've sinned. I've made mistakes. I've done wrong things. I haven't, you know, obeyed everything God said. I understand that. I acknowledge that. And yet, at the same time, they have this mistaken notion, of course, that they can clean themselves up by adding good works to their lives.

This is a very simple concept, but a very prevalent concept. And it's absolutely wrong. It just doesn't work that way. The only solution to the problem of sinfulness and this hopeless separation from God, the only solution is the salvation that God has provided through His Son, in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, specifically through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, at the cross.

It's the only solution. His blood alone cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Unrighteousness. All right, so that's our subject this morning, once again. Salvation.

[6 : 24] Salvation. And we have been looking at that statement on salvation. And I would say specifically, in the latter part of the message last week, we were looking at these two things that seem to us irreconcilable, and that is God's sovereignty in salvation and man's responsibility.

That's what we looked at primarily as we drew to the close of the message last week as we looked at this statement. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are two things that don't seem to come together in our minds.

And yet, as we talked about last week, they're both taught in Scripture, and they are perfectly reconciled in the mind of God.

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Now, let me remind you of something that we looked at last week then to kind of get us started with where we left off last week.

We teach, remember, this is part of our statement, we teach that God, through his sovereignty and before the moment of creation, chose those out of the fallen human race whom he would redeem, bring to faith, justify, sanctify, glorify, and a few other terms in between those great events, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[8 : 00] That's part of our statement. We talked about that last week. Now, something I did not address, a natural question that comes to mind, a kind of process of our thought that needs to be addressed.

We didn't address last week because I knew it was going to be a part of our statement. And so, we want to address that this morning. Really, it's a question. If only those who are chosen will be saved, then what effect, if any, does that have upon evangelism?

Is that a question you have? I guarantee you it's a question that many have when it comes to this position on salvation, the sovereign election of God.

What about evangelism? And so, let's find the answer as we take up where we left off last week. God has not revealed to the church the identity of who will be so chosen.

Actually, if I were to change it, I would say those who have been chosen. Now, think about that statement. It's a true statement. God has not revealed it to me or you or any within the church.

[9 : 30] He's not revealed to the church the identity, the exact identity of those whom he has chosen for salvation.

He hasn't identified those. And nor will he. Listen, dear people. I don't know who the elect are. And neither do you. But, in his sovereignty, he has made provision to work through the church, that is, to work through you and through me, through us as the church, to call the chosen to himself. It's a very simple, simple statement. And it helps us understand this question, if God has chosen those to be saved, then, you know, what does that do with evangelism?

Maybe even some, and I guarantee you, some have even come to the conclusion that there is no need for evangelism then. If those who are going to be saved are going to be saved, no matter what you do or I do, then we don't need to evangelize.

[10 : 44] And that's just absolutely wrong. It's wrong according to Scripture. And so, therefore, we, what do we do?

We preach, teach, witness to all mankind.

No one excluded. You see, I can be just as resolute in proclaiming the sovereign work of God in salvation and be just as strong in my belief in that and at the same time be just as strong when I state man's responsibility.

And one aspect of that responsibility is your and my responsibility as God's people to proclaim the gospel, to preach and teach and witness to all mankind, no one excluded, trusting that God will accomplish the work of salvation through us according to His will.

Plain and simple. And though we could find and look at a number of passages of Scripture that help us understand that, perhaps none would be better than Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20, the Great Commission.

[12:16] That's what we know this passage as and it certainly is. Go therefore. This is a mandate to all of us as believers. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.

No nation excluded. From our perspective and from our duty, no person excluded. Go and tell them about Jesus. Baptizing those who believe, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always.

That doesn't mean just that God is with us, present with us as we go. It does mean that, but God's will is with us and He's going to accomplish His will concerning salvation through us as we go.

And that will continue until the end of this age. That is when Jesus comes. And so I want you to get it down very strongly.

There is no conflict, no contradiction between the sovereign election of God and salvation and our responsibility to evangelize. No contradiction at all there.

[13:32] Not at all. I shall never forget, and I think I've shared this before. I know I did with our search team when they were visiting with me to come and be your pastor.

And I'll never forget something that Dr. Gray Allison, founder, president of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, and I was one of his students there, and I'll never forget what he used to say to all of us, and probably still says, because he's still alive.

He said, he said, boys, keep telling people about Jesus. Keep telling them about Jesus. Keep sharing the gospel.

He said, it is amazing how many of God's elect show up when you preach the gospel. For me, that makes perfect sense, and it's right.

We don't have to concern ourselves. About who may or may not be one of God's elect. We don't have to concern ourselves about that. Looking around as we go different places, say, well, I wonder if that guy or that girl, and even sometimes making judgments based upon what we observe in that person's life, well, he certainly could not be one of God's elect.

[14:53] We don't have that information. Nor should we try to make any of those kind of judgments. Nor should we be concerned about it. It even should take up any time or part of our thinking.

And I would add to that, we don't have to worry about sharing the gospel with someone whom God has not elected, because we don't know who they are. That knowledge has not been given to us.

So election is God's business, predestination. By the way, both those words are in Scripture, okay? Election is God's business, predestination is God's work, salvation is of the Lord.

It's of the Lord. You know, when you read the writings of the Apostle Paul and you begin to put together what his thinking was concerning evangelism, then really you could boil it down to about three things.

Three very general things. Number one, Paul taught that believers are commissioned as representatives of Jesus Christ. You can't escape that in the teachings of the Apostle Paul or in the teachings of Christ or any of the teachings of the writers of Scripture.

[16:14] That believers are commissioned as representatives of Jesus Christ. Paul used some other images to describe that.

We are stewards. We're stewards of the message. We better handle it correctly. We are heralds in the ancient tradition of kings sending out their heralds to go to different parts of their kingdom where the king would not go personally.

He would send a herald to make announcements of some new law or some new celebration or some new festival or whatever it may be. And so the herald represented the king.

And the herald would go and proclaim the message of the king. He didn't proclaim his own message. It was a message of the king. And he better get it right. He had no right to change it or alter it or not speak it.

See, Paul viewed every believer, not just those who are called to the vocation of preacher or missionary or some vocation like that, but the Bible teaches that every single believer is commissioned as representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 30] We're stewards. We're heralds. We're ambassadors. Also, he used that image as well. Number two, we could say that Paul very clearly taught that the believer's primary task is to teach the truth about Jesus Christ.

That makes it really very simple. And I don't know, in this age of pragmatism, churches have to come up with some newfangled thing to say to people and, you know, to try to get more membership in their church.

We're commissioned primarily to simply teach the truth about Jesus Christ. And we don't have to come up with that truth or make wild guesses about it.

It's very clear in Scripture. And we're just commissioned to give that truth, to teach that truth, to preach that truth, to exemplify that truth, to bear witness to that truth about Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture.

That makes it very simple, doesn't it? And then I would say a third thing that Paul taught that our aim, the aim of evangelism, is to convert people to faith in Jesus Christ.

[18 : 48] That was Paul's driving ministry to convert the sinner to faith in Christ. You say, I thought that was the work of God. It is the work of God. Through the believer who, in a determined way, seeks to convert unbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ.

Quite simply. Even the half-brother of Jesus said it this way in James chapter 5, verse 20, He who turns a sinner or converts a sinner from the error of his way or her way will save a soul from death, that's eternal death, by the way, and cover a multitude of sins.

Let's go on with our statement on salvation. We teach that none of this should be looked upon as based merely on kind of an abstract sovereignty.

You know, we're talking about the sovereignty of God. It's just kind of over here somewhere and we believe that and trust that God. Yes, God's sovereign. Some abstract concept.

God did not create the universe as a clockwork device that He set in motion and then sat back to watch it unwind.

[20 : 13] Now, that certainly is true when you're talking about the creation. You know, there's some who believe in a form of evolution that allows for that possibility that yes, there is a God and He got it all started and then He just sits back and He's not involved in not intersecting His creation in any way personally and He's just letting it go and unwind and do whatever.

That also applies to salvation. God is sovereign in salvation but He didn't just kind of set it up, you know, and Jesus dying on the cross and then He just let it go from there.

He's not involved in any way and nothing within His nature or character is involved in bringing people to salvation. That would be kind of an abstract view of His sovereignty but rather God's sovereignty reveals to us the greatness of His glory and grace.

God is truly sovereign, truly sovereign but He exercises His sovereignty, exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes especially His omniscience.

Omniscience is engaged in this thing of salvation, the omniscience of God working, He's present. His justice, His holiness, His wisdom, His grace and especially His love.

[21 : 51] God's involved not just in some abstract way but very personally, very directly and this sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We would not know anything about any of this apart from God being revealed through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now how does that apply to salvation?

Matthew 11 verses 27 and 28 all things have been delivered to me by my Father and no one knows the Son except the Father nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and I love this part of it and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

You couldn't know the Father apart from Jesus. The one that Jesus reveals or wills to reveal Him and then this invitation come to me here's the way come to me all you who have who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

And then acknowledging I love this part of the statement acknowledging God's sovereignty moves us to humility confidence joy praise faithfulness holiness in response why humility humility that God would even use us in his work of bringing the lost to himself that's a humbling thing likewise confidence why confidence why is the sovereignty of God in regard to salvation give us confidence because we know that the gospel is successful in our teaching and preaching and proclaiming it will be successful not because of how we share the gospel some method we use some formula some Roman road or some other creative way to present the gospel or some persuasive illustration we might use or some inflection of our voice that might evoke some kind of emotion it's not based upon any of those things but our confidence is in the promise that the gospel will accomplish [24 : 50] God will accomplish salvation through his gospel it is the power of God and the salvation to all those who believe confidence and certainly joy to be a part of something like this not only joy but obviously praise as we respond to our Lord and Savior and faithfulness the sovereignty of God produces in us a faithfulness to be faithful to him in all that he has called us to do and holiness and on and on really we could go with that let's move to some of the significant terms used in scripture to identify what happens in salvation and the first one is regeneration this part of our statement on salvation regeneration what do we mean by regeneration it's a really long word perhaps you've heard it before let me use another word born again rebirth new birth being being enlivened quickened as the old

King James says in Ephesians 2 quickened regenerated new life brought to new life and we could go on and on with some other terms that that we could use as synonyms for regeneration so what do we teach we teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit regeneration is something God does by which the divine nature and divine life are given regeneration is the supernatural work of God Titus chapter 3 verse 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit actually grammatically both those things are the work of the Holy Spirit regeneration and renewing regeneration renewing of the Holy Spirit it's the work of God now I can't pass this up without explaining that this washing of regeneration is not water baptism okay I know this goes a little further in our doctrine but biblically speaking Paul's not talking about the ordinance of baptism water baptism nowhere in the Bible does the Bible teach that water baptism is a part of salvation that is in bringing about salvation there's no baptismal regeneration as some denominations believe and teach I mean listen I mean all I have to do is just look back at Titus 3 5 what did Paul say he said not by works of righteousness which we have done that would make baptism a work of righteousness some work some outward act something that we choose to do now the washing is a spiritual thing here it's spiritual it's in internal it is the spiritual internal working of the Holy

Spirit if there is any concept of baptism meant in this passage it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which happens by the way at salvation not some second blessing okay the baptism of the Holy Spirit in fact in the very next verse there in Titus chapter 3 Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit of God being poured out that God poured out the Holy Spirit on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior so you see at salvation we are baptized in immersed in the Holy Spirit of God so according to God's mercy as Titus 3 5 says according to God's mercy he saved us through the work of the Holy Spirit through regeneration or the rebirth through the renewing renewing of the Holy Spirit it's all the work of God now let me add another passage to this John 3 3 and also verse 6 and you remember John 3 is when Jesus had his dialogue with Nicodemus and so he's speaking to Nicodemus and he says most assuredly I say to you unless one is born again that's regeneration he cannot see the kingdom of God that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit now the familiar term born again again is just simply a synonym for regeneration that's that's that's the meaning behind that word born again Jesus said you must be born again he said you must be birthed again rebirthed birthed from above literally is what he's saying you must experience the regeneration of the Holy Spirit regeneration is crucial in any understanding of salvation but it is the work of God now let's take the next part of the statement regeneration is instantaneous it's important to understand that it's not a process it's not a process we are not becoming born again it's instantaneous and it is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy [31 : 05] Spirit that is nothing there's nothing we do in this we don't participate with God in this that's sanctification which is another term now they're closely related in fact one kind of leads to the other it's the ongoing work of God there's regeneration it's instantaneous then commences

sanctification regeneration we don't participate in that in fact from our consciousness it's imperceptible it's the work of God done through the instrumentality of the word of God that is that he uses the word of God John 3:5 most assuredly I say to you unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God now there's a lot of controversy surrounding that particular passage or controversy or different interpretations but I would have you remember that the context in John 3 is salvation it's regeneration that's the context

Jesus said you must be born again in fact he said it a couple of times there so the context is regeneration so born of water is not a reference to natural birth there are those who hold that that interpretation born of water born of the spirit so born of water is not talking about natural birth and certainly born of water does not refer to water baptism the ordinance of baptism Jesus is talking about the word of God here there's several references in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament that identify that for us I think very clearly it's the word of God Ephesians in fact Ephesians chapter 5 verse 26 that he might sanctify set you apart for himself that begins with regeneration and cleanse you with the washing of water by the word the concept of washing of water is something taught throughout scripture

I think Jesus is talking about the word of God that is the instrumentality of the word of God we put this together regeneration is instantaneous and it is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality using the word of God as its instrument when the repentant sinner as enabled by the Holy Spirit responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation so what is the outward observable proof of regeneration if it's not something that you know is part of our consciousness that is when the event takes place it's instantaneous it's an internal work of God then what's the proof of it proof that you are born again we could probably answer that ourselves but what about our statement genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance that's really a phrase taken right out of scripture fruits worthy of repentance that is fruits works that point to the reality of something works that come out of repentance true repentance that's the idea works fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct so not only the things we do but also how we think our motivations our attitudes and so forth these are expressions of the fruit of true regeneration!

And so good works are the proper evidence of the fruit of regeneration and repentance! This is an important part of the statement because this is where our statement will address each of us individually and either confirm in us an assurance of our salvation or confirm something just the opposite.

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 For we are his workmanship this is talking about salvation we are his workmanship created in Christ so salvation not by works it's by grace through faith not of works lest anyone should boast but then as Paul goes on to say for we are his workmanship that his salvation is the work of God we're created in Christ Jesus but for what for good works righteous works good works that's inside the church outside the church it's within the context of life itself as huge as that is We are created in works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them and these good works will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his or her life through faithful obedience to the word of

[36 : 52] God now that's a mouthful but that pretty much lays it out for us doesn't these good works we experience this this fruit of regeneration to the extent that we submit to the control of the Holy Spirit Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18 that famous passage and do not be drunk with wine in which is debauchery that's how the new King James translates it actually that debauchery is the word a word that means unsavedness live your life like an unsaved person but rather what be filled with the Holy Spirit be being filled constantly filled that is being controlled by the Holy Spirit that's the idea behind the passage and so this obedience to the word of God is vital absolutely vital and so look at it this obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to what the image of our

Lord Jesus Christ now this is where we kind of move from regeneration on into sanctification sanctification the work of God in our lives and that is an ongoing work but we're still kind of under the category or the definition of the word regeneration this is the goal we would be conformed to the very image of the Lord Jesus Christ 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 verse 18 but we all with unveiled face which by the way is a reference to Moses you remember in the Old Testament Moses would go in to meet with God and then he would come out and he would be so transformed by his being in the presence of God that the people couldn't stand as they had to put a veil over his face but every

time Moses went back in to meet with God he took the veil off and he continued to be so transformed by the very glory and presence of God he was transformed and so the idea here in the verse is that we too that's what

Paul said we all that is all believers can approach God we approach God and all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord which means right now we see the glory of the Lord as through a mirror and it's a perfect representation we get it from his word but one day what we see him face to face face to face so we are and then it says we are being transformed, that's passive, it means it's being done to us. God is doing this work, being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as by the Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of the Lord.

This really, again, kind of moves us on into sanctification, a subject we'll deal more with when we come to it next week. All right, so such conformity, let's read the rest of this, such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification, glorification at Christ's coming, and by the way, not before Christ's coming. No glorification on this side of the coming of Christ, this side of heaven. Romans chapter 8, verses 28 to 31, and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose, for whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be, Jesus might be the firstborn among many brethren, firstborn among us, all of us. Moreover, whom he predestined, now watch this, whom he predestined, those he also did what? Called. Whom he called, those he also justified, and whom he justified, these he also glorified. Now, Paul's not including all of the terminology that's wrapped up in salvation, the word regeneration is not in there, but it's implied in there. Justification will be the next thing we look at here in just a moment. But think of this, moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called, the gospel call, in a general sense, and also in a very specific effectual way. He called, and those whom he called, he justified, and whom he justified, these he also glorified. And by the way, that's all in the past tense. Now, our experience is not that this has already been done, but in the mind of God, it's already done for us, all the way to heaven. It's all done in his mind. What then shall we say, Paul says, to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

So, that's our statement on regeneration. Next, and we'll end with this, what we teach about justification. That's another big powerhouse word, isn't it? In fact, it's one of my favorites, doctrinal words. By the way, our doctrinal statement does not include all of the theological words connected to salvation.

[42 : 53] And so, we're kind of hitting the high spots here, very important parts of it. Justification. What we teach, we teach that justification before God is, again, an act of God. It's an act of God. It's what God does. Romans 8, 33.

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. By which, and we go on with a statement, by which he declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins and confess him as sovereign Lord.

Now, that's just kind of a general statement of justification. A couple of passages. Romans chapter 5, verses 1 and 2. Having been justified, it is declared righteous. That's what it means. Having been justified by faith or through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into his grace, in which we stand. So, justification is a standing we have before God. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Isaiah chapter 55, verses 6 and 7. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way. And the unrighteous man, his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Now, the word justification didn't appear there, but that's the concept. To abundantly pardon. So, justification includes forgiveness, too, doesn't it? And what else? This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man. Now, we keep intersecting as we go through our statements. We keep going to that concept. It's very important that we get that. None of this is according to any virtue you may or may not have, you may have, or any work that you may do. Romans chapter 3, verse 20.

Therefore, by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight. That's pretty clear, isn't it? Let's just get out of our heads. That any of our good works could gain any merit from God in any degree.

[45 : 26] That mean we don't need to do them? If it doesn't mean anything to God, it does mean something to God, but if it's not going to merit anything from God, then why waste our time? Why spend the effort?

That doesn't mean it's not important. In regard to salvation, no virtue, no work of man. The law, the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight. And we go on to chapter 4, verse 6 in Romans. God imputes righteousness apart from works. I know imputes is not a word that we're, you know, it's not some word you use every day. But that goes on, it leads us on to the rest of this statement and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ. That's very important to understand. The only way salvation could even be possible, first of all, that our sins are imputed to Christ, our sins to Christ. Colossians chapter 2, verse 13, and you being dead in your trespasses, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements. That's kind of a statement about the law. The handwriting of requirements that was against us. We've broken those laws. It's against us. Wiping it out, he said, which was contrary to us.

And he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to his cross. I love that passage and the image of that. That all the laws I have broken in the past, breaking now ever will break. All my sins, past, present, and future, as if they were written on an indictment against us, were nailed on the cross of Jesus Christ. Beautiful, beautiful image. I could also add, though I don't have it here on the screen, Isaiah chapter 53, verse 6, the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. That's imputation of our sins to Christ, but that's only half of it. It also includes the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. Now, what a deal. What a great trade. Our sin for his righteousness. Our sin laid on him, his righteousness given to us. That's justification. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, for he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us. He became sin for us. That we might become the righteousness of God in him. That's glorious. And so, as we wrap this up this morning, by this means God is enabled to be just and, at the same time, the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. I don't know if you fully comprehend the weight of that. The just justifier.

I mean, have you ever wondered how God could justify the guilty sinner? That is, wiping away his sin, forgiving, removing it, removing all the condemnation. How God could justify the sinner, the guilty sinner, and at the same time remain just himself?

[49 : 34] I mean, in a court of law, technically speaking, though, we can find all kinds of exceptions to this in our day. But in a bona fide court of law, the judge who fails to issue justice to those proven guilty actually condemns himself as being unjust.

I mean, he can't be just and, at the same time, justify the guilty. The proven guilty. So, if that's the case on an earthly level, then how is it that God can do that with us?

This really gets us to the very heart of the truth of salvation. Truth of the cross. Because here's how. God can be just and the justifier.

He can do it through the cross. Because, at the cross, God himself became the guilty. The guilty sinner. That's what Jesus did there.

He became the guilty sinner. That's the only way it could work. That's the only way God could be just and the justifier. I heard a story about a certain judge. Perhaps you've heard this before.

[50 : 53] But this judge had a daughter who had been caught committing a crime. The nature of the crime is not important to the story. But as it happened, she was brought to stand before the bench of her father.

The judge. And the prescribed judgment for her particular crime was \$1,000 or 30 days in jail. So, pretty tough place for a father to be in, right?

As judge. He would be tempted to be lenient in that case, wouldn't he? Maybe throw out the charges. Or, you know, require some lesser punishment.

Because she's his daughter. Beloved daughter. So, pretty tough place. But as she stood there before her father, he issued his justice, his judgment.

With a gavel in his hand. He's \$1,000 or 30 days in jail. Boom. As soon as he said that, he got up from his seat.

[52 : 03] Took off his robe as a judge. Walked around to where his daughter was standing. Took out his billfold. And paid her fine.

Now, that illustrates, I would say, in really a very limited way. Illustrates the truth of justification. How God could be the just and the justifier of guilty sinners. And simply, he took our sin upon himself.

That's what Jesus did. He took our guilt. Our condemnation. He took our judgment. He traded places with us. Because we deserve to be there.

The illustration is limited. Because in justification, it's really far more than just that. Just Jesus paying what we owed at the time.

[53 : 08] And that's it. It's much bigger than that. It's eternal. Because in justification, God declares us to be as righteous as his son.

Otherwise, there would be no hope of salvation. How does that make you feel? That God declares you.

Because Jesus took your place. God then declares you as righteous as his son. That's what it means. My sin imputed to Christ. Christ's righteousness is imputed to me. Not just a kind of element of righteousness or measure of righteousness.

But the full righteousness of Christ has been imputed to me in salvation. And you, if you're saved. And so God then declares us to be as righteous as his son.

And if we could take this a little further. God then sees us. Because we're in his son. He sees us as though we had never sinned.

[54 : 07] Not just simply we had not sinned a certain sin. But any sin. He sees us as though we had never sinned. Because his son never sinned. And further, he sees us on the positive side.

To say this in a positive way. He sees us as though we had always perfectly obeyed him in every single thing. Because Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father in everything.

That's justification. Think of it this way. Jesus took your place. My place. At the cross. Right? That's what he did.

And so, when God looked down from heaven at the cross that day. Guess what? He saw me there. He saw me there.

And in a sense we can think of it this way. He said, you know, that doesn't look like my son Jesus there. That looks just like Don Coleman.

[55 : 11] The sinner. And so, his full judgment was poured out upon the cross. Because Don Coleman was there.

You were there too. And then some 2,000, a little over 2,000 years later, I was saved. Became a believer.

Trusted Christ. And was saved. Praise the Lord. So glad for that day. And I'm telling you that on that day and every day since, when God looks down upon me, today even, he sees Jesus.

He sees Jesus. Not because I'm such a great guy. Or that somehow I now have arrived and emulated in the very life of Christ. He doesn't see me in that way.

He sees me as his son. As Jesus. As Savior. And in a sense we can think of it, that he says, that doesn't look like Don Coleman.

[56 : 20] That looks just like my son Jesus. I don't think it could be explained any better than that.

This idea of justification. That God sees us as righteous. He declares us as righteous as his perfect sinless son.

And so therefore he sees us as though we had never sinned. He sees us as though we had always perfectly obeyed him. Wow.

See, by the grace of God and through faith in Jesus, your standing before God is in Jesus, the perfect sinless Jesus.

Man. So great a salvation. Thank you.