Sinners Made Right With God

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Yesterday, I asked Marcy if you could have a perfect day.

What would your perfect day be? You can't go on a vacation out of town. It has to just be at home, normal things that you do. But if you could just have a perfect day, what would that be?
And we talked about that a bit. I thought in my own heart, what would my perfect day be? I've thought about that the last 24 hours or so since we had that conversation coming home from dinner last night.
My perfect day would be to see my family. It would be to work in the office a little bit. Go to work out. Be home with my wife. And to gather in worship with my church family. I can't think of anything better than this. It is an amazing thing to be able to gather as God's people to sing and to focus on the cross of Jesus Christ.
[1:19] It is a blessed day when we're able to gather in this sanctuary, this building, that we understand that the church is people. We know that. We know that this building were to be knocked down and destroyed, the church would still exist.

We get that. But this is a special place. And this is a building where so many people worked and labored and sacrificially would give to allow us, by God's grace, to have a building like this to gather into worship.
This is a special place to us. Mainly because this is the place where collectively as the body of Christ, we gather week after week after week for the purpose of the worship of Christ.
And we can worship in our homes. And I hope that you do. And you can worship driving down the interstate. And I hope that you do. And you can worship in quiet time with you and the Lord.
And I hope that you do. But there is something special when the body of Christ gathers. When we can lift our voices and sing about Jesus.
[2:34] When we can read scripture that reminds us how Christ, as the good shepherd, laid down his life for us. To hear our choir reciting the words from the book of Revelation that Christ alone is worthy.

I don't pretend that everybody in this room today had a perfect day. But I'll tell you this. It's a good day that ends with your church family worshiping the risen Christ.
It's a good thing. It's fitting for us. And we've done this for a number of years now. To gather on Good Friday. To worship.
And as our deacons were meeting and talking and praying before this service. It's fitting because we want to view every day through the reality of the empty tomb.
We also want to view every day through the reality of Christ crucified for us. Both of those truths are the gospel. That Christ had to die for us.
[3:42] And he did. And he was raised back to life. And because of that, we have salvation. And on Sunday and just a couple of days, we'll gather in here and we will, as we do every Sunday, but in a special and unique way and focus to consider the blessed truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And it's true that in one sense, every Sunday is resurrection day. That's true. In one sense, every day for the Christian is resurrection day.
And yet, it's fitting, I think, and helpful for us to have time set aside where we just highlight that truth with the most clarity possible.
And Mars and I have been married almost 29 years. And we're married every day. But on our anniversary, we go out and celebrate that.

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Probably not this year because it's on a Sunday, but shortly around it. We're married every day, but there's something fitting about setting time aside to just be thankful and grateful in a unique way.
[5:02] In a sense, that's what this weekend is. This isn't the only weekend that the power of the cross is alive within us. That's true every day.

This isn't the only weekend that I hope that we focus on the sacrifice of Jesus and his resurrection, but in a unique way with the greatest intensity we can and clarity and focus we can, we remind ourselves of the truth that it is the story of grace conquering our sin that gives us hope.
And my hope and my prayer for you and for my own life is that as we gather here tonight, that we would rightly and appropriately remind ourselves of the cross.
Not merely the historical fact of the cross, but what was happening and why was it happening. We look forward to Sunday morning, but we do well to first stop and consider Friday.
Our society doesn't do very well with considering Friday. I get that we've got good Friday and that people will be off work, maybe out of school, but the heart of it, the loneliness of it, the brokenness of it.
[6:28] Our society is always a very quick fix to just get past all of the suffering and all of the pain and all of the darkness. We want to talk about victory and celebration and joy, but it's fitting for us to take time to remember the agony of the cross.

The empty tomb, to be sure, is where our hope is found. It is where we see victory displayed. Absolutely true, but do not forget that before there was Sunday morning, there was Friday morning and Friday afternoon and Friday evening and maybe darkest of all Saturday where things seemed completely hopeless.
Praise God, we live in the victory of Sunday morning, but we do well to remind ourselves of why Sunday morning was necessary.
It was necessary because Friday was essential. And Friday was essential because God is holy and we are sinful.
Romans chapter 3 helps us to put into words and understand with Holy Spirit-inspired insight exactly what is happening on the cross.
[8:02] Jesus died for our sins. We know that we're sinners. We're aware that we are unfaithful and often not truthful.

We know that we are often prideful, short-tempered, jealous, materialistic. We could go on and on. Of course, it's actually worse than we think.
James 2 tells us if you're guilty of breaking one part of the law, that you are guilty of breaking all of that. And you say, well, how can that be? It's because our sin is far more than merely breaking a rule.
It's a trampling of the glory of God. Which means we're more guilty than we even know. But there's grace.
The song that we often sing reminds us our sins, they are many. His mercy is more. Romans 3, let's start in verse 21.
[9:09] It says, But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 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. 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.
The question I want us to consider tonight is, what was accomplished on the cross? And in this, what is actually in the original just one very long run-on sentence, it tells us at least three things that were accomplished in the cross.
First, that sinners can be made right with God. Verse 23, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
[10:42] We're sinners. That's universally true of all of us. The question is, do you feel the gravity of that?

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I mean, let's just be transparent. There's all kinds of people this very day walking around planar earth who are guilty sinners and do not care.
The truth that all have sinned does not move everybody. And the fact that people would hear that truth and not care in no way tells us that they're not sinners.
It tells us they do not understand the weight of their sin nor the wages of their sin. The wages of sin, of course, the Bible says would be death.
And yet, at the cross, something amazing takes place as sinners can be made right with God. How? By being justified, verse 24, by His grace as a gift.
[12:01] This term for justified is borrowed from the courtroom. It means to receive a favorable verdict. We are justified. Declared righteous.

The judge has set us free. Verse 24, this happens through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
If you're a believer today, if you've been saved by grace through faith, you are saved. You are, in the truest sense, you're as saved as you can possibly be.
And yet, the fullest extent and understanding of our salvation will come when we meet the Lord face to face.
Today, we see through a mirror dimly, but then face to face. There are some things in life that can be true, but we won't understand the fullest delight of it until that day.
[13:18] And on that day, even more so than this day, we will understand that our salvation truly was a gift and that our redemption was accomplished by the work of Christ.

Christ, we can affirm the Bible's teaching that we're not saved by works. The Bible's clear on that.
And yet, our pride just will not let go.
Ever creeping, ever lurking, ever desirous to find some weak channel in our heart from which to express itself. death. And yet, when we stand before the Lord face to face with the clearest vision we can possibly imagine, on that day, even more than this day, we will understand just how none of the credit for our salvation goes to us.
All of Christ. on the cross, because of God's grace, sinners can be justified and that is accomplished by the work of Jesus.
There is a second thing that we see being accomplished and that is that God's judgment on our sin was poured out. John read a moment ago from the New Testament how Christ was our propitiation.
[14:49] Same exact thing taught here in Romans 3 and verse 25 that God put Christ forward as a propitiation by His blood.

Please understand the Father did not send the Son to shed His blood to add His work to your works.
Yes. It is His work alone that saves. It would in fact be more than insulting to pretend as though anything you could do or offer or bring or give to the Lord would in any way seal the deal.
Christ did not die so that together between your works and His salvation could be achieved. As has been said what you and I contributed to our salvation is nothing more than the sin that made it essential for us to be saved.
God put Him forward as a propitiation. The language here when it says that He put Him forward can be interpreted two different ways.
[16:16] Let me explain both of them to you and show you that actually both of them fit the exact context. One way the language can mean is that Christ was put forward in the sense of that He was presented.

That He was presented as a propitiation. A second way you can interpret the language is that He was put forward in the sense of a purpose or a plan.
And both are exactly true. It was the plan of God to offer His Son as a sacrifice for our sin.
The book of Acts says it was the predetermined plan of God to do that and He was put forward publicly. In fact, in the wisdom of God and the kindness of God, one of the most amazing elements of the crucifixion is that the words Jesus would say on the cross were uttered out loud.
Not only to be heard but to be recorded so that we can know exactly what was on the heart and mind of our Savior even in His final moments before He would die.
[17:30] why? And of course one of the statements He would say and utter is the question of my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? In the brilliance of the wisdom of God, that would not only be something that would be considered, it would be spoken.

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Why? Because it becomes the question that every single one of us must know the answer to. Do you know why the Father crushed the Son?
Even as Jesus is being crucified on the cross, this becomes an invitation even for those who despised Him, even for those who are clamoring for His death, this question is an invitation to them to consider the reality of why is He here?
What is being accomplished? What is the purpose and why has He been put forward? And the answer is because He was bearing the weight of our sin.
He who knew no sin becoming sin for us, that we could become the righteousness that could only be given to us through the work of the cross.
[19:04] He is our propitiation, which means He satisfies the wrath of God. God's wrath poured out upon sin is poured out upon His Son God's that all who would believe in His name would be saved.

And that very truth speaks both to the holiness of God and the utter sinfulness of man. But on the cross, something amazing is accomplished.
Sinners are able to be made right with God because the wrath of God was poured out upon the Son. It says in verse 25 that Christ as our propitiation is received by faith.
This has always been the way. Faith in the promises of God. Abraham 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.
What does the text say? Abraham believed and it was credited or reckoned to him as righteousness.
[20:40] I've shared with you before in other settings that I can remember very well being a very young child sitting in church as a first grader, second grader and struggling a bit, believing all that I'm hearing from the Bible.

But I remember as a young child struggling to consider why is it that Jesus had to die? because though I couldn't have explained it all, I did know and believe even as a young child that Abraham believed, reckoned him as righteousness, David, a sinner, but according to scripture, a man after God's own heart.
heart. I don't know if I could have articulated this clearly, but I vividly remember being a first or second grader wondering if it was working that sinners were believing in the promises of God, why did Jesus ever have to die?
Why not just continue whatever was going on? Romans 3 gives us the answer. It says this was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance, he had passed over former sins.
To Abraham, it was placed in his account, reckoned as righteousness, but that debt had to be paid.
[22:14] And it was paid on the cross. And I want you to think of this with me because when you read Romans 3, we're reminded of grace and sin.

And if you were to see your sinfulness but not see grace, it would lead you to complete despair.
To be aware of your sin, to be aware that the wages of sin would be death, to be aware that on your own you have no chance of earning salvation and you don't.
To see your sinfulness and not see grace would leave you at a place of complete despair. We could flip that sin.
And if you see grace but lose sight of the reality of your sinfulness, that will lead you to pride.
[23:29] If you think that you are heaven bound, if you think that you are a child of God, a part of his family, without the reality of understanding your sinfulness, then you will in time convince yourself this was your doing.

So, to see sin without grace leads to despair. To see grace without sin leads to pride.
It's when you rightly see both your sin and God's grace that it leads us to behold the glory and the beauty of the gospel.
This is why we sing of the cross and the empty tomb. Because we need to never forget that on the cross we see the ugliness of sin and the glory of grace.
And where they come together, what we see is what Christ accomplished on the cross, which is salvation coming to sinners who believe, and the wrath of God satisfied.
[24:50] This is His doing. There's a third thing we see and that is that the character of God is displayed.

Verse 25 speaks of His righteousness because of His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins.

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I mean, just think of it in this sense. If you were to read tomorrow on the news about a judge who continually let convicted murderers go free, if you were to read about a judge who week after week after week in his courtroom had people guilty of murder who was proven beyond any doubt they did it and he declared they did it and then continued to set one after the next free and tell them they can go there would be an uproar.
And maybe somebody would speak and say, well, the judge is so merciful and perhaps but it would say nothing of His justice.
The answer to why did Jesus have to die and what is being accomplished on the cross is spelled out in verse 25. This was to show God's righteousness because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins and to show His righteousness at the present time that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
[26:47] The sin must be paid. The debt must be paid. And in Christ Christ it was.

On the cross the sin of all who would believe go upon Christ as our propitiation and you see God's character displayed. He is a God that is merciful and just and gracious.
He is complete in all of His character. He is not divided into parts. And on the cross we see who God is on display as He puts forth His Son as a payment for our sin that all who would believe would be saved.
Psalm 85 verse 10 says it this way, loving kindness and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. God is always holy and always just and always merciful.
He's complete in His character and as has been said for many years and rightly so, our salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.
[28:11] One of the things that we've been talking about for a little while now, it's come up in preaching, particularly on Sunday nights in the fall when we're going through 1 Thessalonians.

It's something we've talked about as a pastoral team. It's something that we've talked about in this room as well from time to time in recent months. When someone comes to faith in Christ, when you see someone baptized as an example, or when somebody tells you they've been saved, when your friend says, I've been saved, when your child, when your grandchild calls you and says, I've given my life to Christ, let your first thought be about Jesus.
Don't congratulate them as if they passed the spelling test. Don't congratulate them as if they made all state as a quarterback. back. Let your first thought and your first words be, look what Christ has done.
And the reason that matters is because that's exactly how the Scripture describes our salvation. This is what Christ has done.
One day soon, I trust, my grandkids will start to speak their first words. It will probably be grandpa, at least how I'll hear it.
[29:53] I think they said it today, in fact, but I'm not sure. And I'm going to get a call or a text and say, Rosie said her first word, Sutton said his first word, or they're going to stand up and take steps without falling, and we're going to congratulate them.

You're doing so good. You're such a big boy. You're such a big girl. You're growing so fast. You're doing so wonderful. I'm so proud of you. But I hope, Lord willing, when the day comes, by God's grace, I get the call that my grandchildren have given their life to Jesus Christ.
my first thought will not be how proud I am of them. It will be how grateful I am for Christ.
And if you've been around a few months, you've heard me say this. This is not semantics. This is understanding the gospel.
This is understanding God's grace. Let your first thought always be of the glory and the beauty and the grace of Jesus Christ who saved the soul.
[31:22] God saves the God saves.

God saves. That's Romans 3. Our God saves. sinners. Sinners are made right with God because Christ pays the debt of our sin and satisfies the wrath of God.
And because He does, we see the character of God on display and we have a way to understand that on the cross, our salvation is accomplished.
And when someone comes from death to life, our first thought needs to be how good and gracious is our God.
God saves the God. That He would open our eyes and give life to our dead hearts and allow us to see the glory of the gospel.

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[32:47] Lord, we are grateful that you in grace have redeemed us. Grateful that you have with love showered your mercy upon us.

And Lord, we pray that as we prepare to receive the elements at this time, that we would with fresh eyes behold the glory of the cross.
We see there the ugliness of our sin, but the absolute grandeur of your glory. Give us eyes even this night to see it afresh.
In Christ's name, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.
[33:59] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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