Righteous by Faith

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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. As Jeff mentioned, our pastor is away this morning, so it's a privilege for me to stand in his place and open with you God's word.

You can take your Bibles and open with me to Romans chapter 3. This morning we'll be covering Romans chapter 3 verses 19 through 31.
And before we jump into that text, if we consider the Old Testament's teaching on the whole, we're left with some burning questions. The Old Testament is very clear on very many things, but it does leave some questions unanswered.
And at the head of that list of unanswered questions stands, how can God be righteous and forgive sinners?
How can he show mercy and be just? And both of these things are promised in the Old Testament. The Old Testament declares that God will and does forgive sin.
[1:25] At the same time, even in the very next verse sometimes, it says he will not clear the guilty. And so we have Exodus 34 verses 6 and 7.

How can both of these things be true?
Another Old Testament question that is really not clearly answered comes from the book of Job. And Job asks in chapter 9 verse 2, how can a man be in the right before God?
How can man as a sinner stand before a holy God and be righteous? Another question I have is how they lived without bacon, but that's neither here nor there for our purposes.
But these questions are more relevant than anything we can think about as human beings. These questions are nearer to our hearts and to our issue than anything else we could talk about or spend our time thinking on.
[2:39] And the passage we will look at this morning, Romans 3, 19 through 31, will actually answer both of these questions with undeniable clarity. It will tell us exactly how God can be just and forgive sins.

It will also tell us how we as sinful human beings can be in the right before a holy God. And so we will see that the righteousness that God requires is obtained by faith apart from works.
And this should lead us to humility, unity, and holiness. And if you're familiar with the book of Romans, the first four chapters are really devoted to Paul making a case for justification, coming by faith apart from anything we do.
And the first three chapters of Romans, he's dedicating to establishing the sinfulness of all of us as human beings. Whether Jew or Gentile, whether near to the promises of God or far off, we all stand condemned by his word.
But that's not all Paul has to say. And even from the first chapter, he's going to establish what the gospel of God is.
[3:55] That it is the power of God for salvation to anyone who believes. And that in it, in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed through faith. In chapters 1, 2, and 3, Paul goes through establishing the sinfulness of everyone.

Chapter 1, he devotes to the sinfulness of Gentiles. Chapter 2 is the Jews and their sinfulness before God. And chapter 3 is everyone. In verse 10, he says, Within our passage this morning, he transitions beautifully to what the hope of the gospel is.
And this passage is loaded with theological terms that are important. We may be familiar with them, but they can be lost on us sometimes. Things like righteousness, sin, faith, grace, redemption, propitiation, justification, all found in this one passage.

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And as is the case with most of the early chapters in Romans, there's not a single command in any of the verses we'll be looking at this morning. And yet, if this passage is rightly understood, it will alter the course of your life.
Paul is wanting us to understand what the gospel is. And I'll read our passage for us in full.
[5:20] Romans chapter 3, starting in verse 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.

For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. 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.
Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.
[6:48] Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one. Who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith?

Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law. Pray with me. Our Father, you are the God of the Bible.
You are the God who has revealed yourself through your Son and through this word about your Son, which we now turn our attention to. I pray that you be with our minds, that your spirit would enlighten our eyes, that we may see and behold the glories of Christ through the written word.
And our prayer time would be edifying and that we would submit humbly to your word. And it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Our title this morning is Righteous by Faith.
Righteous by Faith. And we'll have just three points this morning. We'll see the purpose of the law. We'll see the righteousness of God. And then we'll see the results of this doctrine.
[8:02] So firstly, the purpose of the law in verses 19 and 20. And as with any passage towards the heart of a book, we're jumping in on this conversation partway through.

So we need to make sure we're up to speed on what's been happening. And as I mentioned previously, Paul's been addressing the universal problem of sin. It infects everyone and all stand condemned before a holy God.
And he really ratchets this up in verses 9 through 18, where he brings scripture itself as witness against humanity. Quoting from primarily the Psalms, but also Isaiah as well.
And verses 19 and 20 are Paul's concluding statement on the universality of sin. He says, Now we know that whatever the law says speaks to those who are under the law.
Now we need to ask some questions here. Who is considered to be under the law? And what even is this law to which he refers in verse 19?
[9:10] The word law is a very diverse word for the Apostle Paul. He can use it to refer to the books of Moses. He uses it to refer to the Ten Commandments. He uses it to refer to the entire Old Testament.

He uses that word just as a principle or a system. So which meaning does this word have here in Paul's intent? Well, he's not just referring to the Ten Commandments.
He's not just referring even to the books of Moses because what he's just previously quoted wasn't written by Moses. It was written in the Psalms and by Isaiah.
And this law that he refers to doesn't just hold the Jews accountable. It holds the entire world accountable to him.
And so I take this reference to law and under the law as the entire body of God's revelation in the Old Testament. And although that was delivered primarily to the Jews, it was intended to hold the Gentiles accountable to God as well.

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[10:13] His revealed standard, His righteousness, His demands are for all people everywhere and showing them their sinfulness. I want you to just notice one thing that Paul says, whatever the law says, it speaks.

Though scripture was written thousands of years prior to even Paul writing to the Romans, it is speaking presently even in his day. And it speaks presently in our day as well.
And the purpose of this law is so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be accountable to God. And again, although this message was primarily delivered to Israel, not exclusively, Jonah was sent elsewhere, it reveals God's standard for everyone, everywhere.
God has revealed himself clearly both in his world and in his word so that it is sufficient knowledge to condemn every person in their sin.
He has written this law in the Bible, chapter 2, verses 14 and 15, also tell us he's written this law on our hearts. Something of his righteousness is revealed to us just by being creatures made in his image and so that every mouth may be stopped.
[11:38] There will be no defense or backtalking when God renders his verdict. This is an impressive showing of power and authority. Some mouths are much harder to stop than others, but on judgment day, not a word will be spoken back to God when he renders his judgment.

The world will know. There will be no more critics. There will be no more skeptics. Everyone will be silent in his court and the whole world will be held accountable to God.
Jew or Gentile, man or woman, slave or free, rich or poor, ancient or modern, every person in the entire world will be in knowing silence as God renders his judgment.
Verse 20, why does the law function like this? For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight.
This refers to any of the rules laid down or the commands laid down in the Old Testament. This refers to any kind of system you might put in place in order to attain righteousness with God.
[13:00] The bottom line is we cannot do anything to earn God's favor. We cannot do or be anything that's pleasing to God.

Nothing that anyone does, whatever the goal or motivation earns them favor with God. And this word justified is critically important. We'll come back to it later, but it means to be declared righteous.
No one will be declared righteous in God's sight because of anything that they do. Why? Since through the law comes knowledge of sin.
The law exposes sin, but it does not, it cannot produce righteousness. It reveals our shortcomings, it shows us our sin, but it doesn't have the power to make us righteous people.
The law is external and so cannot change our hearts. We need something more powerful for that. But the law does show us our unrighteousness.
[14:08] And if you want Paul's take on this in his own life, in chapter 7 he says, I wouldn't have known what it was to covet if the law had not said do not covet. And so sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, raised up in me all kinds of covetousness.

The law exposes sin but it does not give power to overcome sin. And so what does the law do? What does it do perfectly? It holds the entire world accountable to God and it gives everyone in the world a knowledge of sin.
And so what hope is there under the law? The law exposes our sin and leaves us there, but how can a man be in the right before God?
The law shows us that we are infected with sin and worthy only of God's wrath and with this cancer eating away at our souls, what hope do we have?
Do you think you can work your way out of this? Do you think anything you do can reverse the effects of sin? Do you think anything we do can free us from its vice grip?
[15:16] trying to work for righteousness in this condition is like trying to eat fruit to get rid of cancer inside your body. That's not going to work.

You need something more powerful, something more potent to rid you of this disease. And similarly, we need something more powerful and more potent than works to save us.
We need something else to give us this righteousness. And it is righteousness that God requires. And so Jesus says in Matthew 5.20, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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Righteousness is what we need, but we cannot do anything to attain it. To stand before God, we need a righteousness that goes beyond the level of human performance.
So we've seen the purpose of the law. Secondly, we see the righteousness of God. We see this in verses 21 through 26. And the Apostle Paul says, but now.
[16:36] This is not just a shift of idea, but also a transition in time. These transitions like this in the New Testament for me are like waking up from a bad dream. I don't know if you're like me, but I have some recurring nightmares.

My teeth fall out. I can't remember any locker combination from any time in my life. The light switches in my house don't work. Please don't psychoanalyze me, but these are recurring nightmares I have.
And as soon as I realize that it's a dream, or as soon as I wake up from it, it is like these first two words of verse 21. But now. Such relief brought by these words because the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.
The law condemns us. The law shows us our unrighteousness, but now the righteousness we need, this righteousness of God, has been revealed or manifested apart from the law.
That is apart from works of the law. Because we see that Paul says, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. So it's not as though this righteousness of God is contrary to the law.
[17:52] It just doesn't come through being obedient to the law. Because the law itself testifies about this righteousness that God will give. And this righteousness of God here isn't the attribute of justice, isn't his righteousness in terms of his justice, but it's the righteousness that he gives.

The righteousness that he dispenses. And the word manifested is a really important New Testament word, particularly related to the appearing of Christ.
Just one example, 1 Peter 1.20, speaking of Christ, he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times.
The law and the prophets not only expose sin, they point us to the sin bearer, and now he has been manifested in the world.
And this doctrine did not originate with Paul. The manifestation of this righteousness is recent from Paul's perspective in time, but the doctrine itself, the idea itself, is as old as the Bible.
[19:07] And so in what way did the law and the prophets bear witness to this righteousness of God? Any prediction of Christ you see in the Old Testament, any forgiveness of sin you see in the Old Testament bears witness that one day God is going to do away with sin once and for all.

And Paul in verse 22 describes the kind of righteousness that he's talking about. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.
This is obtained through faith. Now what is faith? Is faith considered a work? Well based on what Paul just said, faith isn't considered a work because we cannot work to attain this justification, but it does come through faith.
At the same time, faith is something we do. Faith is something we participate in. So what is faith? Faith is the empty hand that receives Christ.
Faith is the recognition that we are bankrupt and condemned before God and receiving the offer of forgiveness that comes through Christ.
[20:24] So if you're in line at the grocery store and you drop your credit card after making the purchase, hopefully the person behind you would say, excuse me, I think you dropped this. You'd recognize you don't have your credit card, extend your empty hand and receive it from them.

That's the way this righteousness of God is received, is through faith. It's a recognition that we are bankrupt, a recognition that we are empty, and a receiving of God's provision for our need.
And he grounds this faith in Jesus Christ. It is not faith itself that saves us. Lots of people have faith. It's faith in Christ that saves.
And this shows us that the object of our faith, what we're trusting in, is far more important than our faith itself. What we're trusting in is more important than the strength or quality of our faith.
If you trust a flight to get you somewhere on time, that's not a very solid foundation to trust in. Now, if you're trusting a flight to get you there safely, that's a much more sturdy ground to stand on.
[21:44] What you are trusting in is more important than faith itself. The effectiveness of faith is not to be measured by how strong it is or how weak it is, but by what it is trusting in.

Jesus is the only way to heaven, so if your faith is in him, regardless of how weak it may feel or at times may appear, it will lead to righteousness.

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It will lead you to heaven because he will take you home. On the other hand, if someone places their faith in anything else, regardless of how strongly it is felt or how strongly it appears in their life, it will lead to death.
It will take them to hell. The object of faith is far more important than the strength of faith itself. And so believer, be encouraged.
Jesus is a perfect savior of all who place their faith in him. Do you feel weak? Do you feel incapable? Do you feel too sinful?
[22:53] Jesus is a perfect savior who's able to save to the uttermost all those who draw near to God through him. It's through faith that this righteousness is obtained.

And he says, for all who believe. Is this redundant? Paul just said it's through faith and now he says for all who believe. Are faith and belief really that different that he needs to mention both?
Why does he mention this at the very end? He's showing us there is only one way to obtain this righteousness. It's through faith in Christ. That's a very narrow road.
That's the only way that justification is received but that one narrow way is wide open to any who will believe in Christ. Not just to the Jews, not just to those who are righteous, but to any who believe in Christ.
because there is no distinction. Just as the whole world is outside of righteousness and condemned by God, so all the world can receive this gift through faith.
[24:04] Jew or Gentile, monotheist, or pagan, morally upright, or sexually immoral, whoever you are, whatever you've done, this promise stands available to you through faith in God's Son.

And why is there no distinction? Verse 23, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We are all sinners. Nothing distinguishes us in this room from anyone else in the world.
We may be sinners with more or less education than other sinners. We may be sinners with more or less money than other sinners. We may be sinners who belong to a more or less upright society than other sinners, but we are all sinners.
And because of that, as a result of that, we fall short of the glory of God. We miss it. We do not live up to who we are supposed to be as image bearers of God.
And so sin is not just something we do, it's who we are. We fail to be who we are, or who we're called to be and created to be because of sin.
[25:13] We're sinners by nature and by choice. And if you don't grasp this idea, if you don't understand what Paul is talking about, what he says next will be completely missed on you.

And it's possible for us as believers to lose sight of our sinfulness. It's possible for us to say, I memorized verse 23 in a wanna, I get it, move on.
It's very easy for us to lose sight of how damaging sin has been to our own lives. We are worthy of nothing but God's wrath.
But verse 24, and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Again, justification means to be declared righteous, not to be righteous, not to be made righteous, but to be declared righteous.
is an important theological word people can easily misunderstand, but we actually use this concept quite frequently in our own culture. We justify some purchases we make.
[26:24] We justify some expenses that would maybe otherwise be considered indulgent. Like, if you're purchasing something for $15, and if you spend another $15, you can get free shipping. So we justify the expense of spending another $15 to save the three bucks on shipping.

We're justifying that expense. It doesn't mean it's right, but we're declaring it as right. Or if something normally costs $90 and it's on sale for $50, you can think, I just made $40 by buying this. Like, look at me. We're justifying those expenses. And even in our legal system, the declaration of guilty or not guilty, those are not statements about the person's nature.
They're declarations about their standing before the law. And so someone who is genuinely guilty can be declared not guilty. And that's the legal concept that we have here in the Bible.
It's a legal declaration of our standing before God. We are sinners. We are ungodly and yet declared righteous in the presence of God.
[27:35] And in chapter 4, verse 5, Paul says God justifies the ungodly. This is by his grace as a gift. There's nothing we can do to merit it and a gift by definition is something that is not worked for.

So nothing we do can prepare us or make us better candidates for receiving this justification and it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

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Redemption means to buy out of slavery to purchase and liberate a slave and Christ has paid that price for us. He has paid the cost to liberate us from our slavery to sin.
And who is Jesus? Verse 25, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.
Salvation, I want you to notice, is God's work. It is God the Father's idea. It is God the Father's doing. Christ is the one who came. Christ is the one who died.
[28:46] But this was the Father's plan. And so are you tempted to view in Christ a loving and soft-hearted son who stands in front of an otherwise uncaring father?

That's not the picture of God we get in the Bible. this is the Father's plan of redemption. This was the Father's idea. And so Jesus is not trying to persuade his Father to forgive.
God is by nature forgiving and so he sends his son. And this word propitiation occurs all over the Old Testament and there it gets translated as mercy seat.
it was the place where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on top of the Ark of the Covenant. It was the place where the high priest would go behind the veil once a year and sprinkle blood to turn away God's wrath from the people of Israel for another year.
It was the place where satisfaction was made for God's wrath and that's what propitiation is. It's a satisfaction of God's wrath. It's an atonement made to satisfy that wrath.
[29:57] It absorbs God's wrath and this is what Jesus does for us. Through his blood he absorbs and turns away God's wrath from us.

Believer, there is no more wrath in God for your sins. Past, present, or future.
Christ has absorbed it all. Christ has suffered it all. Christ has paid for it all. God has no more wrath towards you for your sins.
It was all poured out on his son. It has all been turned away. So redemption is the price paid to set free from slavery.
Propitiation has to do with our liability to the wrath of God and all these things take place by his blood. He died in our place.
[31:03] The wages of sin is death and what God demands he also supplies. He demands death for sin and he provides a payment for our sin through Christ that's to be received by faith.

Again, not worked for, not earned, it's a free gift that's received. Now propitiation is a common idea throughout pretty much every single religion.
So is Christianity all that different then? Is Christianity really distinct from every other religion? All religions have some idea of propitiation, of a sacrifice that abates wrath, that gets rid of wrath.
Yes, Christianity is completely distinct and here's why. In every other religion, propitiation is performed or accomplished by man in hopes of pleasing a wrathful deity.
In Christianity, God himself is the one who provides propitiation. God himself is the one who supplies this sacrifice that turns away wrath.
[32:16] In paganism, propitiation makes the gods willing to not punish, which is not the same thing as forgiveness, but makes them willing to not punish. In Christianity, propitiation is the price of forgiveness that God freely gives, that God willingly gives.

So yes, Christianity is vastly different from other religions, even if there are some similar concepts.
So we think about even just these words, justification, grace, redemption, propitiation.
This is the gospel. This is salvation. Why did God do this? And Paul's answer is that God did this to demonstrate his righteousness.
Salvation is God-centered all the way down. Everything about this event has a foundation in who God is and in what God does. It's to show his righteousness, and now we're talking about that attribute of justice, righteousness, that God possesses by nature.
Why did he need to demonstrate this? Why did he need to show he was righteous? Why did he need to show that he was just? Because he, in the past, forgave sins, even though there was no payment yet made.
[33:39] He had passed over former sins. Abraham was fully and freely forgiven, even though Christ's death is thousands of years in the future. And so his righteousness could be called into question because he was forgiving sinners.

This could compromise his righteousness and his justice. And so Christ's sacrifice then is proof that God is righteous even in forgiveness.

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So how is it that God can be just and forgive sins? The cross is the solution to the Old Testaments, most burning question. It's by grace, it's through redemption, and it's through propitiation by his blood.
It shows his righteousness in offering forgiveness in the past, but there's also a present aspect to this as well in verse 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.
God is perfectly righteous in both forgiving Old Testament saints and in justifying the ungodly today. He is righteous and he justifies the ungodly.
[34:53] And Christ is the only way that God can be merciful and just. It's the only way God can be just and the justifier. If God only punished sins, he would be perfectly just, but he would not be the justifier.

justifier. If God only justified the ungodly, he would be the justifier, but he would not be just. And it's in the death of Christ then that he can be both.
And if this tension, if this whole conundrum is foreign to you, or if you say, why couldn't God just forgive sin without a sacrifice? No big deal. You haven't yet understood the weight of sin.
You haven't yet understood what your sin deserves. It deserves the wrath of God poured out on you for eternity. And it's only through this sacrifice of Christ that it's turned away.
And so, how is this relevant to our daily lives? What do we do with this doctrine? How do we live in light of this truth?
[36:02] Well, Paul actually, in spite of his deep, deep theology in this passage applies this very practically in verses 27 to 31. So we see the results of this doctrine. Verse 27 says, then, or because of this, what should be true of us?

We see not only that the righteousness of God is through faith apart from works, but it will also lead us to humility, unity, and holiness. Then what becomes of our boasting?
It is excluded. It is cut off. It is done away with. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.
Salvation is not a reward for good behavior. And so, because of that, we should not be prideful. Many of you are self-made people.
You've worked hard to be where you're at today, but there are no self-made Christians. Someone is a Christian by grace through faith, not by works of the law.
[37:14] And Paul is perhaps targeting the Jews specifically in this congregation about their boasting and possessing the law and having the prophets revealed to them, but it certainly extends to all of us.

Jews boasted in their law, Greeks boasted in their wisdom, we as Americans boast about all kinds of things, and too many Christians boast in or about their good works rather than the grace of God.
Verse 28, for we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. If justification were by works, at the end of the day, it would have its ground in the person justified.
And if that was the case, boasting would be a fitting response. But because justification has nothing to do with your works, all praise, all honor, all glory goes to the God who provides that justification.
Justification by faith is fundamentally placing your trust in another. faith looks toward what God has done and so should be humble.
[38:33] It also should result in unity. Verse 29, for is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one.

The Jews really kind of viewed God as belonging to them rather than themselves belonging to God. And Paul's question is, is he really just your God?
He is the God of everyone. He is the God of Jew and Gentile alike. And so there should be unity in your church between these two groups. There should be peace and harmony in your church because there is just one gospel.
And so while this gospel would break down barriers and remove boundaries between ethnic groups, it was also in perfect continuity with the Old Testament's most basic teaching that God is one.
Since there is one God, there is only one salvation and since there is only one God and one salvation, there is to be one people of God who are unified. And this is why we go.
[39:45] This is why we share the gospel because anyone who believes in Christ will be saved through faith. Regardless of where they're from, regardless of what they've done, we must scatter

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this seed far and wide.

And lastly, it leads to holiness, verse 31. Sorry, I'll read verse 30. Since God is one who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.
So whether they're circumcised according to the law or whether they've never heard the written law, it is through faith that they'll be made right with God. Verse 31, do we then overthrow the law by this faith?
By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law. So the Jews could ask, is the law useless then? Can we just get rid of it now?
Paul says, by no means. May it never be a thousand times no. If we don't overthrow the law, we uphold it. And we not only uphold the law in principle, but we actually fulfill the law when we live in accordance with its commands.
[40:57] This is where Paul goes in Romans chapter 8, verses 3 and 4. God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.

He condemns sin in the flesh. Why? In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
We don't do away with the law and its demands. We demonstrate their true purpose and meaning by believing in Christ and obeying what he says.
And so the law, the Old Testament, is incredibly relevant to our lives in Christ. We need to be good students of it. And so we've seen the righteousness of God, is obtained by faith apart from works leading to humility, unity, and holiness.
And I'll just apply this a couple more ways to close. If you're in Christ, let this doctrine bring you assurance. Let this doctrine bring you confidence that you're in good standing with the Father.
[42:10] It's possible for us to agree with everything the Bible teaches but live inconsistently with it. And so to test this, we can ask a question.

Do you think that God loves you less when you sin? Do you think God loves you less when you sin? And obviously he desires us to obey.
He is pleased when we obey. But he has loved us fully in Christ. He has paid for our sins fully in Christ. And so if at any time we think God loves me less because I sinned, on the flip side of that we think that if we obey, God would love us more.
And at the end of the day that's works righteousness. That's not a solid ground to rest your soul on. That will not lead to assurance. confidence. So let this doctrine wash over you and bring you confidence that you belong to God because Christ has absorbed all of the Father's wrath for your sin.
And let this doctrine bring you hope. Hope for unbelievers. No one has done too many bad things or too many wicked things or too many evil things to be saved.
[43:33] They don't have to work out all of their sins before they come to Christ. God offers full and complete forgiveness and final justification simply through faith in Christ.

And so if your unbelieving friends and family members are alive, there is hope. They can repent of their sins and believe in the gospel. And if you're here today and you're not in Christ, let this doctrine also bring you hope.
You are too vile and sinful to do anything to impress God. And so am I. And yet he stands ready and willing to forgive you and declare you righteous on the basis of what his son has done.
And because of this doctrine, when we get to heaven, I think we'll be surprised by some of the people who are there. I think we'll be surprised by some of the people who are not there.
Maybe we'll be a surprise to someone else. Joey, what are you doing here? Because God freely forgives and fully pardons through faith in Christ. We cannot work to obtain this.
[44:51] It is his grace as a gift. Again, zero commands in this passage, but it's truth is life altering if you embrace it fully. Let me pray for us.

our Father, we praise you for your gospel. Paul introduces this letter by saying it's the gospel of God.
It was revealed through your son, his death and resurrection. It was proclaimed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. I pray we'd believe these truths, that we live in accordance with them, and we'd walk in the peace we have with you through this justification.

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Father, guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus until we see him face to face, and we'll continue to praise him for all eternity. I pray that you would make us those who love you, who love your gospel, and who proclaim it to others.
That's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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