The Gospel

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Preacher: Asher Griffin

[0:00] Well, if you have a copy of God's Word, I want to encourage you to turn to the book of Romans, chapter 3.! My name is Asher Griffin. It is really a pleasure to be here. I'm so thankful to be here with you guys as fellow campers.

Also, I'm really thankful for all the guys who have put on or put in the labor over the last year, really, in getting this thing accomplished. Our church, our elders, our people have been praying for this type of week for a long time.
I would imagine that you, in your own Christian walk, recognize that God gives us the ordinary means of grace by coming to His people and His gathering and His table week after week, seeing that as a special moment. And in our church, before we open the service, or as we open the service, we really do pray that this moment would be a moment where God changes us and transforms us.
And I think in the same way, I went to camps growing up like this. I went to camps like this as an adult. And it really is amazing to see God at work through long days and long nights and sermons and prayer time and journaling and all of that.
And so I'm really hopeful that this week is a moment for you as God claims you and reminds you of Him keeping you for a long time. I really have been encouraged in just the 24 hours that I've been here by those of you who are attending this as a camper.
[1:14] I've been so encouraged by your singing. It is very abnormal for you to sing as if God is in heaven and He's coming for His bride. And I mean that by your tone, your loudness, your eagerness. Many churches don't have that.

So as you go back, don't just make it a camp thing for you to not be ashamed of the gospel through your own voice going out. Also, just in seeing you guys take notes. I'm not normally a note taker, but I'm looking around like, man, should I take notes?
Sometimes everyone's taking notes here. So I'm encouraged by that. I hope that those notes serve you in the decades ahead of even you might look back and be like, what was that message about? But then you might see a phrase or a couple of words where the Lord was guiding you by His Spirit to see Him for who He truly is.
And then just the common mingling of Christians. I know that a lot of you come here and you're not friends with each other or you don't even go to the same church or live in the same town, but you're meeting other people and what a small glimpse that is of a foretaste of what you and I will have for all eternity.
Not only in our local churches, but also in the new heavens and new earth where we'll be around a bunch of people who have nothing in common with us except for the God who has saved us unto Himself. With that, if we could just take a brief moment and aim to quiet our hearts, aim to posture in our hearts and meditating to where I'll open us up in a word of prayer and then we'll dive in to Romans chapter 3.
[2:50] Our gracious and heavenly Father, we come to you this day asking for you to build us up in great faith. We pray that you would call those who don't know you to yourself. We pray that you would encourage us by reminding us of the Spirit that indwells within us, that was sent to us by you, our Father, and your Son, our Lord, recognizing that it is in this case where we can fully rest and you, our eternal King.

So God, as we go to your word, we pray that what we know not, you would now teach us. To where we have not, we pray that you would now give us. To where what we are not, we ask that you would transform us and make us into the likeness of your Son.

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We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, when I was in junior high and high school, like many of you, I really struggled in many ways with the veracity or strength of my own faith.
I grew up going to things like FCA camp and church camp, and typically speakers at those camps, of which I'm not one, they were typically like giant men who came to Christ with incredible stories, like falling out of a helicopter or being shot at in a war or these incredible things where you look at that and you just go, I just went to Good News Club.
And I just heard the gospel and I think I responded to it. And that in many ways, comparing myself with these giants in my way of the faith, became actually very quiet in my own faith.
[4:17] I know that I was a believer. I became a believer at a young age, was baptized at a young age, but I was a little bit quiet of that. And so I was talking briefly as my junior year of high school, I was talking with my youth pastor at the time and just telling them that all these guys have something that I don't have.

They have like a big faith in Jesus. And he kind of leaned back, a little bit of a smirk. I recognize that now. So in junior high, you don't recognize sarcasm. High school, you fully realize it and it's the bane of your existence.
But he smirked at me and he goes, oh man, friend, it is not your faith. It is God's gift to you that you are struggling with. He has given you everything and you have nothing to be ashamed of.
Recognize what he did. He took you from bondage to freedom. He took you from deadness to life. He took you from a worn, torn heart to a life that now lives in paradise forever.
Like you have nothing to be silent or shallow about. And in many ways that changed, not my faith, but the trajectory of my verbal desire with what God has given me to where I had something that was beyond me.
[5:24] I had something that will live eternally. I have something that was a gift from God to me. And in many ways it changed in recognizing who I saw the gospel being for.

Now, if I were to ask you, who is the gospel for? However, you might respond, the gospel's for the lost. And it certainly is for the lost. But friend, you've got to realize that the gospel is for Christians. The gospel is for those who didn't know the news, but the continual resounding announcement of the very good news in your heart on a daily basis.
Many people misunderstand the gospel, thinking it's for other people, recognizing that it is also very much for you if you are united in Christ. The gospel is the redemptive work of Jesus on our behalf.
And my point, or I hope that my point of this sermon is that the gospel is something that you and I never forget and that you and I always practice. In the same way, if you're in sports or in arts, it is the tedious thing, the difficult thing of always practicing, always rehearsing, always going back to the basics, always stretching the limits.
[6:36] And in many ways, that reminder of the gospel impacts our hearts in a lot of the same ways. We must preach it to ourselves. We must speak of it to ourselves.

In the same way, if you had a hundred friends who didn't know the gospel, you have a hundred opportunities to tell people the gospel. Every day that God has given you is another day. Every hour that God has given you is another hour to remind yourself of this ferocious announcement from heaven on high.
It is not a one-time thing to acknowledge. It is something that we don't just know for sharing to other people, but it's something that we know so that we can speak it and remind it to ourselves.
But it's something we must know so that it's something that we can always preach. We can always tell. Now, every good Christian values the preaching of the scriptures. You think of it just historically, since the Protestant Reformation Reformed churches always place at the center or the focal point of their worship service, hopefully, actually the very scriptures, the Bible.
You think about the structure of how a church is built, how the sound of a church is going out. It's going out from the scriptures. Even how instruments are around us or maybe behind us.
[7:49] The church I went to in college, the instruments would have all been back there. It is very weird. I don't recommend it. But we're all just kind of like singing to a screen so that we wouldn't be distracted by anything, but that we're just seeing these pages on this pulpit, recognizing that it's from this pulpit with the harnessing effect of the words on top of it, recognizing that the power here is that God is using these very words to mediate himself between me and you, but also between us and him, where we recognize the power of God's word going out.

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That's why the pulpit is center in nothing else. And we get excited about biblical preaching because of its power. I would imagine some of you in the, I think we've had four messages so far in this camp.
Some of them, all of them have been very, very good to where, what do you naturally do when you hear a message like that? You go to someone and talk about it. What do you do when your favorite sports team wins the night before?
What do you do when you see someone the next day? You talk about it. And we recognize that from a preaching, formal, me-to-you standpoint, but we very much diminish very often, and this is going to be the bulk of the second half of my sermon, we very much diminish the power of us actually preaching that very gospel to ourselves, like in our own minds, speaking this gospel to ourselves.
We need good preaching, but the preaching that goes on from the pulpit, this desk, is not the only preaching that you and I must be concerned about. We must also practice preaching Christ to ourselves.
[9:14] So you, individual Christian, you must get very good, you must get very good at preaching the gospel to yourself. So I hope this sermon is basic, and I hope it's very helpful, and I've got three points.

Now the first one, I want you to recognize the gospel from a particular set of scriptures. I want you to recognize the gospel. You can't preach the gospel to yourself unless you recognize this gospel. Second point is I want you to place that gospel in a very particular area in your life. So imagine it's like a can in a pantry. You take that can, you recognize what that can is.
This is a good can. It's a gospel can. Then you do something with it. You place it in a particular place. The third thing I want you to gain from this is I want you to tell, or I want to tell you how you can preach the gospel to yourself.
So I want you to recognize it. I want you to place it. And I want you to preach it to yourself. Now, I want you to be propelled. The main aim of this is I want you to be propelled to preach the gospel to yourself from the scriptures.
[10:18] I remember learning this particular task when I was in college, where a man taught me how to preach the gospel to myself. And it completely changed the way I handled despair.

It changed the way I handled joy. It changes the way I deal with other people or probably people deal with me. But when you start preaching the gospel to yourself, it takes you back to the heart of where God wants you all together.
You've heard some of the messages before. Theology, the necessity and the glory of theology. That is good. And you must apply it. You've heard of a big God.
A God who is other. A God who is beyond. A God who is terrifying but also very gracious. That is good. But you must revere him. You also heard clear teaching on the Trinity.
Where something that seems so complex, one in essence, three in persons, seems so otherly. But it becomes very clear when you recognize that the object of our faith is the whole goal of our faith.
[11:21] And that is very good. But you must administer this glorious and good God to yourself. And how do you do that? Well, you do that by preaching the gospel. So first, I want you to recognize the gospel.

Recognize the gospel. In order to preach Christ, you've got to know him. In many ways, you've got to be a graduate of who he is and of what he has done.
And it will only edify you to really know the good news according to the scriptures. God has given us everything that we need to know him by from the scriptures.
People get very spiritual verbally when they talk about, man, I just felt God in this place. And if you had a lot of guts, you would just say, what do you mean by that?
And they would typically answer like, well, you know, you just know. And you're like, no, that's what dumb people say. That is not an answer at all. Or you even see books that are published.
[12:17] Really heretical, awful books that act like they have the very voices of God themselves teaching you something new about God. You know, the Book of Mormon or Jesus Calling or all kinds of things where people who think they're inspired by God are adding to this very text.

You want to know the gospel? You know this text. In the same way, if you wanted to know math, you wouldn't open up a history book to know trigonometry. You go to a math book. If you want to know the gospel, go to the book.

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See what he's done and who he is. It will edify you. If you only know the bare minimum of who God is, then you can only expect to have a bare minimum spiritual life. And to have a deeper knowledge of Jesus.
Have a rich, refined recognition of the Jesus of the Bible. Now, if you haven't turned there yet, turn to Romans chapter 3. I want to go through verses 19, God willing, through 26.
And for the next several minutes, I want to walk you through this first passage. I'm still in the first point. And I think these couple of verses are some of the clearest explanation of Jesus' gospel. So if you want to continually preach Christ to yourself, you've got to know what these verses mean.
[13:27] If you want to know Christ, this is what you must know. Now, within this first point, so for you note-takers, I'm about to give you seven sub-points within this first point. All right, so plenty of room.

I'll guide you through it. If I remember, I'll repeat it. Seven things that we see from this passage, 19 through 26. The first one is that the law shows us, so the law shows us that we are not righteous. Here from 19 through 21. 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 own sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. A righteous person. So the law shows us that we are not righteous.
A righteous person is someone who perfectly obeys the law of God. Perfectly obeys the law of God. Righteousness is a status of legal integrity that satisfies the requirements of God's character.
[14:31] Righteousness is a status of legal integrity that satisfies the requirements of God's character. And when Paul speaks of the law in this passage, when he talks about the law, what he means is all of the scriptures.

So a couple times throughout the New Testament, it talks about the law and the prophets, Moses and Elijah, Moses and the prophets, all these kinds of things. Whenever this is talking about the law, he means all of scripture.
Now, one late author, Jerry Bridges, strikingly calls the law, quote, the transcript of God's nature and the rule of obedience that he requires of all human beings.
The ethical commands scattered throughout the Bible. The transcript of God's nature and the rule of obedience that he requires. All of the scriptures. And what all of the scriptures show us is that none of us are righteous.
Now, and some of us might come from a context, and I do. I come from an ethnical context and a social context where people call themselves red-letter Christians.
[15:30] Where there's a lot of debate on black letters in the Bible. And some of the stuff in the Old Testament is really difficult to read. Or does that really mean what it says? Some of the stuff even in the New Testament.

You know, Paul, he wrote so long ago. It was in a different culture. There were different things going on. But we, they say, can really trust in the red letters of the scriptures.
And that sounds really spiritual. But it's really wrong. It's really dangerous. Ironically, it's against the scriptures that that argument comes about. What the law shows us from Genesis to Revelation is that none of us are righteous.
God lays out the standard where righteousness is perfect obedience. But we don't hit the mark. If you want, turn over to the book of James.
It's to the right. So you've got all these Pauline letters. And then you get to the book of Hebrews. And then the book of James. Go to James chapter 2, verse 10. James chapter 2, verse 10.
[16:31] Now's when you're jealous for all of us who have Bible tabs, aren't you? It's not that we're better. It's that we're quicker. James chapter 2, verse 10. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

I'm sure some of you all have heard the examples of teachers in classrooms who if one person messes up, the whole classroom is punished. Or it's kind of like, I remember in elementary school you play the quiet game.
And if one person blurts out, then the whole class faces a consequence. Or you play heads down, seven up. And if one person looks up, the game's over. They ruin it for everyone.
Now, think of the law like that, but having all of that apply to you. If you mess up once, you're completely polluted. So if I came and handed you a cup of water, and I said, it's clear water, it's got

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ice in it, it's good water, but also I spit in it, would you drink it?
No. Some of you just nodded yes. Do not do that. Because it looks the same. Most of it's water. 98% of it's water. So it's basically good. We often think this religiously.
[17:51] God should judge me rightly because, after all, I'm a pretty good guy. But what God's law says is that no one keeps his law righteously. No one keeps his law rightly.

And even if you mess up once, you're completely polluted. So the law shows us that we are not righteous. And the point is that God will not accept you because you're a decent person.
How many of you heard of friends who you know a little iffy stuff about? But other people say, he's a good guy. And you're like, no, he's not a good guy.
What the law shows is that God will not accept you because you're a good guy. Because even one sin separates you from what was preached about last night from a holy, holy God.
The second thing we see is that righteousness from God. So righteousness, good thing, from God to you comes apart from the law.
[18:50] Righteousness from God comes apart from the law. Look at verse 1. Flip back to Romans chapter 3, verse 21.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. You and I cannot achieve righteousness on our own.
You and I cannot achieve righteousness at all. Which goes against so much of my desire, so much of all of our desire. If we believe it, we can achieve it.
You know, we now have a standard way of looking at performance or progress as effort. You know, he didn't finish the race, but he tried really hard. And you're like, that's not enough.
Here we recognize that we cannot achieve or attain righteousness on our own because we are fallen. Because the scriptures call us totally depraved. Because we're not righteous. But the good news of the gospel, think of this, is that God provides righteousness for us.
[19:53] The good news of the gospel is that God provides righteousness for us. The righteousness of God is established in the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus, who through his life and his death, in obedience to the Father's will, perfectly fulfills the law of God.

That phrase there, the law and the prophets, It's talking about how all of the scriptures in the Old Testament are actually pointing to, longing for, highlighting with like blinking, flashing Christmas lights, the very one who would come, who was delivered as a perfect man and lived a perfect life.
The word manifest here in this passage means that they become clearly, or Christ becomes clearly revealed to the senses and judgment of men. That he was made manifest for us.
So God's gift of righteousness is a real righteousness given over to us, worked out in real circumstances by a real man handed over, think of this, to unrighteous people.
So chronologically, we recognize that the Son of God always existed, is existing, and will always exist. But at an appointed time, he came. We celebrated at Christmas.
[21:03] It's called the Incarnation, where he condescended to earth. The mere birth of that was an absolute perfection. He was without sin. I think I'm going to get into that in a little bit. But then, catch on to this, he lived a sinful life.

So that as he becomes the righteousness for us, he becomes righteousness to the unrighteous. He was perfect in life and in death. In his life, he perfectly lived and obeyed unlike anyone that you and I know, even ourselves.
And in his death, he completely paid the penalty of a broken law. So from the standpoint of obedience to the law, of paying the penalty for breaking the law, he perfectly fulfilled the law of God.
That's what this text is speaking to. So by this, God declares his people righteous on the basis of the real accomplished righteousness of Christ, which is imputed or credited to us through faith.
Turn over to the book of Isaiah. It's to your left. The book of Isaiah. It's a little bit after the Psalms. Typically, you open the Bible in the middle and you're kind of around that area. I went too far.
[22:15] Isaiah chapter 61. So the law declares that we are not righteous. The law declares that we cannot achieve righteousness on our own.

But what the law of God tells us is that God's righteousness has been granted to us by Christ Jesus and his achievement for us. Isaiah 61 verse 10. We see here that the righteousness from God comes apart from the law and it comes from the person of Christ.
Now, the third thing I want you to see here in this passage is that righteousness from God is received by faith in Christ Jesus. Righteousness from God is received through faith in Christ Jesus.

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So you are not righteous. Righteousness comes from God. How can you receive or take part in, behold and relish in that very righteousness?
This word says that it is received through faith in Christ Jesus. Look at verse 22. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.
[23:42] So it's 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. I've heard it said from someone, I don't know where I got this quote, but I've heard it said that faith is the hand by which the righteousness of Christ is received.

Now, the word faith in our scriptures is a noun that has no verbal form in English. Instead, translators use the word believe. So faith and belief are in many ways interchangeable in our case right now.
Like in Acts 16 verse 31. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Or if you confess with your mouth or believe in your heart that Jesus is the Lord, you can be saved.
And the scriptures are clear that we are to believe in, trust in, have faith in Christ as the Son of God. Clothed in our humanity where Jesus lived a perfect life and then died a complete death on the cross for our sins.
That's the gospel. Now, a couple hundred years ago, people used an acronym to talk about what faith is. You might say, I just want to have faith. Or you've got to have more faith.
[24:53] Or what I'm praying for my friend to have is faith. Or I need to have a greater faith. I need to have a larger faith. And what does that mean? Like, what does that mean to have faith? There's an acronym.

You can write it down. It's CAT. But not with a C, with a K. K-A-T. A misspelling of CAT, but a right understanding of faith. K-A-T. What it means to have faith is to have knowledge in and of who God is.
If you don't know what He is, if you don't know who He is, you do not have faith in Him. So to have faith is to have knowledge in and of who He is. The second word is A, ascend.
A-S-C-E-N-D. Ascend. You've got to go to Him. It's not just you abstractly know that He's there. Like, I know that the Rocky Mountains are in Colorado, but I haven't gone there.
So like, I don't know. So if you know who God is, you've got to go to Him. You've got to go to Him as He is. You've got to go to Him according to you are, which is unrighteous. And then the last one, the T, is to trust.
[25:54] So you know Him, you ascend to Him, and then you trust in Him. Now, if I were to have the most expensive thing in my life, other than my house or my truck, it would obviously be my cell phone.

My cell phone is a very expensive thing. All of our phones, I would imagine, are actually really expensive things. And you were to say, hey, throw me your phone. I would say, no. Why would I say no?
Because I don't know you, and I don't trust that you'll catch it. Oh, I play sports, whatever. Don't know you, don't care, don't trust you. And you might say, okay, I'll come up to you, and you can hand it to me. And I'm going to like hold on to it, and you're going to take it, and I'm going to like keep on gripping it, and you're going to try to pull it away from me.
Why? Because I really don't trust that you'll do well with my phone. And I think that's how a lot of us trust God with our entire lives. We don't want to throw it at Him, mostly because we don't have a knowledge of who He is.
We don't want to go to Him, because we want Him to come to us. But even when we're there, we don't really trust that He will do absolutely everything good for us. Because we're surrounded by a world that doesn't do a lot of things good to us, and we don't do a lot of good things to those in the world.
[27:03] And so we grip on so much. Look at it this way. If I were to take that phone, and you were to place your hands underneath it, and I completely drop it in your hands, I've lost all ability to control that phone at that point.

That's what trusting in God actually means. Throwing yourselves completely at Him. Saying, whatever you want for my life, however you want to lead my life, whatever you want to do for my life, or day, or moment, do it.

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So friends, know, receive Christ through faith. Know Him, ascend to Him, trust Him. Number four. So number three was righteousness from God is received through faith in Christ Jesus.
Number four, righteousness of God is available to everyone on the same basis. Righteousness of God is available to everyone on the same basis, because all have sinned.
Hear this from verse 22 to 23. 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.
[28:13] God sees no distinction in the seriousness and worsening of sin. God sees no distinction in the seriousness and worsening of sin. He treats all people equally, because all people are sinful.

All may not be equally sinful or guilty, but all are guilty and sinful. It's like the difference of getting 20 on a test, or 45 on a test.
You all failed the test. Some of you really failed the test. But you all failed the test. Both scores are failing. And the first purpose of God's method of salvation, through Christ's death, is actually to deliver us from this guilt of death.
And the point here is the business of God in salvation is not your goodness that you are delivered from, but your actual guilt. Think of back in the book of Exodus.
I almost forgot it. The book of Exodus. It was a great movie. Where God's people were, thank you for someone who laughed, where God's people were taken from Egypt in their bondage to freedom.
[29:22] They left a land and went through something else. Or when they were approaching the promised land, they crossed over the Jordan. They went from something to something. Now, in many ways, I actually became really caught off guard when I would ask people, and I really kind of gained the confidence in asking people about their faith, really in the earlier stages of college.

I started going to a church the summer after my freshman year of college, where it just became a normal thing to ask people, you know, what did you read in the Bible today? Or what are you praying for right now? Or, hey, I just met you.
Like, are you a Christian? Or, you know, I do this all the time, my own line of work, because I'm a pastor, so I get to talk about this. you know, do you go to church anywhere? And they might go to a church, they stumble around.
Or, you know, would you say that you're a Christian? And yes, or whatever. And I ask, I often ask people, like, when were you converted? And people are always confused at that.
I think a lot of people think of the phrase, when were you born again? Or when did you come to Christ? Or whatever. I just use the phrase, when were you converted? Because a lot of us think, those who are converted, are those who are converted from, like, Mormonism to Christianity.
[30:28] Or, converted from being Islam to being a Christian. But, recognizing, according to the scriptures, we are converted from the deadness of our sins to a life, now alive in Christ Jesus.

Where he takes us from something, guides us through it, and plants us on the other side of the river. Where the righteousness of God is available to everyone because they were in a certain place.
They were dead to their sins. So the righteousness of God is available to everyone on the same basis, because all have sinned. Number five.
All who believe in Jesus are justified by God's grace. All who believe in Jesus, have faith in Jesus, are justified by God's grace.
Look again at verse 24. And are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Now, to be justified God is to be announced as forgiven from any charge of guilt and to be declared absolutely righteous.
[31:35] We are not only cleared from all of God's wrath because of our sin, but we are also personally accepted by God because of Christ. Justification is like two sides of a coin.

One side of this coin says not guilty, and the other side says righteous through Christ. Christ. The doctrine here of justification is actually the completed work of Christ Jesus in your own life.
So you think of what Christ does to save you from your sins. He regenerates your heart. He makes your heart new. He converts you where you respond in faith and repentance because you who were once dead had no ability to say or believe in anything, but because he awakened your soul, you then can like look around at him and go, I believe in you.
I trust in you. I apologize. Forgive me for my sins. To where then it's at that point that you are declared justified to the ends of the earth. Now, the example was used at the sermon earlier about speeding tickets or parking tickets.

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I have had probably more speeding tickets or parking tickets than the other speaker, much to my shame. And I've had to stand in front of a judge in high school because of a speeding ticket. It wasn't that bad, but I was that young.
[32:46] And I had to say why I did what I did. And out of the kindness of his heart and maybe from the tears of my own face, he said, I'm going to cancel the debt that you have for this payment and I'm going to delete it from your record.

So it's not only that, okay, I don't have to go and time out for a while, but also, no one's ever going to talk about it again except 20 years later when I tell everyone about it.
Friends, when God justifies us, he blots out our sins as far as the east is from the west, which is a biblically poetic way of saying you can't find it.
And when God justifies us, we are not only forgiven of the charge of guilt, but we are also declared absolutely righteous. I have in my mind that at one point we will be in front of the holy throne of God himself and he will look at us and in many ways it will be because we are standing behind his righteous and perfect substitute on our behalf.
He'll look at his son and see his son's army behind him and he'll look at us and he'll see his son in front of us where we are justified, where we are declared free and righteous and that is all by God's grace.
[34:07] None of us did anything to do that. We didn't deserve to do it. We didn't obtain it in any way. We can't do it all the time. I remember in high school I used to have like cramps in sports because I didn't drink Gatorade because it wasn't cool to drink Gatorade and so I'd have cramps and I remember praying, God, if you take these cramps away, I'll read a proverb a day for the rest of this month.

Thank you again for the one who laughed. Isn't it so ridiculous? That is not how God works. God is a God of grace and mercy, not of one who looks at a tired soul and go, okay, you've done enough, now I love you.
That's not how love works. There's a story of a Hall of Fame baseball player who took his son to his first eight and under baseball game. Now you'd imagine there's a Hall of Fame baseball player so everyone's actually watching the dad and the son at his first at bat hits a home run.
I mean, how cool, like father, like son, would love to know it. Second at bat, home run. This guy's gonna be a legend just like his dad. Third at bat, strikes out.
Well, two for three is not bad for those of you who don't play baseball. Kid's really sad, gets into his car or dad's car. Dad looks at him and he says, hey son, good job. He said, man, I'm really sorry about that last strikeout.
[35:29] And the dad says, man, to be really honest, I wish you had struck out every single time. And all your reactions are like, sounds really weird. Sounds really awful.

Why would you want your son to strike out every time? And he said, why? And the dad looked at him and he said, so that when I say that I love you, you won't think it's because you're a baseball player.
I don't love you because you're a baseball player. I love you because you're my son. When God looks out on his people, he doesn't look at their checklist, on their to-do list, or on their filled up journal of how much good they've done.
He've looked at the work and the perfection of his son on their behalf. Number six, Christians are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
Christians are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You see that phrase at the end of verse 24. So at this point, I think it'll be helpful to distinguish between justification and a simple pardon.
[36:30] A pardon is letting someone off the hook. You let someone off the hook. There's no pain involved. We all have that friend, right? I always say we have that friend. Maybe some of you are that friend where they mess up a lot and their parents say, when I get home, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

When your dad gets home, here we go. And then what happens? Nothing happens. They've been pardoned of their sins. They've been let off the hook. That's not what justification means, though.
It's super important to know that our redemption, our salvation in Christ was not given by a mere pardon. Justice had to be completely satisfied where the penalty for sins was paid in full by a very bloody, cosmically, wrath-accepting death by the Lord Jesus Christ.

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the consequences for your sin is death, according to the Scriptures. And the amazing thing about the justification that God gives us in the very person of Christ is that the consequences of your sins by God's grace and mercy and love of you amazingly was placed on the shoulders of one who is absolutely perfect.
a lamb who had no imperfections was led to slaughter for your case. Christians are justified through the redeeming, bloody, deathly work of Christ on the cross.
[37:57] Number seven, we're still in point one. I was told earlier that my battery pack lasts three hours. Would love to see it. Number seven, God presented Jesus as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

Verse 25, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.
Now some, I hope all Bible translations rightly use the word here propitiation. Propitiation is rarely a part of our vocabulary today.
It is a word that you must know though. So see it in your text. If you're a note taker, write it down in your notes. Memorize how to spell it. Think about how to say it. Propitiation. Propitiation in the context of salvation means that Jesus appeases, accepts the wrath of God against sin.
So the Lord Jesus Christ by his sacrifice on the cross appeased and turned aside God's just and holy wrath. The wrath that we should have suffered.
[39:11] I don't know if any of you have ever played in a river. I loved playing in rivers like small creeks growing up. And I would imagine I did what a lot of people do in rivers. They put up giant rocks to build up kind of a pooling effect or divert it to another area.

Or maybe you've seen, maybe you've gone across a giant dam in Oklahoma or another city where this giant mountain of concrete is holding back water. When we think of what Christ did on the cross in the Bible, the biblical language, absorbing God's wrath or taking on God's wrath or suffering of God's wrath, what he's doing is he's serving as something that is diverting God's wrath away from you.
But he's not diverting it over there. He's diverting it all the way to himself. Where because of everything you have done against a holy God should have rightly and justly been placed on your shoulders to the point of death and agony and despair.
But because of God's love for you, Christian, he places it on his absolutely perfect son. as a propitiation for you so that when he announces you as justified, all of the universe knows that because of his righteousness, you too are righteous.
One very important point is that propitiation is taken by us as sinners through faith in Jesus' blood. The blood of Christ referring to his death is to be the object of our faith by which we take his propitiation.
[40:59] I heard an illustration a couple of weeks ago by a friend who took it from a book on Marco Polo. I recognize none of you probably do Marco Polo because I'm a little bit older than you and that's not cool anymore.

But I heard it from a friend so I'm going to butcher it a little bit. I want to imagine that you are very, I want you to imagine yourself to be very sick. Like you're terminally ill. And someone offers you a pill that can save you from your illness.
They give you the pill, you accept the pill, you take the pill in your mouth, you swallow the pill. That pill is what saves you. You swallowing, you accepting, you following the rule of medicine, you going to the doctor, you doing all that, that doesn't save you.
The pill saves you. But that action of receiving or taking Christ to be your savior, that's faith. That's faith and that pill will work for you.
What faith looks like is seeing Christ for who he is and saying, if that's who you are and if this says I am what I am, then I desperately need you. The blood of Christ in connection with our salvation is a regular expression in the New Testament with the New Testament writers.
[42:13] The blood of Christ. It's a hard thing to say. It's a weird thing to say. The blood of the Lamb. There's this rugby team in Fiji that sings this song. By the word of the Lord and the blood of the Lamb we shall overcome.

And they get it from phrases like, it is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from the defilement of sin in Hebrews chapter 9. It's the blood of Christ that purifies us from all of our sin in 1 John chapter 1.

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It's the blood of Christ that we have confidence to enter into the very presence of an infinitely holy God in Hebrews chapter 10. It is the blood of Christ according to the Romans passage that you and I have been examining that turns the holy and just wrath of God, think of it, away from you.
Friends, that's the gospel. Right here in this text. But I want to tell you that there is a particular way in which you should treat this gospel in your life.
Not only should you receive it, yes you should, but you should also operate or administrate this gospel in your life in a particular way and that is you should place this gospel in front of your very life.
[43:26] Now, I'm not into planets or space or moon landings or anything, but I think a lot of us treat God in the gospel like a moon rather than like the sun, the S-U-N.

When you have a sun in space, everything revolves around it. When you have a moon, it can get caught up in clusters of rocks and asteroids and other moons and other kinds of things and you can be tempted to box up the gospel in other religious pursuits or other lifetime endeavors.
Those are called idols or those are called good things, but they should be centered around the gospel like planets would rotate around the sun. It should be the center of your life.
It should be the front of your life because, because, think of this, life will push back on your faith. Life will push back on your theology. Life, and even sometimes yourself, will push back against you. We do live in a dark world. You do live in a harsh world. I tell high schoolers all the time, high school is definitely the hardest part of your life. It is very difficult.
[44:39] The things you encounter, the people that you go through, the friends that you don't get to choose, the operations that you don't get to be a part of, friends, I gotta tell you, if you just live through it, it gets a little bit better, but there's gonna be other things pushing up against you all the time.

And it will be way more glorious and way more fulfilling as if you march towards Zion. It is because you have the gospel in your forefront and in front of you. In situations like this, you do not need to be clever or brilliant or even bold or courageous, but consumed with the truth of God as revealed to you in the scriptures.
When life pushes back, push back with the gospel. Preach Christ's life, death, and resurrection to yourself. You, Christian, need to preach the gospel to yourself.
You need to place the gospel where the world tries to place its trouble, right in your heart, right in front of you, in your soul. I would imagine that none of you can surpass the test that I'm about to you right now.
Do not, friend, think, do not think of a pink elephant. You all did it. I know you all did it. Do not think of a pink elephant. And you did it right then and again.
[45:50] Don't do it. It's exactly how sin and temptation creeps up into us. A distraction, an avoidance, a hurdle, a burden, a lie, all in all.

We see this is how the devil first crept into the garden by just changing a couple phrases around to Eve. We see this maybe in our lone lives through other friends or family members or books.
Does God actually want that for you? Does God actually mean that? Is that really what the Bible says? Do you really believe in that thing? You can have everything and you believe in that? When life becomes perplexing or painful, we often start to listen to ourselves and our own doubts rather than speaking to ourselves the things we need to most hear.
One of my heroes, a late preacher in England named Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote in one of his most famous books. It's called Spiritual Depression. You don't have to write that down. Just listen to this quote. But he says, Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life, so think of yourself here, most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself.
Take those thoughts that come to you in the moment. You wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you. They bring back the problems of yesterday or maybe in your own context when you go to sleep at night and you lay your head on the pillow, you can think of all the things that you have done wrong or that has gone wrong the day before.
[47:21] Somebody is talking, he says. But who is talking? Yourself is talking to you. Like in Psalm 42, this man's treatment was this.

Instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. Why are you cast down, O my soul? He asks. His soul had been depressing him. In Psalm 42, his soul had been crushing him.

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So he stands up, as almost you could imagine, and says, Self, listen for a moment. I will speak to you. The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself.
You have to take yourself in hand. You have to address yourself. You have to preach to yourself. Take the example of Psalm 42. Why are you cast down, O my soul? He says, You must turn on yourself, rebuke yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself, Hope in God.
Or you, in your own way, and in your own circumstance, may have to remind yourself that you are not what you often tell yourself to be.
[48:24] You are not who others often tell yourself to be. But you are one who was sought and bought by the blood of the Lamb. There is a new title above your doorstep.

There is a new address to your heart. There is a new king who sits on a throne in your kingdom. And he is the king of kings and the Lord of lords. It is the gospel who you have got to, what you have got to remind yourself with.
And you have got to place the gospel in front of your life. And what that means is you have got to preach Christ. Preach the gospel to yourself. We are preaching to ourselves as the personal act of applying the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to our own lives with the aim of experiencing the sanctifying grace of God leading to ongoing faith and repentance.
Now, you and I must sit, and we should sit, under the preaching of God's word, but we must also preach Christ to ourselves. We must preach the reality that it is Christ alone who can save us from our sins, that it is Christ alone who can sanctify us by the Spirit's operation.
It is Christ alone who is coming back for us and who will place us at the seat before his Father. It is Christ alone that we remind ourselves when ourselves are speaking against us.
[49:39] So we place the gospel before our every step, our every reflection, within every lesson, before every aim. And we do this, thirdly, by rehearsing the gospel.

So three quick points. This is the third main point, but three quick points. We do this by looking to God through his word. In the same way that you can discover the real Jesus by the very word of God, you can remind yourself of this glorifying, sanctifying work of Christ being present before ourselves and our lives by actually looking in his word.
One of the most dangerous things happening in evangelicalism, I think, is placing people, not the word, at the center of our worship. Many worship services in many different churches make everything about you.
They might even have a vision statement that it's all about you. The most important thing about this church is you. What a heretical and damning thing to say. God is only concerned with you.
Are you happy? Our goal is to make you happy. Are you lonely? Our job is to give you friends. Do you have a mirror? You must have a mirror so that you can see what we see.
[50:54] We see you. It's all about you. Welcome to you, church, where you are the center. But that is the opposite of what God has called us to do in reminding ourselves of himself.

To preach Christ to yourself, you are lifting up your heart to heaven to see, not yourself, but to him who is there. Psalm 73 says, But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task until I went into the sanctuary of God.
We're preaching to ourselves as not a self-centered discipline. It's the opposite. It's a Christ-centered action. So we look to God through his word, but then we list our need. We take our needs to the Lord.
When my soul was embittered, Psalm 73 says, When I pricked in my heart, I was brutish and ignorant. I was like a beast toward you. We're being honest with the Lord about ourselves and then applying his salvific word and sanctifying message to our own hearts.
It means we must speak our need and address our need where our greatest problem is our sin and unbelief in particular, and we need to properly diagnose those with God's very word and with God's very truth.
[51:57] I'd imagine some of you have been to a doctor. I'd imagine some of you have been to a tutor, or maybe you've just gone to a friend for help. What's so very glorious in our scriptures is how different our Christ is from going to a doctor or going to a tutor or even going to a friend.

All those things are good. If you're hurt, go to a doctor. If you're lonely, go to your friend. But it's only Christ Jesus who would ever look to us in any situation and say, what you need more of is me. A doctor would never say that.

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A tutor would never say that. A friend would never say that. What you need more of is my presence in your life. And friend, you can do that by preaching the gospel to yourself. And then we set our hope on the person of Christ.
We're preaching to ourselves as the personal act of applying the life, death, resurrection of Jesus to our own lives with the aim of experiencing the sanctifying grace of God leading to an ongoing faith of repentance.
Paul talks about this in other parts of the scriptures putting off what is wrong or unhelpful and putting on what is righteous. And we can regularly remind ourselves of how to do that by preaching the gospel to yourself.
[53:07] In the beginning, God created the world and God created man. God put man in the garden and kept the garden and he gave the man a command and God held the man to a perfect, perpetual state of obedience and he promised him life if he kept that and death if he didn't.

And if he didn't keep it and he didn't keep it. Man didn't keep it in the garden. He actually ate what he wasn't supposed to eat and because he ate because of that one man who sinned, sin entered into the world and death through sin.
And everyone born from the man through ordinary generation inherited that man's sinful nature and because of that sinful nature sins proceed from it and our world is broken because of that sin.
You and I stand guilty not only in a broken world but we stand guilty before a holy and righteous God and we know that he's holy and we know that he's righteous and we crave justice but the problem is that if God gives us justice then we would all die.
And so God in his goodness and mercy sent his son who was not born of ordinary generation but born of a virgin the scriptures say. Yes, the virgin birth really matters because the son is born of ordinary generation.
[54:19] He's born into sin but because he's not born in ordinary generation he's not born into sin. He is clean of sin and his record is completely clean and he keeps his record clean by obeying God's law perfectly.

Jesus always wanted to do the Father's will and he did so with quite perfection. And because he's fully God and fully man he then obeys the law of God on our behalf and in active obedience and in his passive obedience God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us where we like sheep have all gone astray each one of us has turned to his own way but God laid upon Christ the iniquity of us all and Christ died for sin once for all the just for the unjust and God imputes our sinfulness to him so there he nails our sinfulness to the tree and there Christ dies and rises again on the third day for our justification but there's another imputation that the scriptures talk about the righteousness of Christ that is actually imputed to us so our sins were imputed to him but in a glorious turn his righteousness was imputed to us so that God can be both just and the justifier of the one who places faith in Christ Jesus so that all who come to Christ may enter in so that all those who put faith in Christ Jesus might be saved friend if you're here and you're not a Christian the call of this text the call of this scriptures the call of this entire camp is for you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and friends you really can because of your placement on this side of the river calling out to him and asking him to carry you to the other side he's faithful to do it friends those of you who are in Christ recognize the story goes on he not only saves you but he sanctifies you because Christ is the firstborn of many brethren we are justified and adopted into the family of God we're sanctified as his children we begin to become or have a family resemblance and by this we're further sanctified throughout this life by the very same gospel that saves us by placing it in front of us we become more like him until one day when it's all said and done where we're not just saved from the penalty of sin where we won't just be saved from the power of sin but one day we're glorified and saved from the very presence of sin friends to believe in Christ is one day to be with him one day to behold him one day to really and fully and truly know him that's the gospel let's pray our gracious and heavenly father we thank you for what your word says so clearly to us by your grace about us and we thank you for what your bible and your word says so clearly and so graciously and so wonderfully about your awesome and glorious son we pray that by capturing our minds within this moment that you would continue by your spirit to continually remind us of your glory our God we pray that you would do this for the sake of your son's name and for the continual announcement of his gospel it's in Jesus name we pray amen thank you ■■■■■ so we pray that you would do this for the sake of your son's name and for the sake of your son's name and for the sake of your son's name and for the sake of your son's name and for the sake of your son's name

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