

Series through Romans: TRUTH: UNASHAMED, PART I

Sermon Title: Week 6, The Magnificent Alternative

Principal Scripture: Romans 3:21-31

Date: July 08, 2018

† Putting things in perspective

- **Last week we concluded the first section of Romans- where Paul makes the necessary diagnosis of human condition...**
 - **Reality of sin- all alike are under sin, separated**
 - **Nothing we can do about it to help ourselves**
 - **We all will give an account to God**
 - **No place for us to judge each other.**
- **This is hard for people today to hear- even as believers, this is uncomfortable, if not, downright offensive. WHY?**
- **WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE. We- people- see ourselves as the center of life, and even if we are caring of others, we tend to express this on our own terms, and deny any accountability to anything bigger than ourselves, let alone a creator who IS GOD.**
- **CONTRAST THIS WITH 1st century church. They ABSOLUTELY believed in a present God who was very aware of their sin and rebellion, and when they read these opening pages to Pauls letter, it must have shaken them to their core.**
- **ESSENTIAL PERSPECTIVE- YES, IN CHRIST we have been set free! But to begin to comprehend the freedom that Paul is about to proclaim, we must not be afraid to honestly pry off the lid of our lives, hold them up to light of scripture, and understand what we have been SET FREE FROM.**
- **AND SO, Paul concludes his diagnosis with the indictment of Romans 3:**
*^{3:9}...For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.
²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law.*
- **AND NOW, HAVING MADE HIS CASE... PAUL TURNS TO THE MAJESTIC ALTERNATIVE**

† The **Majestic Alternative** of Romans 3:21-24

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

† Defining a few terms...

- **APART** from the law
- **To jews in the church... apart from your possession or knowledge of mosaic/moral law, apart from your failed attempt to keep it... to non-jews... apart from your inherent understanding of God's essential morality and goodness, which you also fail to keep... Apart from your upbringing, apart from your politics, apart from your gender, sexuality, apart from your wealth or poverty, apart from your social standing.... APART FROM ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, ON YOUR OWN, EVER.**
- **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of God
- **Translation- a righteousness from God. A right standing with God. It is to be right with God, nothing between us and him, but more than that, it is everything that is right ABOUT GOD, given to us. It's hard to even comprehend! Apart from anything we can do, as a GIFT, God's goodness is our goodness. God's holiness is our holiness. God's love, life, joy, peace, full nature of who he is, is given to us, so that IN CHRIST, we are fully,**

completely, forever, right and upright before God. MUCH MORE could be said... BUT BECAUSE THAT IS TRUE...

- **JUSTIFIED** freely (by his grace..)

- Key word, ‘Justified’... Legal term... Justice has been done in the case of our sin against God. God’s forgiveness of our sin is inherent in this idea... my record has been cleansed.
- That fact that God is JUST is extremely important to Paul, and all of scripture. HOW can God be just if he doesn’t punish us for our sins? If we think of God as our ultimate judge, how can he pardon, take away the eternal consequence of our sin and rebellion? ESPECIALLY when you add the idea that we are justified FREELY? This is the answer... God’s justification of us- his pardon- is free to us, but not free to him. IN CHRIST, he paid the price. This leads to the idea of REDEMPTION...

- **REDEMPTION** (that came through redemption in CJ)

- Idea of being purchased. An exchange for a price. In OT many uses, one being a slave being purchased into freedom, and the person who bought their freedom was their redeemer. The picture is easy to see! CHRIST is our redeemer, who paid the price for our sin, and the price he paid was his own life.
- **THINK OF THIS! SEE IN PERSPECTIVE... consider this passage in first person, this is TRUE OF YOU...**

²¹ But now apart from anything I could ever do, or anything about me, the righteousness of God has been made known to me, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given TO ME through my faith in Jesus Christ- this became true when I believed. There is no difference between me or anyone else in the world, ²³ for I have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, ²⁴ AND NOW I HAVE BEEN justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- **AMAZING LOVE, HOW CAN IT BE, THAT YOU MY KING WOULD DIE FOR ME! But Paul isn’t done... everything that is true about our redemption is true because of CHRIST ALONE**

✠ **In Christ Alone!**

- **Following on idea of our REDEMPTION... Christ paying the price for our deliverance from slavery...**

²⁵ God presented Christ as a **sacrifice of atonement**, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

- Christ as the sacrifice for our **ATONEMENT**

- **Huge statement, library’s of books written about the phrase the NIV renders ‘sacrifice of atonement’. The most direct translation into English is the word ‘propitiation’, and it means a ‘satisfaction of wrath’.**
- **Many scholars have pointed out that this word for ‘atoning sacrifice’ is same as OT description of the top of the Ark of the Covenant, called the ‘mercy seat’- where the blood of the sacrifice in the temple would be sprinkled on top of the ARK, demonstrating that payment had been made for the sin of Israel, and God’s wrath against their sin would be satisfied for another year.**
- **POINT is that we need to try and fully grasp the magnitude of what Christ did on our behalf. It can make us uncomfortable to think of the ‘WRATH’ of God, because we prefer to think of God’s peace, his love. THIS IS TRUE! BUT GOD IS the God of peace, He IS LOVE, because he has fully dealt with the necessary WRATH against the harm, pain, suffering, devastation**

of SIN. WRATH is sense of the full force of God's nature against the harm sin causes to his creation- and to provide the cure for sin, he directed his wrath- deserved by us- upon himself.

- **OTHER POINT! "Atonement" meaning to make right, to cure, to heal, to satisfy- Christ's sacrifice of atonement was different from the OT sacrifices because it is FOREVER.**

Hebrews 10:11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

- **Paul continues, turns again to the matter of JUSTICE.**
 - A matter of **JUSTICE**

25..He did this (**everything Christ accomplished on the cross**) to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- **WOW! This really needs a bigger discussion that we have time for.. THREE BIG THOUGHTS**
- **Christ's sacrifice for sin was TOTAL- for all who would look to God in faith. This paid the price for the sins of those BEFORE CHRIST who had looked to God in faith. The entire OT sacrificial system was only a temporary practice pointing to the complete justification and redemption that would be accomplished by Christ.**
- **God also demonstrates his righteousness- nature- right NOW, in the present, ongoing, BY BEING FULLY JUST, FULLY TRUE TO HIS NATURE, BY JUSTIFYING THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS.**
- **As I said, libraries of discussion about this, but when you boil it all down to the ESSENCE OF THE MIRACLE of SALVATION, of US, HUMANS being made right with God... THIS MIRACLE IS ALL ABOUT GOD.**

✠ It's not about **US**

^{3:27} Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

- **FRIENDS! This is the message, the good news, that our world needs to hear. THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, and his work, his purpose He is working out in His creation, is to JUSTIFY us... make us right with him... whether we be Jew, Gentile, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, agnostic, YOU NAME IT, whatever our background, our questions, our hurts, our sin, our strengths, our weakness... HE CALLS ALL PEOPLE to hear THIS GOOD NEWS and respond to him in FAITH.**
- **HAVE YOU DONE THIS? Have you responded? God isn't calling you into religion, far from it. He is calling you to trade everything you are for everything HE IS, TO RECEIVE what only He can give... and to FOLLOW HIM. Let him begin the work of changing you, setting you free. ALL THIS IS BY FAITH**
- **THAT is where we are going next week. BUT FIRST...**

✠ A little foreshadowing... the issue of the **LAW**

³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law