

How God Saves Sinners – Part 2

Romans 3:20-31

Pastor John Miller

We're going to read verse 20 down to verse 31 again. I know it's a large text, but we're going to read the entire section. Paul says, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified..." there's our word, "...in his sight," and then he tells us the purpose of the law, "...for by the law is the knowledge of sin." No one can be saved by doing good works. No one can be saved by their own deeds or by the keeping of God's law. The purpose of the law is to show us our sin and our need of a Savior. Verse 21, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets..." so there is a righteousness that comes to us from God, it is the righteousness of God, and it's given to us as a free gift, and we receive that apart from the law. In verse 22 it says, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." That is, by the way, the conclusion of this section. Then, he defends how God saves sinners in verses 29-31. "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also..." the God "...of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith," that is, Jew and Gentile, "31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

As I said, in this section of Romans we are studying how God saves sinners. It is really telling us that all have sinned and all have fallen short of the glory of God. There is no one righteous, no not one. The idea is since we have all sinned, God has provided salvation for all. Now, we pick up our study tonight in the middle of verse 24. I want to quickly and briefly remind you of what we covered last Wednesday. How does God save sinners? 1. Absolutely apart from the law, verses 20-21. No one goes to heaven by being good. No one can earn, merit or deserve, or work their way to heaven. 2. Through faith in Jesus Christ, verses 22-23. So, we're saved by grace, but it is through faith. 3. We learned in verse 24, look at it with me, "Being justified freely by his..." what? Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, I was blind but now I see. Amen? Amazing Grace! We're saved apart from the law. We're saved through faith in Jesus Christ, and we're saved by God's grace. I mentioned in verse 24, that little word "freely" actually means without a cause. The cause lies in God. It doesn't lie in us, so there is no cost to us. God pays the price of our salvation. For us, it's a free gift. We are going to see tonight that though it is free for us, it is very costly, and it cost God the life of His own Son upon the cross. Thus far, we have seen the source of our justification, it is God in His grace. We have seen the means of our justification,

which is faith and faith in Christ alone, and it's through grace.

Now we move to the ground of our justification or our salvation, it is through the cross of Jesus Christ. Now, just a quick reminder. Justification is the act of God, it's not a process, and God declaring—not making, the believing sinner to be righteous, and the basis by which God can do that and still maintain His righteousness is our subject tonight. It is the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Justification is an act, it's not a process. It happens instantaneously. God declares you righteous. Just a little interesting thought too. It's far more wonderful and glorious than forgiveness. If you sin against me and I forgive you, I'm basically saying, "Okay, I forgive you," but you still sinned and you still committed an act of sin against me. If I justify you, then I am treating you like it never happened, and I am declaring that you are justified. You can break it down like this. I didn't share this with you last week and I wanted to do this. You can break down the word: Just as if I'd never sinned...justified. Just as if I'd never sinned. It's not as though I sinned and God forgave me, or God pardoned me, but I'm still a criminal. It's actually that God justifies me. It's not a process, it happens instantaneously and there are no degrees of justification. Once you are justified you will always be justified, that's why Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." So, it's just as if I'd never sinned. That's good news, right? God gives me the righteousness of Christ, and it's just as if I had never sinned or I am as righteous as Jesus Christ Himself. No cost to us, but there is a great cost to God who had to give His Son Jesus Christ. How does God save sinners? He saves them in and through and by the cross of Jesus Christ.

We used to sing a song years ago, If you wanna get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. I won't sing it for you, and you can be glad I won't sing it for you, but I used to love that song. It was back in the 70s, kind of rock and roll days. It was a rock and roll kind of Jesus people hippie song, and it was so cool. If you wanna get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. Now, if I sung it, it wouldn't be cool, okay. The words are cool, but my voice isn't cool. If you wanna get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. Whether it's Old Testament, whether it's New Testament, I don't care what color you are, I don't care how bad or how good you are, the cross is for everyone. Remember we learned that the pagan is without excuse? The moral man is without excuse, and the religious man is without excuse. If the pagan wants to get to heaven, he's gotta go through the cross. If a moral person tonight, a so-called "good" person, wants to get to heaven, they can't go around the cross. If a religious person is here tonight and you say, "Well, I'm going to get to heaven by my good works," there's no justification through the law. If you want to get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. Amen? It's through the cross and in the cross and by the cross that we come to know salvation.

There are two more points on how God saves sinners. I want you to write them down. 1. At a great cost to God, not us. We don't pay for our salvation. We don't work for it, we don't earn it. It's at great cost to God. I want you to go back with me to Romans 3 and look at the middle of verse 24. The word says, "...through the redemption that is in...", who? "...Christ Jesus." So we can be redeemed in, by and through Christ Jesus. Then, notice verse 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past..." that is, Old Testament sins, "...through the forbearance of

God.” So, our salvation is by grace through faith, but it is not cheap. It cost God the Father the life of His Son. It’s through the cross that a righteous God can justify, or declare righteous, the unrighteous without compromising His righteousness or condoning their unrighteousness. I’m going to ask you to quote that to me after church tonight. The righteous God makes the unrighteous righteous and still maintains His righteousness. If you can’t follow me on that, I’m going to hit it from different angles, but it is a marvelous, marvelous truth.

In the cross is the wisdom of God. In the cross is the mercy of God. In the cross is the power of God. In the cross, all the attributes of God are demonstrated. The theologians used to speak of what they called: The Theatre of the Cross. That is, when you look at the cross, it’s not only an act, listen carefully, the cross is not only an act where God died in the person of His Son for man, the creature, sin. It’s also a word, and God is speaking. God is saying, “I love you.” God is saying, “I want you to be redeemed and justified and forgiven and free. I want you to come to heaven.” God is speaking through the cross, and so we can come to that “Theatre of the Cross” where we can see His mercy, we can see His love, we can see His grace, we can see His wisdom, truth and righteousness, as the Psalmist says, kiss each other in the cross, and the grace of God and the mercy of God, I believe, all of the attributes of God are demonstrated in “The Theatre of the Cross.” That’s why as a Christian you never outgrow the cross. You never get away from the cross. We need to glory in the cross, not in our righteousness, not in our works, but in the cross because it’s in the cross that God justifies the unjust.

There are two key words in these verses for our understanding. They are the words redemption and propitiation, verses 24-25. Redemption and propitiation. Notice first of all, redemption in verse 24. It is, “...through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Redemption is a commercial term. Justification is a legal term. It takes us into the courtroom where a judge declares, “Righteous,” but the word redemption takes us into the marketplace. In the marketplace, the word “redeemed” means to purchase or to buy. In the Bible, it has the idea to purchase, to buy, to release or to set free. The reason we have that word is because in the ancient world they bought slaves. The Bible says that we were all slaves to sin. We’re on the slave market of sin, and God came and died on the cross in the person of Jesus and bought us. He bought us. He didn’t just buy us, He set us free. Amen? He took us out of the kingdom of darkness, of which we were enslaved to sin, and He took us into the kingdom of His own dear Son or the Son of His love, by which He set us free. I don’t know about you, but when I met Jesus Christ, whom the Son sets free is free indeed! Amen? Not free to sin, but free to no longer sin. Free to walk in the liberty that is in Christ Jesus. The redemption concept is the idea of purchasing in a slave market and then to release and to set free. The best picture to illustrate this is in the Old Testament in the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

You’ve all seen the movie, The Ten Commandments, right? Where Charlton Heston and the children of Israel go out of Egypt in exodus, or you’ve read your Bible. I’m kind of being a little silly there, but you know in your Bible the story of when God, through Moses, brought the plagues upon the nation of Egypt. The last great plague was Passover. It was when the death angel came into the land of Egypt. God instructed the children of Israel to take a lamb, slay it

and to take its blood and put it on the doorposts and the crossbeam (it's called the lintel), so the side posts, (or we would call it the door jam or the casing around the door) and the lintel. He didn't tell them to put it on the threshold because He didn't want them walking or trampling over the blood. It's interesting that it did form a cross on that door. When the blood was applied to the homes of the children of Israel, and this angel came in to destroy the firstborn of every family in the land of Egypt, what happened in the homes of the Israelites where the blood was applied to their house? No one died. That death angel passed over their homes. That's where we get the Jewish feast of Passover, which we are about to celebrate in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who were under that blood were delivered, and that was what brought them out. Pharaoh said, "Okay, you can go and you can take your children and your wagons and your goods, and you can depart." So that was their redemption, and they were set free from bondage as slaves in Egypt. It's a picture of our salvation, and the Israelites would look back and see that God redeemed them with a strong and mighty arm. God brought them out. God delivered them and brought them into a land flowing with milk and honey. Even as God through the cross of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, whose blood was shed, applied to our lives spares us of God's wrath, and we are purchased and brought out and delivered and set free. That's a wonderful truth!

Redemption is very personal. It speaks of the price that Jesus paid to buy me and to set me free by His blood. It's not just that He forgives me or pardons me or even justifies me, He actually bought me. I belong to Him. He redeemed me, and He sets me free. We are bought by the blood of Jesus Christ which speaks of His cross. When we're bought, we're set free from three things, and we could spend a long time on these. I'm going to try not to get bogged down, but write them down. The first is sin. In Titus 2:11-14, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself..." listen carefully, "...for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." So, we were redeemed from the penalty of sin. We were redeemed from sin's penalty. Grace is not a license to sin, it is liberty to not sin, to live in holiness.

Secondly, we are redeemed from the law, Galatians 3:13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law..." so, He redeemed us from the penalty of sin and He redeems us from the curse and the payment here of sin. The law no longer has dominion over us. "...being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." In Galatians 4:4-5, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Here's the third thing we're redeemed from; the bodies of sin, our sinful earthly nature. In Ephesians 4:30 it says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Now, that day of redemption is talked about in Romans 8:23, where we will actually be redeemed. Our bodies will be redeemed and transformed, and we are going to get

new bodies. So we're saved from sin. We're saved from the law, and we're saved from our bodies of sin, and one day we'll be glorified. We will get new bodies. Our sins, past, our sins present, and our sins, future, are all taken care of in our redemption. There is a second word, verse 25, "propitiation." I know a lot of preachers don't use the word, talk about the word, you don't hear the word. You don't walk up to somebody on the street and say, "Have you been propitiated?" As a matter of fact, we don't go up and say, "Have you been justified?" or "...redeemed?" or even "...washed in the blood?" They are going to think you're crazy! A popular term is "born again." All these things happen when you are born again. You say, "Well, do we really need to know these technical terms?" They're in the Bible. They're in the Bible, and they're in the Bible for a purpose. They are in the Bible for us to understand our salvation, our redemption, our justification. Now, actually, this word "propitiation" is one of my favorite words because when Jesus died on the cross He died manward for our sins, but when Jesus died on the cross He also died Godward. He died for God the Father. You say, "Well, what do you mean by that?" I mean that by dying as our propitiation on the cross, He died to satisfy God's law that has been broken, and He satisfies or propitiates the broken law of God so that God is satisfied and He can now justify the unjust. It's the death of Christ Godward. When Jesus died on the cross, His death goes out to sinners and His death went up to God the Father. He had to pay the penalty and satisfy the law that had been broken.

If you just look up in the dictionary the word propitiate or propitiation, it'll say, "The action of propitiating or appeasing a god, spirit or person. It has the idea of winning or regaining favor with a god, spirit or person by something that pleases him." Now, this is different in the Bible than in the pagan concept. You've seen the old Tarzan movies where the natives are restless and Boom boom boom boom boom boom boom boom. They are beating the drums trying to appease the god of volcano. Have you ever seen that? I can't tell you what movie because I don't know, but you know those movies where they have that little native guy in his little native outfit and stuff like that. The volcano starts to erupt, and they need to appease the volcano. Sometimes, what they would do is take fruit or vegetables and chuck it into the volcano hoping that the god of the volcano would be happy now. Tragic and sad, and this was happening in the land of Canaan. This is why God had them driven out of the land and destroyed. They would take a baby, a child, and go over to the mouth of the volcano and throw this child into the volcano. They would do that to appease the god. Now, that is far different than the propitiation of God. You say, "Well, how so?" God being propitiated is in the area of His righteous law. God's law is good, holy, just and righteous. God's law reflects God's nature, and God's law has been violated. It wasn't that God got all angry and started erupting like a volcano and we say, "Here's some fruit. I'll go to church on Sunday, or I'll be baptized, or I'll get a Christian haircut, or whatever you want me to do. Just be happy with me." People are trying to propitiate God, and they can't do that. God in His righteousness and in His law, which was broken and violated, needed to be satisfied.

If I get a speeding ticket and the fine is \$1000, the state of California or the county of Riverside, or wherever I'm at, San Diego, they are not going to be satisfied until that fine is paid. Right? Once it's paid, I get it stamped, "paid in full," done deal. So when Jesus died on the cross He cried, "Tetelesti," it is finished or paid in full. He was dying for God the Father. God's law had

been broken. God couldn't just whimsically forgive or justify or take sinners to heaven just because He's the God of love because He's also a God who is righteous and holy. This is so lost in modern Christianity today. We have this light, easy kind of Christianity that's light on the cross, light on atonement and light on repentance, sin and salvation. It's kind of like, "Yeah, yeah, try Jesus. He's cool. He's fun. He'll make you happy and give you a fun life," kind of deal. Rather than coming to God born out of a sense of, "I am a sinner! God is holy. His law has been violated. I've broken God's laws!" I don't have the means whereby I can satisfy that law. I owed a debt I couldn't pay, but God paid a debt He didn't owe. I don't know about you, but this fills my heart with joy and humility and love for God—that God would stoop so low to satisfy His own law that had been broken. This is where you might say, "God played by His own rules." God actually played by His own rules. He would not violate His own law and His own nature. Rather than the wages of sin being death, and the sinner dying, He provides salvation in Jesus. Whoever trusts in Him has redemption and justification and salvation and propitiation, and they can stand righteous before a holy God for all eternity in heaven! This is so marvelous! Yet, people all the time, still try to work their way to heaven or appease God or think they can do something to make God happy or to satisfy Him. Someone said, "God's own great love propitiated His own holy wrath through the gift of His own dear Son who took our place, bore our sin and died our death. Thus, God Himself gave Himself to save us from ourselves." You got that? God Himself gave Himself to save us from ourselves. That's all found in the cross of Jesus Christ who died to be our propitiation. Now, it's necessary because God's law had been broken. His righteousness demands it, and the author of propitiation is God Himself, not man.

In 1 John 4:10 it says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be..." here's the word again, "...the propitiation for our sins." But not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. I don't believe the Bible teaches limited atonement. I don't believe the death of Jesus Christ was only for the elect. I believe the death of Jesus Christ was for the whole world and sufficient for the whole world. You say, "Well, why isn't the whole world saved then?" Because man must repent and believe and trust in and receive Jesus Christ. Remember, we are saved by grace but it comes through faith. God is not going to save you apart from your faith and trusting in and believing in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you the second way that God saves sinners. He does it in perfect justice. He does it in perfect justice, verses 25-26. Follow the text with me. "Whom God..." now at the end of verse 24, "...in Christ Jesus," it's in Christ Jesus that, "...God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare..." here's our point, "...his righteousness..." or display or demonstrate His righteousness. It's His vindication or His declaration, "...for the remission of sins that are past..." even the Old Testament saints can't get to heaven but through the cross of Jesus Christ. The blood of bulls and goats could not atone for sin. They had to wait for Christ to die before they could truly be saved, even though they were in the presence of God. So God, through the forbearance of sins that are past, notice verse 26, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be..." here's the term, "...just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

You might say that God had a problem: How can God justify the unjust and still be just? How can God justify the unjust and still be just? If someone committed murder, they are brought into a courtroom, found guilty, and the judge just says, "You know what? It's my birthday today. I'm in a good mood and I kinda feel good. I think you're a nice guy. I like the way you comb your hair. I'm just gonna pardon you, forgive you, you're free. Go out of here, you're free." Now, especially if you were a family member of the victim, would you be happy about that? Anybody looking at that would say, "That's not fair. That's not righteous. That's not right, that man was guilty. He needs to pay the penalty. He needs to pay for his wrongdoing." So, how can God just say, "Oh, you wicked, vile wretched sinners ye, I just love you and I'm just going to forgive you, and I'm going to take you to heaven and everything is going to be alright. Let's just all go to heaven." That's not right. That's not just. God had a dilemma because two things: He loves us, but He's also righteous. He loves us, but He's also righteous. So, God devised a glorious way that in His love He could provide salvation through His very own Son so that we could be forgiven and go to heaven. I don't know about you, but when I hear that I just want to praise His name! Amen? No way I could be saved...if salvation was by keeping the law, we'd all be lost. If salvation was by our doing good, we'd all be lost. So, God provides salvation in Jesus Christ, and He does it at perfect righteousness. The cross is a redemption of sinners, a propitiation of God's wrath, but now it's a vindication of His justice. Let me repeat that. The cross is a redemption of sinners, a propitiation of God's wrath, and also a vindication of God's justice or His very own nature. It says in verse 25 that God's righteousness was seen in his forbearance. That means, through the Old Testament God was forbearing with their sin, waiting for the time when the Messiah would die so that they could be forgiven. In the Old Testament the sins were only covered, but they weren't propitiated and they weren't justified. The cross is the righteous basis on which the righteous God can declare righteous the unrighteous without compromising His righteousness. I want you to look at it again. The cross is the righteous basis on which the righteous God can declare righteous the unrighteous without compromising His righteousness. I wanted you to see that, and I want you to memorize it. I'm going to question you after church tonight.

I can't tell you how glorious this marvelous truth is! We don't think about that. We don't really think about that. We just, "Oh, you know, Jesus died for me. I accepted Him. I'm saved. I'm going to heaven." You know what? It took the wisdom of God, it took the power of God, it took the death of His Son, the blood of Jesus Christ to get you to heaven. I don't want to, for any moment, take my salvation for granted. I don't want to, for any moment, think, "Uh, no big deal." How would you like to give your son to die for someone that hated you? If you only had one son, and your son had to die so that somebody who didn't like you and was antagonistic toward you could live, I mean, would you do that? The Bible says, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die...but God for us as sinners gave his own Son." Oh the love that drew salvation's plan. Oh the grace who brought it down to man. Oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. Cross...I think of the arms of the cross. With one arm He reached over here and he grabbed the sinners, and with the other arm He reached over here and He grabbed God the Father, and He brought them together at the cross of Jesus Christ. What a marvelous thing that is! I see His love. I see His mercy. I see His wisdom, and yet you hear skeptics today mocking the idea of the death of Jesus saving people. There is no greater wisdom than the

cross of Christ. The unbeliever mocks it. The Jew stumbles over it. People have ridiculed the concept, but in the cross is the wisdom of God and the power of God and the love of God and the salvation that is ours through Jesus Christ saving sinners through the cross. God has redeemed His people, propitiated His wrath and declared His righteousness. I don't know about you, but that makes me want to sing! It makes me want to worship.

I only have one last point, and hopefully the worship team can come out and we're going to do that. In verses 27-31, is Paul's defense of how God saves sinners. I won't tarry on it because I'm going to go back over it in two weeks from tonight, but look at verses 27-30. He says, "Where is boasting then?" It's shut out. The word "excluded" in my King James translation means locked out, shut out, permanently once and for all. Do you know what that means? No one can brag about being saved. I've often used the illustration of you drowning in the ocean, flailing in the water and going under. A lifeguard runs out and rescues you. When you come back on the beach would you walk around going, "Wow! Did you see me let that lifeguard save me? Woo! I'm awesome! I am amazing!" No. I've seen people rescued out of the ocean. They're kinda like, "Oh, I hope no one saw that! That's so embarrassing! Oh man! I can't believe I had to be saved by a lifeguard. Oh! That's just so humiliating, that's so embarrassing. I don't want anyone to see. I don't want anyone to know." You know, God rescued you! God saved you! You were drowning. You were going down for the last time, and God reached down and rescued you! He threw out a lifeline. Do you know what that lifeline was? The cross of Jesus Christ, and that's your only hope. You're out in the ocean flailing and a Coast Guard helicopter came and dropped a line to you. Would you sit there and debate about, "I don't like the color of that rope." I mean you'd just, "Yeah!" and grab that sucker, right? "I'm saved! Hallelujah!"

Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone shuts the door of boasting. No braggarts in heaven, praise God! Nobody is going to be in heaven saying, "Do you know how many doors I knocked on to get here?" "Do you know how many magazines I had to sell?" "Do you know how many boring sermons I had to sit through?" It's going to be all praise, all honor, all glory be to Jesus Christ who redeemed us by His blood. Amen? That's what heaven is going to be all about. No boasting here, and no boasting later when we get to heaven. It excludes boasting.

Secondly, I want you to notice that he asks the question in verses 29-30, "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." These are arguments that Paul was anticipating. First in verses 27-28, that we eliminate boasting. Secondly, that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. For the Jew to think that God saves the Jew just the way He saves the Gentile was abhorrent to them. What this means is that He puts Jews and Gentiles on the same footing before God. The cross puts Jews and Gentiles on the same footing before God. No nation, no race, no church has any monopoly on God's saving grace. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. Amen? Everyone must be saved the same way.

Thirdly, I want you to notice in verse 31 he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." What is the purpose of the law? The purpose of the law

is to show you your sin and your need of a Savior. The law cannot save you. It's kind of like a mirror. A mirror can't make you look better. Have you ever thought about that? If you go home tonight and look in the mirror and you're ugly, a new mirror will not help. "We just need to get a new mirror. Every time I look in that mirror I am so messed up!" Don't you hate those mirrors that have the bright lights over them and they show all the blemishes? I stand back a little bit. I dim the lights. "Yeah, now I'm looking pretty good." These mirrors, you know, mirror mirror on the wall who's the biggest sinner of them all? You are. You can stand in front of the mirror all day, "Come on, mirror. Come on, mirror. Make me better looking." It's not going to improve your appearance. You need a little soap of God's forgiveness. Amen? What's the purpose of the mirror? To show you you're messed up! I need help! That's what you do. You get up in the morning. You look in the mirror and say, "I need help!" So, you open the law of God—you open the Word of God. You read the 10 commandments and say, "I need a Savior! I need help!" They cannot save you.

Another little poem I learned years ago...

Do this and live the law commands

That gives me neither feet nor hands

A better word the gospel brings

It bids me fly and gives me wings

I love that! The law cannot save you. That's the purpose of the law, so we don't nullify the law. The Jewish argument in verse 31 is, "Well then, what good is the law? If you can't be saved by the law, what good is the law?" The law is good to show you you need a Savior, to drive you to Jesus Christ.

Here's a summary on what we've covered these two weeks: 1. God justifies the unjust by providing a righteousness apart from the law. 2. Righteousness comes through faith. 3. It is by God's grace. 4. It is made possible by the cross. 5. Where God's wisdom in justifying are seen in how God saves sinners. 6. It excludes boasting, but in Christ alone. 7. It excludes discrimination. We all come the same way; good people, bad people, black people, brown people, white people, red people, men, women, boys, girls, Americans, whatever nation you're from, religious people, irreligious people. We all come and have to be saved the same way. 8. It upholds the law. It upholds the purpose of the law. Here's one verse that summarizes just about everything we've taught these last two weeks, 2 Corinthians 5:21. You all know it. "For he..." that is, God, "...made him..." that is, Jesus, "...to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There it is. God took my sin and He placed it on Jesus, and He paid for it in full. God takes the righteousness of Jesus Christ and He gives it to me, and He gives it and puts it to my record and my account and He justifies me. He declares me righteous. It's just as if I have never sinned. Do you know what that is? Good news! Amen? It's good news! Let's pray.