



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 46 Christ died for God

Romans 3:25-31, *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

²⁷Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. ²⁹Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, ³⁰since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Paul must explain something that is massive in its significance and has been an issue throughout all redemptive history.

How did God has forgiven sin in the past?

How did God has overlooked sin in the past?

How is it that if He has done that, He is righteous?

V 25, in the forbearance of God, in the tolerance of God, in the patience of God, He passed over the sins previously committed.

How can He do that and still be righteous?

Pagans had their gods.

They were unreliable.

They were utterly inconsistent.

One hand demanding compliance with their rules and ceremonies and laws, and on the other hand doing what was seemingly unrighteous in their own realms.

Clearly in the Greek and Roman world, gods were viewed as a mixture of good and evil.

So, it was easy to throw the God of Israel – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ into the same box with the rest of the deities seemingly very inconsistent, laying demands on people by virtue of their divine laws, expecting righteous behaviour, and yet for themselves being inconsistent and unpredictable.

Why would such an accusation be thrown at the God of Scripture?

Because God had tolerated sin all through man's history.

Many unrighteous people seemed to prosper.

Many unrighteous people were blessed by God.

They entered into a relationship with God.

They enjoyed the salvation of God and the promise of being a part of his eternal kingdom.

The only way that that could happen would be if God overlooked their sin.

Now, the Old Testament says God is merciful, and gracious. God demonstrates lovingkindness.

The Old Testament word '**chesed**', which means loving kindness, which is a synonym for grace and mercy.

V 25, *"The forbearance of God by which He passed over the sins previously committed."*

Past sins meaning before Christ, before the cross. God subjected himself in all that redemptive history before Christ to certain accusations.

Accusations that had to do with His righteousness. Through all of man's sinful history since the fall, wherever people believed on the true God, He passed over their sin. He even did it in Egypt, and that's where the word "Passover" comes from. He withheld judgment in tolerant patience.

Acts 17:30-31, *Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

God did not actively interfere by special judgment as should have been required. Divine judgment defined as such was only occasional.

There was an absence throughout redemptive history of a one-to-one act of divine judgment on sinners. For those who believe, there is a passing over their sin seemingly altogether.

How can God so long overlook sin?

How can God so long let it go unpunished?

How can He forgive it and bring blessing and the promise of salvation and heaven and still be just?

The Jews of Malachi's day accused God of injustice.

Malachi 2:17, *You have wearied the Lord with your words; Yet you say, "In what way have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil Is good in the sight of the Lord, And He delights in them," Or, "Where is the God of justice?"*

Psalm 78:38, *But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, And did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, And did not stir up all His wrath;*

How can God simply pass over sin and still be righteous and still be just and still be holy?

The sacrifices of the old covenant. The animal sacrifices, which were ubiquitous in the old covenant, they took the judgment of God. The animals bore the judgment of God. The animals died in the place of sinners.

That has all too frequently been suggested. However, that is a bad answer. Animals could not take the judgment of God for men.

Hebrews 10:4, *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*

Hebrews 10:14, *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

V 14 contrast to verse 4!

There never was a sacrifice that could take away sin. There never was an animal sacrifice that could satisfy the judgment of God.

So, if you look at the Old Testament sacrificial system took the jut for sin on the part of all who believe, then you misunderstand that system. All it did was picture the sacrifice that is of Christ.

As **Hebrew 10:14** says that would be the one offering that would take away all sin, for all who believe, for all time.

1. Cross is the righteousness of God.

Now, when you go back to Romans 3 and verse

V 25, *“God displayed Christ Jesus publicly as a propitiation,”*

That is a satisfaction.

Jesus is the only satisfactory sacrifice.

- ✓ He is the mercy seat.
- ✓ He is the covering.
- ✓ He is the one who pleases God.

That’s what the verb propitiate means, to satisfy, to placate. He is the one who propitiates God, satisfies God in His blood.

Christ died for God.

Most people think of salvation as Christ dying for us. Of course, a sense in which that is absolutely true, but it is not the full picture. The only way that Christ could die for us would be to die satisfactorily for God.

Christ, then, died first to satisfy God. Once God was satisfied, then His death could be applied to us.

So, God displayed Christ publicly as a sacrifice, a propitiation, a satisfaction for Himself, because He had to demonstrate His thus far undemonstrated righteousness. There isn't really anything in the Old Testament that demonstrates the righteousness of God the way the cross does.

What about the Law?

The Law demonstrates God's righteous standard, but it doesn't tell us exactly how righteous He was.

Romans 10:3, *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

While the Law is a perfect reflection of the morality of God and the righteousness of God, and the justice of God, the one thing the Law doesn't do is show you how absolutely righteous

He is by demonstrating that the only way that He can forgive anybody is when there is a satisfactory sacrifice. Because in the Old Testament, there is no satisfactory sacrifice.

That's why sacrifices were made every morning and every night, every day, for a millennium. Priests were just butchers slaughtering animal after animal, day after day, and month after month, year after year, century after century.

V 26, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

His righteousness at the present time" – as over against the past time when there was no such demonstration.

If you were living among the Israelites in Egypt, and you sprinkled blood on the doorposts and the lintel, and the angel of death passed by, and you were delivered from death, you would experience the deliverance of God, the salvation of God, God passing over.

Yet the question in your mind would be, "How can a righteous and just God pass by this house, which is just as sinful as the next house or any other house, and still be just?"

That comes into direct connection with **verse 26** to *demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

How can God declare righteous an unrighteous sinner?

How can He forgive sin and still be just?

That is the question that is behind this passage.

The very heart of the Christian gospel.

The death of Christ, then, was for God.

It was to demonstrate the righteousness of God.

Until the death of Christ, there was no satisfactory, final demonstration of the righteousness of God. You could see how righteous God was by His Law. You could see how righteous God occasional acts of divine judgment was.

How can God justify sinners, saying as He did to Abraham and to Noah that by grace, by faith they were declared righteous?

How can He do that and remain just if their sin has not been paid for?

Christ's death, then, is the act by which God demonstrates His righteousness. He shows that He is very different from the capricious gods of the pagan world. Very different.

He has overlooked sin in the past. He has forgiven sin through all redemptive history. He has set people on a course to heaven and invited them to come, and they are there.

Heaven is occupied before Christ even comes. God is just, and the justifier of sinners.

How can He be both?

Because Christ becomes a satisfactory substitute.

A judge is unjust if he allows a criminal to be pronounced righteous just because he wants to without justice being served by a proper penalty. The proper penalty is the only thing that is the satisfaction, the propitiation. Then that sacrifice of Christ becomes that satisfaction.

So, in the Old Testament, a thick veil is over the justice of God. In fact, in the Old Testament there is not a veil over the grace of God, there is not a veil over the mercy of God.

Micah 7:18-19, *Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. ¹⁹He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.*

A God of grace, a God of mercy, a God of forgiveness, a God of compassion. God even introduces Himself as that!

Exodus 33:19, *Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

For thousands of years the spectacle presented by mankind to the whole moral universe was, so to speak, a continual scandal. Divine righteousness seemed to sleep. One might even have asked if it existed. Men sinned here below, and yet they lived. They sinned on and yet reached in safety an old age.

Where were the wages of sin? It was this relative impunity which rendered a solemn manifestation of righteousness necessary. Jesus died for men, but in a much more striking way, He died for God.

The death of Christ solves the problem.

Galatians 3:13, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),*

Christ became a curse for us. That is, He bore the curse in our place.

1 Peter 1:18-19, *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

How did John the Baptist introduce Jesus?

John 1:29, *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Hebrews 10:14, *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

After the sacrifice of Christ, the priesthood came to an end. All sacrifices came to an end because there was nothing left to point toward because the final sacrifice had been made. The veil of the temple torn from top to bottom, and God was satisfied.

So, Paul sets the record straight. Christ died for God in the sense that He died to make public, to make open, to demonstrate His righteousness, at the present time, and to show that He can be righteous, and He can be the justifier of sinners who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

He is both righteous and the forgiver of sins.

So, the cross is a work of God that reaches back in its application.

It is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross that is the satisfaction that God required for the sins of everybody who believed in Him from Adam on.

Hebrews 1:3, *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

It was all the sins of the past as well as all the sins of the future.

The sins that have been committed, those that are being committed, and those that will be committed by all who will believe in Christ.

Revelation 13:8, *All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Justice and mercy meet at the cross!

Psalm 85:10, *Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.*

2 Corinthians 5:21, *“God made Christ to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

God is saved from condemnation by His own standard of justice by exacting the just requirements for sin on a substitute, namely Christ.

1 Peter 2:24, *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.*

To whom is this applied?

V 26, *to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

From the time of Jesus on, you must put your faith in Him. In past time, God overlooked that. But now since Christ has come and died and risen from the dead.

Acts 17:30-31, *Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

The cross then demonstrates the justice of God, that all the sins of all past believers will be and were paid for on the cross by Christ.

God could not just pass over sin.

God could not just forgive it and not punish it.

It would have its fit punishment, and that punishment came on Christ. In that sense, then, Christ died to satisfy the righteous requirement of God.

Only when God was satisfied could we reap the benefits of His death. There was never any spiritual benefit from any death of any animal.

The cross is for God, is to the glory of God because it reveals God's righteousness.

2. The cross exalts God's grace.

If salvation is a free gift from God by grace,
if it is given to the one who has faith,
if it is given from God who has been satisfied by the sacrifice of
Christ,

V 27, *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*

Paul is simply adding to the fact that the cross is a work of Christ for God, that brings God glory by demonstrating the righteousness of God.

Also making it clear that salvation is purely by grace.
It is a work that God has done in Christ that we cannot earn but only receive.

There is no place, therefore for self-congratulation.

Only God can make such a provision.

Only God can determine the terms.

He's the one offended.

He's the righteous and Holy One who has been assaulted by our sins. Only He can determine the satisfaction that He requires.

It goes all the way back to the Old Testament that the only thing that's going to satisfy God is blood. The blood of a perfect sacrifice, namely Christ.

It is a gift of His grace.

It is given to those who do nothing but receive it by faith.

Paul asks, then where is boasting then?

It is nowhere.

“It is excluded.”

There is nothing for us to boast about.

“For by grace are you saved through faith” –

Ephesians 2:8-9, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Nothing to boast about because it operates on a principle.

What kind of method does salvation operate on?

Works?

No, but a principle, a method, a means of faith.

Would works salvation eliminate boasting?

No. If you did anything to earn your salvation.

If you did anything to achieve your salvation, then you would have a right to boast.

Since salvation is designed to glorify God to bring honour to God, praise to God, worship to God, God has therefore designed it in such a way as to exclude boasting.

1 Corinthians 1:23, *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,*

The Gentiles would see the whole story of the cross as folly. The Jews see the story of the cross as scandalous, blasphemous.

So, it is really beyond their ability to accept. Therefore, the only way people could be saved would be if God intervened by His sovereign grace.

1 Corinthians 1:24-25, *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

1 Corinthians 1:27-29, *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are*

not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.

It all comes from God!

1 Corinthians 1:30-31, *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”*

Again, this is simply another reflection on the sovereignty of salvation and the reason that God has designed it this way is so that He gets all the glory.

Psalm 115:1, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.*

Romans 1:5, *Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,*

For His glory.

Romans 11:36, *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

After 11 chapters of the presentation of the glories of salvation. It is the doxology that responds to the whole section on salvation.

The eternal purpose of salvation, then, is to make us capable of glorifying God forever.

We can readily do that when we understand that the salvation we have received is not by any means of works, any method of works, any principal of works, any law of works. But rather simply by an act of faith.

3. Cross satisfies God.

V 28, Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

The apostle Paul says that Christ died for God that He displays the righteousness of God, and He displays the grace of God in and through His death.

Paul is showing us that God is on display in the death of Christ, and God is satisfied with that sacrifice.

What kind of faith does it take?

What kind of faith is saving faith?

That's been an important aspect of ministry through the centuries, really, to sort out saving faith from non-saving faith.

2 Corinthians 13:5, *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*

What is saving faith?

What is NOT a saving faith?

a) Visible morality.

Visible morality doesn't necessarily prove it.

Many from the Pharisees had visible morality. On the outside, they looked very moral.

Matthew 23:25, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.*

Visible morality may be the manifestation of a believer, but then again there is superficial morality.

There are hypocrites all over the place. There is the sowing of tares among the wheat. There is no necessary true holiness in outward morality.

b) Intellectual knowledge.

The devils have an absolutely accurate theology. They get it right. And they even have the sense to shake because of the fearsomeness of divine judgment. While knowledge of the truth is necessary for salvation, knowledge of the truth doesn't equal salvation.

Matthew 7:22-23, *Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

Many who know the Scriptures very well are headed for hell.

c) Religious involvement.

Religious involvement isn't necessarily an indication of true faith.

2 Timothy 3:5, *having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

Active ministry. Judas was a public preacher and an apostate.

Again, **Matthew 7:22-23**.

Felix trembled under the preaching of Paul but never left his idols. The Holy Spirit convicts' men of sin and righteousness and judgment and convicts many who never repent.

Some will even superficially confess their sins as those who came down to be baptized by John the Baptist, openly repenting, and confessing their sins and accepting that baptism.

By the time you come to the upper room on the Day of Pentecost, all that can be gathered from Judea, in the name of Jesus Christ, totals 120 people. They must have felt some conviction of sin under the preaching of John the Baptist, and perhaps even under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, but it never blossomed into real saving faith.

d) Assurance.

Many people feel they are saved.

They may feel that way because they have been baptized. They may feel that way because they have sympathetic feelings toward Jesus.

They may feel that way because they think they are spiritual. The whole world of legalists must believe that they are saved,

or they wouldn't go through the compunctions of their legalism.

All the narrow-minded Pharisees and Orthodox Jews and all the people who go to these religious occasions and subscribe their lives to these performances of ritual and morality must believe that they are being saved by these things and have some measure of assurance.

There are people convinced by their supposed goodness that they are Christians than anything else.

e) Time of decision.

Because you can identify a moment when you made a decision. Prayed a prayer doesn't make the decision valid. Many people have come forward, prayed a prayer.

Saving Faith.

If you are a true Christian, you have an assurance of it. You have gone through the conviction of sin. All these things are part of the experience of a true believer, but in and of themselves are not sufficient evidence. These things will mark saving faith, but they can't stand alone.

If you want to do a little inventory on whether yours is a faith that saves and therefore enjoys the gift of grace, here are some true tests.

i) Love for God.

Romans 8:7, *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

The regenerate mind is liberated from hostility toward God and seeks to love the Lord with all heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The believer finds his delight in the excellencies of God who is the first and highest affection of his renewed and regenerated soul.

God is his chief happiness.
Christ is his chief joy.

There is a great difference between such love and the selfish attitude that focuses on one's happiness being given by Christ.

Matthew 10:37, *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*

Do you love God?
Do you love His nature?
Do you love His person?
Do you love His glory?
Do you love His kingdom?
Do you love His holiness?
Do you long to do His will?

The supreme love for God is the decisive evidence of transforming, genuine, saving faith.

Psalms 42:1-2, *As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

ii) **Repentance.**

An ongoing, constant, brokenness over one's sinfulness.

A proper love for God involves a consequential and opposing hatred of sin.

How do you know you are a true believer?

Because all your affections and desires and longing go toward God and away from sin.

Sure, sin is present, sin is there. It is powerful in us, but we hate it, we resist it, we resent it. This is the backside of loving God.

David cried out to God.

Psalm 51:4, *Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.*

The agony of his repentance is that he has offended the one he loves. True repentance involves a constant confession and turning from sin. It is a constant state of brokenness.

True penitents are true believers.

Do I possess a settled conviction of the evil of sin?

Does sin appear to me to be an evil thing, a bitter thing?

Does conviction of evil increase in my life consistently?

Do I have an increasingly greater love for the Lord and a greater hatred of sin?

Do you hate it merely because of its affects, or do you hate it because it offends the God you love?

What grieves you more, your sins or your misfortunes?

What exercises you more?

What sacrifices are you willing to make to be delivered from your sins?

Do your sins appear as many and aggravated?

Do you discover sin in a thousand forms?

Do you mourn over the sins of your heart?

Do you battle against the ignorance that is in you, the self-justifying tendencies of your flesh, the rejection of the fact that sin is so deceitful that if you don't look deeply and honestly into your heart, you will think yourself to be better than you are?

Do you mourn over your vain thoughts and carnal affections?

Does it grieve you in your heart that you have sinned against God?

Because when God touches a heart, He breaks that heart. He pours in at the spirit of grace. There are not just a few transient sighs against sin. There's a heart-rending pang of sorrow against sin that never goes away and only grows stronger and stronger.

iii) Humility.

Genuine humility. Where there is true saving faith, there is a beatitude attitude.

Along with brokenness and mourning over your sin, there is meekness.

Meekness. Jesus said, "If anybody will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me."

The Lord receives the one with the broken and contrite spirit.

James 4:10, *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

We all need to be like the prodigal in **Luke 15:21**, who came back and said, *“I am not worthy to be your son.”*

There is a real humility.

There is a real brokenness.

It’s the kind of humility that disdains to ever offend the Lord, ever bring any reproach on His name.

iv) Devoted to the glory of God.

Saving faith seeks the glory of God in everything. True saving faith reflects itself in a life that is set toward bringing honour to God every way possible, living for His glory.

And we can say that benediction at the end of Romans 11, “We give all glory to Him.” We can say it the way it’s repeated again and again in the New Testament:

Philippians chapter 1,

Philippians chapter 3,

Ephesians chapter 3 – all glory to Him!

This is the other side of humility.

The hatred of sin is the other side of loving God and devotion to God’s glory is the other side of being humble.

Romans 3, that was just a little digression, but an important one. Christ died for God to put God's righteousness on display. Christ died for God to put His grace on display.

It's a gift received only by faith and never earned. Christ died for God to put God's consistency on display.