



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

The Solution

June 23, 2019

Romans 3:23-26

Clint Pressley

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom 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. ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

(Pastor prays)

When the day is done, in the evenings after we eat supper, I like to have something sweet to eat. Sometimes it's cookies or a pound cake or even a Klondike bar but my all-time favorite dessert in the evenings is a bowl of Blue Bell ice cream. It started with vanilla then moved to coffee and then 2 cookies and cream. But some time ago the wonderful magicians at Blue Bell created the perfect food. I don't mean the perfect ice cream, I mean the perfect food. The name of it is Cookie 2 Step. So named because in the ice cream there are glorious and generous chunks of both Oreo cookies and chocolate chip cookie dough, so that every time you dip your spoon down into the joy of that ice cream you pull up chunks of glory. Now what Blue Bell Cookie 2 Step does from my taste buds, this text right here does for my soul. You can't dip into this passage without pulling out chunks of soul satisfying goodness. This passage is packed full of delicious words and concepts that are guaranteed to satisfy your soul. So today, Paul takes us to the cross to teach us how in Christ, and more specifically in the cross of Christ, God has solved our greatest problem. That problem has been started in verse 23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's a problem and so today I want you to listen and think. I want you to taste and see that the Lord is good.

God's Answer to Our Problem is the Cross of Jesus

At the cross we are justified, clearing our record

Let's go to the Bible. The changes are made in verse 23 and the verdict is given in verse 24. Let's read them together and talk about justification. *²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*

Justification is the heart of the gospel and it is completely unique to Christianity. The word justification is borrowed from the legal system. It's the idea that as sinners we start in the divine courtroom, in front of a holy judge dash God himself. And in justification God who is wholly pronounces the Sinner who is guilty, he pronounces that center righteous. Justification is a legal transaction where God pronounces the legal Sinner not only forgiven but righteous. This is an amazing thing, being forgiven is one thing but being justified is altogether different. Not only not guilty but declared righteous. When Adam and Eve were created, they came into this world having neither committed sin nor done righteousness. They were neutral. What Christ has gained for us at the cross is a billion times better than What Adam lost for us in the garden. And it comes only through the cross of Christ. By the way a gospel that says a lot about Christ and not much about the cross is not the gospel. Notice the description in verse 24 we are justified by his grace as a gift. Justification is given at the front end of Salvation not at the end of life as a reward. How great is it to be justified by free grace bantuhope that you were good enough to get in. Even if I do the best I can I'll never be good enough. Justification is an act of free grace, a gift, and it happens at the cross. Justification is the absolute opposite of condemnation. Justification is not you are getting off on a technicality because some lawyer found a loophole and beat the system. In justification, all the demands of the law are fulfilled in Christ life. God didn't break the law for love, Jesus kept the law for us. And justification, God takes the righteousness life of Christ and puts it on the believer. And God takes the sin of the believer and at the cross put that's in on Jesus. That means that we forever share the same righteousness as Christ, it is final and irreversible, it's instituted by God and given as a gift. Find a mental to the Christian gospel is grace Ann gift. That this saving initiative from the beginning belongs to God the father, accomplished by God the son and applied by God the spirit. At the cross we are justified clearing our record. There's another important word and it is redemption.

At the cross we are redeemed, setting us free

Let's move quickly to the word redemption. You'll find it in verse 24, *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Redemption, one of the most glorious words in the entire Bible. If justification was a legal word then redemption is a commercial word. If justification was from the courtroom, redemption is from the slave market. In Leviticus, the word redeem was used of slaves that were purchased to be set free. A redemption price is the payment of a ransom. It's the word that Jesus used to describe what he came to do when he died on the cross. Mark 10: 45 says, *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" When Paul talks about the church in acts 20, he calls it the Church of God which he purchased with his own blood. Paul says in first Corinthians 6, you were bought with a price so glorify God with your body. And finally, in heaven they sing a redemption song. Revelation 5: 9 says, *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation* This is what happens at the cross. Come out of the courtroom now and come with me down the road to the slave quarters. There we were, slaves, living in squander and captive to our own sin. Some of the shackles were acceptable like pride and ambition and child worship, some of the chains were shameful like addiction and adultery or racism or greed. But either way we were utterly unable to liberate ourselves and there we were hopeless. But now, Jesus Christ, by shedding his own blood on the cross has bought us out of captivity. Jarvis Williams says that the redemptive work of God in Jesus Christ is the most amazing event in the history of the universe. It is a divine manumission, to purchase a slave for the purpose of setting him free. Here is the heartbeat of the gospel and the fullness of God's gracious act for us in Christ. The Lord Jesus himself summed it up best in John 8: 34 – 36, ³⁴*Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* Add the cross we are justified, clearing our record. At the cross we are redeemed, setting us free.

At the cross we are saved, giving us peace

In verse 25 through 26 there's a lot so let me read it and touch on what I can. 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. ²⁶It was to*

show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Propitiation is the turning away the wrath of God from the sinner. It could be called appeasement. It is the diverting of wrath and judgment away from sinners and the gospel tells us that wrath was placed on Jesus at the cross. Sometimes people shrink back from the word but we must look deep into it because the wrath of God is resting on sinners. Propitiation is necessary because it is the only way that God is able to declare centers righteous without violating his own righteousness. Let's run through how it's done.

Enacted by God

This is not like other religions where the worshipper provides the sacrifice. Verse 25 tells us it is put forward by God, God sent his own son.

Through Christ's blood

Here is a direct reference to the cross of Jesus. There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. His death on the cross satisfied the justice of God.

Received by faith

This is giving your heart, your emotions to Christ. You mentally believe the truths about Jesus. You spiritually yield yourself to the will of Jesus. You absolutely trust the saving power of Jesus.

Propitiation shows God's righteousness

Justice demands punishment of sins and God in his patience has held back his wrath. From Adam until Christ, God held back the wrath and then poured it all out on Jesus at the cross so that the cross is the centerpiece for all who will be saved. Those that were before Christ were saved by looking forward to Jesus. Those that come after, look back at the saving sacrifice of Jesus. So the efficacy, or power of the cross reaches backwards and forwards.

Propitiation shows God as just and the justifier

Just – perfectly holy and gives full and fair punishment of sin. Justifier – By grace he extends mercy and forgiveness and righteousness to anyone who will believe and have faith in Jesus. To be just and justifier at the cross, God pronounces sentence and then disrobes and takes the penalty. God's answer to our problem is the cross of Jesus. We are justified, clearing our record. We are redeemed, setting us free. We are saved, giving us peace. Clear, free and peaceful – only through faith in Jesus.

(Pastor prays)