

“The Family of God”

Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians 1:7-23

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Jeff: Our gracious Father in heaven, we come to You because You are our Father. And we’re thankful for the opportunity. Lord, we ask now that You’ll bless us as we study Your word today. Help us to understand it. We pray, Father, that You would bless us as we look at the book of Ephesians, and how rich it is. Father, we ask that You’ll strengthen us. And do this by Your Spirit, that we might be conformed more and more to the image of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Father, we pray that You’ll bless us today. Give fruit to the work of our hands. Father, bless others as we come into contact with them, not just with our kindness but with our words. Let them be seasoned with grace, and certainly the grace of the gospel.

Father, we pray that You’ll be with Frank and especially his son Glenn. Lord, we pray that You’ll grant health and healing. We certainly pray for Brad, that You would heal his head injury. And Father, we pray and give You thanks that You surround us with Your love and Your care that is most noticeable in Your word and in the ministry of the Spirit, who uses it and takes it up daily, and speaks a word in season for our lives, that we might be encouraged and refreshed, that we might know that our Savior lives, and that we might face the day with vigor and confidence. And so, Lord, help us to face this day with those same virtues. Bless us in it, for we ask it through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. So let’s turn to the letter to the Ephesians. Let’s look at verse 7 and following today. And I want us to read from verse 7 down to 22. I realize that it looks like we’re starting in the middle here. But we’ve already covered this ground a couple of times. So let me just start with verse 7 of Ephesians chapter 1.

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him—things in heaven and things on earth.

“In Him we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation through the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are

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the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things for the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Don Maurer: This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: Sorry about that. Well, we’ve really been looking at Ephesians 1. And we’ve been looking at it through the lens of what we might call the three A.’s. The Father allocates, the Son accomplishes and the Spirit applies. The last time we were together we looked at what it means for the Father to allocate and what it means for Him to set apart those who are in sin unto everlasting life.

The question really has to come to one’s mind. Okay, so He sets them apart. But how does He accomplish salvation for them? After all God is just and we are fundamentally unjust. How is it that a just God can simply declare unjust people now to be just? And that’s the great mystery of the gospel, isn’t it? But it’s a mystery that’s not unknown. It’s a mystery that has been made known, and the fullness of it in Christ.

So that’s the answer. Christ is the answer to that great dilemma. How can the just One justify the unjust? And the answer to that is, like I said, in Christ.

And so I just want us to think about the work of the Son for a few minutes. It’s in verses 7-10. And I want us to think basically about three words that will help us to think about this work of the Son. And let me point out these three words, because some of these three words don’t actually appear in the text. But I want you to see where I’m getting them.

In verse 7 certainly you have *redemption* there. And then notice: that redemption is through *His blood*. And that blood redemption has to do with *propitiation*. I’ll say more about that in just a minute.

And then I want you to notice that it says “*the forgiveness of our trespasses.*” And that is *justification*. At least that’s the way Paul uses it in Romans chapter 4 when he employs Psalm 32 in his teaching so that we can understand justification. So that’s the way I’m understanding it here. So those three words are very crucial words for understanding our life in Christ and what He has accomplished for us.

What has He accomplished for us? Well, I want you to think about that using those three words.

First of all, let’s think about the word *redemption*. What does it mean? Well, I think that in its most basic sense it means to buy back. Think about it. If you are in a slave context you purchase a slave; you buy a slave. You redeem a slave for your own use.

Now I want you to think about this not so much in a pagan context or a Greek context. And that’s oftentimes the way it’s represented to us. But I want you to think about it in terms of a Jewish context, a Hebrew context, because that’s really the background that Paul is using to teach us about the redemption that’s in Christ.

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And the Old Testament Scriptures teach us about redemption in various ways. For instance, think about it. If your bull tramples somebody’s property or even gores someone, you can redeem the animal back.

Think about it this way. There are all sorts of ways that you can redeem your property or your person. But the pinnacle way of redeeming your property or your person, a relative, is through the kinsman redeemer, either by becoming one or by enlisting one.

And that is basically the story of Boaz and Ruth that we all know and love. Here is Naomi. Naomi goes down to the land of Moab with Elimelech her husband. They seemingly have a good time in the beginning. The two sons marry, and then Elimelech dies. And then her two sons die.

And there’s a great problem here because Naomi is now poor. Naomi is now penniless; she’s without support. She has no help. And so what happens is that she hears that there is bread in the Land of Promise. She decides that she’s going to go back, and she does. She takes with her her daughter-in-law who refuses to stay in the land of Moab.

When they get back home you remember what happens. Boaz shows an interest in Ruth. And so Naomi decides that this is the jackpot. There is a kinsman redeemer who is closer than Boaz. But Boaz has displayed an interest. So she basically forces Boaz’s hand to the extent that Boaz on the threshing floor one evening has to say to Ruth, “Go tell your mother-in-law that I’ll handle it.”

And he does. The next morning he gets up and he meets with the town council. And on the way by the kinsman redeemer who is first who is before him goes to pass by. He stops him and he says, “Will you redeem the field?”

And the man says, “Oh sure, I’ll redeem the field of Naomi.”

And at that point Boaz says, “Well stud, I’ll tell you what. Here’s the problem. The field comes with a woman. And so you have to produce an heir for her dead husband, which means that when the boy grows up to be of inheriting age you have to give him the inheritance of the firstborn. And he gets the field that you’ve been tending all these years.”

And all of a sudden the man says, “Now wait a minute. That will cost me to buy back or purchase back Naomi and her field. I can’t do it. I’m out, you’re in.”

And so Boaz does it. The interesting thing about it is, Boaz becomes very much like Christ in that situation.

Why do I say that? For two reasons. First of all, in the same way that Christ bore the curse, so also this Boaz is bearing the curse, the financial cost. But he also becomes the fount of blessing. And so very much in that sense Boaz is a kinsman redeemer who bears the curse, takes upon himself the debt, and becomes the blessing to another. That’s redemption.

So your kinsman, your fellow person, is now a slave in debt—destitute, whatever. And you purchased him back. You assumed their debt so that you can become a blessing to them.

That’s redemption from the Old Testament Scriptures. And God is oftentimes called our kinsman throughout the Old Testament. And here we find that any time that was the case in the Old Testament, that whatever it pictured there is now brought to fulfillment in

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Jesus Christ who is our closest Kinsman. And so He redeems us. He purchases us back from slavery. That’s really the first way or one way to think about some of the crucial ideas that are involved in redemption.

Another way is to think about *propitiation*, or the idea of “*through His blood.*” Let’s take that first.

I want you to think about *through His blood.* When you think about that expression you can think obviously about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you think about that I want you to think about what propitiation means and what blood-letting means in this situation. It means *appeasement*. It means that the wrath of an individual has been taken away.

Now liberal scholars have long not appreciated the word *propitiation*. And in fact there were scholars, and there was a man by the name of C. H. Dodd who tried to say—and he wasn’t alone,—that when you saw the word *propitiation*, you’ve got to think *expiation*.

What’s the difference between propitiation and expiation? Well, expiation means basically just to fix the problem. So for instance, let’s say it like this. Let’s say that I’m a boy and I’m out on the playing field. And I crack the ball and it goes over the fence and breaks a window. And I go over to the homeowner and I say, “Look, I’m really sorry.”

And he says, “Well you should be, because here is what it’s going to cost you.”

And so I go home and I get my allowance and I bring that allowance to him, and I give him all my allowance. This is what it takes to fix the window. Not only do I buy the window that he wants, but I install it. At six years old I’m a master window installer. (*Laughter*) So I install the window. And so I fix the problem.

But then I go back to the baseball field next week, and I’m playing. And this man is over there, over the fence. And every time that I get up to bat he’s chattering away. He’s calling me all kinds of names—Shorty and everything else, you know. “You can’t hit.”

And I walk over to him and I say, “Why are you doing this?”

He says, “I’m mad at you.”

And I say, “Yeah, but I fixed your problem.”

And he says, “Yeah, but I’m still mad.” You see, the difference between expiation and propitiation is this. Expiation deals with fixing the problem. But propitiation—appeasement—deals with the personal relationship.

And in the cross, in the shedding of Christ’s blood on our behalf, Christ both expiates the problem and He propitiates for the relationship. He appeases God.

So when you think about this you think about those two ideas. And let me put it to you like this. For instance C. H. Dodd said, look. We ought to think about the problem of God in simple, simple terms. This is a mechanical issue that just needs to be fixed. There’s no wrathful God.

And the question has to be, then, what do you do with Scriptures that talk about wrath? And obviously he would have had an answer to that. But his answer wasn’t a good one. But my point is that here are a few terms that I think are important for our understanding the Atonement.

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And you get that when I put it into that kind of explanation. You understand that it’s not just fixing it, but that it’s the relationship that’s involved that is important.

And then there’s *justification*. But I probably should stop; I’ve been rambling on. Any questions? Any thoughts about these two words before I move to the other word? Yes?

Bishop Rodgers: All through Scripture God has a problem, and that is that He’s just. And so His anger or wrath is a just wrath. Propitiation means that He must appease Himself with the cross.

Jeff: Yes.

Bishop: And I think that Stott’s big book on the cross develops that beautifully. That’s what C. H. Dodd and the others just didn’t want to deal with. They did not want to say that God was actually wrathful.

Jeff: Yes.

Bishop: And just.

Jeff: Yes. Ted?

Ted Wood: Was John Stott Anglican? (*Laughter*) Okay, I just wanted to get that over with. (*Laughter*) But this thinking amongst liberal churches like the seminary that both John and I were at, they would teach that it is basically profane to speak of God’s having anger toward us.

Bishop: Yes.

Ted: And I have one of the quotes that the seminary taught me, that the whole idea of propitiation was invented in the Middle Ages by Anselm.

Don: Oh my!

Ted: I said, “That was not true. Look at the Scripture.”

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: But then they would probably say that those Scriptures are the invention of a primitive religion. I mean, that’s the way it goes. You think this is odd, but it’s very common.

Jeff: Yeah.

Matt Reichart: Just a search here for that word in the NASB, the New American Standard, it’s in those verses. I didn’t find it in the NIV; it wasn’t there. So that’s interesting.

Ted: You couldn’t find it in the NIV?

Jeff: I think the NIV calls it “*an atoning sacrifice*.”

Don: “*A sacrifice of atonement*,” yes.

Jeff: “*A sacrifice of atonement*.”

Bishop: I just wanted to mention a book by Leon Morris called *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. When I was a young theologian I felt alone in this. And what a book that is! I mean, you have to love detail. And he absolutely makes it impossible to deny propitiation in the New Testament.

Jeff: Isn’t he the guy that answers C. H. Dodd decisively?

Bishop: I think he does. I still have all of my students read it. And they hate it at first because it’s kind of detailed. But when they got done, they knew in their heart and soul that God has dealt with His wrath on our behalf.

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Jeff: Yes. And that book is a great book. But he put out another book called *The Atonement*.

Bishop: Yes.

Jeff: Which dealt with the same categories. It’s a little bit different, but it’s along the same lines. And so once I discovered that I started recommending that book to people.

Ted: Wasn’t Leon Morris an Anglican? (*Laughter*)

Don: I think the problem that many people have is that when they hear of God’s wrath they equate it with our sinful wrath, where we come all unglued and we get angry and it’s sinful. But God’s anger is His settled indignation for sin. And I think that is part of the problem.

Jeff: Yes, Don; you’re right. I think you’re right. Okay. All right, let me say one more thing about this word *justification*. And then I want to return to something that was said earlier that the Bishop brought up that I think is important for us to go back to.

Justification, or the forgiveness of sins. If you go to Romans chapter 4, one of the things that you find there is Paul teaching about justification by faith. And like I said to you, Paul enlists a Psalm. It’s in verses 7 and 8. It says:

*“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered.*

Blessed is the man against whom the LORD will not count his sin.”

And so he’s dealing here with the idea that justification by faith is the forgiveness of sins. And so—

Sig Tragard: Where was that, Jeff? What did you just quote?

Jeff: Oh, that’s Romans 4:1-8. 7 and 8 are the verses I read. But 4:1-8 is where he deals with justification. And there are so many things that we could say about it. And I think that I’ll just go up to what I was going to go up to. And then if you have questions I’ll let you ask them.

But go up to chapter 3 for just a minute. In chapter 3—

Sig: Of Ephesians?

Jeff: No, of Romans; sorry. So in Romans chapter 1, I think what you have to remember is that Paul is saying here in chapter 1, and then in chapter 2, and then in chapter 3, that all are under sin.

And why is he saying that? Well, there are a number of things that could be said. But when you dig into the background one of the things that you discover about Judaism is that the Jews taught that Abraham merited a righteous reward. For instance 1 Maccabees, which is an inter-Testamental book used by the Roman Catholics, 1 Maccabees 2:51 and 52 talk about that merit. They talk about the righteous reward that Abraham merited. And then they quote Genesis 15:6.

Transcriber’s Note: Genesis 15:6, ESV. *“And he”* (Abraham) *“believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness.”*

And so there’s this idea that Abraham merited, that he earned righteousness. And so what’s in the background of romans is that.

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And why do I say that? Well, because what he says is that the Gentiles are sinful. And the Jew that is sitting back in the back is saying, “You tell ‘em, Paul!” It’s in chapter 2, right? “You preach it, brother!”

And then Paul goes to them and says, “Hey, I’ve got news for you. You’ll not escape this, because you know that these things are wrong, and yet you do them.” And then in chapter 3 he says that both Jew and Gentile alike are all under sin.

And then the Gentile comes back and says, “Wait a minute! I didn’t have the law like they had the law.”

And Paul says, “Oh, contraire!” (*Laughter*) “You did have the law. And the law was written on your hearts.”

Bishop: Yes.

Jeff: And then the Jew comes back and says, “Yes, but we’ve got circumcision and the signs, and things like that.”

And Paul says, “Yes, but they didn’t do you any good.” And so by the time you get to chapter 3 he says that “you’re all under sin.” And then you get this. “*But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.*”

Now it’s important to stop there and remember something. If you go back to romans 1:16, remember what it said. It said in verse 17 rather, “*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.*” The righteousness of God is revealed.

Now notice too then what it says. It says in verse 18 that this righteousness is revealed “*against the unrighteousness of men.*” And so you have this righteous God. And His righteousness is revealed against the unrighteousness of men. And then in chapters 1, 2 and 3 men are sinful.

And now all of a sudden he says, “*But now the righteousness of God.*” And then we’re fearful because we think, wait a minute! The righteousness of God is being revealed against the unrighteousness of men. His standard in His law is something that we cannot maintain. Oh no!

And now he says this. “*But now the righteousness of God has 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.*”

And now all of a sudden we begin to see that the righteousness of God is manifest apart from that law that stood in judgment over us. But notice what he says. I have to go to the next page. He says, “*Do we nullify the law by this?*” And he says, “*no.*” It’s in verse 31. “*Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*”

Now that’s crucial for something the Bishop said. The Bishop said that “*God is both just and the justifier.*” In other words, God is just because of His standard. But how is it that He becomes the justifier of the ungodly? Well, the simple answer is what?? He stands in the place of those condemned and takes upon Himself the punishment meant for them, that they now might be justified in His sight. So He is both the just and the justifier.

But this passage walks us through that. And what I want you to see is that it walks us through the same concepts as the Ephesians passage did. Notice verse 23. It’s that very familiar passage. “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” Verse 24: “*and are*

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justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith.”

So you see these three terms. There’s redemption, there’s justification and there’s propitiation. All three terms are used here. And this is to be received by faith, or through the instrumentality of faith.

And notice that the idea of God being just and the justifier is in verse 26. *“It 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 Christ.”* So these three crucial terms are used elsewhere to depict what’s happening in the gospel, what Jesus does in order to accomplish our salvation. Any questions about that before we press forward? Don?

Don: Just an observation. It was that term “righteousness of God” that terrified Luther, because the righteousness of God was a standard he couldn’t attain to. And no matter what he tried in the monastery or whatever he just felt more and more guilty. But then in studying Romans 1:17, *“for in it”—the gospel—“a righteousness from God is manifest from faith to faith.”* And he began to see what you were talking about, that this righteousness is a gift from God that’s given or imputed to our account. And he said that when he understood that the gates of Paradise swung open and he entered.

Jeff: Yes. And let me tell you a little bit as to why that verse meant so much to him. He came to understand Romans 1:16 and 17 after he’d already studied the book of Romans. He had studied and lectured on the book of Romans prior to his own conversion. In fact I think the commentary on the book of Romans that we have from him was published before his conversion.

And let me tell you why I think the problem with Luther is such an acute one. It’s because when you look at the righteousness of God, that phrase in 1:16 and 17, it can mean three things. It can mean who God is. It can mean what God does. And those two are acute, aren’t they? Who God is—He is righteous. What God does—He judges righteously. And Luther spent a lot of time and heartache thinking about that very thing, about righteousness in these two categories, to answer these two questions.

Now *“from faith to faith”* didn’t help him, because that’s the word *pistos*. And therein lies the problem. He understood that this term could be interpreted as not just *faith*, but *faithfulness*. And if it’s faithfulness that one has to render so that God does not judge, then the question is, how much faithfulness does one have to render?

And it was through studying the book of Romans that Luther answered a third question. And that is this. Righteousness can be what God gives, what God expresses. And that is that He gives the righteousness that is His apart from the law through faith in Christ. And this became the moment when the gates opened for Luther. He understood that it’s not just who God is and what God does, but what God gives apart from the law, in other words apart from faithfulness, but through faith in Jesus Christ who underwent the curse on his behalf because of His righteous life. And again that’s the gospel. That’s just the beautiful gospel.

Bishop: I just wanted to say that it also seems to me that Paul wants to say that it’s precisely in justifying us who are sinners, but declaring us righteous in Christ, that He is being just, because He has paid the price.

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Jeff: Absolutely. And it’s sort of like when the Bible says that death could not hold Christ. Why could death not hold Christ? Because death is the curse for sin. And Jesus is the righteous One. The curse of death could not hold the righteous One. And so He had to be raised to life. And in the same way if we are in Him, and His death was counted as ours, then God has to justify us. Isn’t that wonderful? We’ve got that in Christ. Anything else? Yes, Matt?

Matt: Just to clarify. This is a statement from my Sunday school teacher when I was a kid about the word *justification*. She used the phrase “just as if I’d never sinned.” Is that appropriate?

Jeff: Yes. It’s “just as if I’ve never sinned,” or something like that, right? And there’s an idea where it does help very much. I think it helps very much. But the idea of acquittal has the idea of I was tried and found not guilty. I could never be tried for that crime again.

So there’s the idea of “just as if I’ve never sinned,” to be taken as “just as if I’ve never fallen in Adam,” as if there were no need for Christ. That’s not the best way to take it. But if you take it in that acquittal sense—just as if I’ve never sinned,—that is, I cannot be tried for this again, now that’s a better way to understand it.

Matt: You know what? The way I look at it is that yes, I’m a sinner condemned by God. But when God looks at me through the blood of Christ He looks at me just as if I’ve never sinned.

Jeff: Yes, it’s because we’re in Christ. Had Adam not sinned, had Adam acted righteously, we would not be in Christ. We would be in Adam, right? But because we’re in Christ, I think you’ve got the idea.

Ted: I was just going to say that we can’t be accused again because we’re dead.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: And once a man is dead he can’t be brought up on a charge. And we’re dead in Christ and raised with Him. But we’re dead in Him as well.

Jeff: Yes.

Jim OBrien: In addition to not being guilty, that doesn’t make us good—just not sinful. And so our justification has two parts—the acquittal, and the accrediting to us of Christ’s righteousness. And because we’re united to Him we get it all, praise God. We get His obedience in our place because we have kept the law in the Savior who lives in us.

Jeff: Yes. And that’s a good point. And I’ll tell you what: I’ll just address it quickly.

Jim: If I could add one more thing.

Jeff: Please.

Jim: John Wesley was famous for denying the imputation of righteousness. He said that justification is only pardon, not the accrediting of righteousness. And that’s why he had to develop a doctrine of perfection, so that you had to be perfect in your heart and life. And John Wesley was actually very medieval in this. This is the sort of thing that the Protestant Reformation went against. And in this particular doctrine Wesley embraced the medieval idea of being transformed, because God can’t let anybody into heaven who isn’t perfectly good. So you are supposed to become perfectly good.

Jeff: Yes.

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Jim: And that’s the problem, because nobody was dying who was perfectly good. And so he had to manufacture the idea that perhaps at the very end, at the very last moments of life, God somehow perfected them. But if you follow the medieval idea through, you have to go to purgatory, which thankfully Wesley did not embrace.

Jeff: Yes.

Jim: It’s a serious error.

Jeff: Oh, it is. But you know, we have a tendency to downplay Arminianism as a serious error. Throughout church history it has always been considered a serious error.

Jim mentioned this so I want to say this to you. You need to remember that there is a two-act theology in Scripture. And when you think about justification you think about obedience. And like Jim said, sometimes the evangelical church forgets about the fullness of atonement.

So, for instance, when you ask, “Well, what did Jesus do for me?”, the answer is, “Well, He died for my sins.” But that’s only part of the equation.

So I want you to think about Adam for a minute. Adam is in the garden. He has the tree in front of him. And God says to him, “Obey and live.”

Now when we think about that—obey and live—we think about what theologians call the *active* aspect of obedience. In other words, you are fulfilling the law by your actions, an active obedience. This is what Adam was required to offer. Okay?

Now he fell in his sin. So the second Adam comes along. And the second Adam now has to offer obedience, and so active obedience. But that will not atone for fallen Adam and his posterity because they now live under the curse. So in the obedience of the second Adam not only must he obey the law in order to present Himself a perfect sacrifice, but He must bear the curse for the first Adam and his posterity. And so this is what is happening on the cross. We call this *passive obedience*—curse-bearing. And so Christ has to not only obey like the first Adam was called to obey, but now He’s going to obey and passively submit Himself to the curse.

Now when we think about justification and its two aspects, as Jim was mentioning, we first of all think about the forgiveness of sins, which is the passive obedience. We’re forgiven the curse that is against us in Adam. But we’re also constituted righteous. How? By being in Christ. The righteousness of Christ is now ours. What was in His account is now in our account. So His active obedience is now reckoned as our obedience, okay?

And so when you think about justification those are the two aspects. Oftentimes the church forgets the active aspect, constituting one righteous, which we should not forget. But that’s oftentimes the case. Yes, Matt?

Matt: Just as an observation, the obedience of Christ qualified Him to be the sinless sacrifice, correct?

Jeff: Yep.

Matt: Had it not been perfect, then it would not have been valid.

Jeff: That’s correct.

Matt: Because He was perfect He did not deserve to die. therefore that death on the cross paid for sin. God was pleased with that. And in accordance with us as His people, when we sacrifice ourselves we do something to serve others. You know, they don’t

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deserve it; it's costing us. I think there's a principle there, for God is pleased and there is blessing—not just for us, but there is blessing that helps others. And so our life here on earth is not just to be saved, but like Christ to sacrifice ourselves, to look around and say, “Where today can I help and serve somebody else who does not deserve it?”

Jeff: Yeah. And that's a great point. It brings to mind the kinsman redeemer of the Old Testament. Think about Boaz. Now you can say that Boaz had to be the closest kinsman redeemer; there were obligations that needed to be met. The first or closest redeemer had to back out. Then he had to step in. He had to be willing, and so on. So there's your active aspect of obedience.

And then he bears the burden for Naomi. And so he comes under her curse so he can be a fount of blessing for her. And it's very much like Christ; I think it's a picture of Christ in the Old Testament. And not just a picture of Christ, but here's a real individual stepping in and helping. I mean, yes. Naomi had Ruth through what happened to them pre-figure and actually step into the line of Christ. But there is a real woman that has helped, which is to your point, and it's a very good one. Anyone else? No? okay.

So let's move on then; I think we've got that down. So let's talk a bit about *the gospel's power*. And when you talk about the gospel's power I just want you to notice that somebody said—I believe Matt said this,—that we're not just saved. It's more than that. There is certainly a bigger plan, and that is “*to unite all things in Him—things in heaven and things on earth.*” So there's a comprehensiveness to the plan of redemption.

You see that in places like romans 8 where the creation strains its neck to see the resurrection of God's sons and daughters, knowing that with our resurrection it will be renewed. And so there's a cosmic aspect to the redemption that is in Christ.

You know, oftentimes the gospel is just reduced to sort of a fire escape from hell. And that's certainly not the way the gospel is presented in the Scriptures. It's a cosmic plan; it has cosmic implications. And then we go on to—

Ted: Jeff, can I talk?

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: Actually as you read this I was actually making notes on that very subject. I found this commentary on this part, this section.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: So it's Ephesians 1:10: “*to unite all things in Him—things in heaven and things on earth.*” And then in 1:23 it says, “*fills all in all.*” And then you go over to 1 Corinthians 15:28. “*The Son Himself will also be subjected, that God may be all in all.*” So this all just strikes me as kind of a big wrapping up of the cosmos. But I don't really know what all that means. I mean, that's something that we almost never talk about.

Jeff: Yeah. So I think that some of the passages that you quote can be put together in this sense. “*Things in heaven and things on earth.*” When you have Christ the Mediator, what you have is that you have God bridging the gap between the creation and Himself without the intermingling of the two. So in the Incarnation the Son of God, who is Himself God, enters into creation, again without intermingling, without becoming the creation itself. So you find that there's a bridging of the gap between the two. It's the Lord's Prayer, right? Do you remember that? The phrase escapes me.

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Don: *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?”*

Jeff: Yes; thank you. *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* There’s a bridging of the gap. With the coming of Christ there is the imposition of heaven upon earth.

And then I think you quoted from verse 23. So Jesus is *“the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*

Now I think that one of the things that you’ve got to keep in mind here is that this is something that I think is oftentimes lost in discussions. I come from a particular tradition that sees Christ as the mediatorial King over all the nations. Psalm 2: *“Let the nations kiss the Son,”* lest they come under His wrath. So notice in this verse that He is Head over all things to the church. So he is the mediatorial King over all things in service to, for the sake of the church.

And so one of the things that I think that means is that now Christ is King over heaven and earth. And it’s the obligation of every nation to kiss the Son before it’s too late.

And so when you go to 1 Corinthians 15, where did you quote?

Ted: 15:28.

Jeff: 15:28. *“When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all.”* And I think what’s in view there is the mediatorial aspect of the Son’s work. He came to bring all things—nations and all—under His subjection, which will be submitted to the Father. That’s Him as Mediator, right? And then what does it say? *“Then the Son Himself will be subjected.”* And that’s the Mediator. *“To Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all.”*

So again the idea of His mediatorial Kingship, and that for the church, is in view here. That’s my understanding of what’s going on in those verses. It has a lot to do with Christ’s Kingship, but understood in a way that says that Christ is the King over an invisible kingdom. And there are two spheres in this world. One is the church and He is King over the church. And the other is the nations, but He’s not really King over the nations—not in a really meaningful way. In my tradition, coming out of the Presbyterian tradition all the way back to John Knox, there’s a different aspect, a different emphasis. And that would insist that He is the mediatorial King over the nations. And that’s one of those verses that’s understood this way by somebody like myself, anyway.

Bishop: What would they do with the phrase *“all authority in heaven and on earth hath been given unto Me?”* It’s the other position of how He’s not reigning over all the nations.

Jeff: Yeah. So there’s this idea that there’s a difference between God as King providentially over all things and God as King in Christ mediatorially over all things. And so there’s the difference. And in that there’s a split in terms of our church history over that very issue. Is God King in general, providentially? Or is God King specifically in Christ?

Bishop: The answer is yes.

Jeff: Yes, He is. *(Laughter)* They’re both right. And the reason why He is King mediatorially is because He’s the King essentially. Yes, Matt?

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Matt: So this just stirs up a recent thought that I’ve been wrestling with. You know, traditionally we believe that Christ will reign here. He will come back and He will reign. He’s King over all. *“Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.”* But when I read the Matthew 16 passage—and he quoted part of it,—“All authority is given to Me.” And then He says to Peter, *“I give you the keys to the kingdom, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth.”* So my understanding of that is that at the cross Satan was defeated. And he is the ruler of this world. And my traditional thinking is that someday he will be dethroned and Christ will reign. But that statement, and even what you’re saying here, does that mean then that now the authority that Satan had has been taken away because Christ defeated him on the cross? That’s authority, because keys give you access. “So now I’m taking these keys, Peter.” He’s the representative of the church. “I’m going to give you the keys of the church, so that you have the church from this time forward till I come back. You have the authority here on earth.” And so the question for myself and for the church is, are we unaware of how much authority we really have? We should be taking more ground than what we are taking. Maybe we’re too content with what we have. Do we have more authority than what we think we have? What are your thoughts on that?

Jeff: A couple of things there. First of all, Oscar Kuhlmann wrote a book called *Christ In Time* that in my mind is a really helpful book. It helped me sort of think about it. It’s not worth reading. *(Laughter)*

Matt: Okay.

Jeff: Just read a section. I don’t think Kuhlmann is always faithful. But here’s the illustration. The illustration is that he said there is a D-Day and a V-Day—a Decisive Day and a Victory Day. And you know, he talked about the war and he talked about D-Day.

And he said that D-Day, the decisive day, meant that basically the battle had been won. But they hadn’t sat down at the table yet to negotiate. There were still shots fired after D-Day. But they were futile, just wasted ammunition because the battle had been won on D-Day. And the cross is D-Day.

V-Day is the consummation of all things. And until that day there are going to be a lot of shots fired. But it’s not going to matter because Christ has already won. So that helped me to think about the idea of what Satan’s power really is. He’s shooting a lot of guerrilla warfare shots, but it’s not really accomplishing much. *(Unclear)*

Matt: Yes. After D D-Day happened the Nazis did not just surrender. They fought to the bitter end. And so had we not pursued them there would have been a lot more lives lost. So in that sense, with that same illustration, here we’re still in battle. And it’s our responsibility to shoot and to keep trying to rescue our people, as many as we can.

Jeff: It is. And it raises the second question that you asked, and I’ll say this. So think of the Ephesian church, right? The Ephesian church lost its first love and was in jeopardy of losing its place, right? God was going to remove it—Revelation 2 or 3, right? So here’s this church and God is telling them. “This is all that I’ve done for you in the first three chapters. I’ve done all of this for you. This is what I’ve done to accomplish your salvation.” And the last three chapters are “this is what you need to do.” And obviously it

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was a church that did not continue to do. And so they lost their first love and eventually were removed. So it's the end.

Matt: Yes. So in the MacArthur Commentary on Revelation it says that *“the Ephesus church was responsible for launching the other six churches that are mentioned in Revelation.”* They planted those churches and they were missions-minded. So in losing their first love they went from being orthodox to just something they were doing; they lost the mission of the heart. This was forty years later. So the challenge to the next generation is to make sure that you're just so passionate. Don't ride on your parents' shirt tails, that kind of thing.

Jeff: Yes.

Matt: You alone are responsible for your relationship and what you do with Christ there. So hurry up and repent and turn. And so I think that's for us, for our kids and our grandkids. Hey listen; so you grew up in a Christian home. Make sure you don't lose your first love too.

Jeff: Yeah.

Matt: That's a message to my children.

Jeff: And it's an important one. The second generation is always the one in jeopardy, you know? They don't feel the urgency that Mom and Dad felt. That's very true.

Well, I want you to know that it's your fault. *(Laughter)* We only got through three verses again. *(Laughter)* It is not my fault; it's yours. *(Laughter)*

Brave Man: We'll take that responsibility.

Jeff: All right. Well I certainly enjoyed my time with you regardless of all the black sheep. I appreciate your questions and the interaction that we have. Let me pray for us now as we close out.

Sig: Where are we starting next week?

Bishop: With the Holy spirit.

Jeff: We'll start in verse 11.

Sig: Is it in the same outline?

Jeff: Well, you can send out the next outline on the low possibility that we'll finish. *(Laughter)*

All right, let's pray. Father, thank You for this day, for the time You've given, for the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts, and for the love of Your word that we have. Father, I want to thank You. Thank You for ministering to us in ways that are so deep and profound. And Lord, we just pray that You'll continue to do that through Your word and Spirit. Bless us today, and let us be lights that shine. And let that shining not be just an external manifestation, but let us have a sense of how the luster comes from our internal being, Lord, that has been renewed in Christ Jesus. And we pray these things in His name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Brave Man: Thank you, Jeff. *(Applause)*