

## ***“But Now” continues***

### **Romans - The Gospel of God**

Romans 3:21-26

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**Jeff:** Gracious Father in heaven, we are humbled to come before You, to recognize that You are God and there is no other. You formed all things by the word of Your power. Father, as we stand on this earth, we recognize that what You have revealed by Yourself in general revelation is suppressed by sinful man in unrighteousness, and that he would hold down that which You reveal. And yet we are so thankful that You gave us special revelation and that You gave us Christ, and that through the lens of special revelation we not only know of Your great love for us, Your saving power toward us in the Beloved, but we also understand what it is that You’ve done in this world—Your power and Your might, how it is exercised and mediated through all that we see. And so, Father, as we bow before You this morning, we are so thankful that You loved us so much when we were yet sinners that You sent Your only-Begotten into the world.

And Father, as we come we are also thankful for Your word. We’re thankful that You gave us this Word as a comfort to us, as a preservation of the truth itself. And Father, as we come to study we pray that we would study it and see it as it is indeed, Your word.

Father, as we come we also bring those upon our hearts. We think of our brother Ted. We are so thankful for him, for his abilities. And we’re thankful for his wisdom. And we’re thankful for his very life. And we pray as well for his wife Diana, especially as she has to attend him in the recovery period of his surgery. We ask that he would heal well.

Father, we’re also thankful for the bishop, for his life and for his work and for all that he’s done. We’re thankful, Father, for his ministry in the local church, for his ministry at the Academy. We’re thankful for him being here, and we’re thankful for his influence.

Father, we’re also thankful that You give us opportunities to pray for those who are hurting. We think about Dave as he hastens to his mother’s side in Kansas, and we certainly pray for safety in travel, for stamina especially after he’s been in a traffic jam for over five hours. We pray as well that he would have a good visit with his mom when he reaches her.

Father, we pray for Alex and his loss. He not only grieves but suffers economic distress. We pray, Father, that You will meet that need. Father, we also come before You thanking You for the opportunity to be together in this Bible study. We pray that You would use this time in our lives for good and for Your glory. And we pray it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Okay. All right. So today let’s get started again in the passage we left off with, chapter 3 of Romans. Let me just say a couple of words though because we’re going to start in the middle of the lesson. Let me say a couple of words about where we’ve been just to catch us up.

You’ll remember that when we started in Romans we started looking at the introduction which is 1:1-17. Then we moved to verse 18, where we find that the wrath of

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God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. And men suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And we find that as they suppress the truth in unrighteousness they do two things. First of all they commit idolatry. And then secondly that idolatry gives way to their own pleasures. They begin to engage in sin—sinful practices in everything from homosexuality to disobedience to parents—those kinds of things and everything in between and everything that you can imagine. And Paul sums it up by saying that not only do they engage in sin, but there are those who approve of their sin. And they are guilty of the same, that sort of thing; it’s all-encompassing.

But we realize that when we look at the pronouns there he’s talking about *them*. And what does he mean when he references *them*? He means the Gentiles.

And so we get to chapter 2. And that Jewish man sitting in the back of the congregation is saying, “Give it to them, Paul!” And Paul looks at him and says, “Now wait a minute. Let’s think about you now.” So he begins to address the Jew. And he talks about how they don’t keep the law themselves.

And then you go into that section where he actually names Jew and Gentile and he says, “You’re both under condemnation from an impartial Judge.” And then there is some back and forth. You know, the Gentile says, “How can I be found guilty? I wasn’t given the law like the Jew was given.”

And then the Jew turns around and says, “Yes. But Paul, you’re forgetting Abraham.” And so Paul answers those objections.

But when we get to chapter 3 what he says is very powerful. And you remember how powerful it is, especially when you look at 1-3. At least at one sitting, reading it, you get the impressive feeling that the righteousness of God is revealed. And it’s a righteous wrath against all sin and ungodliness. And it’s the law that exposes that unrighteousness.

And then in 3:21 he says, “*But now.*” And it’s that “*but now*” that has a way of demonstrating the greatness of grace that is found in our God. And so I want us to just pick up there. We won’t start in 3:21. But I certainly want to read 3:21-3:26, and I’ll start a little further down in there. So Don, do you have that?

**Don Maurer:** Yes, I do.

**Jeff:** Why don’t you read 3:21-26?

**Don:** Okay; thank you.

**Jeff:** Thank you.

**Don:** “*But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 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, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*” This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

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**Jeff:** All right. Now let’s ask the question. Who needs this grace? Because we’ve already dealt with this in 3:23, that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But now we have to ask the question. Who needs this grace? Who is in need of this saving power, because all have fallen short? Who’s in need?

Well, he says this. All are justified by His grace. Now this is not all indiscriminately. But this is all who come to Him. All who come to Him are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ.

And we started to take this apart a bit and asked the question. What do these things mean? How do we understand them? And there was a great deal of discussion the last time. I’m studying a little bit further back into where we left off. And so I want us to just recap some of these things, because they’re all part and parcel of the answer that we’re giving.

But what about justification? If you’ll remember, the last time we were together I put the Westminster Shorter Catechism’s answer to that upon the board, and it’s this. *“What is justification?”* Well, Westminster says this. *“Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.”*

Now there’s a lot there. And I want us to just take that apart and think about that—what it means to be justified—because that’s such an important point when we think about life in Christ.

So first of all we ask the question: what is grace? Because we know this: that *“justification is an act of God’s free grace.”* Now you remember what I said the last time we were together. I said that oftentimes we think about grace as undeserved or unmerited favor.

Now when you think about that you think about that in terms of the example I gave. Let’s say that I’m sitting there and my dad walks into the living room and hands me a \$10 bill. And I sit there as he passes by with a \$10 bill in my hand and I say, “What was that for? I didn’t do anything to deserve that.”

And I said to you that that’s not the way we should look at grace, because when we think about grace it’s not given to neutral humanity, humanity that didn’t do anything good or bad. Dad just walked by and gave us a \$10 bill.

No, grace is more like this. Remember what I said? I said that I burned the house down. I killed the family dog. I poured sugar in the gas tank of the car. And my dad walks by and gives me a \$10 bill. That’s grace. And that’s grace because I’m not neutral. I didn’t deserve that \$10 bill. In fact I deserve to go to jail, you know?

I mean, that’s the kind of position I’m in with the Father. I’ve fallen short of His glory. And in having fallen short of His glory I’m in no position to deserve anything like that. In fact I am receiving grace out of demerit; that’s the idea.

So grace is this free grace of God given to us when we are His enemies. That’s what Romans 5 says. He was gracious to us when in fact we were His enemies.

Now he goes on to talk about redemption, at least in our text. And here’s where I’m going to merge the Westminster Shorter Catechism together with what we find in the Biblical text because both ideas are there. I do think that what I want us to do is to go

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back to that Westminster Catechism statement for just a minute; I want us to think about it. I think I put this on the board the last time, but let me do it again.

Remember that when we think about Christ we think about Christ’s obedience. There’s one obedience of Christ. But we divide it into two aspects. We divide it into His active obedience and we divide it into His passive obedience.

And what do we mean by that? Well, when we say His active obedience we mean that He obeyed the law. He kept the righteousness of God. When we talk about His passive obedience we mean that He gave Himself up to be placed under the curse for us. In other words He received not the reward, but the curse for having broken the law, not because He was sinful but because He was our Substitute, okay? So it’s the active and passive righteousness of Christ.

So what does that mean for us? How does that translate for us? Well, the active and the passive do translate. As He comes under the curse for us we receive forgiveness. And as He is actively righteous we receive the imputation of His righteousness to our own account. In other words, our account was empty; we were bankrupt. And He took from His account his righteousness, and He dumped it into our account.

Remember? I think I may have said this. I sometimes get confused about what I did say and what I didn’t say. Let me say it like this. Let’s say that somebody comes along and says this to Sig. Let’s say that Sig is in debt for—

**Sig Tragard:** How did you know?

**Jeff:** For lots of money here, lots of money. Somebody comes along and says to Sig, “Sig, here’s a million dollars.” Now Sig does not pay down his debt, okay. He just blows it. I know that’s hard to imagine. *(Laughter)* He comes in with flowery kinds of clothes all the time. *(Laughter)* He comes in with blazers, completely violet-colored.

**Don Maurer:** Goes to the beach.

**Jeff:** Goes to the beach, right; has marguerites and all this sort of thing. He knows! Sig’s going, “You know me!” *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** A million won’t cover it.

**Jeff:** A million won’t cover it. So then he spends the million, and he’s still in debt. If we were to say that we’d say that we would only have half the equation here. If we have the whole equation, what the guy does is, he comes along and says, “How much are you in debt for?” “A million dollars.”

**Sig:** Three million.

**Jeff:** “Three million dollars.” He pays down the debt and then says to him, “Now you have access to my account. And there are billions of dollars in there. Take whatever you need whenever you want it.”

That would be this equation, because here’s the thing. If we take this out and He has just paid our debt, then that means what? We are in a position of neutrality. We’re not righteous, because He hasn’t given Us His righteousness. We’re just in a position of having been forgiven. Now we’re in a position to start all over again just like Adam in the garden. Who wants to be in that position, right?

But it’s not that He has just imputed righteousness, because we’re not forgiven if He’s just imputed righteousness. There has to be both of these components when we think

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about justification. There has to be the forgiveness of sins on the basis of His coming under the curse of the law. And there has to be an active imputation of His righteousness on the basis of His behavior, on the basis of His having lived a spotless and pure life.

So those two things are key. And it's those two things that enable Him to pay the penalty so that we might be redeemed.

All right. Now when you think about this idea of redemption, you think about this idea in terms of a ransoming. That's really what it is. Somebody is on the auction block where it's a slave, a prisoner of war, even a criminal. And they're on the auction block.

And what are you doing when you give money to purchase them and place them in your care? You are ransoming them. You are redeeming them. That's the Biblical idea of redemption.

And so here we were. We were on the auction block. We are slaves to sin. And we are redeemed by Christ. There's another way for Him to communicate what it is that Christ does.

I want you to think about this for just a minute. When you go back to Leviticus there are seven different sacrifices. Not only are there seven different sacrifices; there are all sorts of different molds and mildews and scabs and all kinds of things like that.

Why are those things there? Well, those things are there to remind us of the multi-faceted nature of sin, and the multi-faceted aspect of redemption. In other words, one sacrifice can't cover, can't begin to cover, all that Christ does for us in the face of sin that is multi-faceted.

And so what you have here is that you have a number of pictures being given and being painted for us that communicate to us the idea of redemption, and this is one of them. And it's a beautiful one.

Well then what you have is this idea of *substitutionary atonement*. I want you to think about this for just a minute. Does anybody have any questions about this? No? All right, let me have you think about this.

I want you to think about something that Paul is dealing with here. We've done this before; this is the covenant of works. The covenant of works ends in Genesis chapter 3; you know that. Then there is the covenant of grace. And the covenant of grace has five exfoliations, right? It has Noah, it has Abraham, it has Moses, it has David, and then Christ with the New Covenant, right?

Now I want you to think about this. What do you have? This covenant, (Noah), is the covenant of preservation.

But now think about these covenants for just a minute. The covenant with Abraham appears in Genesis chapter 12. And what does God say? God says, "I'm going to make you a people. I'm going to give you land. And you're going to be a blessing."

Now move over here to the New Covenant. Think about Galatians for just a minute. We find that we are told that Abraham had the gospel preached to him and believed it by faith. And if we exercise faith we are children of Abraham, okay?

Now that means that this covenant is fulfilled ultimately in Christ, who creates for Himself a people. The land is that *“all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to*

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*Me*”; that’s the land. And so “go out and disciple the nations so that you might be a blessing to the nations.”

Okay. So I want you to think about this. This is on the basis of promise. Now when you think about the Old Testament one of the things that you think about is that you automatically think this. What comes up all the time in your thinking is the law. And that’s not just for you; that’s for the Old Testament people as well.

What I mean by that is that in the Old Testament what you have is that you have a gradual decline, to the point that by the inter-Testamental period you have writings that indicate that faith is actually merit.

In other words, we have this tendency. Remember Genesis 15? Genesis 15 is where the animals are divided up by Abraham at God’s command. And the king says to the servant, “Now I’m the king, and this is what I expect of you. And you pass through the halves. And if you don’t do what I tell you to do you’re going to be ripped apart like these animals.”

The vassal goes through. And every time he looks at the blood on the hem of his robe he understands that if I don’t do what the king tells me to do I’m going to be ripped asunder like these animals.

And yet in Genesis 15 what happens to Abraham? He falls into a deep sleep. And God passes through the halves saying, “I am going to secure your blessedness.”

And then what happens? In Genesis 17 God says, “*Walk before Me and be blameless.*”

Now any person in his right mind would say, “This hasn’t all of a sudden reverted to obedience that gets it done for Abraham; no.” God promised to get it done for Abraham; He promised to secure his blessedness. But having adopted him into the family of God, God is saying, “Now you’re My son; behave in a way that is becoming of being My son—not because you’re not My son, or not because you’re going to get kicked out of my family, but because you are My son.”

Now by the time of the inter-Testamental period the Jews had turned that around and said that we need to look at Genesis 15 through the lens of Genesis 17. In other words the faith of Abraham in Genesis 15 is merit. And it merits God’s favor.

That’s what was happening. By 50 B.C. that’s what was being written by Jews. By 150 B.C., 100 years before that, that’s what was being taught. But by 50 B.C. that was codified. The idea that obedience would get it done before God was the ongoing teaching of the day.

Now Paul is part and parcel of that. Doesn’t he say in the New Testament, when he’s describing his conversion, “*I exceeded all of those my age in the tradition of the fathers?*” What’s the tradition of the fathers? The things I just said—the writings, the extra-Biblical writings of the Jewish leaders. And he exceeded all of them.

What are we saying? We’re saying that Paul was a guy who saw himself as zealous concerning the law. But whatever happened to the substitutionary idea that stood in the sacrifices? It begins to diminish. And it diminishes in 722 because they are carried into Assyria. It diminishes in Babylon in 586. And it certainly diminishes under the Romans to some degree. But it ends totally in 70 A.D.

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But my point to you is that the idea of substitutionary sacrifice continues to dwindle and diminish in the life of Israel. And the law begins to take the preeminent spot, such that people believed that they could please God on the basis of obedience to the law.

Now when Paul is converted he has to ask the question. He has to ask this basic question. Why the law then, God? If it’s about the promise, why the law?

And remember, he asks that twice: once in Galatians and once in Romans. That’s a fundamental question. And the answer is that the law drives us to the promise; that’s where he comes down.

But you see what he does. He comes back to this idea of substitutionary atonement. How do I know? Because when Paul was Saul the Pharisee he believed that Deuteronomy 21 said that the person who hangs on the tree is cursed.

This is fascinating; think about this. In Galatians 3 he says, “I came to realize that Christ hanging on the tree was cursed. Yes, but not for Himself, but for us.” And then he asks the question right after that in chapter 3: now why the law?

So he’s working through these things. Galatians was written early, around A.D. 49. It’s probably the earliest Christian literature that we have from the pen of the inspired apostle. And what he comes back to is that he comes back to the idea of substitutionary atonement. Yes?

**Sig:** Hold on. He’s slowing me down; I thought it was Bob. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** No, it’s Bryan.

**Bryan Whittington:** So I’m struggling with this.

**Jeff:** Say that again.

**Bryan:** I said that I’m struggling with this.

**Jeff:** Oh, you’re struggling.

**Bryan:** So the law, the Ten commandments, points out a bunch of things. But then you take it into two tables: love God, love neighbor. You take it down to one word: law.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bryan:** So the law is combined with love. Jesus is love. How do we combine those things? I fully agree with everything that you’re saying. What I’m wrestling with is, if the law is love then we’re to love. So that’s not a bad thing. But we love in grace—God’s righteousness at Christ’s expense. I’ve just been really wrestling with this for a while.

**Jeff:** Yes; that’s a great question. And what we need to remember is that he actually says in this chapter that “What I’m saying doesn’t displace the law; it actually establishes the law.” He’s going to say that in verse 27 to the end of the chapter. And then what he says in chapter 7 of romans is this. He says, “Hey, let’s remember that the law is not a bad thing.”

The law is not a bad thing. We think it’s a bad thing because the law has a tendency to stir up that which is sinful within us.

Do you remember that example about the guy being in the cage? Remember that? He’s in the cage with the bear, and the bear is his sin. And the law comes to the door and says, “Hey, how ya doin’?”

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And he says, “We’ve got the bear.” The bear wakes up and starts tearing him apart. And he says to the law, “Help me!” And the law says, “I can’t help you; I was never meant to help you. I’m just here to point out your sin.”

And so that’s what the law does. And because of that we have a tendency to think that the law is bad, right? I mean, the kid who is told by his mother, “Don’t eat the cookie before dinner,” thinks that rule is a bad thing. But it’s not the law that’s a bad thing; it’s our desire contrary to that law that’s a bad thing. So it’s the sin in us that the law stirs up that’s a bad thing.

So the law is a good thing. “And what I’m saying actually establishes the law.” But here’s the thing, right? After we’re in Christ then the best part of us wants to obey the law. Why? Because you’re right; the law is love. The embodiment of everything moral and upright in God is contained for us temporally in the law, in those two tables.

**Bryan:** So is that why the Psalmist says, “*In Your law I delight?*”, because once you come to that saving faith you realize the love received? And your obedience has the love. And that love is potentially by serving others. Is that why the law is a delight?

**Jeff:** Yes; I couldn’t have said it better. That’s exactly it. Once you come to saving faith you recognize this. I mean, the question is how do I please God now? And the answer is love God and love your neighbor. That’s how you please God. Do you want that fleshed out a little more? Here it is: the Ten Words, you know? That sort of thing.

So the regenerated justified believer who immediately longs for sanctification looks to the law. When he fails at it he finds forgiveness in Christ to satisfy it for him. And he gets back up and he uses it as a guide. Bryan, go ahead.

**Bryan:** I’m just looking at a few verses—Philippians 2:3-15, where it talks about—

**Jeff:** The mind of Christ and Christ having assumed the mode of a Servant? Is that it?

**Bryan:** I used to have this memorized. It says, “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others more precious than yourselves.*” It’s that, where you consider others more. But then there’s another one where it says that you’ve been given works to do.

**Jeff:** Isn’t that Ephesians 2:10?

**Bryan:** It’s not Ephesians 2:8-10; it comes a little later on. I’m just not able to find it. I’ll find it and let you know.

**Jeff:** Okay; you just interrupt when you find it. So he goes back to substitutionary atonement, which is what was given in the sacrificial system. Think about it like this.

**Sig:** He found it.

**Jeff:** Okay; go ahead.

**Bryan:** It’s 1 Peter 4:10. “*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.*”

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bryan:** That’s where I’m finding it. “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others more precious than yourselves.*” How do you do that? As you have been gifted—and as the image of God the gift is given,—“*use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.*”



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**Jeff:** Yeah. And what you’re saying goes back to what the bishop reminded us of last week. Obedience in Christ is like Colossians 3, or a passage where Paul is telling us, “Now in Christ show gentleness and peace and kindness and love,” or as Peter says, “As you’ve been gifted, use it to serve one another.” So those are ways of saying, “Love your neighbor” for instance, right? But you’re doing it in a context that is really Messianic for our lives.

So go back to substitutionary atonement for a minute. Think about all the places in the Old Testament where we find this. I think about Isaiah 49. I think this is so funny. And it grabs hold of the idea in a way that I think that we don’t often think about.

Remember Isaiah 49. I think it’s in the first three verses. Imagine Isaiah coming in with this scroll and reading it in the synagogue and saying, “Now there is a Servant and He’s called by My name.” And the people in the synagogue are saying, “Yes, yes! What’s His name?” And then Isaiah says, “And His name is Israel.”

Everybody in the synagogue says, “Wait a second. His name is Israel? That’s us. Why is the Servant Israel?” And you can imagine the question. “Is God replacing us? Is He getting rid of us? Is He getting a new son?”

And see, the answer is not that. The answer is, “I’m telling you what you’ve always needed. I’m telling you what you’ve always sought, prefigured in the sacrifice. Yes, the Son is coming, and His name is Israel. But He is your Substitute.” That’s the idea. There’s a substitutionary element that runs throughout the Servant passages.

And this is what we see in Isaiah 53. Remember, I read it last time.

*“Surely our griefs He Himself bore,  
And our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten of God and afflicted.  
But He was pierced through for our transgressions;  
He was crushed for our iniquities.  
The chastening of our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed.  
All of us like sheep have gone astray;  
Each of us has turned to His own way;  
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon Him.”*

That’s the idea of the substitutionary atonement that you see in this text coming out through and through. But it’s not just there. I want you to think about Isaiah 53 again for a minute. Think about Isaiah 53:5:

*“He was pierced through for our transgressions.”*

Now that Hebrew preposition *for* is an interesting word, because some people, liberal in their orientation, have criticized that and said, “Well, think about it. The Jews suffered for or because of Hitler, right? So that’s not substitutionary atonement. So what about that?”

Well, it’s interesting. He doesn’t use just one preposition. In verse 5 he uses another preposition. *“Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
And with (or by) His wounds we are healed.”*

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Think about it like this. You could probably think of any number of ways to bring these words together into an image. But I think about the boy who’s playing around the fire. And he’s about ready to fall into the fire. And as he falls Mom has been talking. And all of a sudden she sees him out of the corner of her eye. And she pushes him, and she herself falls into the fire, and she’s burned. Is she burned for him? You bet she is. In one sense is it by her wounds that he is healed? It sure is.

There’s a sense in which not every picture does justice to every idea. But you can come up with your own ideas or your own pictures that illustrate what these prepositions teach about the atonement of Christ as substitutionary.

And the point is that when Paul goes to Arabia for three years after he’s converted, he’s working these things out. “Why the law, O Lord, why the law? I’ve invested my life in the law.” And he comes to the idea of substitutionary atonement in a way that I think is just as much in the Old Testament as in the New.

But here’s the thing. (We see you, Don; Sig is coming.) One of the things that we have to remember is this. One of the things that we have to remember is that even today there is an eclipse of substitutionary atonement. And this is something we don’t want to lose. This is the heart of the gospel. Go ahead, Sig.

**Don Maurer:** I was just going to bring that up. Many liberal theologians will really utter what I consider to be blasphemy. They would say that the substitutionary atonement of Christ is cosmic child abuse. How could the Father do that to His Son?

**Jeff:** Yes, that’s right. That’s how we lose it. And that’s not just theologians. I mean, I remember first being saved back when I was eighteen. I went into this bookstore that I would frequent. And I told the lady who I knew from the time I was fifteen. I told her that I was a Christian. And she looked at me and she said, “I don’t want anything to do with that.”

And I said, “Why?”

And she said, “I do not want anything to do with a God who abuses His Child.” And so those are the kinds of things that are not just in the theologians but in the laity all the time.

**Bishop Rodgers:** It’s bad theology.

**Jeff:** It’s bad theology.

**Bishop:** Non-Trinitarian.

**Jeff:** Yes; that’s right. And it’s in Christ that these things are ours; it’s in union with Christ. And we’ve talked about union with Christ so much. And if Ted were here he would want us to talk about it some more. But I’m going to hasten by it, at least at this point, because I’m sure that at some point we’ll have an opportunity to revisit it.

But it’s in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that we see this substitutionary element coming out with all of its force. “*He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” That’s the idea. And then the question is—Yes?

**Bishop:** I just wanted to emphasize that when the Son suffers the Father, the whole Trinity, is involved in this.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** It’s God laying it on Himself.

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**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** It’s not on Someone whom He is beating up. That misses the whole point.

**Jeff:** Yes, that’s right. And the bishop is drawing our attention back to it. Let’s go back to it a minute.

Let’s think about the cross for a second. There are some who say, “What was it that Jesus suffered on the cross in our behalf?” It was societal oppression. It was political oppression. There was surely economic involvement in that. There was relational family pressure; there were all kinds of things.

And there are some today who don’t understand substitutionary atonement that would say that Jesus bore all of these things as an example to us, as a moral exemplar, right? And we are then to implement His example.

I get a kick out of it. I read this one book. This one author says, “*Some people say that I’m saying that Jesus is just an example. I’m not saying that! I’m saying that He’s an example for us to put into practice.*” And I want to say, “What is the difference?” (Laughter) There is no difference.

And here’s the difference between this view and what we’re saying. And this is the point the bishop was making. Christ is on the cross and He is bearing all of these things, and we know that. But one of the things that He’s bearing for us is the wrath of God.

**Bishop:** Amen.

**Jeff:** This is the point of suffering for the Savior.

Now let me say it like this, because this is important. And I think this gets to the heart of what the bishop is saying to us and reminding us here. And that is that when Christ is on the cross He is on the cross as the God-Man. And the God-Man is the Person of Jesus Christ. And we need to remember this. We need to remember that there can never be disunity between the essence, the *ousia* of God in Jesus Christ and the *ousia* of God the Father. There is never a separation between God the Father’s essence and God the Son’s essence and God the Spirit’s essence.

So when we talk about God turning His back upon the Son, what we are talking about is the Man, the essence of man in Christ, experiencing dereliction from the heavenly God, the holy God. And the only way that the essence and the nature of man can stand in that dereliction is to be united to God. And that’s what we find in the Person of Jesus Christ.

So when we think about Christ on the cross, let me put it this way. It’s the *opera ad extra Trinitatus indivisa sunt*. The external works of the Trinity are indivisible. And the external work of the Trinity in redemption is indivisible. In other words you can’t divide Father from Son and Son from Father and Son from Spirit, and so on.

However, there is a doctrine of what is called *appropriations*.

**Bishop:** Right.

**Jeff:** And this is important because what we say is that it was for the Son to die on the cross, and not the Father. If we say that it’s the Father who dies on the cross, now all of a sudden we’ve entered into what’s called *patripatianism*—that is that the Father suffers the Passion in a way like the Son. Yes, Don?

**Don Bishop:** It’s impossible for God to die.

**Jeff:** Yes.

## **“But Now” continues**

**Bishop:** Except for His human nature.

**Jeff:** That’s right; except for His human nature.

**Don Bishop:** So going back to Genesis 15,--

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Don:** Who is passing through the pieces? The Trinity?

**Jeff:** So it’s the Theophany. It’s a Theophany. And when you think about the Theophany, let’s put it this way. Who appears in the burning bush? It says that it’s the Angel of the Lord that appears in the burning bush. Who appears in that smoking firepot? It’s God, and I think it’s God generally. Am I right? I think this is the covenant name of God—LORD; Yahweh. So the triune God is here saying, “I am securing your blessedness.”

**Bishop:** Right.

**Jeff:** All right. You know, I think this is far too important to just hurry through. So I think that what we’re going to do is that we’ll take point #3 and go over it next time; let’s deal with it then.

**Sig:** That’s Iv.

**Jeff:** That’s III, isn’t it?

**Sig:** I’ve got to get you a new outline. What we have is what you’re going to start with.

**Jeff:** Okay; that sounds good. Yes, Don?

**Don Maurer:** I don’t know if you wanted to cover this today or not, or wait till next week. I don’t want to get too technical here. But what would you say to a Roman Catholic apologist? They’ve said this through the centuries that this is a legal fiction, this whole idea of justification and imputed righteousness. You’re not producing any righteousness. God has to see righteousness in you before He’ll recognize you as righteous.

**Jeff:** How about we deal with that next time?

**Don:** Okay, that’s fine. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** That’s good; we’ll deal with it next week.

**Brave Man:** You know, Jesus is a part of the Trinity. He’s eternal in that respect, and I understand that. But He’s not considered the Son until His resurrection.

**Don Maurer:** No, no.

**Jeff:** Did you say the Son?

**Brave Man:** Yes. He became God’s Son at the Resurrection.

**Jeff:** No. What we have is this; let me just say this to you really quick. So when you think about the one God you have the one God in three Persons.

**Brave Man:** Right.

**Jeff:** So they share the same Essence though They are different Persons. You have the Father and you have the Son and you have the Holy Spirit.

Now the question is this. In eternity, when you think about *opera ad extra*, think about *opera ad intra*, okay? What’s *opera ad intra*? The external works of the Trinity are works with regard to creation.

**Brave Man:** Yes.

## **“But Now” continues**

**Jeff:** But the *opera ad intra* are works prior to creation, apart from creation, okay? So when you think about God before time and space and all that sort of thing. The question is this. Is He Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Or do you have three individuated properties? And at the creation the One says, “I’ll be the Father,” and the other One says, “I’ll be the Son,” and the other one says, “I’ll be the Holy Spirit?”

No. What classical orthodox theology has said for hundreds of years is that there are individuating properties.

**Brave Man:** Right.

**Jeff:** And the individuating properties are unbegotten—that’s the individuating property of the Father,—eternally generated is the Son, (or begotten), and then spirating or proceeding is the property of the Spirit. So those are the things that individuate These before.

So Sonship is built into that. In other words, as you think about creation,—

**Brave Man:** He’s not made, then.

**Jeff:** He’s not made. He is eternally begotten.

**Brave Man:** Right.

**Bob Busted:** This is a strange one. I was asked a question the other day, and I wasn’t sure how to answer it. I’d like to know what you would say.

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Bob:** The question was when did Jesus become God? When we’re thinking of the Trinity, when did Jesus become God? I hadn’t thought of that question before and I don’t know how to answer it. What would you say?

**Jeff:** So I would say that in John 1:1 that Jesus was God before time began.

**Transcriber’s Note:** John 1:1. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

**Bishop:** He never became God; He always was God.

**Jeff:** He was God; yes. But what I would say is this. That’s the simple answer: Jesus was always God before creation—always God. Tom?

**Tom Hansz:** Jeff, I think that an easy way to remember that is Genesis 1:1. *“In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.”* It’s the plural form of God. He starts off as a plural God.

**Jeff:** Yeah. And so what does John 1:1 say? *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* And so let me get to this really quick, and then we’ll quit.

In John notice this, and this is really fascinating. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* And the word for *was* there is an imperfect tense. And the point of that is that it has no point of origin. So when it says that *“the Word was God,”* there’s no point of beginning for God the Word.

But then notice. And John does this on purpose. He says, *“He was in the beginning with God.”* Then he goes to all things that are made. He says, *“All things were made through Him.”* This is a *genito*, and it’s in the *aorist*. And that does have a point of origin. In other words, he’s setting up creation which has a point of origin with the eternally

## ***“But Now” continues***

begotten Son who has no point of origin. And it’s built into the language itself; it’s fascinating. Okay, let me pray with you. Yes?

**Bishop:** I was just going to say that the simple answer to the question when did He become God is never. He always was God.

**Jeff:** Yes, He always was God. Let’s pray. Father, thank You for this day, for the time and for Your word. We thank You, Father, that You are almighty, powerful, that You loved us so much that You revealed Your Son to us. Thank You for life in Him, for the Holy Spirit who is the down payment of better things yet to come. Thank You, Father. We praise You. We ask that we might live according to Your word and precepts. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)