

## ***“The Righteousness of God”***

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

Romans 3:21-26

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**Jeff:** Let’s pray. Our Father in heaven, we are thankful to be gathered here so that we might study Your word. We’re also thankful to be gathered that we might praise You. Lord, we know that You are a prayer hearing God, and that the prayers of righteous men are powerful and effective. And we are not righteous in and of ourselves. But we are righteous in Christ Jesus. And so it’s in Him that we flee to You.

Father, we ask that this gathering tomorrow morning would be a success. We pray, Father, that many men would come out to it. We pray that they would learn to pray, and most importantly that they would learn to lead their families in prayer. Father, we ask on behalf of men that they would rise up and that they would be leaders, that they would be leaders among their own households, that they would be leaders in the workplace, and that they would be leaders, Lord, in society—men who are humble and contrite, and who love You, and who are willing to stand for You no matter what. Lord, we ask that for tomorrow.

We not only ask that. We certainly pray for David and ask that You’ll calm his heart. We pray that You’ll minister to him as he is with his family. We pray that You’ll grant him traveling mercies as he heads for home tomorrow.

Father, we pray for Alex who lost his wife. And Lord, the pain that must be involved in that is for some of us unimaginable. And yet we pray for him, asking that You will comfort him as well. But also we pray that You would come alongside of him in his need. So Father, we pray that You’ll meet it more abundantly than he can possibly imagine.

Father, we also pray for Curtis. And our hearts break when we hear a story like that, where a man struggles for years, and there is a compounding to his struggles. Lord, we are also saddened to hear about his wife and her decision to cease going to worship. We pray that You will bring conviction and repentance to her life. We pray that You’ll bring hope and joy to Curtis. And Father, we ask that You will use people like Don in his life to bring the encouragement of the gospel to him.

Father, as we gather here we’re thankful to be able to open Your word. And we do that now with great joy, and we do it in Your Son’s name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Well let me ask that you turn to Romans chapter 3. And we’ll just read 21-26, although we’re not going to cover it. We’re going to start in 25, but that will give us the context. Don, do you have it?

**Don Maurer:** No.

**Jeff:** Oh, Don!

**Don:** I put it in my bag this morning, and I didn’t know where I put my bag; I forgot where I put it!

**Jeff:** Don, this is kind of a shocking thing at first. But then I realized that Don has the Bible memorized and doesn’t need it. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Oh, you’re putting me on trial! *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Okay. Well let me read Romans 3:21 ff. *“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it*

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—*the righteousness of God through faith In Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 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. 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.*” This is the word of the Lord.

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

**Jeff:** I want you to know that I only remembered that because I had an exchange with Ted Wood last night in a text. *(Laughter)* And his final text was, “Remember!” *(Laughter)* I couldn’t disappoint him. *(Laughter)*

Well, what are we doing? Oh yeah, we’re doing a Bible study. *(Laughter)* Well, today I want us to think about Romans 3:21-26. I want to start us off a little bit. I thought about this just a little bit, about how to lead us into this. And I think I’m going to take a little bit of a detour from where I was going to lead us. And then we’ll just jump into point #1 after this introduction instead of that introduction.

I want you to think about a man by the name of Anselm. Anselm was an interesting fellow. There are many differing points as to why we should know Anselm. But one of the things that he did is that he wrote *Cur Deus Homo—Why the God-Man?* And it was on the satisfaction theory of the Atonement, something that we embrace. And so we’re happy for that book.

But one of the things that he said in *Cur Deus Homo* is a striking thing. I think it strikes our senses a bit when we think about the cross today. What he said was this. The reason for the cross had to do with the righteousness of God.

Now we oftentimes think that the reason for the cross is the mercy of God. But he pointed out that the righteousness of God was offended by man. And so there had to be some satisfaction. And the cross is where that satisfaction takes place.

Now that makes sense to us. We understand it; we grab hold of it; we intuitively know it must be true. And yet when we think about the righteousness of God as it applies to day-to-day living, we don’t have a tendency to think in that sort of way. We have a tendency to think a little more loosely about it.

For instance, well, he’s a good guy; I’m sure he’ll make it. You know, that sort of thing. When we think about the eternity of a person, when we ask that question, we are oftentimes met with a little looser of a standard than the righteousness of God.

And yet I want you to see this. It struck me in a couple of places, especially as I finished preaching through Jeremiah just recently. I want you to go with me to Jeremiah for a minute. I’ll take you to a couple of places; I’ll just point this out.

Jeremiah chapter 5. This is where the prophet is instructed to go around looking in the streets of Jerusalem and seeking a man. And the prophet is told in the middle of verse 1: *“Search the squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her.”*

And it’s not just there. If you go to Isaiah, just one book backward to Isaiah 59, you find the same two words. You find God saying in verse 14:

*“Justice is turned back,  
And righteousness stands far away.”*

In other words, justice is turned back in the city. Righteousness is far off from the city.

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*“For truth has stumbled in the public squares,  
And uprightness cannot enter.  
Truth is lacking,  
And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.”*

So the Lord sees this. He recognizes that righteousness is lacking; uprightness is not in the city. And so what he says is:

“I will put on My own righteousness, and go in and redeem the city.” And this is really the passage where the armor of God is found that is used in Ephesians chapter 6.

But it’s really in a passage in Genesis that I want you to notice, and it’s in Genesis chapter 18. This is where God comes to Abram. I guess he’s Abraham at this point. He says to Abraham, “Look. I’m going to send these angels down, and they’re going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.”

And I want you to notice what He says in the midst of this. Look at verse 16. *“Then the men set out from there, and they looked out toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.”*

Now listen to this. *“The LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him: For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice.’”*

I thought that was an interesting thing. Here is a man who is to lead his family and command his family in the way of righteousness and justice. And it’s at that point, remember, that Abraham says, “Wait a second. You’re going down to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. I’ve got family there. So can we talk about this?”

“Sure, we can talk about this.”

“Well, if You find x number of people,” (what is it, thirty, thirty-five, forty people? Fifty people; I think that’s where he starts off.

**Don:** Fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, ten.

**Jeff:** Fifty, forty, thirty, twenty ten; okay. *(Laughter)* I told you, he has it memorized. *(Laughter)* “So if you find fifty people there that are righteous, will You spare the city?”

“Yes, I’ll spare the city for fifty righteous.”

“How about forty? How about thirty?”, right; all the way down to ten. But what is he asking? He’s asking for him to spare the city if he finds righteous men. Does he find any righteous men?

**Bishop Rodgers:** No.

**Jeff:** Not ten, right? And so he destroys the city.

Now here’s the interesting thing about it. We might look back on this story and say, wow! Isn’t that cruel? Isn’t there any leniency in God? And the answer has to be not when His righteousness is offended; not when His righteousness is treated with such flippancy.

And I think that kind of story helps us to understand what we’re dealing with in Romans, because remember how Romans opens. Romans says that the righteous wrath of God is revealed against unrighteousness of all sorts. And it’s for unrighteousness that God reveals His wrath against all, because all—Jew and Gentile alike—have fallen short of the glory of God.

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And so that really takes us to where we are in the first point that I want to share with you, and that’s this. Who did what? And that is what I want to start with. God put Christ forward as a propitiation. This is in Romans 3:25. *“Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood.”*

So what we have is that we have God putting forward Jesus Christ the Son as a propitiation for sins. Now I want us to think about that for just a minute. I actually want us to take it apart and turn it over in our minds.

When it says that *“He put Him forward,”* that Christ was put forward, that word doesn’t just mean that He was sort of moved out as a pawn: “Here, take Him.” It means that He was purposed for that end. In other words God intended to put Him forward. There was some forethought that went into this, some eternal design that motivated God to put forward the Son, Jesus Christ. This is not a plan B. This is God’s eternal plan from all eternity, to save some. And so Christ is put forward.

Now for what? To be a propitiation. I want you to think about this for just a minute. And I want to talk to you guys today about it. I want to think about it in the text. But I want to put it in contrast to something else so that we can see what’s actually being said here and what’s at stake.

When we think about propitiation, the Greek word there is *hilesterion*. *Hilesterion* is a big word. It’s one of those words that has quite a bit of meaning. We might say it’s pregnant with meaning. It’s like another word you might find in the Bible; it’s like *chesed*. You know *chesed*. You might look in the Bible and it’s translated “loving-kindness,” “love,” “covenant faithfulness,” “covenant love.” It’s translated in all sorts of ways because the translators are trying to get their arms around what it actually means. *Hilesterion* is like that.

And so some people have taken advantage of that fullness, the largeness of this word. And they’ve taken advantage of it by trying to minimize what it actually means. And so what you have is that you have basically two words that you really have to have in order to understand the atonement of Christ.

When we think about atonement what do we think about? Can you give me what you think of as atonement in your own words? If somebody said, “What is atonement?”, what would you say to them?

**Bryan Whittington:** Sacrifice.

**Jeff:** What’s that?

**Bryan:** Sacrifice.

**Jeff:** Okay. Sacrifice would go into that idea. What else would you say?

**Bishop:** Reconciliation.

**Jeff:** Okay, reconciliation.

**Brave Man:** Payment.

**Jeff:** Actually this is a made-up word. And when you think about it it’s at-one-ment, right? And so reconciliation actually gets to the heart of the made-up word, at-one-ment, you know? But what else? There are other things that you might say.

**Bishop:** Ransom.

**Jeff:** Ransom; yes.

**Bryan:** Justice realized.

**Jeff:** Yes, justice.

**Brave Man:** Faith.

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**Jeff:** Yeah; that’s good. What else?

**Don:** Satisfaction.

**Jeff:** Satisfaction. Okay. All of this stuff; you might even say vicary, right? All of these things are important when you think about this idea.

Now when you think about atonement you think about two things. First of all you think about *expiation*, and then you think about *propitiation*.

Now when you think about these two terms, they fill out what it means for us to talk about atonement. Now let me give you an example of what I mean by this. Let’s say that you’re playing ball. And Old Man Jenkins has a house at the end of the ball field, okay? Old Man Jenkins! I’ve been watching too much Scooby-Doo! (*Laughter*) And you hit the ball one day and it sails right into Old Man Jenkins’ window. And he comes to the window and he looks out and sees you with the bat. And he says, “Young man, get over here!”

And you walk over and he says, “You’re gonna fix that window!”

So you work out something with Old Man Jenkins. You’re going to have to mow his lawn. You’re going to have to do whatever you need to do in order to fix that window. And all of a sudden, one day that window is fixed. Okay. But every time you walk by Old Man Jenkins he growls at you; he’s angry.

Now that’s an example of expiation, but not an example of propitiation. Why? Because expiation fixes the problem. The window is fixed. There has been an expiation. The trouble is that Old Man Jenkins is angry. He hasn’t been propitiated.

Okay. So let’s say this. Let’s say that Don drives into the Bible study.

**Sig Tragard:** That’s a scary thought. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** And he hits Sig’s car.

**Sig:** That would be easy.

**Jeff:** And so Don gives him his insurance money or his insurance information. The car is fixed, and Sig growls at Don every time he comes in. And Don walks up to Sig and says, “Sig, what’s the matter?”

And Sig says, “You hit my car.”

And Don says, “Well, I fixed your car.”

“Yeah, but I’m still angry with you.” See, this is where propitiation comes in. The anger of God, the wrath of God, needs to be satisfied.

Now having said this, this is the problem. The problem is that most liberal theologians hate this idea of propitiation, right?

**Bishop:** They really do.

**Jeff:** They hate this idea. In fact you don’t even have to be a liberal theologian to hate this idea. I’ll never forget the time when I discovered my love for reading when I was twelve. I discovered and laid hold of Louis L’Amour at twelve years old. (*Laughter*) And I started reading. And I went into this B. Dalton bookstore and I made friends with the clerks.

And then I transitioned to higher things. I went to *Tarzan, the Ape Man*. (*Laughter*) And so I just made my way through all the good literature. And then at almost nineteen years old I got converted.

And I went into the bookstore one day. Again, I knew all the clerks. And I shared with the clerk. I said, “Something wonderful just happened to me recently.” And I told her. I said, “I just became a Christian.”

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She listened to me for a minute and she said to me, “You will never catch me believing any of that.” And I was taken aback and I said, “Why?”

And she said, “Because I am not going to believe in a religion that endorses a cosmic child abuser.” You see? But she understood, didn’t she? This is really striking to me. She understood that the Son was punished by the Father, that it delighted God to crush the Son, as Isaiah 53 says. She understood that much. And she understood at least this much: that the wrath of God was poured out on the Son.

But what she did not understand was something so fundamental, something I think the New Testament takes for granted. I want to show you something that we see. This is a side-bar.

You know, Romans 3 is so deep and wide. It’s going to be forever before we get through this. But I want you to go here because you need to see this; this is great stuff. And this is the kind of stuff that you learn from the Old Testament about the New Testament sacrifice. Go to Isaiah 53. I just mentioned it. Isaiah 53 and verse 10.

Now what’s really striking is that in Colossians 1:19 it says that it delighted God that *“all the fullness should dwell”* in the Son. Why did it delight God that all the fullness dwelt in the Son? Well, here’s an answer in part.

*“Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him.”*

And that idea of *“the will of the LORD.”* If you look in different lexicons you will see that it’s sometimes translated *“delight.”* Maybe some of your translations translate it that way. *“It was the delight of the LORD to crush Him.”*

Now I also want you to take note of that word *“crush.”* It’s a word that can be translated, and is translated *“bruise.”* *“It was the delight of the LORD to bruise Him.”*

Now that’s Isaiah 53, the Servant Song. Go to another Servant Song. Go to the Servant Song that we find in chapter 42 of Isaiah. That’s about the Servant of the Lord as well. And this is where we’re told that:

*“A bruised reed He will not break,  
And a faintly burning wick He will not quench.”*

But then in verse 4 it says this:

*“He will not grow faint or be discouraged.”*

And if you have a note, if you look down at the bottom of the page, that word for *discouraged* is *bruised; crushed*. So it delighted the Lord to crush or bruise the Son. But in Servant Song 42 we learn that the Son could not be bruised.

Why? Think about it like this. What does it mean to bruise or crush the Son? It means that He is going to bear the curse of the law. But what is the curse of the law? Death.

But remember what we’re told. Death couldn’t hold Him. Why couldn’t death hold Him? Because He’s righteous. But He could bear it for others, and He did. And so He was crushed for others, but not because of Himself.

And so it’s just kind of beautiful when you think about this. Yes, the Father does bruise the Son, knowing that the Son can’t be bruised forever. Shall we say it like that? Because death couldn’t hold the Son. The curse couldn’t hold the Son. Does that make sense?

Okay.

**Matt Reichart:** *“By His stripes we are healed.”*

**Jeff:** Yes, *“by His stripes we are healed.”* Praise God!

The other thing that you could do as you think about this is that you could also think about the mercy seat. It’s by His blood that we are healed. Now as soon as you think

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about His blood in that statement, you think about the priest bringing the blood into the mercy seat, and sprinkling it on the mercy seat. In other words, what you have in that picture of the mercy seat is a means of expiation and a place of propitiation. In other words, here are the means by which the problem is fixed, through sacrifice and through the shed blood of the sacrifice sprinkled before God. But you also have a place of propitiation on the mercy seat, on the ark, the place where God dwells. And so you have a means of expiation and a place of expiation.

And so what you have is, you have God who provides the means for expiation, for sin to be fixed, but also you find that God is propitiated through these means. Yes?

**Matt:** In your illustration with Don and Sig, how does Sig get propitiated?

**Jeff:** Yeah. So we don't know how Sig is propitiated. *(Laughter)* But we know how God gets propitiated. God is propitiated in the expiation. So in the means that He provides He is satisfied.

I mean, think about it like this. The curse of sin needs to be paid. And it is in the Son that we find the means for payment. But it is in the Son that we find satisfaction for payment, and therefore God is propitiated. Sig is another matter. *(Laughter)* Yes, Don?

**Sig:** Wait a minute. Before you go to Don,--

**Jeff:** Okay; right.

**Sig:** I can only run so far.

**Jeff:** Yes?

**Bryan:** I just had a comment when you were going off in the beginning about Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah. It's really easy in my mind to look at us., to look at us right now. And then we have to remember that maybe Abraham's question was wrong; it had a wrong context. I mean, if there was one righteous person that could have stood before Him—thirty, twenty—in reality there were none, just as in reality there are none righteous now but in Christ. It's like why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? That's an erroneous question. And so we can easily fall victim to that and not remember God's righteousness, and so we're not cut to the core as we should be for the gift we have in all of this. If we forget that, and we don't live our lives through this, we're not really showing God's glory in all of this stuff. *(Unclear)* This just really cut me to the heart on that.

**Jeff:** Well let me just say this. I totally agree with you. I'll just say this and then I'll leave it; I'm agreeing with you. We need to live our lives in faithfulness to Christ, not in faithfulness to some political idealism. And if we don't we're in big trouble, because we need to be showing the world that we're different. And the only way to show them that we're different is to live according to Christ's word and not according to some ideology that comes down the pike.

But I do disagree with you. What do you do with Lot?

**Bryan:** I would think that his faith gives him the righteousness, because as you breathe your first breath you're in Adam, and you're sinful. So somehow righteousness was accounted to him. But Lot in and of his natural human self—

**Jeff:** Let me share this with you. This could derail us, but maybe we can do a study on this at some point. Listen to this; this is in 2 Peter 2:7. *“And if He rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked, whereas that righteous man lived among them day after day. He was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard.”*

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So in my mind, when I look at Lot I think of him as a righteous man. Actually, think about it. When they come to his house and they ask him, they say, “Who made you a judge over us?”

And where is he found when they arrive? He’s found at the city gate. It’s almost as if Lot is trying to bring some sense of righteousness to the city. We often think about him in terms of his failures with his daughters. But I’m not sure that should color the whole life of Lot. It’s an interesting thing to think about. But he’s definitely not ten. So anyway, that’s something unrelated, but it’s a great point. I think it’s applicable for us to think about living the Christian life today.

**Don:** Okay. I have two things to say—one frivolous and one serious. Matt, the way Sig was propitiated was that I gave him a whole big bag of Reese’s peanut butter cups. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** That’s not enough. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Man, you can’t satisfy anybody, I’ll tell you. *(Laughter)* The second thing is that people like the woman that you talked to who railed against cosmic child abuse, people like that don’t realize the gift, as Bryan pointed out—the gift that we have. Knowing who we are—totally unrighteous, totally undeserving, totally unworthy. And Christ bears the wrath of God—hell itself—for us. That’s not child abuse; that’s love.

**Jeff:** Yeah. I mean, you know, otherwise we’re going to perish, right?

**Don:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** Okay. So what’s the big deal? The big deal is connected to what Don just said, and it’s that Jesus was sent that we might have life. Otherwise we weren’t going to have it. So therefore we talk about the finished work of Christ. In other words it is by Christ and by His shed blood which expiates the Father and propitiates the Father. So there’s an important element here that we have to remember.

But I want to bring this home. I want to contrast it with Roman Catholicism, because I think that we see an enormous difference between ourselves and the Roman Catholic church at just this point, because we believe that an expiation has been made and that a propitiation has been made.

The Roman Catholic church does not believe that a propitiation has been made that satisfies God once for all time. And I want to talk to you about that because that’s a huge deal; it’s a big deal.

So let’s start with the second point: *we receive*. Now how do we receive it? Well, we receive this atonement by faith; we receive it by faith.

Now the question is, what is faith? And you guys know this. I’m going to just do this really quickly because we may need it to draw a contrast here in a few minutes. But I’ll just throw it up on the board. You could probably do it better than I could at this point in terms of your drawing. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** What are you drawing?

**Jeff:** I’m drawing you there, buddy. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Uh-oh! *(Laughter)*

**Transcriber’s Note:** A profile.

**Jeff:** I’m going to draw you. There are the glasses. *(Laughter)* Oh man, Don, you should see it! *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Someday I will. *(Laughter)*



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**Jeff:** All right; there’s Don. So when we think about faith we think about three things. We think first of all about *notitia*. And *notitia* has to do with the mind, some knowledge that I have. And then we have what? We have *assensus*. And *assensus* has to do with the will; something I agree with.

But saving faith means something else.

**Bishop:** Trust.

**Jeff:** It means trust—*fiducia*. And I need trust because the demons have *notitia* and *assensus* and are still demons. They don’t have a trust or an affection in their hearts for what they know.

Okay, that’s faith. And faith is given to us. When you think about what the Scriptures say, “We love God because He first loved us.” So we might have known about the existence of God or the gospel itself. Maybe we even agreed with it in some sort of sense.

I had a friend in college who said to me, “Well you know, I agree that the sort of God you’re talking about likely exists. And I agree that if there is sin in the world this could be one way of atoning for this sin.” And so in that theoretical way he was agreeing with it, and so forth. But he didn’t love it. And he won’t love it until God first loves him. Then he will love the gospel. So that’s how we receive it. And it is by the Holy Spirit. He’s the One who enflames the mind and the heart and causes us to love Him. So that’s faith.

So what is faith in? Well, in verse 26 faith is in Jesus; faith is in Christ. Now here’s the important thing that we need to touch base on at this point. Is it only faith in Jesus that is required, or is it something else? And I want to show you that we’re getting to our last point, but we’re building up to it right now.

I want to show you a Romans commentary, actually a very good commentary by a guy by the name of Joseph Fitzmeyer. And Joseph Fitzmeyer said that he is Roman Catholic. And Joseph Fitzmeyer is just commenting on the text.

Now he doesn’t stay here; he has to deal with his tradition, right? Roman Catholics have two sources of revelation, right? The two sources of revelation are tradition and Scripture. But if you just take the Scriptures, what do they say? It’s Joseph Fitzmeyer; you’ve got to see this book; it’s a great book. He’s commenting on this text. *“It is indeed crucial to Paul’s argument. For even though the most important aspect of Christian salvation is what Jesus did in dying and rising, its benefits are shared only through faith.”*

**Bishop:** *Sola fide*.

**Jeff:** *Sola fide*. Now that’s the point. That’s the rub between the Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church. Is it *sola fide*, or is it not? In other words, is it faith alone, or is it faith plus works?

Now if you look at the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church it’s going to tell you that it’s faith plus works. But if you look at somebody who is just commenting on the Scriptures, he’s going to say that it’s only through faith. And we say, “Amen!” (*Laughter*) “Why don’t you put that tradition down? Why don’t you put that cannonball down?”

All right. Now I think this is important to see. So Roman Catholics agree that when you look at the Scriptures you have a problem with their tradition. Now I want to show you this, because there’s a growing sense among Roman Catholics that “our tradition does not match up with our Scriptures.”

Now I want to show you this. This comes from a Roman Catholic apologist; here’s an example. And he’s getting near to what we’re talking about.

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He says, *“The risen Christ becomes present on the altar and offers Himself to God as a living sacrifice. Like the Mass Christ’s words at the Last Supper are words of sacrifice: ‘This is My body, this is My blood, given up for you. So the Mass is not repeating the murder of Jesus, but is taking part in what never ends: the offering of Christ to the Father for our sakes. Hebrews 7:25; 9:24. After all, if Calvary didn’t get the job done then the Mass won’t help. It is precisely because the death of Christ is sufficient that the Mass is celebrated. It does not add to or take away from the work of Christ; it is the work of Christ.”*

Now there is a sense in which that sounds really good, doesn’t it. The bishop is shaking his head. But there is a sense in which—what is he saying? He is saying that the Mass doesn’t repeat the sacrifice of Christ. He seems to be arguing that the sacrifice of Christ is once for all and unrepeatable.

But the problem is that you have this. And the problem is that the Roman Catholic Church says that both of these streams are of equal authority. Now when you have tradition infallibly linked to your body it’s hard to repent. And so what you have to do is, you have to finesse like this.

In 1545 there was a council called The Council of Trent. And it developed some things that the Roman Catholic Church believes, and they are infallible declarations. Let me show you the infallible declaration of the Council of Trent about the Mass.

It says this. *“Should anyone say that in the Mass there is not offered a true and genuine sacrifice, or that to be offered means nothing more than that Christ is given to us to eat, anathema sit.”* In other words, may an anathema or a curse sit upon you.

*“Should anyone say that the sacrifice of the Mass is only one of praise or thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice offered on the cross, and not—”*

**Bishop:** Propitiatory.

**Jeff:** *“Propitiatory, anathema sit.”* In other words, if you say that the Mass is not a re-sacrifice of Christ and therefore propitiatory, then anathema sits on you; a curse be upon you.

**Bishop:** That is self-consciously against the Reformation.

**Jeff:** That is self-consciously against the Reformation. I would say to you that if anything is a reaction in history or a knee jerk in history it is that, among other things.

Now it’s one thing for a Roman Catholic apologist to say, “Hey, you know what? That was a mistake. That should never have been written.” But they can’t, because that’s an infallible declaration of the church. And so they have to say, “All right; here’s what that really means.” And so they have to re-cast it like that previous statement tried to do. But the statement doesn’t say that. The statement is pretty clear.

And the point that I would say to you is this. Let’s go back to our window example for just a minute. I want you to think of the boy. So the boy breaks the window, makes satisfaction and replaces the window.

But now think of it like this. Old Man Jenkins is still angry. And so what does the boy have to do? Well now, bring it into the Roman Catholic system. He has to go to Mass to propitiate angry Old Man Jenkins, in this case an angry God. What happens when you die and God is not fully propitiated?

**Sig:** You go to purgatory.

**Jeff:** You go to purgatory. And you continue to do what Protestants believe the finished work of Christ has already done. We believe that Christ is an expiation and a

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propitiation. We believe that the wrath of God no longer sits on the believer who is in Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church does not believe that. There are people in the Roman Catholic Church who want to say, “That’s not what we believe.” And that may not be what they believe. But that is certainly what the Roman Catholic Church believes. The Roman Catholic Church believes exactly what we put on the board, because that’s exactly

**Bishop:** It’s still in their new catechism.

**Jeff:** Yes, it’s still in their catechism; that’s exactly right.

**Bishop:** We speak of the finished work of Christ and the complete satisfaction of God’s justice.

**Jeff:** Yes; amen.

**Sig:** Jeff, when you were talking earlier about “*we love God because He first loved us,*”—

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Sig:** When you said that lights just went off in my mind. Isn’t that what being born again is all about?, because we can’t create the happening or the experience or the reality of being born again.

**Jeff:** That’s right.

**Sig:** God has to do that.

**Bishop:** If you love God you have been born again.

**Sig:** So when you said that, that’s the realization of why did I make that statement of faith? It’s because I realized that God loved me first.

**Jeff:** Yeah. Let me give you one more passage. Let me take you to John chapter 3. This is the end of the verse here; this is verse 36. “*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon Him.*” The wrath of God remains on him because he doesn’t believe in the expiation and the propitiation that is offered Him in the Son. It’s as simple as that. Okay, so—Yes?

**Bishop:** It seems to me that one of the reasons why liberal theologians are so offended with propitiation is that they think of many of the religions of that day. The gods were kind of irked. But in this there is a justice, God’s justice. As Judge of all the earth He must indeed protect His honor as the righteous Judge of all creation. So in order to justify us His justice must be ours.

**Jeff:** Yeah. He’s been wronged.

**Bishop:** Right.

**Jeff:** And that wrong needs to be righted. And here’s the problem; you’ve raised a great point. We have a tendency to think of it like this. Is He that small that He can’t overlook it?

And it’s like wait a minute. That’s not the way we think about righteousness and justice. If somebody murders somebody, you don’t say to the judge, “Can’t you just overlook this? Do you have to be so small?”

And then you say, “Well, that’s a murder.” But think about this. A small sin is an infinite sin to an infinite God, right? We have a question over here.

**Sig:** I’ll get there. Finish your point, Jeff.

**Jeff:** Go ahead.

**Bryan:** It’s for next week. So here’s my question.

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**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bryan:** You’re frustrating my thought process on this one.

**Jeff:** I’m frustrating your thought process.

**Bryan:** Yeah. *(Laughter)* So Job was righteous. In 2 Samuel 22 David was righteous, and we know what he did. You just pointed out in 2 Peter that Lot was righteous.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bryan:** So that seems to be for the works, which goes to James 2:24: *“Faith without works is dead.”* I get this; I believe wholeheartedly in this. Can you help us next week to unpack this, because that goes right to where our righteousness is. I thought my righteousness was only in Christ, and not necessarily my works. But with Job, David and now Lot there seem to be works there as well. You can’t do this now because we’re over our time, but I would really be interested if you could unpack that next week.

**Jeff:** Sure. Yes, we’ll take up this next verse and then do it next week. Let Matt speak and then I’ll pray.

**Matt:** It’s imputed righteousness. I’m righteous because Christ gave it to me. And so even though I sin He sees me as His righteous child.

**Jeff:** Okay. Let’s pray and I’ll let you go. Father in heaven, thank You for this day, for the time You’ve given and for Christ. Thank You, Father, that He is an expiation and a propitiation for sins, and that in Him the wrong has been righted. We’re thankful for that finished work of Christ and for our lives being in Him by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit who made us alive and applied the benefits of Christ’s work to us. Lord, we go now and ask that You will bless us as we meet with people throughout the day, whether in family or at work. And we pray, Father, that we would be a light to this dark world. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen. *(Applause)*