

## ***The "Justifier"***

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Romans 3:23-28 (text v. 26) [Theme of Romans is SALVATION.]

The first 3 chapters of Romans establishes the fact that man is a sinner.

1. Man is a sinner by CONCEPTION (Ps. 51:5—“*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*”; Eph. 2:3—“*...were by nature the children of wrath...*”). Alligators, crocodiles, sea turtles are all hatched on dry land. After they hatch they immediately gravitate to water. The water appeals to their nature. Likewise, there is something about sin that appeals to our nature.
2. Man is a sinner by CHOICE (John 3:19). There is some point in every person’s life when they come to a crossroad and must make a choice between light or darkness. And without fail, at some point every person has chose darkness.
3. Man is a sinner by CONDUCT (3:23). “Sin” is a term that originated in archery. It means to miss the “bull’s eye.” It doesn’t matter how close you get if you still miss it (Rom. 3:23 cf. James 2:10).

Isaiah 64:6 says, “*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...*” Lepers would bind up their putrefying sores with pieces of cloth. These rags would get filled with puss and rotting flesh and be discarded as rags. The best your and I can produce, as far as God is concerned, is nothing more than a stinking pile of putrid, rotten, vile, filthy rags.

- ➡ After establishing the fact man is a sinner, Paul **introduces the doctrine of justification**. This was the great truth that sparked the Reformation in the 1500’s. No other Bible doctrine has changed church history more than the doctrine of “justification.”
- ➡ To be justified means “to be *declared* righteous” (“Just-as-if-I-never-sinned”).

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Most word processors have a function called “justify text.” When the text is first typed, all the lines on the right margin are uneven. Some lines are longer than others. With the push of a button, the word processor automatically adjusts the space between the words so all the lines are the

same length. The right margin is perfectly even and lined up, just as if they were never jagged in the first place. This is called justification.

Before I was saved, the lines of my life was totally out of line with God's Law. But, when Jesus saved me, He aligned my life against the Law. Now, in the sight of God, the lines of my life are perfectly "in line" within the margins of God's law, just as if they were never out of alignment with in the first place. Hallelujah!

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### ➡ Three essential truths of justification:

#### I. **God's ESSENCE—God is JUST** (3:26).

- A. We make much of the love of God—*"God is love."* If it were not for the love of God, I would not be here.
- B. BUT, God is also JUST and HOLY.
  1. God's love is a HOLY love. Some people abuse the love of God as an excuse for their sin. The first openly homosexual church, the Metropolitan Community Church was started in Florida by a homosexual Pentecostal preacher. His inaugural sermon was, "God is LOVE."
  2. The angels around God's throne do not cry, "Love, Love, Love." NO! The Bible says, *"they rest not day and night, saying, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY..."*
    - ➡ God cannot, and will not, compromise His holiness —*"THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST..."*

#### II. **God's ENIGMA—How can He be the JUSTIFIER** (3:26).

- ➡ God is holy—I am unholy. How can I, a wicked, depraved sinner, be declared righteous, when I am not? Job asked, *"How then can man be justified with God?"* (Job 25:4). That's the question!
- ➡ **NOT by keeping the law** (Rom. 3:19). The law tells us how to walk, but does not give us legs. The law tells us how to talk, but it does not give us a tongue. The law tells us how to serve, but does not give us hands. All the law does is pronounce us guilty.

#### ➡ Three DEMANDS of God's holiness—

- A. God's holiness demands a **PAYMENT** for sin (Rom. 6:23).

1. God could not remain **JUST** and overlook sin.
  2. The payment for sin had to be a **MAN**—not a goat or bullock (Heb. 10:4). Why? Because we were not made sinners by a bull or goat. We were made sinners by a man (Rom. 5:12). Therefore, only a man could buy us back.
- B. God's holiness demands **PERFECTION** in the payment for sin.
1. All O.T. sacrifices were inspected for any imperfections. If there was defect in it, it was disqualified.
  2. Only a man can buy us back—but not just any man. He had to be a **PERFECT MAN**. I could not pay for your sins. I have my own faults and sins. I'm not perfect. I'm disqualified.
- C. God's holiness demands **PUNISHMENT**. Sin must be punished. The penalty for sin had to be paid.

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God could not excuse our sin saying, "I know you're a sinner, but because I love you, I'll just pretend it never happened and take you to heaven anyway." God's holiness would not allow Him to pass over sin without the penalty being paid.

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- ➡ All men are sinners. There was no perfect man who could pay the payment.
  - ➡ Because God loves us, He chose to come down and become that **PERFECT** man so He could be both "**JUST**" and "**the JUSTIFIER**."
    - It was an **irreversible decision**. Nothing could ever reverse Jesus becoming flesh—He would be confined to a body throughout all eternity. That is awesome.
    - As the **PERFECT** man, Jesus went to the cross and paid the **PAYMENT**, and suffered the **PUNISHMENT** for my sin and your sin!
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In the O.T. the priest would place one hand on the sacrifice and his other hand on the person bringing the sacrifice. That symbolized the transfer of the sins of the man to the sacrifice.

When Jesus was on the cross, God put one hand on the world and the other hand on Jesus and transferred all my sins to Jesus—“*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*”

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➡ **Jesus took my place! He suffered the Hell that I deserved...**

- The crowd at the cross gnashed on Him with their teeth. Why? Because in hell there is “*weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.*”
- Darkness covered the land. Why? Because when a lost man goes to hell, he is cast into the “*outer darkness.*”
- Jesus cried, “*My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?*” Why? Because every soul in hell is forsaken by God for all eternity.
- Jesus cried, “*I thirst!*” Why? Because that is the cry of every lost soul in hell!

➡ **He did it that He might be “JUST” and “the JUSTIFIER.”**

### III. **God’s EXPLANATION—How God brought about JUSTIFICATION** (4:24-25).

➡ What Christ’s death is to the atonement—His resurrection is to justification. Jesus died for our sins—He was raised for our justification. We are not justified by Christ’s death—we are justified by His resurrection. [While it is true that we are “*justified by his blood*” (Rom. 5:9), without His resurrection, His blood would avail us nothing.]

- A. The **connection** between justification and the resurrection. Romans 1:4—“*Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*” The greatest evidence that Jesus is perfect the Son of God is the empty tomb.

- B. **Where did death come from?** God's command to Adam (Gen. 2:17 cf. Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 5:12; 6:23). Death is the result of sin.
- 1 Cor. 15:56—*“the STING OF DEATH IS SIN.”*
  - James 1:15—*“...when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth DEATH.”*
- C. **How do we know Jesus was perfect?** Because HE GOT UP FROM THE GRAVE. DEATH COULD NOT STING HIM!!! If Jesus had committed just one evil thought, He would still be in that grave today. Death could have stung Him!
1. Jesus GAVE His life. Death could not sting Him because He had no sin. He cried with a loud voice, *“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he GAVE UP the ghost”* (Luke 23:46). Had He not given up the ghost, He would still be hanging on the cross today in agony.
  2. Jesus said, *“I LAY DOWN my life...No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down OF MYSELF.”* He was in charge all the time! He chose the place...the day...the hour...and even the second.
    - ➡ Jesus told His heart, “OK heart, you can stop beating now... Lungs, you can stop breathing now.”
- D. Connected with the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION is also the doctrine of IMPUTATION (Rom. 4:22-25). It means to transfer from one to another.
1. When Jesus went to the cross, our sins were imputed to Him. Now, when we come to the cross, Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.
  2. God remains JUST... Christ becomes the JUSTIFIER... and you and I are JUSTIFIED. Wow!
    - ➡ It is all because of *“HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS”* (Rom. 3:26). I'm not justified because of my righteousness. I'm saved today because of *“HIS righteousness.”* I'm going to heaven someday because of *“HIS righteousness.”* I'm going to get a new body someday because of *“His righteousness.”*

**SUMMATION:** Craig Edwards' wife Linda told me about a television documentary she saw about sheep farming. It showed a big sheep farmer in New Zealand. It was the time of the year that the ewes were giving birth. Several lambs were being born at the same time. One ewe's lamb died shortly after birth. About the same time, a ewe died giving birth, but the baby lamb survived. So, the farmer had a lamb without a mother, and a mother without a lamb.

The farmer put orphaned baby lamb in the stall with the the ewe that lost her lamb. The ewe sniffed the helpless baby lamb and pushed it aside. The baby lamb had a foreign scent. The lamb would try to nurse on the mother sheep, but the ewe would head butt it away.

The farmer then went to the ewe's dead baby lamb and skinned it. He took the skin from the dead lamb and put it on the orphaned lamb.

He returned the baby lamb, covered by the skin of the dead lamb, to the stall where the mother sheep was. This time the ewe accepted the lamb, because it was clothed with the covering of her own lamb.

I'm glad I've been accepted by God today. Not by my righteousness, but because I have been covered with the righteousness of His lamb—Jesus, *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*