

Justice Satisfied

Date: Sept 9, 2012

Location: Church—Atrium

Review from last week

1. **The ultimate aim of the cross is to demonstrate God's character and glory—to demonstrate that God is both just and merciful.**
 - God's justice demanded the cross as a punishment for our sins.
 - God's mercy provided the cross to save us from our sins.
 - The cross is where God's justice and mercy meet in full harmony.
2. **Apart from Christ, every human being is sinful in nature, corrupted in the entire person, unable to please God, and incapable of working out of this condition. Sin is our default mode. (Total Depravity)**

Romans 8:7–8

⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

3. **We are, then, sinners by nature who show ourselves to be sinners by choice.**

The gospel is a message about sin. It tells us how we have fallen short of God's standard; how we have become guilty, filthy, and helpless in sin, and now stand under the wrath of God. It tells us that the reason why we sin continually is that we are sinners by nature, and that nothing we do, or try to do, for ourselves can put us right, or bring us back into God's favor. It shows us ourselves as God sees us, and teaches us to think of ourselves as God thinks of us. Thus it leads us to self despair. And this also is a necessary step. Not till we have learned our need to get right with God, and our inability to do so by any effort of our own, can we come to know the Christ who saves us from sin.

J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p. 59

4. **CONSEQUENCE of our sin:** We are **destined for hell**—eternal separation from all that is good.
 - A place of fiery agony (**Rev 20:5; 21:8**)
 - A place of conscious torment (**Luke 16:22-24**)
 - A place of total darkness (**Mt 22:13**)
 - A place of divine destruction (**2 Thess 1:9-10**).
 - A place of eternal duration (**2 Thess 1:9-10**).
 - Jesus called hell "eternal" "unquenchable fire" (**Mt 25:41**), where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (**Mt 13:42**), and where the "worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (**Mark 9:48**)

5. The divine dilemma solved in Christ.

So we see in all of this that God in his justice can't be true to himself in saving sinners without a punishment!! He must punish this cosmic treason!!

The **divine dilemma—apparent clashing in the person of God, justice and mercy**; Bible says in **Prov 17:15** that the Lord detests when people acquit the guilty. In other words, he hates it when guilty people get off without just punishment.

Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—the lord detests them both.

Prov. 17:15

But this is exactly what God has done, acquitted the guilty in that he passed over the sins (Rom 3). Questions to explain the divine dilemma:

- How can a just God be kind to rebellious sinners who are due his wrath?
- How can God express his holiness without consuming us in our sin?
- How can God express his love without condoning us in our sin?
- How can God judge the sin and justify the sinner at the same time?
- How can God satisfy himself and save us at the same time?

Answer to the divine dilemma—Christ's sacrifice on the cross!

- He stood in our place and
- satisfied God's wrath and
- fulfilled God's requirement for the guilty to be punished.

The death of Jesus was a complete and full satisfaction of divine justice for all who trust in him. At the cross there is no tension between justice and mercy; instead, they meet in full harmony. Justice suffers no violence and mercy has full expression...Therefore, as believers we can rejoice in the abundant mercy of God through Christ, while at the same time fully honoring the inviolate nature of his holy justice. (Bridges, 46)

Do you want to see the greatest evidence of the love of God? Go to the cross. Do you want to see the greatest evidence of the justice of God? Go to the cross. It is where wrath and mercy meet.

*The Cross! The Cross! The sacred meeting place
Where, knowing neither compromise nor loss,
God's love and holiness in shattering grace
The great dilemma slays! The Cross! The Cross!*

(DA Carson *Scandalous*)

Discussion Groups

1. What does it mean that God is just? What are implications of God's justice? To answer, read, Deut. 32:4; Psalm 36:6; Psalm 89:14; Psalm 98:9; Acts 17:30-31.
2. Bridges says, "God's justice must be satisfied; otherwise His moral government would be undermined" (page 43). Why would His moral government be undermined if He just forgave us without insisting that there be a payment for our crimes? (If needed, use the quote from Wayne Grudem below to help).

Nevertheless, it should be a cause for thanksgiving and gratitude when we realize that righteousness and omnipotence are both possessed by God. If he were a God of perfect righteousness without power to carry out that righteousness, he would not be worthy of worship and we would have no guarantee that justice will ultimately prevail in the universe. But if he were a God of unlimited power, yet without righteousness in his character, how unthinkabley horrible the universe would be! There would be unrighteousness at the center of all existence and there would be nothing anyone could do to change it. Existence would become meaningless, and we would be driven to the most utter despair. We ought therefore continually to thank and praise God for who he is, "for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4).

3. Put the above quote in your own words:

BOOK

The Justice of God

Deuteronomy 32:4—Key verse.

"The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

Definition:

God governs his kingdom as he perfectly administers justice according to his laws. God's justice is certain and inflexible. God's judgments are always right and correct; he gives to each one what is due. If someone breaks God's law, he will judge them with consequences. Period. This means that, in order to uphold justice, payment for lawbreaking is required.

Psalm 89:14

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

Judgment upon sin is a RESULT of his justice, his perfect standards.

Psalm 98:9b

He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Acts 17:30–31

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

2 Thess 1:5-9 explains that Jesus will come in the future to inflict his vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” (v. 10).

Rev 14:18-20.

Picture, treading wine: servant girls treading grapes into winepress. In this adaptation of such imagery, people are being thrown into this winepress of God’s wrath, and they are being trampled down until their blood flows to a distance of 200 miles at the height of a horse.

So, what does this mean?

God’s justice **plays out** in him pouring out his wrath (**righteous anger**) on those who are his enemies, those who sin.

God’s Wrath --we tend to minimize in our day!

- God’s wrath is real (Job 21:20). Very prominent!
 - There are more than 20 different words to describe it in just the OT.
 - Over 580 different references to God’s wrath
- God’s wrath is personal
- God’s wrath is intense (Ezekiel 5:11-17)
 - God intensely hates sin (Jeremiah 16:38)
 - God intensely hates sinners (Ps 5:5; Ps 11:5-6)
- God’s wrath is sovereign (Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6)
- God’s wrath is steady (Ps 7:11)
- God’s wrath is pure (Hab. 1:13)
- God’s wrath is loving as he delays it, forgives sin (Ps. 85:2-3; Is. 48:9; Micah 7:18)

And if you think God’s wrath is just an OT thing, think again!!

- God’s wrath is continual (John 3:36; Rom 1:18-19)
- God’s wrath is coming (Mt. 3:7; Rom. 2:5-11)
- God’s wrath is deserved (Rom. 3:5-8)
- God’s wrath is eternal (Mt. 18:8; Mark 9:47-48)
- God’s wrath is final (2 Thess 1:7-9)
- God’s wrath is dreadful (Rev. 6:15-17)
- God’s wrath is irreversible (Rev 14:9-11)

What is the point of all this wrath talk?

God is serious about justice. He pours out his wrath on sin and sinners. His justice will prevail no matter what.

- Those who have rejected Jesus, he will kill and destroy to satisfy his justice.
- Those who have received Jesus, he has satisfied his justice by killing Christ on their behalf.

In both ways, his justice is bloody and terrible because sin is a terrible offense against the holy creator of the universe.

So the **Heidelberg Catechism** states, “God will have his justice satisfied: and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another.”

God will have his justice satisfied!! This is why we deeply, deeply NEED the cross!!

So, In the Cross, justice was satisfied: How? Look again at Romans 3:21–26.

Answer: God sent Jesus to be our propitiation by his blood (sacrifice of atonement (NIV), wrath is appeased, given to another). Christ was sacrificed on our behalf and appeased the wrath of God—cleansing us of the guilt of our sins. Fulfilling God’s requirement for justice. Bearing God’s wrath.

What does this passage have to do with justice? (v25-26) God is Just and the justifier

Greek word (*dikaios*) in the NT is the same word for our English words **just** and **righteous** (used 72x). It is translated “**righteous**” 52x and “**just**” 16x. Main **two verses** related to God are; **Rom. 3:26**, “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.” And **1 Jn. 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and **just** to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Verses 25–26 also solve the problem that has been building since **1:17 (God’s wrath is being revealed against sinners)**. How do the saving and judging righteousness of God relate to each other? How can God mercifully save people without compromising his justice? Paul’s answer is that in the death of Jesus the **saving and judging righteousness of God meet**. God’s justice is satisfied in that the death of his Son pays fully for human sin. He can also extend mercy by virtue of Jesus’ death to those who put their faith in Jesus.

Why does he bring up God passing over previous sins? These verses are saying that...

In the Old Testament period, God did not punish sins with the full severity he should have. People who sinned should have suffered spiritual death, because they did not yet have an adequate sacrifice to atone for their sins. But in his mercy God “passed over” their sins. In doing so, however, he acted against his character, which requires that he respond to sin with wrath. So the **coming of Christ “satisfied” God’s justice**. In giving himself as a “sacrifice of atonement (propitiation),” Christ paid the price for the sins of all people—both before his time (v. 25b) and after (v. 26a).

So, God has demonstrated his **righteousness** (his holiness and justice) **at the present time** in salvation history. In the cross of Christ, God has shown himself to be...

- **Just** (utterly holy, so that the penalty demanded by the law is not removed but paid for by Christ).
- **The Justifier** (the one who provides the means of justification and who declares people to be in right standing with himself) and the Savior of all those who trust in Jesus.

Here in these two verses is the heart of the Christian faith, for at the cross God's justice and love meet in harmony!!

The Bible also says that God's justice is **now a force that works for us**, pleads on our behalf, as God has forgiven us in Christ—he will be faithful and just to forgive! We can **bank on his promise** because he has been just to forgive!

1 Jn. 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Charles Spurgeon (popular preacher in the 1800's) describes what we are saying here in his sermon “Justice Satisfied.” He depicts God's **justice as a sword**—

- swooping to kill anyone who has sinned, but through Christ God has sheathed his sword of justice.
- Then the sword of justice is put into the hands of the forgiven sinner to plead on that person's behalf—God shows his justice and promises forgiveness!

The sinner is right in his conviction that God is just, and he is moreover right in the inference which follows from it, that because God is just his sin must be punished. Ah, sinner, if God punish not thy sin, he has ceased to be what he has always been—the severely just, the inflexibly righteous. Never has there been a sin pardoned, absolutely and without atonement, since the world began.

Wonder ye heavens! Be astonished, O earth! That very justice which stood in the sinner's way and prevented his being pardoned, has been by the gospel of Christ appeased; by the rich atonement offered upon Calvary, justice is satisfied, has sheathed its sword, and has now not a word to say against the pardon of the penitent.

How was justice satisfied? It was by another man, the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, it was by him that this sin was borne; by him its punishment endured; by him the whole wrath of heaven was satisfied.

Justice that now stood with a fiery sword in God's hand...now goes into the hand of the sinner, “I will go and plead for thee. Once I spoke against thee; but now I am so satisfied with what Christ has done, that I will go with thee and plead for thee. But I will go with thee and demand thy pardon. It is but an act of justice that God should now forgive.”

God ceases to be God when he ceases to have mercy upon the soul who seeks pardon through the blood of Christ. No, he is a just God, "He is faithful and just to forgive our sins" (1 Jn 1:9)...God's justice now demands that the sinner should be forgiven if he seeks mercy, for this reason: Christ died on purpose to secure pardon for every seeking soul.

Keeping it practical, preaching the gospel to yourself.

Preach the gospel to yourself. Not public preaching, but preaching where the **audience is your own heart!**

When you set yourself to seriously pursue holiness, you will begin to realize what an awful sinner you are. And if you are not firmly rooted in the gospel and have not learned to preach the gospel to yourself every day, you will soon become discouraged and will slack off in your pursuit of holiness...

To preach the gospel to yourself means that you continually face up to your own sinfulness and then run to Jesus through faith in His shed blood and righteous life... We need to continue to hear the gospel every day of our Christian lives.

Jerry Bridges in *Discipline of Grace*.

Gospel not just foundational for salvation but foundational for growth (sanctification)

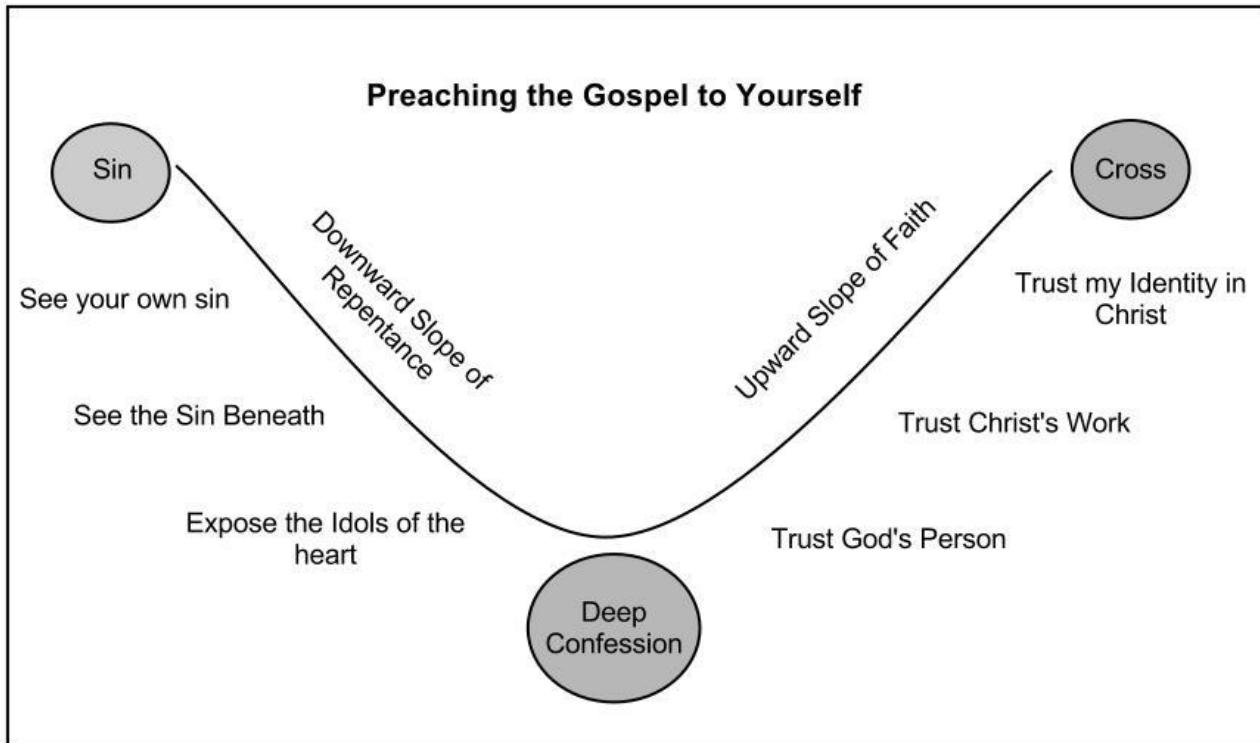
- The gospel is how I change (Gal. 2:20)
- The gospel is what empowers me to serve (2 Cor. 3:5, 9:8)
- The gospel is where I meet God (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6)

Joe Thorn in his book, Note to Self...

Preaching to ourselves is the personal act of applying the law and the gospel to our own lives with the aim of experiencing the transforming grace of God leading to ongoing faith, repentance, and greater godliness. (24) Preaching to yourself demands asking a lot of questions, both of God's Word and especially of yourself. You will have to be honest about your motives, struggles, and needs... You will need to ask how the gospel meets your needs and heals your brokenness. To preach to yourself is to challenge yourself, push yourself, and to point yourself to the truth. It is not so much uncovering new truth as much as it is reminding yourself of the truth you tend to forget. (32)

How do you do it practically?

Repentance and faith (two events)



EVENT 1 Down the slope of repentance:

- See your own sin

- See the sin beneath the sin, push, “why?”
Idols—power, approval, security, comfort

Power Idol	Approval Idol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Position • Influence • Success • Strength <p><i>Symptoms:</i> Has to be in position of power, is demanding, wants the final decision, thwarts other leaders, bursts of anger.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Achievement • Ethnicity • Social Circles • Appearance <p><i>Symptoms:</i> Takes criticism and failure badly, finds it hard to relax, is proud or envious, desires inclusion, craves recognition.</p>
<i>Truth:</i> God is glorious , so I don’t have to produce results.	<i>Truth:</i> God is gracious , so I don’t have to prove myself.
Security Idol	Comfort Idol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Finances • Protection • Religion • Safety • Future <p><i>Symptoms:</i> Is overbearing, is inflexible, is impatient, is irresponsible, hides weaknesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleasure • Health • Freedom • Excesses • Home and vehicles • Recreation <p><i>Symptoms:</i> Feels ministry is a burden, often complains, makes people feel like a burden or a duty, lacks joy, has inconsistent moods.</p>
<i>Truth:</i> God is great , so I don’t have to be in control.	<i>Truth:</i> God is good , so I don’t have to look elsewhere for comfort, peace, and fulfillment

- **Expose** idols, **false lovers** of your heart
 - They are weak—cannot save, give fulfilling recognition
 - They are harmful—hurt you and others, undermine your ability to love
 - They are grievous to God “Jesus is not enough”

EVENT 2 Up the slope of Faith:

- Trust **God’s person** and truth to combat my idols (glorious, gracious, great, good).
- Trust in **Christ’s work** (lived for me, died for me).
- Trust in my **identity** in Christ.

- Through Christ, I am dead to sin (Romans 6:11).
- Through Christ, I am spiritually alive (Romans 6:11, 1 Corinthians 15:22).
- Through Christ, I am forgiven (Colossians 2:13, 1 John 2:12).
- Through Christ, I am declared righteous (1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Through Christ, I am a child of God (Romans 8:16, Philippians 2:15).

- Through Christ, I am God's possession (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9)
- Through Christ, I am an heir of God (Romans 8:17).
- Through Christ, I am blessed with all spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).
- Through Christ, I am a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20).
- Through Christ, I am free from the law (Romans 8:2).
- Through Christ, I am crucified with him (Galatians 2:20).
- Through Christ, I am free from the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:24).
- Through Christ, I am declared blameless and innocent (Philippians 2:15).
- Through Christ, I am a light in the world (Matthew 5:14-15, Philippians 2:15).
- Through Christ, I am victorious over Satan (Luke 10:19, Colossians 2:15).
- Through Christ, I am cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7).
- Through Christ, I am set free from the power of sin (Colossians 2:11-15).
- Through Christ, I am secure in him (1 Peter 3:3-5).
- Through Christ, I am at peace with God (Romans 5:1, Philippians 4:6-9).
- Through Christ, I am loved by God (1 John 4:10).

Practical Suggestions from CJ Mahaney (*The Cross Centered Life*)

1. Memorize the Gospel

The Bible refers to memorizing Scripture as storing up His Word in our hearts. God wants us to tuck His promises into our hearts so that, no matter where we are or what we're doing, we can pull them out and be strengthened by their truth. God has given us passages to help us preach to ourselves. Here are a few key passages that speak of God's work of salvation through the cross which we should never forget.

Verses for Memorization and Meditation:

Isaiah 53:3-6; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:6-11; Romans 8:32-39; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:2; Galatians 2:21; Colossians 1:13.

2. Pray the Gospel

Hancock Suggestion: Pray through a gospel saturated text

Read a verse or two and pray it back to God, whatever comes...work your way through it.

Example: Isaiah 53

3. Sing the Gospel

"A Christian's heart should be brimming every day with the song of Calvary. One thing we must do is not just wait for Sunday worship but, we should make cross centered worship a regular part of our daily routine." CJ Mahaney

Hancock Suggestion: Go on a singing walk in nature

- Put your favorite songs about the gospel in a playlist in your mp3 player and walk and sing, pause and pray.
- Print out the lyrics to your favorite hymns and sit down somewhere and sing.

When I have done this—awesome time with God... In Christ Alone, And Can it Be, Rock of Ages, Amazing Grace, How Deep the Father's Love for Us.

4. Review how the Gospel has changed **YOU**

One of the best ways we can draw near to the cross is to remember the past. It should **remind us of how marvelous God's salvation really is**. For me reminding myself of **my ugly sins** in the past has given a heart to not make the same mistake twice.

Hancock Suggestion: List out How You Have Changed

- Consult journals
- Ask others
- View prayer lists

5. Study the Gospel

Hancock Suggestion: Do Inductive Study Romans, Galatians, Ephesians.

Make observations, ask questions, answer your questions (helps, cross refs, word studies), Summarize (chart, list, paragraph, drawing), Big Idea, Principles for Today, Applications.

Read Books:

Note to Self by Joe Thorn

The Valley of Vision

Scandalous by DA Carson

The Cross Centered Life by CJ Mahaney

God is the Gospel by John Piper

Explicit Gospel by Matt Chandler