

## Romans #2 - Lost and Found Finding God's Power

- This is gonna be awesome! I am so excited! If you've had a bad week, we're gonna fix that. It's gonna be a great time. Find your Bible, go to the Book of Romans. If you are new, it's gonna be this loud for about an hour. Welcome, welcome, welcome. We're in one of the most amazing books in the history of the world. I know it's bad news out there. We got some good news in here. I know there's a lot of problems out there. We got some solutions in here. I know there's a lot of lies out there. There's some truth in here. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- I don't even have time for a cute little introductory story. I got too much yelling to do. And I'm not gonna ask you how you're doing. I'm gonna tell you when we're done, you're gonna be doing awesome. All right, Romans 1:8-10. We're going through books of the Bible. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Oh, come on, what are you, the decaf crowd? Come on! There we go! All right. "First, I thank my God." He's gonna talk about pray, plan, preach. Ready, aim, fire. I love it, I'm fired up. All right. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you." We love you. We're so glad to have you. We thank God for all of you, including those of you who are online, even the haters who post negative comments. We love that much. You made it too, we love you as well. "Because your faith is proclaimed in all the world." Paul's writing to a church that the nations were hearing about Jesus from. You need to know, by God's grace, you're in that place. Each month, over a million people are accessing the sermons that come from this place. Bible teaching is going out around the entire globe. I'm so excited that we live in a time of technology where this multiplication is constantly possible. And he goes on to say, "For God is my witness, whom I serve." And that's who we serve. We serve God. That's why we're here. "With my spirit in the gospel of his Son," we're talking about Jesus, "that without ceasing," so he's always praying for them, "I mention you always in my prayers, "asking that somehow by God's will "I may now at last succeed in coming to you." Paul starts by saying, I'm praying for you and I'm proud of you and I'm pleased with you, and I look forward to visiting you. Here's the big idea. Start with prayer. Start everything with prayer. Start your day with prayer. Start your marriage with prayer. Start your decision making with prayer. Start your work day with prayer. Start your meals with prayer. Start everything with prayer. And for those of you who are maybe new or not yet Christians, prayer is simply how we talk to God and the word of God is how God talks to us. This is the essence of any healthy relationship, communication. God speaks to us through His word. We speak to Him through prayer. Prayer can be written. You can journal it out and think it through. Prayer can even be sometimes done in art forms. You can paint or sketch, and it's just ways of expressing to the Lord what's in your heart. Sometimes per can be silent, it may even be taking a test in school or making a decision at work. And so you're talking to God in the silence of your soul and He hears that. It can be spoken as you pray out loud, it can be sung.

When we sing songs together, we're praying to God collectively and vocally. In addition, he says that he's praying without ceasing. The Bible says this repeatedly, to be praying without ceasing. And what this doesn't mean is that we're always sitting in the Lotus position just thinking holy thoughts. It means that as we live our life, we're just inner, we're involving God practically. Driving into your car, Lord, somebody just came to mind. Let me pray for them. Lord, somebody cut me off and I wanna shoot them, 'cause I live in Arizona, which is an open carry state. I'm now praying for me and them. Just whatever happens in life, somebody is hurting. Hey, let me pray for you. Somebody just got engaged. That's awesome. Let me pray for you. Somebody just got pregnant. Great, let me pray for you, and your sleep, you're gonna need it. It's just looking for opportunities throughout the course of the day to invite God into the commune, into the conversation. It doesn't need to be religious. It doesn't need to be formal. It just needs to be heartfelt and it needs to be respectful. And what prayer does, it builds our relationship with God and others. That's what it does. It gives us God's heart for people, and also, it helps clarify God's will for our life. One of the reasons we pray is to ask God, what do you want me to say? What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go? What do you want me to give? Who do you want me to help? It's asking God for His vision for your life. And here's the key. If you want provision from God, you need to first receive the vision of God. When you're doing what God has told you, God will help you to do it. So you pray to seek His will and then He gives you His vision for your life and then He provides the provision to make it happen. Grace and I just did this for a week in Montana. We got up every day, prayed, sought the Lord. God, what do you want us to do with the ministry, with the marriage, with the kids? Who do we help? Who do we serve? And it was seeking God's vision for our marriage and for our ministry and for our family. We don't have to fight or argue. We don't need to dominate one another. We just need to seek His will in prayer and then trust that His provision will make good for His vision. But what Paul ultimately says is he's so proud of this church. You know what? You guys are awesome. You really are. And if you haven't picked this up yet, I'm not really a flatterer. Like, I. And if you don't believe that, just stick around, I'll offend you at the end of the sermon. So let me encourage you at the beginning. I'm not a flatterer. I like to tell the truth. That's my job. And you guys are awesome. This is a, this is a supernatural church. The people are wonderful, like really wonderful people. They're teachable. They're easy to lead. They're easy to love. They're joyful. They're generous. They're forgiving. They're relational. I talked to somebody who's a new Christian recently. They just got married not too many years ago. They just had their first baby. What they said is, "Going that church is like a little taste of heaven." They said, "The people we meet are amazing. "The marriages are incredible." They said, "It is so inspiring. "And we're so glad that we get to raise our daughter "in that church family, it's just exciting." I want you guys to know that you guys are an incredible church. Unbelievable. And I am so proud of you and I'm so privileged that I get to lead you. And I just want you to know that it's not this way everywhere. I go on these Zoom calls. Who's sick of Zoom calls. Amen? Zoom is the Greek word for I hate my life. I am so sick of Zoom calls. So I'm on Zoom calls all the time with pastors and they literally are just struggling. Our people are fighting. Our people are angry. Our people are divided. Our people are polarized. Our people are declaring war. Our people are really discouraging. Then they ask, how are you doing? Oh, sorry, bad connection. Can't answer that. I don't wanna discourage them, but I wanna encourage you. Generous, loving, hardworking, unified, joyful,

amazing, fantastic people. And I know some people who're like, Christians are all hypocrites. No, we're not. But you're still welcome to join us. There's always room for one more. That ultimately none of us are perfect, but you know what? God's grace does work. The Gospel of Jesus Christ does work. Forgiveness of sin does work. The Bible does work. And life with Jesus makes life better together. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- So here's what he does. He starts by praying. So let me pray for you, and then we're gonna continue. Father God, I just wanna pause, as Paul did, and just pray. God, I pray blessing, I pray provision, I pray healing, I pray unburdening, I pray revelation and encouragement and enlightenment on these dear people, including those who are joining us online. God, I just thank you that what Paul says is he's so proud of 'em and excited for 'em. And Lord, not every pastor can say that, but I thank that I can. I thank you that these are amazing people. These are beautiful people. These are hardworking people. These are generous people. These are relational people. These are serving people. These are people who remind me of Jesus. And so Lord Jesus, I just wanna honor these people. I wanna thank you for these people. I wanna thank you for all that they have given and done to take a church from nothing to in four years, a supernatural miracle. God, for those who are new to the church family, thank you. We're just so glad to meet more of the family and to welcome brothers and sisters in our faith. And God, please keep us safe. Please, please keep us healthy. Please keep us unified. And for that to happen, please keep us focused on Jesus, in whose name we pray. And all God's people said.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Amen. All right. So you start with prayer and then he talks about making a plan. How many of you are planners? How many are planners? You've you've accepted Excel in your heart. You love a plan. You love a schedule. You have a budget. You think the Trinity includes Dave Ramsey. You're just there. You love a plan. You love a plan. All right? All right, here we go. Pray, then plan. "For I long to see you," he's tried to visit Rome over and over and over, but he's not been able to get there, "that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, "some contribution to strengthen you - that is, "that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith." That's an awesome Christian relationship. I pour life into you. You pour life into me. We're both blessed and benefited. "Both yours and mine. "I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, "that I have often intended to come to you." So he's not been to this great city of Rome, but he's tried many times. I don't know what happened, somehow he just wasn't able to make it. " , "in order that I may reap some harvest among you "as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians," Raiders fans, "both to the wise," Cardinal fans, "and the foolish," Cowboy fans. So he's talking about everybody. He's talking about everybody. All right, that was very offensive, but we've only begun, son. Wait till the big dog gets off the porch. Okay, here we go. What he's talking about is that Jesus is for everybody. A lot of times, I'm for my political party. I'm for my racial grouping. I'm for my socioeconomic strata or layer in the tax guide. I'm for our region or I'm for my kind. Jesus is over all, everyone needs Jesus, and

Jesus is available to everyone. Okay? We worship one God, Jesus Christ. All the problems ultimately have one solution and that is Jesus. He talks about Greeks and barbarians. Those are all the nations. He talks about the wise and the foolish. Those were formally and not formally educated. That would be all the classes. And what he's talking about here is a plan. And his plan is also revealed near the end of the letter at the end of chapter 15. So he's been doing ministry, planting churches, preaching the Gospel. And now his work is well established. He's been working for about a decade. And he wants to get to this great major center of Rome. It's a major city. And the reason why it's so strategic that Christianity is established in major urban centers is because that's where culture's made. That's where the universities are. That's where the transportation is. That's where the media is. That's where the thought leaders are. For us in the Southwest, we are in the fastest growing city and county in the United States of America. We're in what is now the fifth largest city and fast growing in America. Then ultimately, if you wanna reach the Southwest and also push down to Mexico, this is a really great place to be. Paul knows that about Rome, it's a major center. If he can get there, there'll be people and resources. And his ultimate goal is to pass through Rome, with their support, that's why he writes the letter so that he can get to a place called Spain so we could set up a church planting network so that he could continue to introduce people to Jesus and open new churches, as we did this one four years ago, throughout Spain. The point is this. Good Christian leadership, and if you are a Christian, someone is following you, so you are a leader. That could be a parent, small group leader, leading in your business and/or community. It requires prayer and planning. Prayer and planning. Prayer is, okay, God, what do you want? Plan. How are we gonna do it? How are we gonna do it? It's taking the vision from God and then writing it down. And what Paul is telling them, he's prayed and now he's planning. How many of you are more prayers? Not so big on the plan. And you're like, I just trust the Lord. It'll be fine. And you know what? I'll just tell you what. I used to mock that till I married Grace. We, my wife, Grace, she doesn't plan a lot, but she prays and God answers her prayers. I kid you not. We were in Montana recently, and I'll be like, did you make a dinner reservation? No, we'll just pray. So we go in and it's Labor Day weekend and they're like, sorry, we're full. Oh, a table just opened. Grace is like, yeah, I prayed. Oh, okay. That's amazing. That's amazing. This happened over and over and over. We wanted to go to Glacier National Park. She said, I wanna go to that part of the park. The concierge says it's closed. It's closed for the rest of the year. Grace is like, oh, it'll open. I'll just pray. So she, hey Lord, open the national park. She's like, okay, let's get in the car now and drive there. I was like, oh my gosh. We're on vacation. We can't fight. I'll drive. So jump in the car, drive to the park. We drive to the park. Here's what the park says. That part of the park has been closed. It opened an hour ago just for the rest of the day. Grace is like, see, I prayed. I was like, okay. So I'm telling you, some people, they don't need a plan. They just pray. Amen? I married that girl. Now, how many of you, you're more like me and Jesus, and you like plans? Okay. How many? What? How many of you like plans? Like plans, budgets, schedules? How many of you, 2020 has driven you mad? You can't plan anything. Okay. It's why as planners, we're freaking out a little bit. Can't make any plans. Paul prays and plans. What do you need to do? Pray and plan. And sometimes that's why God puts you together in marriage. Grace prays, I plan. God answers her prayers and fixes my plan. That's how we do it. And what he's talking about here is praying and planning is really God's heart for his leaders. So let me tell you this. We have been, I got so much to say.

And at the end, there's so many people to offend. I gotta hurry. That earlier this year, things were going good at the church and I was making a plan. Hey, I'm gonna go look at big real estate. I'm gonna go look at maybe a bigger campus, bigger opportunity, and God spoke to me very clearly. This was in, I think, January. He said, "Son, this is not the time to go buy real estate "and start looking at a major development, trust me." Okay? I was like, all right, Father. So I told the team, I said, okay, we're not looking at real estate. And that God spoke to me. He said, "Make a plan to do everything possible "to improve the campus of the church." Okay, Lord. And so then I said, Well, Lord, then we need to really upgrade what we're doing online and technology, 'cause it really wasn't up to speed yet. And then God spoke to me, and I was supposed to take a Sunday off. And He said, "Be in the pulpit on that Sunday, "and I will send a first time visitor "who will see your need for technology. "They will write a check "and pay for everything that needs to be done." So I told Grace and the staff, I said, okay, I'll be in the pulpit that Sunday, I was gonna be out, but you know, somebody's coming and God's gonna speak to them. And then God gave me a vision. He told me, okay, plan to do this work, plan to do that work, plan to do these improvements, plan to do those improvements. I was like, Lord, we don't have the money. And how can we do all of that work if we're open? I didn't know we were not gonna be open! Next thing I know, you know, something happened. I don't know if you guys have heard about it. And all of a sudden we were shut down for awhile. And so all the technology rolls in, all paid for, gets installed. All the work is already permitted, ready to go. Everything that needs to be done on the property begins. And then we opened the doors just in time us to hit this explosive growth season. And I prayed. Now, let me say this. My plan was bad. How many of you right now are glad we're not in the major real estate development sequence. Right? How many of you right now are glad that we're not looking at taking on a lot of debt? You know what? God knows the future and He loves you. And He can tell you some stuff to make a plan so that you can navigate that future. But you gotta pray to Him and listen. So some people would be like, Mark, that's amazing. No, God's amazing. God told us exactly what to do. And then God did exactly what He said. And everything worked out exactly as God intended. What Paul is talking about is praying and then planning. And what we're gonna do, we're gonna continue to add services here at Scottsdale, probably another Saturday night before too long, we're just gonna keep adding services until we can get no more people, and then we're gonna see what's next. But our plan is to keep doing what we're doing until we can't do it no more. And then we'll find another way to do it bigger and better. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And what you see in this as well, let me say this for those of you who are leaders. How many of you are like me and you're a bit of a theological nerd? Okay, I could tell. You wear Dockers, you tucked your shirt in, your Prius is parked out front. We know who you are, okay? We know who you are. You theologic, I'm a bit of a theological nerd. The problem with Romans, it's been hijacked by thinkers, not doers. The study of Romans has been hijacked by thinkers, not doers. Meaning they look at all of Paul's theology and they don't see any of his work ethic and activity. This guy is walking 20 miles a day. He is preaching, he's starting riots. He's writing books, he's in prison, he's planting churches. He's raising money, he's raising up leaders. He's fighting

heretics, he's making plans. He's headed to Rome. He ultimately wants to get to Spain so that he can plant a whole new number of glorious churches for Jesus Christ. And the whole point of Romans is him telling us that he understands who God is and he is on mission doing what God says. What we're not gonna do as a church family for this next year is just argue over what Paul says. We also are gonna do what Paul does. Okay? 'Cause the point of the Bible is not that we would argue, but that we would advance the cause of Christ. Okay? So we are gonna study a lot. But for those of you who think that just coming to write theology is the end zone, it's not. Understanding who Jesus is and what he does should lead to action, church planting, evangelism, missions, reaching people for Christ, bringing good news to a broken world. That's why we're here. Okay? You're both excited. That's awesome. Thank you so much. Here's my third point. What was the first point?

- [Congregation] Pray.

- Pray. Second one?

- [Congregation] Plan.

- Plan. Third one?

- [Congregation] Preach.

- Preach! Love this one, this one's my favorite! This one is my favorite. So I am what? Eager. There should be an excitement to tell people about Jesus. Woo. Right? You know why? Everything else in the world has proven fail. We got Jesus, proven, works. Should be eager to tell, 'cause everybody right now. The world's a mess. Everybody's divided. Everything's a disaster. Oh my gosh, what are we gonna do!? We need Jesus. And we should be very eager to tell people about Jesus. I did it this week, literally. I had somebody come up like, oh, let's talk about politics. I'm talking about Jesus. Let's talk about vaccines. I'm talking about Jesus. Let's talk about Supreme Court. I'm talking about Jesus. Everybody else has got other things to talk about. There's one thing, actually, one person we need to be talking about. Oh, come on. Is this a lib, did I plant a library? Like what the heck? Man. Okay, "So I'm eager to preach." Preaching is not sharing. It's not recommendation. It's not, you know, in my opinion. Preaching is truth with authority anointed in power. And that's what it is, preaching, okay? And if you're new, I yelled, not 'cause I'm angry, 'cause I'm eager to preach the Gospel to you. I want you to be not just believers in Jesus, but excited about Him. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- It's not just principles that we live by, it's a person that we live with. He's alive. He's good. He's loving. He's powerful. His name is Jesus. And nobody's like Jesus. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- All right, "So I'm eager to preach the gospel," that's good news, "to you who are in Rome. "I am not ashamed of the gospel." Oh, we're gonna talk about that for a very long time. I'm gonna come back to it. "For it is," what? Power. You know what our world needs? Power. It has problems. It doesn't have power. We caused the problems. God provides the power to overcome the problems. "It's the power of God for salvation," deliverance, a savior, "to everyone who believes." Doesn't matter who you are or how bad it's been or what you've done. "The Jew first," Jesus was Jewish, our faith started in The Old Testament with the Jewish people in the nation of Israel, "and also for the Greek." That would be those of us who are non-Jewish. "For in it," major theme here, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, "as it is written." And he quotes an Old Testament book named Habakkuk 2:4. "The righteous shall live by faith." Okay. Let me hit preaching. And the Gospel. And then the righteousness of God through faith. That ultimately God has chosen preaching as His mechanism to deliver the message of His Son Jesus Christ. That the Gospel of Jesus Christ needs to be preached, proclaimed. That faith comes by hearing the word of God. That all of creation came into existence, in Genesis, we are told, God said, God said, God said, God said, and it was so, and it was so, and it was so. When God's word goes forth with the anointing and the power of God's Spirit, it brings into reality what God intends. Preaching is not sharing. Preaching is not recommending. Preaching is not apologizing. Preaching is not backward. It is forward. It is not cowardice. It is clarifying. This world has plenty of news tellers. It has plenty of PR firms. And quite frankly, it needs a few preachers who are not concerned about the polls and not concerned about the resume and not concerned about the results. They're concerned about God speaking to His people because people need to hear a word from God. I really like this. I don't know if you guys can tell. This is such fun. I love preaching. You know why? I see God's power show up in people's lives. You know we baptized 56 new Christians last week. That's awesome. When you go from hell to heaven, that's a great week for you. And to get a front row seat, to see God change lives and legacies and alter destinies and heal people, it's amazing. A couple of things about preaching. It needs to be public because Jesus is Lord over all, not just your heart. Jesus is not just a private issue. Jesus is a public issue. Jesus is Lord over all. In addition, it's the public nature of preaching that causes the conflicts. When you say that some things are wrong, those people who disagree, they get very emotional. When you say that certain things should not be happening. People doing them tend to get very opposed. In addition, the Gospel cannot be shown. It must be proclaimed and heard. It's about Jesus. Let me tell you the good news of the Gospel of Jesus. There is a God who is the maker of heaven and earth. You're not here by circumstance or chance or accident. You're here by God's design, decree, and providence. There's a God who made the world and He made you, and He made you in His image and likeness, He loves you. He bestowed on you particular dignity, value and worth. He placed you above the rest of creation and lower life forms, including pets and animals. And he made you to live in relationship with Him. He made you to receive revelation from Him. He made you to listen, to obey, and serve Him. And what we have done, every one of us, we have rebelled against this God, we have sinned against this God, we have declared war against this God. And in that instant, that God, our creator God, had every right to simply terminate life on the earth and be done with us. He owed us nothing. You need to know this. We're not just undeserving,

we're ill deserving of anything from God. And then God in His great, incredible love, this God comes down into human history as Jesus Christ, that the eternal God enters into His created world, that the God who is Spirit takes upon Himself human flesh, that God humbles Himself to come down to seek you and to serve you and to save you. That this God preaches nothing but love and forgiveness. He does nothing but tell the truth. He does nothing wrong in word or deed. His heart, his motives are all together continually and only pure. And we hated Him and we despised Him and we opposed Him. And we harassed Him and we arrested Him and we murdered Him. And in that moment, God died in our place to pay the price for our sins. God substituted Himself on the cross of Jesus Christ with you. The death He died is the death you deserve. The punishment He suffered is the punishment you have earned. The wrath that was poured out on him was wrath that should've been poured out on you. This is why we love Jesus. This is why we preach the cross of Jesus Christ. This is why we have to understand the bad news, that we are sinners, before we receive the good news, that Jesus is our savior. And then Jesus' body is laid in a tomb. And three days later, he roars back to life. He conquered Satan, sin, death, hell, and the wrath of God. And Jesus ascends back into heaven. He is alive and well right now. He is being worshiped by angels. He is surrounded by departed saints. That He is hearing prayers, that He is saving souls, that He is altering destinies, and He is controlling history. And there will be a day that He comes back and that same great God and savior Jesus Christ will plant His foot on this planet and declare every inch his kingdom under His eternal rule. That Jesus Christ is Lord. This has to be preached and proclaimed. And here's what I want you to know. This Jesus is available to you. That He will love you, that he will forgive you, that He will enter into a relationship with you. You have a lot of problems, but your first and greatest problem is the relational problem God has with you. You need to give Jesus your sin. You need to receive His forgiveness. You need to give Jesus your condemnation, receive His salvation. You need to give Jesus your life and you need to receive His new life. This is the good news of Jesus Christ. Now, what he's saying in this is that ultimately it's through Jesus that we are declared righteous. I'm gonna get into a bit of theology. This concept of righteousness. He says, "The righteousness of God is revealed "and it's received through faith." It's revealed in Jesus and it's received through faith in Jesus. This concept of righteousness is a term that he uses eight times in Romans, but he uses a lot of other terms to speak to it. Righteousness is this, how you and I can become right with God. Sometimes we'll even use this language. Someone is nearing the end of their life. And it's like, you better get right with God. You're gonna see Him any minute. How do we get right with God? That's the question. And here's the big idea. God is righteous. You know what that means? He's right. You know what that means? You're wrong. Okay. He's good. You know what that means? You're bad. He's holy. You're sinful. Right? No, Mark, in school, they said I had a good heart. You went to a bad school. Okay? Oh man, that hurts my self-esteem. That's the problem. Our esteem should come from Jesus, not from us. Okay? Man, I'm sweating like Mike Tyson in a spelling bee. I don't know what's going on here. I'm gonna get, I'm dehydrated. So when it comes to this, God is holy, we're unholy. God is right, we are wrong. God is good, we are bad. How do we get right with God? There's only two options. What I'll call works righteousness or self-righteousness, or gift righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Let me hit the first one for ya. Works righteousness is this. I have a problem, but I'm the solution. Between me and God, I can fix this situation that I find myself in.

This works itself out in one of two ways. The first is religion. And various religions will tell you what to do so that you can work to fix your problem. And then you will be declared righteous in the sight of God. All are wrong, but I'll share them with you. Buddhism says you can save yourself by ceasing all desire. Confucianism says you can save yourself through education, reflection, self-cultivation, and moral living. Hinduism says you can save yourself by separating from your ego and living in unity with the divine life force, and then paying back your karmic debt through suffering in successive lives of reincarnation. Islam says you can save yourself by living a good life and having good deeds, according to the Quran. Orthodox Judaism says you can save yourself by living a good moral life, according to The Old Testament laws, and repenting to God when you fall short. The new age, also called new spirituality, or as we like to call it, the crazy people in Sedona. Some of you are like, that's offensive. Here's what I would say. You've never been to Sedona. You've never been. Right now, there's some dude drinking green tea, talking to a rock thinking that's gonna fix his problem. Pastor Mark, that's true. I know, that's why I said it. Okay. The new age says you can save yourself by living as part of the divine oneness in harmony with the divine life force that flows through all of creation. Hakuna Matata. Daoism says you can save yourself by aligning with the Dao to have peace and harmony in and around you. Paul told us, the author of Romans in Philippians 3:6, regarding his own religious works, merit, effort and performance. He says, "As to righteousness under the law, blameless." Paul's problem was works righteousness, which is selfish and it is self-righteousness. And it's the essence in the heart, the demonic spirit at work through religion. And what Paul said was, I looked at all the things you were supposed to do, and I did them all. That's why I murdered and harmed and harassed and opposed the people who disagreed with me because I am right and they are wrong. Now, Paul says he was blameless. Now, for you and I, we'd say, what about the murders? What about the pride? What about the arrogance and the self-righteousness and the judgmentalism and the lack of love and empathy and compassion and forgiveness? And ultimately, that's where works righteousness goes. It becomes self-righteousness. And in the name of God, you do despicable and deplorable things to other people. And it's demonic. That is works righteousness, I fix my problem, in a religious sense, there's also a secular sense. You ready? Social causes. Oh, I feel like he's onto something, that guy. The way it works in the secular sense is this. Politically, our candidate is the holy one. Yours is the unholy one. They're all unholy. Just to let you know a little secret. Sometimes it's sexual. Our gender, our sexuality, our gender identity, our sexual lifestyle. We're the good ones, you're the bad ones. How about moral causes? Endless parade of issues held to with religious zeal. True? totally true. And what it is, whatever God creates, Satan counterfeits. So the sec, so every recycling freak, and I'm for recycling, but there are people that like, you've not recycled, you're a terrible person and we're gonna need to report you. And we're gonna need to put it on social media and shame you! You know what? I know the guy who made the planet. I really do like the planet. I know the guy who made the planet is gonna set the planet on fire. And I know that when you stand before Jesus, heaven and hell are not decided by recycling and not recycling. You don't stand before Jesus with your garbage can, open the lid, and be like. Okay. Who else can we make fun of? I got nothing else to do. Who else should we make fun of? 'Cause here's the problem. People take themselves too seriously and they don't take God seriously enough. And they take their little cause or issue so seriously, they don't take the cause of Jesus seriously enough. We do this

with all kinds of issues. We lived in the People's Republic of Seattle some years ago and we drove a suburban. We drove a, it's gonna happen all night. We drove a suburban and different people with causes would come up and put stickers on our suburban. Somebody kept coming and putting up, I'm ruining the environment. And so I'd come out and take it off and pray for my enemies. Another, somebody came and they put a bumper sticker on our car that said, save the wolves. Are we out of causes? Like, did we run out? Like we've got nothing left. I don't know, wolves. Have you not read "The Three Little Bears?" You don't wanna be pro-wolf. I was in a grocery store. None of this is in the notes 'cause I don't really have any. But I'm just gonna unburden here for a minute. So I'm gonna tell you a story. We were in the grocery store one time, and I was there with Grace and our five kids, little kids. And these two women are in line behind us at the Home Depot. And they're like, they're whispering, but they're loud. And they're like, that's a lot of people. They're overpopulating the environment. They're over, we don't need that many people, they should do, I don't know if they've heard of birth control. I turned around, I was like, their ears are a little but functional. You know, like they're hearing this. I said, is there something you wanna say? This woman says, I just don't think it's right to have that many children. I think it's overpopulation. I said, I said, well, you're not gonna have any people. 'Cause there's nobody wants that kind of relationship with you. So if you average it out, we're pretty even actually. I shouldn't have said this, okay? And it was wrong. But I'm gonna say it again. Grace is in the front row going, no, no, no. Okay. I won't say it. All right, so anyways. But it was hilarious and inappropriate. So the way it always works is this, it's always a counterfeit. If you say, do, believe, or align with this, you're righteous. Everybody who's against you is unrighteous. Therefore, you need to evangelize them to join you. And if they don't repent of their cause or their issue or their ideology, then you need to judge them like God and pour out your wrath on them so that their life feels like hell! We call that America. That's where we're at right now. Every issue divides. There's a line. And somebody is righteous and they've decided everybody else is unrighteous and there will literally be hell to pay. So is there an option? Yes. If it's not works righteousness, it's gift righteousness. If it's not what I do, it's what Jesus does. The point is this. There is a problem between me and God. Here's the first thing you need to know. I'm the problem, not the solution. All works righteousness says is there is a problem and you are the solution. Christianity says, you are the problem. Period. And that Jesus is the solution. Period. And so what we're talking about here is what Paul is talking about, the righteousness of God. God is the one who's righteous. Something needs to be done between you and God to make you right with God. You don't do it friend. Jesus does. When Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished." What He didn't say was, I need you to do some things. What He said was I've done everything that needs to be done. I've lived and died for your sin. And then Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4, which is awesome. Now, Habakkuk is a little book in The Old Testament, it's a series of conversations between a guy and God. And he's really frustrated. Tell me if this sounds familiar. Corrupt government, economic collapse, plagues, difficulty, racial division, conflict in the street, everybody fighting. I know, you can't even fathom what that world might look like, but that was the reality that Habakkuk was dealing with. I preached this book some years ago and it's online. But in Habakkuk 1, he just gets so tired. How many of you are there? You're just so, it's like, I'm so tired. 2020 has been such a long decade. You'll get that on the way home. That was funny. I'm just so, how many of you, you just literally, you get PTSD when you turn your phone

on in the morning? Like, I don't even wanna know what's happening. What chapter of Revelation are we doing today? Oh my gosh. And so Habakkuk asks this question. He's like, Lord, how long!? Any of you thought that, felt that? How long? And then God answers him in Habakkuk 2:4. "The righteous shall live by faith." Not by sight. Oh, I know what's happening. No, I don't. I know that there's a God over it and He ventures through it with me, but I don't see the future, I trust that He does and that His leadership of me will help me navigate what seems impossible. That's faith. That's faith. This little line of living by faith and righteousness by faith, it is that Jesus does all the work and I trust Him. That Jesus is my righteousness, and I trust Him. That Jesus gives me His righteousness as a gift. And I receive it as a gift without adding anything to it. The Apostle Paul says this way in 2 Corinthians 5:21. "God made Him who knew no sin to become sin, "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." What happened on the cross of Jesus? He took your place. He took all of your sin and the wrath of God. He put you in His place, gave you His performance, gave you His righteousness. That is access through faith in Jesus Christ, trusting who He is, what He says, and what He does. This is quoted three places. Habakkuk 2:4 is in The New Testament. It's in the study guide that I gave you. But one of the places is right here in Romans 1:17. Let me tell you how magnificent this scripture is. It led to something called justification by faith. It's one of the essential issues that divided Protestant and Catholic Christians in church history. Is it just Jesus, or Jesus plus baptism, or Jesus plus confession, or Jesus plus first communion, or Jesus plus the priest as mediator, or Jesus plus church tradition, or Jesus plus purgatory? Is it Jesus plus something, or is it just Jesus? Is it something Jesus does and then something we contribute to, or something that only Jesus does and we receive, and that's all, we contribute nothing? There was a man named Martin Luther. He was German. He was trained as a lawyer, brilliant legal mind. And he was almost struck by lightning one day, Grace and I were at his house and we were at his school and we were at the Wartburg Castle where he translated the Scriptures into the language of the day. And Luther was almost struck by lightning. He took that as a sign from God, right? I need to devote my life to you. So he became a monk and a priest. He took vows of celibacy and chastity. He took his brilliant legal mind and he became a professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg. And he was tormented. Because what he would do, is he would take his legal mind and he would go to the Scriptures and then he would judge his life. And he was honest. The problem is, most of us don't know the Bible, or we're not honest. If you know the Bible and you're honest, and you don't know Jesus, you're literally gonna be on the brink of a mental breakdown. So he read everything that the Bible demands and then he looked at his own life and he realized, he wasn't even close. He's not perfect. His thoughts aren't perfect. His motives aren't perfect. His desires aren't perfect. His words aren't perfect. His deeds are perfect. He ain't perfect. He ends up literally coming to the brink of insanity. I mean, he is mentally unwell. He spends hours every day in the confessional, confessing his sins to the priest. Okay, I thought this, I said this, I did this, here's a, okay, ta-da. Eventually, the priest is like, give me a break. He couldn't sleep. He punished himself physically. He ruined his digestion and intestinal life. He was seeking to punish himself to pay God back. He was literally going mad. And then he read Romans 1. He was actually teaching it. Here's what I'm telling you. You can be a Bible teacher and not really understand the grace of God. Happens all the time. You can be a Bible teacher and not understand the love of Jesus Christ. It happens all the time. You can be a Bible teacher

and not understand imputed or gifted righteousness. And it happens all the time. And Luther was reading Romans 1, and he read Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:17, and the Holy Spirit saved him, opened his understanding, and revealed to him, all I need is Jesus, and then I can take a deep breath because I'm okay, I can trust Jesus. And he says this, "I felt I was altogether born again" and had entered paradise itself through open gates." So there's only, and this led to justification by faith, the great doctrine of the Protestant Reformation. We hold it very dearly. It's an essential belief here. And ultimately, there's only three options. Number one, you are unrighteous. You're just broken. You're dirty. You're naughty. You're filthy. You're a failure. You wrecked it. You blew it. You ruined it. The end. People who think that way despair of life and sometimes take their own life. They have come to half of the Gospel. They understand what they have done accurately, but they don't trust in what Jesus has done fully. They have the bad news of their performance. They don't have the good news of His performance. They understand what they deserve. They don't understand what He gives as a gift of grace. Secondly, there is self-righteousness. I'm proud, I'm good, I'm moral, I'm better than they are. And pride is the worst sin of all. It's the sin that got Satan kicked out of heaven. And Augustine the Church Father, says that, "Pride is like a mother pregnant with all the other sins." Religiously proud people are actually the worst people of all, though they think they are the best. That was the Apostle Paul. That's exactly who he was before he met Jesus. The third is gift righteousness. I am unrighteous. Jesus is righteous. He gives me His righteousness as a gift. Therefore, I am, in the sight of God, righteous. I am right with God because of Jesus Christ! I am right with God because of Jesus Christ. So when you die and you stand before God, and they're like, okay, what's your answer? I'm with him. That's it, that's all you need, that's all you got. I'm with Him, I'm with Him. We're all with Him. We're all with Him. He took care of everything for everybody. We trust in Him fully. We're with Jesus. We love Jesus. We like Jesus. We follow Jesus. We trust Jesus. We pray to Jesus. We listen to Jesus. We repent to Jesus. We're all about Jesus. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay? Everybody's got their thing. Our thing is Jesus. Okay? Jesus is the answer that everyone needs. We don't need more religion and we don't need more causes with self-righteous people literally pouring out hell on everyone who disagrees with them. We all need humility to receive the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Okay? Now, I've got about seven or eight hours left. As I read time on the clock. Let me do this. I'm gonna rant for a while. Can I do that? Yes I can. Okay. Pastor Mark, you should be ashamed of Christianity. Christianity has done such horrific evil in the world. You should be ashamed. Nah! Nah! I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! I'm not ashamed of who Jesus is. I'm not ashamed of what Jesus does. I'm not ashamed of what Jesus says. If everybody else gets a pride hashtag and a parade, I am not going to repent of Jesus. I will preach repentance to all for Jesus. And some of you have been brainwashed and some of you are more inclined to think in a way that is rebellious. So let me just deal with that. Pastor Mark, what about justice? What about justice? Okay. That's great. Thanks for bringing it up. Okay. Let's just look at all of our options. Eastern religions, karma, you did something bad. You gotta come back and pay it off. You get the caste

system. You get strong class warfare. Mercy ministry is impossible because of your suffering. It's 'cause you did something bad or wrong. And if I help you, I'm messing up your karma. Go to India, see how loving and gracious and generous people are who believe in karma. What about Islam? Women and men are not treated equal. Christians and Jews are called monkeys and pigs. We're all a bunch of infidels. Well, what about atheism? Well, let's just talk about that. In the 20th century alone, human beings killed 170 million other human beings. 130 million were by atheists. All the atheists lie when they say that all the wars and carnage is caused by religion. Stalin killed 40 million. Hitler killed six million Jews, plus nine to 10 million more, including many Christians. Mao in China killed 70 million. And we aborted about a billion.

- [Audience Member] Come on.

- [Audience Member] That's right.

- Where do you get this sense of justice? 'Cause if you don't believe that there is a law giver who rules over all, why are you upset and appealing to a law that you deny exists? If there's no one up there and there's no rules or laws governing us, why are you upset and what are you appealing to? Everybody who doesn't believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and gets angry is a hypocrite. If there's nobody over us and no laws over us, what the heck are you appealing to with your frustration? How about atheists? Well, Frederick Nietzsche, who went nuts and was cared for I think by his mom who was a Christian, 'cause that's what we do. He says, "You can't get equality without Christianity." Says the great atheist. He says, "Another Christian concept "is passed even more deeply into the tissue of modernity, "the concept of the equality of souls before God." What he says is there is no equality and there is no justice, except for the Christians. 'Cause if might makes right and it's survival of the fittest and evolution, which we'll blow up in a moment, then there is no reason to have compassion or seek justice. The great atheist, postmodern philosopher, Richard Rorty, he says, "The idea of universal human rights "was a completely novel concept in history, "resting on the biblical teaching "that all human beings are created in the image of God." The atheists say, well, if you believe in justice equality, we need to borrow that from Christianity. He calls himself "a free loading atheist." You know why? We were made with a conscience. We're gonna get into that in Romans 2. We know that we know that we know that some things are right and some things are wrong. Well, here's what the Bible says. All authority is derivative under God's authority, that all human institutions are infected and affected by sin, that any sinner in power is someone who has to have a system of checks and balances 'cause none of us are Jesus. The Bible has rule of law. It opens up with more than 600 laws. God governs through law. The reason we have law is because it starts with God's law. In addition, the Bible is very clear that there are demonic leaders politically, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, Nero. It also teaches respect for governments and authority. Jesus submitted to governmental authority and He paid His taxes. When the Roman Empire expanded, they needed law and justice. So they hired the Christians to take care of the job. The Christian Emperor Justinian established the legal system and the bishops overseeing justice in the Roman Empire. That served as the basis for the American Declaration of Independence and the European Charter of Human Rights. Here's what I'm telling you. You want Jesus? He comes

with justice. You want justice? You won't get it without Jesus. That's what I'm telling you. What about issues of race? You heard of survival of the fittest, might makes right? Evolution. It's racist. It says we live on a continuum from animal to human. God said He made animals and humans. We didn't evolve. And there are no people who are somewhere on that continuum. Charles Darwin, you heard of this guy? I think his grandpa was a pastor. You heard of his book. What was the title? You were told, "Survival of the Fittest." Let me tell you the whole title. "On the Origin of Species by the Means of Natural Selection "or the Preservation of Favored Races "in the Struggle for Life." What he said was some races are more evolved than the others. He said, quote, Charles Darwin did, "At some future period, not very distant, "as measured by centuries, the civilized races of men "will almost certainly exterminate "and replace the savage races throughout the world." What happens then is there is a philosopher named Thomas Malthus historically. And he took Darwinian evolution to its logical and sociological conclusion. He also posited that we have overpopulation, scarcity of resources. We're all going to die, therefore, some of us need to die. This led the birth control and forced sterilization, particularly of those who were deemed less fit. He was the underlying philosophical premise for something called Nazi Germany. In addition, we then saw human beings put into gas chambers and furnaces, and it was so horrific that people opposed the concentration camps. So instead, a woman named Margaret Sanger decided to make little concentration camps and call them clinics. She applied Darwin and Malthus as a governmental and sociological experiment and the concentration camps became clinics. Not shockingly, they were put in neighborhoods for poor people and those who were considered less fit. I had someone pull it up. There isn't one in Scottsdale, but all the poor neighborhoods around Scottsdale, that's where the abortion clinics are. In 1933, Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, which means planned white Parenthood, had a magazine called "The Birth Control Review" and she published the article, "Eugenic Sterilization: An Urgent Need," by Ernst Rudin, Hitler's Director of Genetic Sterilization and founder of the Nazi Society for Racial Hygiene. That same year she published E. A. Whitney's article, "Selective Sterilization," in which they praised and defended Nazi racial programs. To this day, the clinics are at poor neighborhoods. We have almost a million abortions a year in the United States of America. 29% of the population is black and Hispanic, but they account for 55% of all abortions. Pastor Mark, this is political. Nah, this is biblical. God made life. God made life. Margaret Sanger said, "Birth control appears to the advanced radical "because it is calculated to undermine the authority "of the Christian churches. "I look forward to seeing human humanity free someday "from the tyranny of Christianity, no less than capitalism." That day has come. Here's what I am telling you. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! There is one God. He made this planet. There is one God. He rules this planet. There is one God. And He has spoken to this planet. He says that all nations, all races, all classes, all colors, all creeds are equally His image bearers, made in His image and likeness, that all life is sacred from womb to tomb. If you care about justice, you need Jesus. That's what I am saying. I have 14 more pages of notes. I cannot hit it all. But let me just end with this, 'cause this seems fun. Pastor Mark, what about charity? What about helping those in need? Well, I worship a homeless guy who was still generous and fed those in need. 'Cause He made us and cares for us, body and soul. The great Bishop Basil in the early church started the first soup kitchens, food banks, and homeless shelters. Charity started with God's people because our God is a God of grace.

Our God doesn't rub your nose in it. He picks you up and He blesses you. Christians consistently give more to charity than non-Christians. I'm sick, sick of it! I'm sick of people who don't give wanting to get elected to get my money. That's not charity, that's stealing. Hold it up. Bernie Sanders gave 3.4%, Kamala Harris gave 1.4%, and Joe Biden gave 1.8%. And if any of my kids gave that combined total, I'd spank 'em. Statistically, God's people are generous. Statistically, God's people fight against racism. Statistically, God's people care for everyone because God made everyone, because God loves everyone, because Jesus died for everyone, because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone! I'm gonna bring the band up. We're gonna have a little fun. We're gonna sing to Jesus. We're gonna celebrate Jesus. We're gonna honor the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You know why? I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The nations need Jesus. The political parties need Jesus. The poor need Jesus. The rich need Jesus. Those who are white and nonwhite need Jesus. Those who are pre-born and born need Jesus. Everyone needs Jesus. Our hope is Jesus. Our righteousness is Jesus. Our authority is Jesus. Our savior is Jesus. Our King is Jesus. Everyone who believes in Jesus, I am calling you, do not be ashamed of Jesus Christ! If they get a pride hashtag and a parade, we're gonna worship, His name is!?

- [Congregation] Jesus Christ.

- Jesus.