

Romans #7 - Crazy Grace Good News For Bad People

- Howdy, okay. So we're gonna start. If you're a bad person, raise your hand. This is not a self-esteem lecture. This is a Bible study. Amen. All right, and if you didn't raise your hand, you're a very bad person. There's not good and bad people. There's two kinds of people. There's bad people and really bad people who think they're good. So for those of you who now know how bad you are, I have good news for you, and that is that God has grace for you, he has love for you, he has forgiveness for you. He has Jesus for you. We're gonna have a lot of fun together, at least I will in Romans chapter three. We're going through this great book of the Bible. You enjoying it?

- Yes.

- So awesome book of the Bible. And if you're new, find your Bible. We're in Romans chapter three. And I'm telling you the first two things that we all need to know is who God is and who God says we are. And once we know who God is, and once we know who God says we are, then we can figure out the refs of life and what to do. That's exactly where Paul begins in his great letter to the church in Rome. He tells them who God is and who they are. And what he does, he says that there are four different ways that humanity has a propensity to view God. These are sort of views and ruts and ways that we consider God and ourselves. And we've looked at those in Romans chapter one, chapter two in the beginning of chapter three. And what's really curious, I was thinking about, as I was praying this week, there was a massive data study that was done here in the United States of America. One of the largest data studies on religion, faith and spirituality, and it was published is actually a very well-known book that was picked up by a lot of media outlets called America's four gods. And I'll show it to you in just a minute, but it's shocking. What they found was, oh my gosh, in America, people tend to have four views of God. These are the exact same four views that Paul prophesied in Romans one, two and three that we would have. The moral of the story is just give social sciences long enough and they'll catch up with the Bible. There are a few years late, but at least they caught up. So I'll show it to you. I put together a little graph. 5% of Americans say that they are atheist. So that's a small portion and percentage group. Those are people who went to a bad church and their parents were legalistic, so pray for them. They need God. Number one, the benevolent God. This is the view that God is engaged, but he's not judgemental. He loves you, he's relational, he's kind he's nice, he gives you a hug, he's kind of Mr. Rogers, but he doesn't really judge anybody and he's not really critical. He just sorta takes you as you are. He doesn't wanna change who you are. 24% of Americans hold that view and that is what Paul called unrighteousness in Romans 118 through 32. We looked at sexual sin, gender, sex, identity, homosexuality, all the things that he talks about in ways that people say, well, this is just the way I am and God loves me and he doesn't judge me and he's not seeking to change me. That's unrighteousness. The other view is the distant God. God is not engaged or judgmental. He's just sort of gone. 24% of Americans see God erroneously in that way. There are three misperceptions and one correct perception of God. This is misperception number two. Meaning

God is far away, he's not involved and he's not judgmental. He's kind of abandoned us. We're kind of on our own. He's an absentee landlord. 24% of Americans believe that. The result is, if you think God is gone and he doesn't really judge us or is involved with us, then if we're gonna bring change into the world, we better bring it 'cause God's not gonna do it. So if God's not gonna judge, we're gonna judge. If God's not gonna be involved, we're gonna be involved. We looked at critical theory, social justice, the woke joke folk and all the cause oriented people, including all the candidates. So that was fun. Thanks for coming back. We had more people, but they all left after that sermon. Number three, there is the critical God. And this is a God who is not engaged, but is judgmental. 16% view God, this way. God is distant, he's judging and he tells you all the things you've done wrong, but he doesn't get involved to help you. He just is sort of like a critic, not much of a coach. 16% of Americans view God that way. Paul talked about this in Romans 2:12-29. Religious self-righteousness people who are religious and ideological and very devoted and very judgmental, but they're non-relational, non-sympathetic, non-compassionate uninvolved and not generous. What Paul is doing, he is obliterating the three popular misperceptions of God and then he leaves standing the one correct perception of God. 31% of Americans believe in an authoritative God. This is more akin to the God of the Bible. That God is engaged, he's relational. He loved you, he's involved in your life, but he's also judgmental. He has strong opinions and he's one who sees right and wrong and he calls out that which is acceptable and unacceptable in his sight. And this is where we find ourselves in gift righteousness today. And this is where we find ourselves learning about this God in Romans chapter three. The moral of the story is your view of God determines how you view yourself and the whole purpose of your life and all of the problems and pains and perils on the earth. And so what we're gonna come into today is this understanding. We've sort of got all the debris off the runway. Now it's time to get the plane up and where Paul is going with this is he's saying that there is a global problem. And the global problem is that sin is in everything. Have you noticed this? Education corrupted, politics corrupted, economics corrupted. Some of us move. Many of you are new. Honestly, on my drive in the majority of the license plates that I saw were from California. So welcome. We're glad to have you, but not your politics. Leave it. So when you come. When you come, realize just because you moved places doesn't mean that there is a place that sin is not infected. Everything and everyone is infected by sin. This global problem is not just a global problem. It's also an individual personal problem. Not only is everything filled with sin and broken by sin, we're filled with sin and broken by sin. The point is that the problem isn't just out there, the problem is in here. And the problem is not just that they, those people and their systems are all part of the problem. We are also part of the problem, which means we're not part of the solution. Well, if we have this global problem and we have this personal problem, and we're part of the problem, we're not part of the solution, where does our hope and help and healing come from? Now, we're coming up on. Somebody said, Jesus, you're not new. Thanks for coming. Just so you know, when I ask you a question here, there's only two answers if you're new. It's either Jesus are carne asada. 'Cause whatever your problems are, these are well-disciplined people. These are mature saints. Whatever your problem is, one of those two is probably your solution. That's what I'm telling you. And if it's not Jesus or Carne Assata, you're beyond help and there's nothing left for you. So as we get into this, we're coming up on Halloween. I don't know if we still do this anymore. I don't know if any kids are allowed to leave

the house, but it used to be when we would do Halloween, people would dress up like superheroes. And what we have within us is this deep, innate sense that the problem is global and it's personal, and that we're part of the problem, not the solution. So DC, Marvel, all of the Comic-Con weirdos, all of those folks, they're all longing for someone who's human, but more than human, who comes from another realm and rescues the globe and us individually. This is where we get all of our superhero movies. This is where we get for example, Thor, Silver Surfer, Green Lantern, and Superman. There's something in us that says there's a problem and the solution needs to come from another realm. And so ultimately Paul is established that there is this global problem. And I would just tell you, every kid who knocks on your door dressed up like a superhero is actually longing for Jesus whether they know him or not. That's what you tell them. Here's candy and you need Jesus. That ultimately what beats Superman is God man. And so our hope is that there is someone who comes in and is part of the solution, not the problem is not part of the globe, but rules over the globe. And so he's gonna get into a few of my favorite doctrines. We're gonna get deep into thinking and theology. And if you're a nerd, this is a great day. If you're not a nerd, feel free to check the scores, but the card those aren't until later. So Romans chapter three verses 21 to 22. We're talking about something called justification by faith. But now, the righteousness or rightness or goodness and justice of God has been manifested, revealed, unveiled apart from the law. That is the scriptures, the word of God in the Old Testament, although the law and the prophets, the Old Testament bear witness to it, the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. How are we gonna fix this global problem? How are we gonna fix this personal problem? We're gonna fix it through the righteousness of God. Not our righteousness, but his righteousness. And righteousness is this language of a performance that either qualifies you or disqualifies you. So when you're in school, if you get your report card, it is your righteousness. It tells you whether you've qualified or disqualified to graduate and head to the next grade. Similarly, when you go to apply for a job, your resume is your righteousness. It's your performance and it tells you whether or not you've qualified or disqualified. How many of you are employers and you get resumes from people that shouldn't be applying for the job because they've not qualified. They're like, I wanna be a surgeon. What are you good at? I play video games at my mom's house. We can't let you cut anyone. You don't qualify. And ultimately, if you do qualify, then you get the job. Once you get the job, if you wanna keep the job or you wanna be promoted in the job, we give you a performance review. This is your righteousness. This is your performance. And it either qualifies or disqualifies you to keep your job or be promoted in your job. The question is when we die, where do we go and how do we qualify? That's the big question of righteousness. If God is Holy and we are unholy and God is perfect and we are sinful and God is creator and we are created, when we die, how do we get our righteousness? How are we declared qualified to stand before God righteous in his sight? That's the big question. And there are only ultimately two ways that people answer this question of righteousness. One is behave, the other is believe. The behavior path, it can be religious or spiritual in nature. Be a good person, tithe, pray to Mecca, reincarnate, pay off your karmic debt, suffer in purgatory, be baptized, take communion, speak in tongues. You've got to behave. There's a list of things you need to do. There is also a secular version, both for the right political candidate back the right cause, have the correct hashtag, join the right march parade, somehow show that you're behaving the right way. We're the good

people, they're the bad people. Everyone who tries the behave path ultimately finds that it's a dead end. It's just a dead end. And so what God says earlier in Romans one, two, and then early in three is that through behavior, no one is saved. That we don't have the right resume to stand before God. So the only other path is the belief path. The believe path is that we are not the ones who behave. Jesus Christ is the one who behaves, and we don't behave, we believe in the one who behaved. These are the only two options really for all of humanity. And what he is saying is that the righteousness is "of God," which it means is this. It's not our resume that qualifies us to stand before God. If you plan on standing before God and he's like, all right, why should I let you in? If you say, here's what I did, wrong answer. Say I'm With Jesus. Yay, ding, ding, right answer. It's his resume, not my resume. It's his performance, not my performance. It's his works not my work. It's his behavior and not mine. I just believe in him and thankfully I'm with him. Amen.

- Amen.

- So ultimately it's about Jesus. And what he says is that this has been manifested. The language here in Romans is like a sunrise after a long dark night, that ultimately, as people were on the behave path do better, try harder, perform more on the performance treadmill, Jesus comes the light of the world, and all of a sudden we see the greatness and the glory and the grander of God. You're like, there's Jesus. Finally, somebody who knows what they're doing. Finally, someone who tells us where we're going. Finally, someone who behaves perfectly. So Jesus lives the perfect life and his life is ultimately the only one that is lived with perfect behavior, no sin whatsoever. Now on this section, the great Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, he's kind of a hero of mine and a bit of a nerd. He had this change his whole life, the book of Romans, but especially chapter three, because he grew up in a religious household and he was on the behave track. And he actually went into ministry as a priest. Took a vow of celibacy and poverty. How many of you guys are like, I don't wanna behave that way. So he's a broke virgin living at the church. One, two, three, not it. And now he's not eating well, he's not sleeping well, he's confessing his sins day and night. He's teaching the Bible. He's behaving as best as he can and he's literally going mad and he is physically dying because he's trying to be perfect and he's not. And then he's teaching Romans three in a seminary. You can be a Bible teacher. You can have a degree in Bible and not really understand Jesus. The point is this, you can't know Jesus without the Bible, but you can know the Bible and not know Jesus. He was one of those guys who knew the Bible, like a lot of religious people do, but he didn't really know Jesus, and it all changed for him. In the book of Romans, especially Romans chapter three. And he realizes, oh, I'm not the savior, he's the savior. I'm not the one who behaves. He's the one who behaves. I believe in the one who behaved. So he then goes forth and says this. Here, therefore is the sermon of sermons. He's like, this is it. And the wisdom of heaven. You can just feel the burden lifting off the guy. If you live in a relationship of performance, what that means is you always need to produce results and if any point you fail, then the relationship is over. If you've had a parental or a marital relationship like that, they are life taking. They are joyless and cheerless because every day is just go to work, go to work, go to work. What if I don't do a good job? Well, then we punish you and or we abandon you. And he said, here's the wisdom of heaven. The

burden is lifted. And he goes on to say, in order that we may believe that our righteousness and salvation and comfort come to us from outside. What he says is righteousness is out there. Comfort is out there. Holiness is out there and it's gifted to me through Jesus Christ. It's not in here. This is where as Christians, we don't go into ourselves. We go out to Jesus. We go out to Jesus. It's not like, well, you need to look within you. No, no, no, no. That's where you find the problem. If you wanna find the solution, you look out and you look up ultimately to Jesus in order that we may believe that though, in us dwells not, but sin and unrighteousness and folly, we are nevertheless acceptable before God, righteous, holy and wise. All of a sudden the sun rises and he's like, oh, it's Jesus. Everything I'm doing is not going to qualify me to be declared righteous and stand before our holy God. Jesus took care of everything. I need to trust his words on the cross. It is finished. All the behaving is done and now the believing begins. This issue is shorthand called justification by faith, by faith. And it actually is such a massive conviction that it split Christianity into two teams, Protestant and Catholic. To give you a little bit of church history briefly. When we lived out of state, my youngest son and I, we like to split wood and have huge fires in this old fireplace that was in our home. And for the big rounds, we would take a maul which is kind of like an accent without the handle and we would put it in the center, boom, hit the maul and it would split the round. The doctrine of justification literally was the maul that split Christianity into Catholic and Protestant. Protestant was a protest against Catholicism and their teaching on many things. But in particular, the issue of how we're justified, declared righteous in the sight of God. So how many of you like me you grew up Catholic? You grew up Catholic. You ever wonder why are there these two different teams? Well, this is largely why. I was raised Catholic. I was born in a Catholic hospital. I was baptized as a baby or I should say sprinkled as a baby in a Catholic church. I went to Catholic school for three years. I officiated mass with the priest as an altar boy. So we're Catholic with decided Catholic and Catholic for dessert. And then in college I became a Christian and like Luther, I knew a little bit about the Bible, but I didn't know Jesus and then I realized it's not about my behavior. It's about his behavior and be believing in him. Well then God spoke to me, said, marry Grace, she's now my wife, preached the Bible which I like to do train men, which is one of my favorite things and plant churches, which have been in my whole life. God spoke to me. Well, now the family is worried. They think I've joined a cult 'cause they're Catholic, they don't know. And the problem with a cult is you never know till the last day, you're like, I thought it was going to church. And then they gave me white shoes and Kool-Aid, and then it got weird. I don't know. So what happened is my parents are a little concerned I've joined a cult, so they fly in my grandmother from North Dakota. After my grandfather died, she became a nun. That's how Catholic we were. She prayed so much that two churches gave her her own key 'cause she was there all the time. So they fly in by matriarch, grandma, Catholic nun. She sits me down. She's like, what happened, Mark? I said, well, I met Jesus. She's like, first thing I kid you not, she says, please tell me you're not a Lutheran. First thing she tells me. She hated Luther because Luther was Catholic and then he split the whole thing and she basically told me, he says like, he's a bad boy. He's an avid. I'm putting him over my knee. But now she's with Luther. They figured it all out. She's a Protestant today in the sight of Jesus. It's all better. So my grandma's asking me, she's like, well, what do you wanna do? I said, well, God told me to marry grace so I can't be a priest because they're not allowed to marry. They are now according to the Pope is supposed to do

civil unions for men. So if you wanna get into that? I don't, but it's different. So we're gonna take a collection later and send the Pope a copy of the Bible 'cause he needs one. I just turned 50. I don't care anymore. I'm just gonna tell you one thing. So and we don't put this on the internet, now you know why. And they'd be like, we got so much to edit. It was only a six-minute sermon when we got done with it. So I tell my grandma why I can't be Catholic 'cause God told me to be married. And God told me to preach the Bible. She's like, oh-oh. So my grandma goes and prays all night the rosary, largely to Mary. She comes out in the morning. She's like, God spoke to me. You don't need to be Catholic. You need to preach the Bible and marry Grace and do what God said. So she was an awesome grandma and a terrible nun. That was my grandma. So even in my own life, this has become a massive personal issue, because ultimately for me as a new Christian at the age of 19, it was okay, is it Jesus or Jesus plus someone or something else? Is it Jesus plus the church? Is it Jesus plus baptism? Is it Jesus plus the sacraments? Is it Jesus plus confession? Is it Jesus plus purgatory. Here's what I'll tell you, Jesus plus anything ruins everything. In marriage fidelity plus anything ruins everything. In marriage, it's about being fully devoted. In your relationship with Jesus, it's about being fully devoted. You involve anyone or anything else and it undermines the entire relationship. So my grandma she's like, well, what about the church that mediates between you and God? I said, I got Jesus. He's the one mediator between man and God. His name is Christ Jesus. She's like, well, what about the priest? I said, I have a great high priest. His name is Jesus. She's like, what about confession? I said, I confess my sins to Jesus. Every time she said, well, what about, what about, I said, I got Jesus. I'm all good, man. I got cuts to the front of the line. Jesus took care of everything. I just, I got no backup plan. I got no plan B. I got no, hey, if Jesus doesn't work, here's my next option. I got no other option. I'm trusting in Jesus or I'm on fire. That's how it's gonna roll. And ultimately Martin Luther said that this is the issue on which the church stands or falls. He said, this is it. And just to give you an analogy, there is two big theological words. I'm a nerd, I wrote a systematic theology. I love to study. One is called monogism, the other is called synergism. I'll try to simplify it for you. Synergism is this concept that you and God work together for your salvation. That God does his part, you do your part. Synergism is where you and God partner together, you work together. Monogism is where God saves you. He does all the work. To give you an analogy. It says in Isaiah, the question is asked to whom is the arm of the Lord been revealed? And so it's like God's arm reached down. So I'll give you an analogy. When my kids were little, we've got five kids, three boys, two girls. Love him with all my heart, but when they were little, the boys were all suicidal. The little boys are all suicidal. If you don't believe that it's because you've never had a boy. And so what would happen was anytime we get near a pool, the boys would run and jump. They don't know how to swim. And so they're running ha ha. It was fine when I had one, get to two, you get to three, now you're on zone defense. You're like, I can't. One of you is in trouble. I got three boys. So there was one occasion, I'll never forget. One of our sons ran, just jumped in. Clothes, shoes, the whole thing, the whole thing. And he's going under. I could have, now synergism would have said, I reach out my hand. I'm like son, grab my hand. If you do that, you're a horrible parent. That's what you are. You're like, I was gonna save him, but they didn't reach high enough. You know what I did. It wasn't synergism, me reaching down, them reaching up. You know what it was? What did I do? I reached down and I grabbed him and I pulled them out of the water. And you know what they didn't do argue with me about

me overriding their free will. That's not what they did. 'Cause more important than your free will, is my love for you. So you chose death, free will. I chose no free will. We both exercised it. God saved you. How many of you, that's your story of you like. I was going under and God just grabbed me. Amen. And if you know Jesus, ultimately that is your story. So don't even tell your story like when I found God. Really was God lost? Was God lost 'cause I was like, what the heck? I don't know where I am. My battery died, I can't find my way out. Good thing Tony found me. That's not how this works. You didn't find God, God found you. You didn't grab God, God grabbed you. This sets up his doctrine of predestination election. We'll get into it later in the book. Come back, bring your friends who wanna be offended. Now, what he talks about here now is some big words, some big terms that are loaded with meaning. He's gonna get four of them. He's gonna talk about sin, justified redemption and propitiation. And some people will say, what do we need these big words for? God gives names to things that he cares about, just like we give names to people we care about. When you have a kid, what do you give them? A name, which will you're like, that's number six. No, you name them because you care about them and they're important to you and they're precious to you. There are certain convictions. There are certain concepts. There are certain doctrines that are precious to God and he names them. And he names them because they're important and should be precious to us. We're gonna read of them and then I'll unpack them in succession. Romans 3:22-26, "For there is no distinction." We have lots of distinctions. Are you Republican Democrat, black, white, young, old, rich, poor American, not American. God says, you know what? I see a bunch of sinners, a bunch of sinners. You know what that means? Americans need, Canadians really need Jesus. It means that Republicans need Jesus and Democrats need Jesus and Blacks need Jesus and Whites need Jesus and poor need Jesus and rich need Jesus and rural need Jesus and urban need Jesus. Do you see a theme? There's no distinction. We have lots of distinctions. God says sinners, savior. That's the two teams. And all the people who are on the line of sinner, they all need the savior. There's no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift. Some people say, Christianity is too easy. All I got to do is accept Jesus. It's actually really hard 'cause you gotta be humble. You can't stand before God and say, look what I did for you. You got to stand before God and say, look what I did to you. And look what you did for me. It's not about what we do for God. It's about what God does for us. That's how we get saved. As a gift through the redemption that is in Christ, Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation will unpack that word. That appears four times in the New Testament. By his blood, we'll talk about that to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness. God is right and we need to get right with God 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. First, he talks about sin. We are sinners by nature and choice. Paul has established that. Sin includes our thought word, deed, motive, and actions. Sin is commission, where we do something we were not supposed to do an omission where we do not do something that we were supposed to do. And what happens is when he says that people have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we tend to think in terms of competition, not perfection. Competition, meaning we find people that are worse than us and we compare ourselves to them. Don't we do this? This is why every one of us has one friend who's awful. Their job is to make us look better. And if some of

you are like, I don't have a friend like that. Oh my gosh, you're that friend. I hate to break it to you. That's you. And what we tend to do, we tend to compete by comparing ourselves. You're worse than me. This is why we like to talk trash about other people, especially if they're well-known. It makes us look better by making them look worse. God's standard is not one of comparison. It's one of perfection. Jesus says, be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. So we're not to compare ourselves to others. We are to compare ourselves to Jesus Christ 'cause he alone shows us what a normal human life is supposed to look like. He never sinned. He was perfect altogether in every way. How many of you, the more you've gotten to know Jesus, the more you are aware that you are not like Jesus? If any of you are reading the Bible, you're like, wow, I learned about Jesus reminds me of myself. Read it again. You missed a few things that are very crucial. And what he's saying is that what we all do, we fall short. So I wanna give you a simple analogy. God's standard is perfection. So for us to get into the kingdom of God, heaven, think of it like crossing the Grand Canyon. We're in the Grand Canyon state. Any you've been to the Grand Canyon. It's an incredible hole in the ground. I mean, for a hole, it's awesome. And so when you're standing on the precipice of the Grand Canyon, imagine somebody said, now, all you got to do is jump to the other side. So one guy's like, alright, great. He's 50, 5'9, 18 inch neck, hypothetically. And he jumps six inches, that's all he's got. He's got a two inch vertical and he falls. He falls what? He falls what? Short, real short. Next guy stretches, goes to the gym, gets himself ready. He's listening to the Rocky soundtrack. Like he's all pumped up on steroids, drinking red bull and he runs and he jumps six feet. And on the way down, he's talking trash. He's like, I crushed you. I went six feet. Still fall short. Like yeah, that was awesome. So then the next guy, Olympic athlete on steroids. He runs jumps eight feet. Everybody's like, oh my gosh, that's a world record for failure. That's what it is because he's what? Fallen short. That the point is this, some of us jump a little farther than others, but nobody jumps far enough. We've all fallen short. We've all fallen short. That's the concept of sin compared to perfection. Then he talks about justified. So if we've fallen short, how could God, who is just, how could he accept we who are unjust? How could he accept us who have fallen short? How does this work? And this is the language of justified. He says, God is just, God is the justifier and makes us justified. He uses those three terms. This is a legal declaration of righteousness before God. It comes from the courtroom. And what it means is not that we are perfect, but that God imputes his righteousness to us. It's called imputed righteousness that God imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to us. So ultimately it is Jesus gives you his righteousness as a gift, which means grace received by faith, believe not behave. This is how the whole thing works. And what he's talking about here is something that should give us great love for Jesus and that is that you only have two options. You work for God or God works for you. That's it, that's it. If you believe it's what you do for God that saves you, that's called works. If you believe it's what God does for you through Jesus, that's grace. So when we come to God, we come empty handed. We don't come, here's all the things I have for you and here's all the things I did for you. So you know what? I got nothing. I'll take Jesus. He does everything for my salvation. It's received by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ and what he says that God is the just, and the justifier, what he means is that God renders a verdict of us being guilty and then he resolves our biggest problem, the sin problem. I'll give you an analogy. These are big concepts. So I wanna give you a few little illustrations to hopefully help you understand them. There was a

case some years ago, a judge was presiding over court and there was a couple that was under contract for, I think it was a residence that they were renting and they had defaulted on their contract. They didn't have the money. They fell short of meeting their payment obligations. They had sinned and fallen short. And this had gone on for some months and then the owner of the property started eviction proceedings and the couple got up and said, yeah, you're right. We have fallen short. Therefore in light of the law, they were guilty. And what would the just thing to do be? To say, you're guilty. Well, we can't pay the money. But the just thing is the contract says you need to pay the money and if you can't pay the money, you can't live there. So the judge was just, he said guilty and then he went back into his chambers and he got the money out of his personal account, the total which they owed. He came out, he handed it to the owner and said, I'm paying their debt in full. He was just, declared them guilty and the justifier paid their debt. You see that? In some regard, that's what Jesus did for us. He's just, you're guilty. You deserve hell. And then he goes to the cross and he pays the price in full so that not only is he just to judge us, he is the justifier who saves us. This is why we love Jesus. How many of you are excited if somebody just buys you a burger, you're like, that's awesome and fries. You're now my best friend. With a drink, I'm getting a tattoo with your name on it. That's how much I appreciate this. Look at what Jesus paid for us. And that's where that old hymn says, Jesus paid it all. That's what it's talking about. The third concept that he gives us is redemption and he uses the language of blood and passed over. The language of blood and passed over. What does that sound like? The Jewish feast of Passover. And the way it worked was this, in the Old Testament book of Exodus, there was an event called the Passover that was a precursor to the redemption and salvation of Jesus Christ. And what happens is there is a counterfeit Jesus, the Pharaoh thinks he's the son of God. There's a counterfeit kingdom. He rules over the nation of Egypt. He has counterfeit priests who do counterfeit miracles by counterfeit and demonic spirits. The whole of Egypt is a counterfeit of the kingdom of God. God's people are enslaved in Egypt. They are oppressed and God comes and he crushes the nation so that he can deliver his people. It all culminates with something called the Passover. The killing of the firstborn. The final plague that was given was God said, I'm gonna bring death to every household with one exception. Those households who take a lamb without spot or blemish, Peter uses this language, without spot or blemish showing that Jesus would come as sinless and perfect and pure. This is where John, the baptizer looks at Jesus and says, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. 2nd Corinthians 5:70 says, behold Christ our Passover lamb has been slain. The whole point of the Exodus and the Passover was to point to Jesus who would be coming later in history. All signs in the Bible point to the savior, his name is Jesus. And so what it was said was if they confess their sins offered the animals as a substitute, if that family sacrifices this lamb without spot or blemish, and then has this worship event in their home and this witness event on their home, then the blood of the lamb will cover them. So they would literally paint the doorpost to their home with the blood of the lamb. So they were covered by the blood of the lamb so that when the wrath and justice and judgment of God came, it literally passed over everyone who had faith in the blood of the lamb. If you're Jewish, and you don't know Jesus, you missed the whole point of Passover. His name is Jesus. And what he's saying here is this is how God saves us, and what he did then, God delivered his people to worship him until they finally got to go home. Jesus has crossed Satan, sin, death, hell, and the wrath of

God. He has delivered us. We are covered by the blood of the lamb. His wrath passes over us because it was passed on to Jesus. We now worship our way home called heaven. And what he's saying is this is how God saves. And in the Exodus story, for those of you who know the story, did the people do anything to liberate themselves? Nothing. In the same way, we do nothing to liberate or save ourselves. God does all the work and by faith we trust and follow him. And then he culminates all of this and one of my favorite doctrines, it's called propitiation. And it's a big word that appears four times in the New Testament. Some translations will call it expiation or sacrifice of atonement. This translation that I'm using the English standard version uses the word propitiation. And it talks about Jesus' cross and Jesus suffering and dying in our place for our sins. And some people ask, how could a loving God possibly pour out his wrath? Well, you know what? The love of God and the wrath of God, they're both poured out on the cross of Jesus. That's why it says, that it is not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us and he sent his son, Jesus, to be the propitiation for our sins. You know that Jesus loves you because he propitiated the wrath of God for you. Because of Jesus, the wrath of God, literally this is what propitiation means. It's diverted away from you and it's diverted toward Jesus. What that means is he put you in his place and he put himself in your place, and he did that on the cross. So I wanna talk a little bit about the cross of Jesus. The Old Testament Hebrew version of the word propitiation is Kippor and the Jews would celebrate Yom Kippor. It's called the day of atonement. It was their highest holiest day of the year, foreshadowing the forthcoming of Jesus, who would propitiate the sins of the people that he would divert the wrath of God. So I wanna spend a little bit of time talking about the cross of Jesus. The reasons are twofold. Number one, oftentimes when Christians talk about the cross of Jesus, we drive by at 80 miles an hour. Jesus loves you, he died on the cross for your sins and he wants to take you to heaven and you're like, okay. We just drove right by it. It'd be good to pull the car over and actually investigate this. Number two, some of you have heard me tell this. I preached this version of this sermon, this portion of the sermon every year, my entire adult life last 25 years on Good Friday, which is the weekend before Jesus' resurrection. But here's what I wanna share with you. Most of you are new. You've never heard this. Most churches in America are running 25 to 50%. Last weekend we were 193%. So we're moving it's for sure. Which is great, so most of you are new. So if you're walking around and you're like, I don't know anybody here, that's how everybody feels. Welcome, we're glad to have you. So when it comes to crucifixion, the Bible gives us a few details about crucifixion because the people that originally received the Bible, they witnessed it. Once you see it, you'd never forget it. Crucifixion was state-sponsored execution. It was like public beheadings on the internet by jihadists today. It was a way of saying don't follow them or you will endure their fate. It was to discourage people from following leaders. Now, when it comes to the cross, it has become the symbol, the icon, the emblem of our faith. This is why we've got a cross on our building and we've got a cross out front. It is believed that with the early church father Tertullian, that Christians adopted the cross as the symbol and sign of our faith. We started making the sign of the cross, we started wearing the cross, we started decorating homes with the cross. And for us, it reminds us of the propitiation of Jesus Christ in our place for our sins, diverting from us and to him, the wrath of God. When it comes to this issue of crucifixion, it is rightly been called the emblem of suffering and shame says an old hymn. Furthermore, when Jesus was a little boy, he may have witnessed a mass crucifixion.

There was an uprising of Jewish people against the Roman government and there was a massive public crucifixion. Crucifixion was done openly, publicly, shamefully. They would crucify people most of the time, that eye level, when a woman was crucified, they would turn her around because they didn't wanna see her face. Crucifixion was done in places where people would just come about their normal affairs and suddenly, and unexpectedly find someone who was bleeding and weeping and crying and dying. Imagine that you were going into the grocery store and there's a guy being crucified at the front door and there's his enemies jeering him and there's this family mourning him. Imagine you go to Carolyn and right by the splash pad, there's a bunch of guys crucified. They intentionally put them in the most troubling spots to haunt you. And it was a way to control the citizenry. Furthermore, it was common. So in 71 BC, the day that Spartacus fell in battle, they crucified 6,000 soldiers, men in a single day, along 120 mile stretch of highway. Imagine after church, you go down to Yuma or you go up to Flag or Prescott or up to Pisan or up to the white mountains and along the shoulder of the road, there are 6,000 crucified men, all painfully slowly, publicly dying. You never forget it if you see it. Now, I believe it was in Psalm 22, that it said that Jesus would be crucified. It prophesies it. What's interesting there, that was written 1,000 years before Jesus Christ was born. That was 200 years before crucifixion was invented. The Bible not only predicts the crucifixion of Jesus, it predicts the invention of crucifixion. Historians believe that crucifixion was originated with the Persians and it started with impaling. They would take a long log, they would sort of carve the end to a point. They would then run it through the midsection of a criminal, and then they would drop it in a hole and the criminal would be impaled sometimes for days and left there. The Romans then perfected it by adding the crossbar. Adding the crossbar. And they were masters in torture and torment and the entire point of crucifixion was to maximize and prolong the suffering and pain. It was so horrifying that a word was created to explain the pain of crucifixion. The word excruciating, literally means from the cross. It's in a category of its own. So a word had to be invented to categorize its impact. And it would take upwards of nine days for someone to die. The way they would die was by painfully slow death by asphyxiation. As they hung on the cross, and this was in a climate quite similar to ours. Imagine just standing outside for nine days. Now, imagine no food, no water, no medical care, no shade. Now imagine that you've been beaten previously. Now imagine that you are literally hanging through railroad spikes, driven through the most sensitive nerve centers on the human body, the hands and the feet. And what would happen, the criminals would slouch on the cross and the air would exit their lungs and it would fill with carbon monoxide and they would start to pass out. It was painfully slow death by asphyxiation. So what they would do then, they would sort of come back to consciousness and push themselves up on their crucified nail-filled feet, to get air in their lungs. If they wanted to hasten someone's death, they would break their legs so that they couldn't push themselves up to get air in their lungs. They didn't break Jesus' legs 'cause that was one of the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament that none of his bones shall be broken, but that's why they broke them if they wanted to sort of expedite the death of the person. Now, in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 21, 22 and 23, it says anyone who is sentenced to death and hanged on a tree is cursed by God. Paul quotes that verse in Galatians. What it means is the wrath of God was poured out on the son of God. I want you to look at the cross of Jesus and what I don't want you to say is I don't feel like God loves me. I want you to see how much God loves you.

Once you see how much he loves you, you'll feel his love for you. That he was cursed, so you could be blessed. He died that you could live. He took your place so he could put you in his place. Martin Luther called this the great exchange. And that's exactly what Jesus Christ did for us on his cross. Well, what about the crucifixion of Jesus? Well, the bleeding started the night before the crucifixion, when Jesus was in such anxiety that he was sweating like drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane. He was betrayed by a pretend friend named Judas Iscariot. And he was very covert. Some people are very covert, you don't know they're against you until they destroy you. Judas Iscariot showed up with religious and political leaders who had never agreed on anything, but they agreed on one thing and that is the Jesus needed to die. Here's what's amazing. We're so bad that Jesus shows up and we think he's the bad one. That's how bad we are. The cross of Jesus shows, not just how good God is, it shows how bad we are. They beat Jesus. They flogged him. The flogging oftentimes killed men. It was a cat of nine tails with straps of leather that would have at the end of fixed either a metal or a stone ball to tenderize the flesh. A hook would dig deeply in and then they would literally rip the flesh off a man's body. Some historical records outside of the Bible say occasionally they would catch a rib and it would literally just come flying off the man's body. Jesus was then forced to carry his cross bars, probably 100 plus pounds of recycled human timber that had been used by other men and they put it on his barren, bloodied, beaten back, and he's forced to carry it, hear me in this, through town. I've been there in Jerusalem, within the walls of the ancient city. It's called the Villa Delarosa. It means the way of the cross. This is where everyone would shop. Imagine you're going into the mall, you're in the mall and then all of a sudden walking through the mall and then through the food court is some guy who's bleeding and incontinent and his mom is screaming and all the children are running from him. Jesus was taken through the closed, narrow paths that all of the shoppers went. Imagine that you are at a store or a grocery store and you go down an aisle and there's some guy bleeding out, carrying a cross, being whipped by soldiers and mocked by enemies. This is horrifying, it's barbarous. Jesus, it says though he was young and strong, he fell. And so the crossbar would have crushed his chest cavity. Medical doctors who explored this, say that this would be the equivalent of a head-on car collision where no airbag deploys and no seatbelt is involved and you're thrown headlong into the steering wheel. He's now got a chest contusion, potentially an aneurysm. He starting to bleed out without medical attention. He is going to die. He then gets help carrying his cross to the place where he is nailed through the most sensitive nerve centers, the hands and the feet. A crown of thorns is put on his head to mock him, hail hail King of the Jews. His cross is dropped in a hole. His body shakes violently. Next to him are two men who are being crucified. Most of the time at the base of their crosses would be feces and blood and urine and sweat and tears. And all Jesus did from the cross was say things like, "Father, forgive them." He just loved, even though he was hated. And then he says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And in that moment, Jesus took your place. And the wrath of God was poured out on the son of God so that the grace of God could be poured out on you and you could be made a son of God. We love Jesus, right? We love Jesus and Jesus then says from the cross, it is finished. So somebody asks, well, what do I need to do? Well, he said it was finished. You need to believe not behave. It's his works, not your works. You need to receive his gift and not come to God with your gift. See, we're saved from God. We're saved by God. We're saved for God. It's all God, it's all God. Now, if you're

here and you've never received Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, you need to know that that gift is available to you. He loves you. If you reject that, there will be nothing but judgment and wrath for you. But this is the most important decision you will ever make and it's the most important relationship you will ever have. Because again, as I told you, the first two things we need to know is who God is and who we are. We're a sinner, God's a savior. That's what we all need to know. And so if you're here, yeah, I want you to meet Jesus. I want you to give your sin to Jesus. Before Jesus takes us for our worst. I hear people all the time say, why should I give God my money? It's like, well, what he asked for first is your sin. He asks for your worst before he asked for your best. And he says that this is the language of Paul is by his grace in chapter three, verse 24. Other translations will say that he does this freely, which means without merit. So here's what happens, you look at the cross of Jesus and we are so twisted and even modern I love pastors and I love church, but I do wanna make a correction here. The cross of Jesus doesn't show how valuable we are. It shows how wonderful God is. And I don't listen to Christian radio a lot. I did yesterday and I regret it, but it is a good illustration, so I'll use it. Somebody was singing a song that God, you must've died 'cause you can't live without me. Okay, let me just point this out. Before he made us, he's doing fine. Doing fine. Since he made us, we've been a problem. Amen.

- Amen. Okay. God's not in heaven going, I'm lonely, I can't live without you. He's like I was doing fine, I'll help you. Sometimes it's even told if Jesus is willing to die for you, that just shows how valuable and precious and amazing you are. No, it shows how valuable, precious and amazing the love and the grace of God is. Jesus didn't go to the cross to show you how incredible you are. Jesus went to the cross because you're not incredible. We've gotta be careful that even when we think of the cross of Jesus, we're not thinking that somehow it makes us, it makes our value really revealed. I'll give you a strange example because I'm that kind of guy. So a while back my wife, Grace and I, we just had a birthday, we went to Montana for about a week and we had a great time and prayer and vision and seeking God's will for the next season of our life. We're walking along this really long river, just covered in river rocks as far as the eye could see. And I just reached down and I picked this one up and I put it in my pocket and I took it home. It's now my possession, it lives in my house. If this rock could talk, it would be really weird if it said, you came all the way to Montana for me? No, not really. And you were seeking me on the beach? You were just looking for me the whole time? To be honest with you, no. Why did you pick me? Was I the prettiest rock? Nope, you look like all the other dried mud. Well was I the one with the most potential? No. When I was laying there, was I laying there better than the other rocks? No. I just made you my possession and took you home. If you're a Christian, God just made you his possession and took you home. And you can't look at him and say, as weird rock would, I just introduced you to a very weird rock. I kind of feel like Tom Hanks in that movie where he's talking to the volleyball. The point is this, that Jesus has made you his possession and he is gonna take you to his forever home. And what that doesn't show is how incredible you are, but how incredible he is. See otherwise, what happens is we take credit for what Jesus does rather than giving God glory for what Jesus does. And that's gonna be his next point. He says, really, there are only two options. Boasting or worshiping. You know what the difference between boasting and worshiping is? Who you're bragging on. Worship is where we

brag on God, boasting is where we brag on us. If we contributed, if we participated, if we did something, we can boast, oh, God chose me, 'cause he knew I chose him. God chose me because I was choosing him and God chose me because I was seeking him and God was choosing me 'cause he knew I had potential. God chose me 'cause he could live without me. That's boasting on me. If it's, I don't know why he picked me, but it's awesome, that's worshipping. The goal is not to know the why, the goal is to know the who. He says it this way. "What then becomes of our boasting?" Romans 3:27-28. It is excluded, no boasting, no bragging. By what kind of law? Law of works, what I did? No, but by the law of faith, what Jesus did. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Now here's what he's saying. Any team that wins, all the fans end up talking trash. True? And if you've been to a sporting event, remember when we used to leave the house and go to places with other people, just harken back to the old days. When we did this, I remember one of the first NFL games I went to. After the game, our team lost, the other team won and we're walking out of the stadium and all of the other fans are totally talking trash to us. We crushed you. We destroyed you. We raked you as like, we didn't do anything. You drink beer and watch people work. You did not contribute. Highly trained athletes were having head-on collisions while you were drinking beer. Your participation did not affect the outcome or score in any way. We did not win. If you're on team Jesus, you don't go around talking trash to everyone else, but worshipping God and inviting them to join team Jesus. 'Cause you know what Jesus defeated, Satan, sin, death, hell the wrath of God. We worship him. Why don't you join us on team Jesus? But he's the one who gets the glory. He's the one who gets the worship. And what he's doing here, I love this section. In the Protestant reformation, there was something called the solo. Solo is the Latin phrase for alone. And there were some things that they said scripture alone. Well, here he's talked so far just in this section about the law and the prophets. Not tradition, not church authority, not the Pope says, not we have this other book and what everybody tries to do, they had tried to have scripture plus someone or something else. The scholar over it, or the Mormons write their own goofy books or the Jehovah's witnesses are like, God came to Pittsburgh and wrote other books. No, he didn't. God would never do something near and Steelers fans. He would never do that. He would never do that. He's a good God. Here's my philosophy, my political party, my ideology, my gender orientation. No it's scripture alone, eyes to authority, the law and the prophets. It is grace alone. It says by his grace as a gift, it's what Jesus does, not what Jesus does and I do. It's not me, it's all him. He says it's by faith alone. Through faith in Jesus Christ. I trust Jesus. Some people trust science. Some people trust morality. Some people trust their political party. Those people are adorable. Some people trust their good works. Some people trust their karma. We trust Jesus, we only trust Jesus, we always trust Jesus. Amen.

- Amen.

- And he's talking about Christ alone and he talks about redemption in Jesus Christ. It's just Christ, that's it. That's all we got. Some person came up to me recently. He said, "I've been coming for a while. "You always preach the same sermon." Good, then I'm not a heretic. I'm always telling you about a person named Jesus. And then lastly, the last solo was to God be the glory. And that's the no boasting, that God gets all the credit, that God is the savior, that God is

the healer, that God is the deliver. And then he closes with this. God works in you, for you, through you. If I had to summarize everything Paul is saying here and we'll build on in the rest of Romans, it's this threefold process. Romans 3:29-31, "Is God the God of the Jews only?" No, you know what? We're always for our team. Our political party, our race, our tax bracket, our nationality, our gender, our life stage, our generation, there's one God for everybody, his name is Jesus. Amen, one God for everybody, his name is Jesus. Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? That's the rest of us non-Jews. Yeah, so Gentiles also since God is one who will justify the circumcised. That's the external sign by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we overthrow the law then by faith? Does God save us? And then we don't live for him and we don't have new lives and nothing changes. By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law. What he's saying is this. God works for you at the cross of Jesus. He propitiated the wrath of God from you at the cross of Jesus. It is received by faith in and grace from Jesus Christ. God does the work for you at the cross of Jesus. God does the work in you through the presence, the power and the person of the Holy spirit. This is where the old book is driving to chapter eight if you're reading ahead and then God takes out your old heart, gives you a new heart, takes out the old nature, gives you a new nature, takes out the old desires, gives you a new desire. You're not perfect, but you're new. And then God begins this process, bringing you into his eternal perfection and God along the way works through you. Now you're gonna love somebody and God's loving them through you. You're gonna forgive somebody and that's God's forgiveness flowing through you. You're going to impart wisdom to someone or give financial generosity to someone or extend grace to someone and that's all God's works. God's work for you in you, through you and now it is Christ living his life through his people. Amen.

- Amen.

- That means the Christian life is the best life. It's the most exciting life. It's the most exciting life because it's not a list of things that we have to do so that God will love us. It's a list of things that we get to do 'cause God already loves us. We're not working for the relationship, we're working from the relationship. And when someone loves you and you love them, we wanna become like them. That's why we wanna become like Jesus. Now, let me just land the plane. And when I say that, it doesn't mean I'm completing my thoughts or we're anywhere near the end. It just means that you seem tired and I'm afraid you won't listen. We hear all these big words as some of you may think, but why does this matter? Some of you are very practical. It matters greatly. Let me give you some examples. If you think that it is what you do for God in part or in whole, it changes how you live and how you die. I'll give you a couple of examples. I was in high school, did not know Jesus. Went to a large public high school, went to college, became a Christian and then I heard that a friend of mine that I went to high school with also became a Christian. And I didn't know any Christians. So I come back from break, hundreds of miles away and I call up my friend and he was a football player. He played football his whole life. He's a good player. I didn't start playing until high school. I became quarterback, he was my fullback. And then on defense, he was an inside linebacker and I was a free safety. And so we played ball together and he taught me a lot about football because I was new to the game. When I met with him, he was really excited, he was filled with joy and he was talking all about Jesus. He's like, man, God

forgive my sin and I met Jesus and he loves me and I love him and I'm reading the Bible. It's awesome and he was just filled with new life. And as a new Christian, I was so excited for my friend. So that I could go back to college for a few months and come back for break and I called my friend and we get together and all of a sudden he started talking about all the things that we need to do for God. He's like, are you reading the Bible? I was like, yeah, I read it every day. I love the Bible. He's like, well you have to read the Bible. I was like, no, no, no. You get to read the Bible. He's like, no, no, no, God will be angry if you don't read the Bible. I was like, no, no, no. God loves me, that's why I wanna read the Bible. We're doing the same thing for different reasons. You're working for God's approval. I'm working from God's approval. You're working for a relationship. I'm working from a relationship. It's very different. Go off to college, come back near them again. And he's like, are you reading your Bible? Yes. He's like, are you reading the right translation? Every time there was another thing to do. I said, well, I don't read that translation. I read this. He's like, that's not the right one. I was like, oh gosh. So I did my research and I argued with him. I go back to college, I come back. He's like, have you been baptized? I was like, yes, I got baptized bro. He's like, was it in the name of the father, son and Holy spirit or in the name of Jesus? I said it was in the name of the father, son and Holy spirit. He's like, was a sprinkling or immersion. Oh gosh. Oh my gosh. Now his list is growing. I go off to college, I come back, I go to his house 'cause he didn't answer the call and I said, is he here? And his mom said he killed himself. He was trying to do everything right and he realized he wasn't perfect so he killed himself. My friend killed himself 'cause he couldn't be Jesus. My friend didn't need to kill himself 'cause Jesus already died for him. Those of you that are works, religious performance-based parents, you're killing your children.

- Amen brother.

- Okay. You're not telling them they need Jesus. You're telling them that they don't need Jesus and they just need to be Jesus. And what happens in that, you just keep adding things to the list until you crush them. There are some people as well, who they think they're going to heaven because of their works and their duty and their performance and what they're doing is they're going to hell, they don't think so and they make else's life hell along the way. That was the Apostle Paul. He thought he was doing great and he is literally causing hell on earth for others. That's what performance works based religion becomes. I'm going to hell and I make life hell for you. There are other people who get into this work's performance behave mindset and they literally worked themselves to death for no reason. When I was a young pastor, many years ago, there was a guy who led worship at our small church and then he offered to lead worship, at a couple of our home Bible studies. And then I found he was leading worship at a college group, at a singles group and a high school group and the dude's singing and playing music all the time and it just seemed weird, if I'm honest, 'cause it was all the time. So I sat down with him. I was like, dude, how come you don't have a job or a girlfriend? Like it's nicer, freely volunteering to lead worship every minute of every day. But why is it? He said, when I stand before God, I just wanna be able to tell him all the things I did for him. I said, brother, you're not leading worship because you're worshiping you, not God. You're wanting people to see you perform and you want God to see you perform and you're not wanting people to see Jesus and

his performance. I said, so I asked him this old evangelistic question. I said, if you died tonight, stood before God and asked you, why should I let you into my heaven? What would you tell him? He said, I would tell him all the things I've done for him. No brother, it's Jesus. It's not a bad thing to serve, but serving is not God's way of saving. Met another older saint. She was on the performance treadmill of behave and not believe in works and not grace. I know that Jesus loved her and she loved Jesus. As she was dying, her family called me as a young pastor in my 20s, I went and visited her. She was in decline in hospice and she was filled with anxiety, could not sleep. And I looked at her, I said, why are you so anxious? She said, I'm gonna die and stand before Jesus. I said, I know isn't that awesome? She's like, I don't know if I'm good enough. I looked at her, I said, you're not. It almost killed her. I said, but Jesus is and he's taken care of you. You don't need to be scared to stand before Jesus. Jesus already stood up for you. She lacked a peace and an assurance that she really needed. And the last one it gives assurance to people that have no right to have any sense of assurance. They're not worried about heaven, hell and God and they should be. First funeral I did, I was in my 20s. I had to go buy a suit. I didn't have one. As a new pastor, I show up to this funeral, I'm out in the parking lot beforehand and there's a group of guys and I just wander over. It's one of those awkward moments. And I was like, so how'd you know, the so-and-so. They're like, we work for him. I won't say his name. I said, I'm sorry for your loss. They're smoking cigarettes. They're like, oh actually he was our boss. We heard he died. We're really glad about that. We're just here to make sure he's dead. They're like, what are you? Why are you here? I was like, I'm the pastor. Welcome, it was awkward. So I didn't do that. And so then I'm co-officiating the funeral with another minister that I don't know. So they bring in his dead body, open casket, put it in front of us. There's a minister standing next to me, this is tall guy, much older wearing a dress and he talks first. And he says, well, we know he didn't really have any interest in God and didn't really have any time for God. But thankfully, when he was a baby, we baptized him here in the church. So we're all glad to know he's in heaven now. And Mark would like to say words. All Mark and think of is four letter words. I can't think of any other words. What the student address just said was you can be a sinner by nature and choice, totally deprived, under the wrath of God, separated from God, unrepented, dead in your transgressions, but if a dude in a dress does this, you're fine. And Jesus isn't in heaven going, I wasn't gonna let you in. I was gonna send you to hell, but you're wet so you won't burn. I guess I got to let you in now. It doesn't work like that. So I'm gonna bring the band up. We're gonna sing and have some fun. Here's the big idea. Our trust is in Jesus. Our hope is in Jesus. Our righteousness is in Jesus. Our heaven is in Jesus. It's all Jesus, it's only Jesus. If you have Jesus, you have everything. If you have Jesus, you have nothing. Amen.

- Amen.

- And what he says is don't be boasting, be worshiping. And so what we're not gonna do is sing a song about you. We're gonna sing a song about Jesus and all he's done for us. So let me pray and we will sing. Father God, we come to you now in the strong, saving, secure name of Jesus Christ, the name that is above every other name and God, our whole current goal is not to boast in us, but to worship him, to brag on him, to celebrate him. Holy spirit, if any of us have Jesus

plus anything, please rip that from us so that we can trust in him alone. If any of us have not received Jesus, may this be the day of our salvation where we empty our hands of our performance, where we empty our hands of our morality, where we empty our hands of our spirituality, where we empty our hands of our religion and if we have it built with the grace of God in Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Love you, thanks guys.