

Romans: How God Saves Sinners

By James Boice

Speaker 1:

Let me pray. Dear Lord, we just pray for this time together that each one of us would be edified and that we'd really pay close attention to what Dr. Boice has to say to us. Lord, we pray that your power would just be present with us and that we would really see you and what he has to say. Lord, we thank you. We ask you, just bless this time in Jesus' name. Amen. Now please welcome, Dr. James Boice.

James Boice:

Thank you. We're going to be studying chiefly the third chapter of Romans, beginning with verse 21, the heart of the book and also the heart of the Gospel. But before I plunge in on that, let me say a word of review about chapter 1 and also what is found in between. If we had a lot of time, it would be nice to treat that in detail because part of the passage in between explores what we call the doctrine of total or radical depravity. And it's important for understanding how God saves people, but yet we can't do that. I can only pass over it lightly.

I assume most of you are here yesterday, so I don't need to take a lot of time on Romans 1, but it's important to get that in our minds as we start. Romans 1 is explaining from God's point of view what's wrong with the human race, and it's not a question of the human race because of the limitations of its intellect or experience, simply being unable to find God, though it would like to if it could rather it's quite the contrary. The human race has plenty of evidence for the existence of God enough to compel any honest man or woman to seek God out, but because men and

women dislike God for who he is, which is a product of their own sinfulness, they spend all their lives actually running away from him.

They disguise it, and no disguise is more successful than the disguise of religion. If you become religious, you can say, Well, look, I'm seeking God, but actually, religion is used as a means of running away from God because it fills our minds and experiences with religious feelings and ideas which actually are substitutes for the God who is really there. Now we may not like that, and certainly the world doesn't agree with that. But that's the way Romans 1 is written. I gave a number of sections to that verses 18 through 20 which explain the issues involved.

Natural revelations suppressed by sinful men and women, and then the wrath of God coming as a result. The wrath of God. Interestingly enough, does not express itself here in this chapter as what we normally think of as an outpouring of the wrath of God in the day of judgment. That is a true enough thing, but that's not what Paul is talking about here. He's talking about manifestations of the wrath of God in our lives now. We won't have God well, then certain things follow, and he begins to show what they are.

So I was trying to say yesterday, somewhat as an aside, that this is an apologetic tool. It's a point at which we can work. People that we talk to in the world don't come with our presuppositions. They don't necessarily even believe in a God. And they certainly don't believe that the Bible is the word of God. But they do have their experience to go on. And Paul, who was certainly used to speaking to secular people, would say to them, look, the very way your culture is moving, and

that includes you and your experience proves that something's wrong. You think that by doing anything you want to do, you'll be happy, but as a matter of fact, you're not happy.

What you're on is a downhill course. And he begins to spell that out. Now, the problem, he would say, consider this, that this is the problem is that you're actually running away from God. What do you mean I'm running away from God? I'm trying to seek God. Well, if you're trying to seek God, why are you so miserable? You see that's the way Paul would operate. And what he shows is that when we reject the knowledge of the true God, there's never such a thing as a perfect spiritual vacuum. Something else always rushes into the vacuum to take the true God's place.

And that's the explanation of other world religions. And it's certainly the explanation of the religiosity of our time, including the New Age movement. And so on. We have a spiritual vacuum. And if we won't have the real God, the true God to fill it up, then something else will. The second thing that happens is that we're on this downhill course that I mentioned, and Paul spells that all out, showing as a typical expression of it. First of all, sexual immorality. Secondly, sexual perversions. And then finally, this kind of mindset in which we call the thing which is good, evil and the thing which is evil, good.

And that's what our world is trying to do. The world is trying to take sin, dress it up and say, it's really all right. It's just a matter of life choice or lifestyle. Everybody is free to do anything they want. And so they try to make it look good, but that is the bottom rung of the ladder. I had a question I wanted to raise yesterday but didn't. And it's to this effect. If you're on this downhill

path, how low can you go? Is there any point on that downhill path where a culture reaches bottom and says, look, this is so bad, we won't go any lower.

Now what I want to answer is that there is no point like that. And whenever we find ourselves saying, Well, here is the point beyond which we will not go apart from the grace of God, that is exactly the next thing we do. Some years ago, I began to explore this by looking for articles in the secular magazines and newspapers that tried to establish some sense of morality in this declining culture of ours where people were saying, look, here is something so bad, we really shouldn't permit it. Now at the time, I suppose it's different now, I haven't looked at magazines with that in view for a while.

But I found a number of articles at about the same time, all of which were saying, look, it's all right to have prostitution, other cultures do it. You should just make sure it's done nicely. And it's all right to have pornography. After all, people want to feed their minds with this. It's a free world, freedom of the press and all of that. But the one thing that we ought not to do this is really the point beyond which we ought not to go is child prostitution or child pornography. It's not right to treat the children that way. Well, of course that's inconsistent. It's all right for adults. Why isn't it all right for the children? You see? But nevertheless, that's what our culture was trying to say.

And then I noticed because this was the line beyond which we weren't going to go that all of a sudden the movie appeared. It's been years now. You probably haven't seen it, but it's a movie called *Pretty Baby*. It had Brooke Shields in it. It's the first movie she made, and that's how she

became so well known. And it was about a child prostitute in a brothel in New Orleans about the turn of the century. It was a classy movie. It wasn't pornographic in the classic pornographic sense, but the message of it was supposedly that this child matured through the process you see. So at the very time, the culture is saying, no, no, not child prostitution, not child pornography.

And that's the very next thing we do. And you see, the path goes down down down, and there's no stopping it. And that's why when I got to the end, I was hurrying a bit at the end yesterday, I said, that hell is going to be made worse by our presence there if that's where we end up, and because there's no bottom to the evil, it'll go on getting worse throughout all eternity. That's what makes hell so bad. People say is Hellfire literal? I don't know whether it's literal or not. It's certainly terrible, and it's terrible enough just to be just like you are only getting more and more that way throughout all eternity. That is just the most dreadful thing I can imagine.

Now, the question is, how does God rescue us from that? Well, he certainly doesn't do it by looking at anything in ourselves, because there's nobody who has anything in himself or herself that is worth looking at. From God's point of view, we're totally depraved. According to this teaching. You see in the second chapter to review it quickly. You have a couple of people who are willing to admit what Paul says in Romans 1 about others, but not about themselves. First person, sort of an ethical pagan would say, oh, it is true. This world in which we live is really bad. But I'm not like that. And so you have to make an exception for me.

And Paul challenges the thinking of that person by saying, look, if you say the world is bad, here's another apologetic tool. If you say the world is bad, there are things out there that are bad,

that must mean that you have some kind of moral standard, right? Because you can't say they're bad without saying there's a standard that defines what's bad and what is good. So, you're appealing to some standard. Now what's your standard? And when the person articulates it, you make the point, as Paul does here, that by whatever standard they judge, they themselves are judged because they break the same law. You see, that's the way chapter 2 begins, you have no excuse. You pass judgment on someone else because at whatever point you judge the other, you condemn yourself.

You see, if a person says, Well, my standard is the Old Testament law, the Ten Commandments. The point is, do you keep the Ten Commandments? The answer is, of course, you don't begin to talk about them, what they mean, you don't keep them person says, Well, no, maybe I'm wrong. That's too high a standard. I don't want anything as high as that. Let's go a little bit lower. What I really mean is the Sermon on the Mount. You know Jesus standard, because Jesus was nice and gentle. He wasn't harsh like Moses was. And that's what I mean. Well, that standard says, Be, therefore perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect, and nobody does that.

The person says, Well, I don't really mean that. What I really mean is that little bit of the Sermon on the Mount that we call the golden rule always do to the other person what you want the other person to do to you. That's my standard. And then the question is, do you live up to that? If that's the standard by which you judge the world, saying the world is terrible and you're different, do you always do to the other person what you would want them to do to you in similar circumstances? Say, when you ask questions like that, it points up the hypocrisy of the one who says, I'm more moral.

Relatively speaking, there may be things this one does not do that the other one does. But by whatever standard he raises, that difference, he is also condemned. And then at the end of the second chapter, there's the person who has a religious orientation and who says, Well, what you say about those pagans is certainly right. Even the ethical pagans don't live up to their standards. Some of the Greek philosophers were the most immoral a man, but we're different because we're religious. And here he's thinking primarily about the Jews who had a revealed religion, a true religion. Paul's point with them, you see, is not the source of the revelation, but whether it has actually made a difference in them internally.

They know what to do and what they are told to do is a right standard, but they don't do it. They're not transformed in their heart. He reminds them there that God sees the heart. Now in chapter 3, he sums it all up, and these are very devastating words. There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks God. That is what men and women are like apart from the intervention of God miraculously supernaturally in their lives. They are not moral, they do not understand, and they do not seek. In other words, their moral life is corrupt, their intellectual life is corrupt, and their volitional life is corrupt.

That's why Jesus, who taught exactly the same thing, said, no one can come to me except the Father, draw him. Unless God is at work, no one naturally comes. And then Paul describes a great length what that means, and in very fierce language. Now, when we come to verse 21, which is really what I want to focus on, we find something new and different. It begins with the words, But now. And let me read the words, so we have them before our minds. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law has been made known to which the law and the prophets

testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe there's no difference. We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It's excluded on what principle? On that of observing the law? No. But on that of faith. But we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles, too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we then nullify the law by this faith? Not at all. Rather, we uphold the law.

Now I want to give you a little diagram that I think will help you remember the three key terms in this paragraph describing what God has done for our salvation, and it's a little bit complex, but I think I can explain it clearly enough. It's in the shape of a triangle with a flat piece on the bottom and two sloping sides. Now, this triangle, the three points represent the following. First of all, the top point, you write it down. It would be easy to get the top point represents God, the Father. And then on one side, down at the bottom, make it your left side that represents Jesus Christ, and then the other point down at the bottom that represents ourselves, Christian men and women. So here I have a triangle.

God the Father at the top. Jesus Christ, on the left, at the bottom of ourselves, on the right, at the bottom. Now, each of those three lines that connect God, the Father, Jesus Christ, and ourselves stand for one of the key terms in this paragraph describing what God has done for our salvation. And the terms are justification, propitiation, and redemption. Now let's look at them. First of all, the line that connects Jesus Christ and God, the Father. On the left side of the triangle stands for propitiation, because that describes something that Jesus Christ does in relationship to the Father.

I want you to make that line connecting Jesus Christ and God the Father into an arrow pointing toward God, the Father just at the top of that, just to add a little bit of an arrow to it. So you get a suggestion of the movement. What that means, if you put it in grammatical terms is that Jesus Christ is the subject of the action and God the Father is the object. So God the Father is propitiated by Jesus Christ or to put in a non-passive language, Jesus Christ propitiates the Father. All right.

Now, on the other side, the line that connects God, the Father and ourselves stands for justification. You make that into an arrow, too, because it points from God, the Father to ourselves. And to use the grammatical language, it means that God, the Father, is the subject of that action, and we ourselves are the object. So God the Father justifies sinners. That's how we become Christians. We're justified by God's action. Now on the bottom, the remaining line, the one that connects Jesus Christ on the left with ourselves on the right, stands for redemption.

And again, that's an arrow, and it points from Jesus Christ to ourselves. So the point of the arrow is over on the right side of the paper. That means Jesus Christ is the subject of the action. We are

the object. Jesus Christ redeems his people. Okay? Now, if you can keep that in mind, if you have it in your paper, look, it tells you an awful lot about salvation, doesn't it? First of all, two actions originate with Jesus Christ. Propitiation, which relates to God, the Father; redemption that relates to his people. So Jesus is the Savior, isn't he? He's the one who accomplishes it?

God the Father receives one action, and He is the source of another. Jesus Christ propitiates the Father, and it is on the basis of that propitiation that he justifies, so God is in the position of a judge. That's why he's at the top of the triangle. Jesus does something. And because of what Jesus does, God is free to justify the sinner. We down here on this right hand side, don't initiate anything. There are two arrows, and they both point to us. Jesus redeems us. God the Father justifies us. And that means that we don't contribute anything to our salvation. And we're going to see that there are things that we do after we are saved, and because we are saved and is evidence that we're saved. But in salvation itself, we don't contribute anything.

Now, each of those three terms is worth studying. Propitiation is the first, and I suppose it's such a difficult word today. It's so little used and certainly universally not understood, that when the New International translators came to translate it, they didn't even use the word propitiation. Verse 25 is where it occurs. God presented him. They say, as a sacrifice of atonement. But the Old King James and other versions say propitiation, because that's a literal translation of the Greek word. Sacrifice of atonement is the idea, however, and it indicates to us that this word propitiation comes as an image from the world of ancient sacrifices.

Now, in this respect, the ancient world was smarter than our own. People in antiquity were very much aware of the fact that they were sinful people. And furthermore, they were aware that they lived in a moral universe presided over by some sort of divine power, and that if they did something that offended the divine power, they were going to get in trouble. Our world is infinitely more stupid than the ancients in that respect. We think we're so much smarter. But actually we only show how foolish we are because we think we can sin and get away with it. The ancients knew better.

But they said to themselves, now, how do you deal with that? They didn't know the true God. They spoke of the gods of the Greek and Roman pantheon. If they were Greeks and Romans or the Egyptian pantheon or whatever it was they said, how do you deal with that? We all do things wrong. We know that. We know that God, if there is a God is offended. We defend against any sense of morality or justice in the universe. How do you make that situation right and get God to stop being angry at you? Because if God is angry at you for what you've done, well, he's going to get you sooner or later. Nobody wants to be got. So what do you do to turn the wrath of God aside? Now that's what propitiation is all about.

And they said, Well, look, God's like sacrifices. And so what you do is you come with a sacrifice. And that's sort of a substitute. You say, Look, God, I know I did wrong. And here I want to make it right. It's a gift. I want you to look at the sacrifice that I perform and then stop being angry with me. So the sacrifice was the means by which the sinner turned God's wrath aside. Now that's what propitiation means. Everybody in the ancient world knew what it meant.

They all had the sacrificial system. And so when Paul comes to describe what has happened for us in salvation, it's the very word he uses.

But now notice there's this great difference. In the pagan world, the sinner made the propitiation. The sinner came with a sacrifice, offered it up. He took the initiative. He said to God, look, I've done this to try and make it right. Now, please change your mind and don't get after me. Christianity, it's not the sinner who makes the sacrifice. For the very obvious reason, none of us can make an adequate sacrifice. The pagans were better than our world in that they had an awareness of sin. And that was good. But they were unlike Christianity in that they didn't know how bad sin was. They knew it was bad. But they didn't understand that it was so bad, there was no way they themselves could possibly make it right.

And so what Christianity comes along and says is, look, it requires God to make it right. The only sacrifice that's ever going to turn aside the wrath of God is the sacrifice of God Himself. Jesus Christ, the very son of God, must die. Now the Old Testament system taught that you know. The old tabernacle had the Holy of Holies and then the Holy place and then the courtyards and there were all the veils and it was hard to approach you know. And within that Holy of Holies, there was the Ark within which there was the law of Moses. And then there were the cherubim on either side of the top, and their wings stretched up and it was in that place, symbolically, between the wings of the cherubim that God was understood to dwell.

Now look what that symbolizes. Here is the Holy God looking down upon the human race. And what God sees directly beneath his gaze within the Ark of the Covenant is the law of Moses,

which all of us have broken. And that picture within the Holy of Holies, the Ark with the Cherubim, the law of Moses is a picture of judgment and wrath. God, the righteous God is going to have to judge the sinner. But then you know what happened? On the day of atonement once a year, the high priest, after he had first of all performed a sacrifice for himself out in the courtyard of the temple, came with a second sacrifice on behalf of the sin of the people and he made his way carefully into the Holy place, through the veil, into the Holy of Holies and there sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice upon the covering of the Ark that was called what? The mercy seat. It is the exact word propitiation, the place of propitiation.

And you see what that symbolizes. The blood of the sacrifice has come between. And now, when God looks down, he sees not the law that has been broken, but he sees that a substitute has intervened. There's been death and sin has been punished. Now that is pointing forward to Jesus Christ. You see, that's why it's proper to say we have been covered over with the blood of Jesus if we believe in Him and why the blood is so important. It means that Jesus died for us, and it's on the basis of His death that God's wrath has turned aside and propitiated. So that's the one term.

Now, the second term is redemption. That describes what Jesus Christ does for us. Just as propitiation comes from the ancient world of sacrifices and religion, so does redemption come from one aspect of ancient culture, and that is the world of commerce. It's a commercial term. It means to buy and not merely to buy, but to buy out or buy back or buy again. It's worth doing a word study of that. And if you study Greek, it's really one of the most useful studies you can do.

There's a whole collection of words in the Greek language that are built up around this word for redemption. The simple word is *luo*, what it means to loose.

You can use that in a lot of ways. If you have an animal tied up by a rope and you untie it, you loose him and you let him go. That's *luo*. If you're wearing a suit of armor and you come back from battle and you unbuckle it and let it fall to the floor, you've loosed it. So you undress in your armors used that way. It would also apply to somebody who is chained. That is a slave. So if you release him and lose him, what you really do is free the slave. But it's a broad word. Now, from that word, *luo* came a noun *lutron*. And *lutron* meant the price one pays in order to set something free, because you see you can lose your own animal simply by setting them free and tying the rope.

But if you're talking about a slave, you have to pay for the slave in order to free the slave. So from the word *luo*, which meant to loose came the noun *lutron*, which meant the price you pay in order to loose. Are you following this? From the word *lutron*, which meant the price that you pay, there came a second verb like *luo*, but with the idea always of paying a price. And that was the word *lutroo*. We got a sequence. So you got *luo*, which means to loose. Then you mean have *lutron*, which means the price you pay in order to loose. Then you have a verb *lutroo*, which means to loose, but always with the idea of paying a price. And then from that word *lutroo*, the verb, comes our nouns for redemption, *apolutrosis*, and so on, where they add on prefixes. And what have you.

So our word for redemption, because of that sequence always means to set free by the payment of a price. Now, in the case of Jesus Christ, that was the payment of his death. It doesn't speak merely of freeing. Our world wants to be free. And that's a good idea. But it's not sufficient merely to say, be free. It must be the price paid. The reason for that, of course, to use the biblical language is that we are slaves of sin, and we have to be released just like a slave would have to be released by the ransom price. In the Old Testament, there's a great illustration of that in the case of Hosea and his wife Gomer.

I mentioned that yesterday when I was trying to talk about this decline that we have in Romans 1. This woman, Gomer fell so low and her decline in the social structure of the day that eventually she was sold as a slave. I suppose it was because of debt, although it doesn't say that explicitly. But presumably she got into debt and she didn't have anything to pay it. And then, as was the case in antiquity, if you finally ran out of resources and you couldn't settle your debt, the only thing you had left to sell was yourself and so a person would become a slave. And this is what happened to this woman. And she was put up for sale on an auction block in the city of Samaria, which is where Hosea was prophesying. And he was told by God to go down and buy her back.

She was his wife. She was an adulterous wife. She had run off with other men. He could have hated her if he had wished. But God said, no, I want you to go down and buy her back because that's the way I am with my people. They commit adultery. They're my people. I'm married to them. I'm the spiritual husband. They're the spiritual bride, and they run off with other gods and gone their own way and committed adultery with the world. And still I love them. And what

you're going to do now is going to be an illustration of what I do to redeem my people from the slavery into which they have fallen. So Hosea went down and bought her back. Now it's a wonderful picture.

One thing we know about this selling of slaves in antiquity is that they were always sold naked. Doesn't spell that out in Hosea, probably for reasons of sensitivity. But in antiquity the clothes of slaves were always taken off so you could see what you were getting, of course. And sometimes in the Greek plays there are jokes about it. It will be a market scene. The men are there bidding because the men always did the buying in the marketplace. And a fat man will be put up for sale. And bidding will start on him. And somebody will be bidding \$0.50 or a dollar. And the other men will be joking.

They'll say, You're paying one dollars for that fat man. It must be out of your mind. The second he gets home, he's going to eat everything and you're cupboard. He's going to cost more than a dollar for you in the first five minutes. I wouldn't pay \$0.05 for him. And so they joked back and forth. And the man who bought him said, I have a squeaky mill, look at all that fat. I'm going to cut him up and use them for grease. And that's the kind of humor, but then you see, a beautiful woman would be put up and the men are buying, don't forget. And now they're not paying a dollar for her. It's \$100, \$200, \$250 because they're bidding for the body of that female slave. Now, that's what happened to Gomer. She was put up for sale. Her clothes were taken off. The men of the city were there bidding for her.

And God said to Hosea, I want you to go down and buy her back. Now, he tells us exactly what he paid. I suppose that indicates that there was bidding. You see, somebody would have said 13 pieces of silver because she was a good looking woman. And Hosea said 14 pieces of silver, 15 pieces of silver, 15 pieces of silver and a bushel, a barley, the other man said. And Hosea realized he was getting near the end of his resources, so Hosea said 15 pieces of silver and a bushel and a half of barley. And at that point there were no more bids. And so Gomer was sold to Hosea.

And you read in the third chapter, it's very poignant. He came to her. He presumably put her clothes back on her. He led her away into the anonymity of the crowd. And he said, now, look, thou shalt abide for me many days. Thou shalt not be for another man. And then he said, So also will I be for thee. You see, if he had wanted to kill her at that point, he could have she was his property. He got to do anything he wanted. But instead of that, he had purchased her out of the marketplace. He claimed love from her. And now he said, I am going to demand no less from you and give you that myself.

You see now that's what Jesus Christ does. He has died for us. He paid the price of his blood. God was the auctioneer and the Lord Jesus Christ, if I can use the image, came and said, I bid the price of my blood. And God, the Father said, there's no greater bid that can be made than that sold to the Lord Jesus Christ for the price of his blood. And so he redeemed us out of our slavery to sin. And we became his his once again because he made his originally. And he says, Thou shalt abide for me many days. Thou shall not flirt with this world. And so also will I be for thee. The love he promised to us is an eternal, abiding love. And that's what he claims from us in

return. Love so amazing. So divine demands my heart, my soul, my all. That's what redemption is all about.

Now, the final term here, the third one that Paul uses is justification. We know that, of course, primarily because of the Reformation, where it became the dominant idea. Martin Luther said it was the greatest of all the doctrines. It was the Prince and King of all the doctrines. He said, where justification stands, the church will stand. And where justification falls, the church will fall. Now, justification on this little diagram I have given is what links God, the Father and ourselves. So it's on the basis of the propitiation provided by Jesus Christ that God justifies it, puts him in the position of a judge.

Now you see, that's the importance of the word, because just as propitiation is a symbolic word borrowed from the ancient world of sacrifice and redemption is a symbolic word borrowed from the ancient world of commerce, so justification is a symbolic word borrowed from the ancient world of the law courts describes what a judge does. Now you've got to be careful with that word, justification, especially if you know Latin. If you know Latin, you know where it comes from. It's justice, which means right or just and facere, which means to make. So the literal meaning of justification if you follow the Latin derivation would be to make just or right or righteous. But that isn't what justification means.

It is true that the sanctification process involves our being made right. But justification doesn't literally refer to that. It is rather a declaration that one stands in a right relationship to the law. You see it's the opposite of condemnation. Condemnation doesn't make us wicked. It's merely

the declaration by the judge that we are wicked and the punishment for it. Justification doesn't make us just, but it's a declaration on the part of the judge that we stand in a right relationship to the law. Now that raises the question, how can that be if we're not actually just? How can God say that we are just?

Well, the answer is it's on the basis of the work that Jesus Christ has done. He has satisfied our debt before the bar of God's justice. Not something that is intellectually dishonest, because the God who justifies us that way also regenerates us. It means he puts His Spirit within us and begins to lead us in a new way. But it does mean so far as standing in a right relationship to him is concerned, it's done not on the basis of anything we can do, either have done or will do. But on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done. Now I gave you one diagram. I want to give you one more and then I want to close with that. I don't want to go quite as long here as we did yesterday.

This has to do with different views of justification. And I want to give you four of them. The view of liberalism. You can write these down one side of the page because next to them, I'm going to give you a little formula for each one. Number one, liberalism, number two, Roman Catholicism, number three antinomianism, which is very prevalent in the evangelical world, and number four, true evangelicalism. So you've got liberalism, Roman Catholicism, Antinomianism, and evangelicalism. Now this little formula I'm going to give you for each one contains within it in each case the words works, justification and faith, but in different order. And here's the question, where is the place of works in true Christianity and true evangelicalism?

We know we're not saved by works, but the works come in at all? Is there any place for works? Do we just forget about works? Does it not matter at all what we do, or if it does matter, how do you fit that in without suggesting somehow that we are really justified by our works? Now here's the formula. Next to liberalism, I want you to put this works equals justification minus faith. Each of these formulas is going to have those three words in it. But in the case of liberalism, their understanding of it is this works equals justification minus faith. That's just classical world religion. It's not even Christianity. It's the kind of thing that says if I'm going to get to heaven, it's going to be by my own effort, doesn't have anything to do with what Jesus Christ has done. Maybe an example, something like that, maybe inspiring, but it's not Jesus Christ who saves me. If I'm going to be saved, I'm going to save myself. That's classic liberalism. Works equals justification. If I'm going to be justified, it's going to be on the basis of what I have done minus faith. Faith doesn't enter in at all.

Now. Roman Catholicism says this faith plus works equals justification. Sometimes we say wrongly, evangelicals, speaking about the Roman Catholic Church that the Roman Church teaches justification by works. That's not strictly right. Roman Catholic Church teaches that you're saved by faith, by faith in Jesus Christ has to be by Jesus Christ. They believe in Jesus Christ as we do. But they say also, through the doing of good works. You ask the question, well, how do we do the good works? They'll say it's power of God working in you accomplishing the good works, but nevertheless it's by good works. They've got the good works on the left side of the equation. Faith plus works equals justification.

Now you say, Well, where do we come? Antinomianism says this, faith equals justification. So far, so good. Justified by faith. That's what Luther said. Faith equals justification. But Antinomianism says, minus works. I'll enter in at all. You don't have to do any good works at all. You can be saved by faith and be utterly unchanged. Go to heaven when you die and be sure of it, even though you're living exactly like the world, because after all, you're saved by faith alone, faith equals justification minus works. What I want to say is that in evangelicalism, true Christianity, Paul makes it very clear the end of this very chapter, and certainly in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

The view of evangelicalism is this faith equals justification so far that's identical with antinomianism faith equals justification. But notice, plus works. There must be works. You say, but isn't that putting works in there as a basis of your salvation? No, not at all. It's on the far side of the equation. You're justified not by works but by faith. Faith equals justification. But it says that you really are justified, there will be works. Works will follow. You say, Why is that? Well, it's for this reason. If I can speak theologically. Although Paul is not speaking about regeneration here, Jesus did, and he said, if you're going to be saved, it must be by regeneration. You must be born again. What does that mean? Well, it means that nobody is justified who is not also regenerated.

God doesn't justify you and not change your nature. As a matter of fact, to put it in a proper theological sequence, if you're justified by faith, the only way you get faith is by regeneration, because you know what Jesus said to Nicodemus. He said, look, unless you're born again, you can't even see the Kingdom of Heaven. But if you can't even see the Kingdom of Heaven, how in

the world are you going to believe in it? So first of all, God has to regenerate you. It gives you a new nature. Out of that flows faith, which leads to justification. And because a new nature is there and is before it all, that justification eventually will also issue in good works.

That's why I say when I look at the church today that although there are a lot of people who say, Well, we're born again and yet live in a way that shows no difference whatsoever. I say that is highly presumptuous to say, I'm born again, I'm saved, I'm going to heaven. Everything's all right. And yet I'm going on living exactly the way I've always lived. You're doing that as utter presumption for you to say, I'm saved. Because to be saved is also to be regenerated and that means that you're going to have the nature of Jesus Christ within. Jesus said, don't call me Lord Lord, unless you're willing to do what I say.

Well, the point I have not dealt with here, but I'm going to deal with tomorrow is this. Eight times over in this chapter, beginning with verse 21, Paul uses the word faith eight times. You see, although this is speaking in an objective way of what Jesus Christ has done for our salvation and how God justifies us on the basis of Christ's work, it is by the channel of faith. And through that medium that it becomes ours. No one is saved who doesn't believe it. Doesn't just happen in an automatic way somewhere up there in the books of Heaven. But rather, it calls for our response. And that's the question of course. It's where Paul leads it and where chapter 4 picks it up.

Do you really believe it? Do you believe that Jesus Christ actually died for you and that it's on the basis of his death and his death alone, that you are saved? Do you believe that it's on the basis

of the work of Jesus Christ and turning aside the wrath of God, that you were justified? Do you believe that he's redeemed you from your sin? Well, if he's redeemed you from your sin, He set you free and you're willing to believe it, you'll also begin to live that way to the glory of God.

Now we'll pick up on that tomorrow. Let's close in prayer.

Our Father, we thank you for these truths that we have been studying here, great and important truths from the very heart of the Book of Romans. We confess that whenever we approach such things, we always do it with limited understanding. And there's so much more we need to know. But we want to begin where we are. And we want you to teach us where we are. And so we ask that you'll give us understanding and then add to that understanding the kind of obedience that ought always to flow from it in order that we might really live as men and women who have been touched by your spirit to the glory of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray Amen.