

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #6: Why the Gospel is very good news. (part 2)

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Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: The Gospel satisfies God's need for justice.

Read Romans 3:25-30

1. We often think only of our overwhelming need for God's mercy - His grace meeting our sin. But what about God's need for justice ... and our need for Him to be just.
 - What would our faith be like if God did not possess a character requiring justice?
 - How does God's holy, righteous character set Him apart from other gods? Read Psalm 19; Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Hebrews 1:1-3; Romans 5:1-8.
2. This week we are looking at *propitiation* - the satisfaction God has that the appropriate penalty & sentence for our sin has been carried out.
 - Propitiation is not about *appeasing* God's wrath but *satisfying* His righteous character.
 - What's the difference between appeasing someone and satisfying them?
3. Romans 3:25-30 also removes the accusation that God is too slow to judge sin and too quick to embrace the sinner with His grace.
 - Read 2 Peter 3:3-9 & Hebrews 10:1-14. How are God's justice & grace satisfied in Jesus, not just in the past or even today, but for all time?
4. Read Revelation 19:11-20:15. Although God's justice for sin is satisfied in Jesus sacrifice, there remains a final moment of reckoning and judgment.
 - What is the final judgement about? Who is involved? Where will you be?
 - When you see God's justice being administered in Revelation, how does it help us understand the seriousness of our sin, and the price Jesus actually paid for us?
 - Spend some time writing down some of your sins that Jesus has paid for. Thank God that in Jesus the penalty for your sin has been fully satisfied. Then close in prayer considering how you might expressing your thanks this week for what He has done in Jesus for you.

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.