

# ***Romans 3:21***

## ***From Wrath to Righteousness***

**Romans 3:21, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."**

**Romans 3:21-27, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."**

### *Introduction*

"This morning I'd like us to open our Bibles to Romans chapter three. Romans, three, and we'll begin with the twenty-first verse. And I believe that the passages that we're considering today are probably the most important passages in the entire Bible. And I don't say that lightly, understand what that means to say that. But if I were to lose my entire Scripture and only be able to save six

verses, I would save the next six verses, from verses 21 onward. These verses are our declaration of the dependence and acceptance and salvation in Jesus Christ. And maybe you've read them, and heard the truths over and over again in your Christian experience. It's my prayer that God would really open your eyes and you'd be touched by his grace in a special way. For some of you this could be the most important sermon that you've ever heard. Because today you're going to hear how you can be right with God. You're going to see how you can finally get a right standing with God. ***Now for two and a half chapters the apostle Paul has been telling us that we're not right with God. The pagan person, the moral person, the religious person, all people are far from God's ideal. All have missed the mark of God's goal, and all are sinners.*** And that's the bad news. You have failed, I have failed to meet God's requirements. And the penalty of that failure, the Bible says, is death. The wages of sin, the Bible says, is death (Romans 6:23). But that's the bad news, and in order to appreciate the good news we must hear the bad news first, and I always like to get the bad news over with first. Some people say 'I've got good news and bad news, what do you want to hear first?' I always say 'the bad news' because I would rather hear the good and let that be the last thing in my mind. The good news is that there is a Savior. Let me read you these verses out of the living Bible. ***'But now God has shown us a different way to heaven, not by being good enough and trying to keep his laws, but by a new way, though not new really, for the Scripture told about it long ago. Now God says he will accept and acquit us, that is, declare us not guilty if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sin. And we can all be saved in this same way by coming to Christ no matter who we are or what we have been like. Yes, all have sinned, all fall short of God's glorious ideal. Yet God declares us not guilty of offending him, if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins.'*** Isn't that simple? Isn't that beautiful? No

rituals to go through, no great works of righteousness, no temples to build, no ordinances to have to partake of. It's so simple. God's work for us is Jesus Christ. Look at verse 21 now, as we consider the authentic gospel. How God takes us from wrath to righteousness. **"But now apart from the law, the righteousness** (it really should be translated "a righteousness") **of God has been manifested."**

### *Two Things We Need To Understand About God's Righteousness*

The first thing that we need to understand is, the problem that we had is we need righteousness, the second thing that we need to understand is that God has given us his righteousness. This is different from any man-made thing, it is not your goodness. You know, sometimes in Sunday school you can get the idea that you sort of get brownie points with God, at least you do with the teacher, for attendance you get a star on the chart. When I was a kid, for my memory verses I would get stars on my chart, and you know it's sort of like when you were little, 'Don't you want a star on your chart with God? And some day you can present your chart to God?' But this is not human righteousness. This is God's righteousness. You see, we're condemned because we fall short of God's righteousness, his rightness. And we can be saved by him giving us his righteousness, his rightness. It's so awesome, that God has now shown us his righteousness, and he's going to give it to us. It's a righteousness from God, not based on human goodness, or merit. It says, **"Now apart from the law."** If you were a Greek person in Paul's day, and you wanted to make a tremendous emphatic statement and separate two things, you would use the word that was used here for **apart**. **"But now**

**apart from the law**" it's one of the strongest terms that he could have ever used. And it means **absolutely apart from, separate from**. The amplified version gives an illuminating rendering of this verse. The amplified version cracks me up sometimes, because it gives every possible rendering of a word, you know--'but now those who believe, rely on, rest in, trust in'--you know--'Jesus Christ.' And it does it every time it comes to belief. But it's kind of neat, because it gives you a fresh insight. So let me read it out of the amplified version. **Verse 21, "But now, the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from law, although actually it is attested by the law and the prophets. This is a righteousness of God that is absolutely separate from your keeping the law."** It is not based on anybody doing any good thing. Any law, the golden rule, the Ten Commandments, or any other rules relations that churches might have come up with, this is a righteousness altogether apart from that, separate from that. In other words, it's not a righteousness that you can do. It's the righteousness of who God is.

*This Righteousness By Faith Was Predicted In  
God's Law*

Now, this righteousness God wants to place on you. Let's read on. **"This righteousness was witnessed"** he says at the end of **verse 21 "by the Law and the Prophets."** This is his way of answering the Jewish objection in his day. The Jews would say, 'Now wait a minute, this is a new religion, this is new stuff, we've never heard of God giving us His righteousness.' Paul says, 'Wait a minute, you don't know your Bible. Why, in the Law and the Prophets both, they testify that God would do this very thing.' 'Where, show us!' Well, think of it,

gang. Remember back in Genesis chapter 3? Man had just sinned. God had just confronted Adam and Eve with their sin. The excuses were coming out to the right and to the left. And then God in his mercy gives the Promise in Genesis 3, verse 15. Verse 15, "And I will put enmity (or hatred) between you and the woman [God addressing Satan], and between your seed (your descendants) and her seed, he shall bruise you on the head (that is, the seed that would come from Eve would bruise Satan on the head) and you (Satan) shall bruise him (the seed to come) on the heel." Here it is, predicting the Messiah when he comes will give a crushing blow, a fatal blow to the serpent, Satan. You know, a head wound is a fatal wound, when you crush someone's skull. Now you can have your heel crushed and you won't die of that. It's painful, but it's not fatal. Messiah's heel, so to speak, will be crushed. But as he crushes the serpent's head, the serpent will be destroyed. And so there's a promise here of deliverance to come. This deliverance prefigured the lambs that would begin to be sacrificed by the children of Israel, and all through the Law you see pictures of God's substituting someone in a sinner's place, taking the sinner's blame, taking the sinner's penalty upon him. That's what the little lamb was all about when they would bring the lamb and they would slay the lamb, you would lay your hands on that lamb, confess your sins on the head of that lamb, and the priest would take the lamb's life instead of taking **your** life. A substitute died in your place. And so God was teaching his people through the Law that there was a substitution, that there was a way where God could save the sinner and yet punish sin, uphold his law and his right standards, and yet at the same time save the sinners whom he loves. It's a glorious thing.

*Jesus Clothes Us In His Garments Of  
Righteousness*

Now this Good News in the Law was also manifested in the Prophets. Clearly, Psalm 22 describes someone dying on the cross, forsaken by God. Then you have Isaiah 53 where you have there the suffering servant, the Messiah, numbered with transgressors, pierced for someone else's iniquities. The chastisement of someone else's peace falls on him. In other words, the Messiah takes the place of sinners, dies, but he rises again. You see all of that in Isaiah 53. And then the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 61, that's what I want you to look at, gives this startling and awesome prophecy of what Messiah will do. Isaiah 61, and we'll look at verse 10. **Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul will exalt in my God."** Why? Why are you so excited? **"For he has clothed me with"** -- with what, gang? -- **"garments of salvation. He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness. As the bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels."** Now yesterday we had a wedding, I was standing right here, and there was this bride decked out, oh she looked so beautiful, standing in probably the most expensive dress she'll ever own, the most decked out she'll ever be in her entire life. And there she was, dressed in that glorious bridal dress. And that picture, he says, is a picture of the kind of fantastic garment of salvation that's been wrapped around us. The picture is, we're beggars, we're street people, we're dressed in rags. The Bible says that all our righteousness is as **filthy rags**. The kind of clothes, that if somebody took them off, you would just burn them. You wouldn't store them in the house, lest they spontaneously combust, they're so gross. But he takes us, and he wraps around our ugliness and our dirtiness his robe of righteousness. It's what Jesus was talking about in the parable of the prodigal son there in Luke 15. When the son came home and he didn't take a shower, he didn't take a bath-- and what was his vocation before he came home? What was his line of work? He was

a pig-keeper, right? He slept with the pigs, he ate with the pigs. Someone said the outline of Luke 15 is, "he went to the dogs, he ate with the hogs, then homeward he jogged." But anyway, he did, he was there with the pigs, he was eating with the pigs, he was beginning to envy pig-slop. He smelled like pigs. That doesn't take much, all you have to do is get a little pig on you and you smell like a pig. My folks used to raise hogs. It was after I left home, thank goodness. They raised some pigs, Huff and Puff were their names. And I remember what it would be like when I came home from college and visit down-wind. And it was bad news when the wind was blowing the wrong way. And on their ten acres, those pigs you could smell, it was gross. [I can remember when my son was about three years old and I was driving down route 31 toward Fitchburg. Route 31 is a two-way street type road called a route in Massachusetts, a sort of old type designation for a highway in days gone by. It winds down this long hill from Ashby to Fitchburg and passing over that double yellow line is extremely dangerous, not so say illegal. We came up behind this cattle type tractor-trailer truck and had no idea what was in it. But the smell was horrendous. I hadn't smelled anything like this smell, not even from my former submarine's sanitary tank, which could hold the waste from a weeks worth of a hundred guys. We were forced to follow this truck for about three slow miles, where my son was begging me in his tiny voice, 'Daddy, pass the truck, please, Daddy, pass it.' When it came time for the truck to turn off, I speed up so I could glance into the side of this cattle truck and see what was putting off such an odor. There were two large pigs or sows laying in some hay inside the truck. editor] But what did the prodigal son do? He came home. While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, because his father had been looking for him. You may be far away from the Lord today and not even know that the Father is looking for you. He's not disinterested. He's not bored with you. He hasn't given up on you. That old man was looking for his son, and the Scripture says, that while he

was yet a great way off the father saw him, had compassion on him, and **ran** out to meet him. And that was a serious deal for an old man, and old Jewish man to run. It was considered to be a tremendously uncool thing to do, to run, if you were an old man. It was considered to be bordering on rudeness and crudeness. But he ran out, he didn't care. The Greek said he actually raced out to meet him. He fell on that dirty pigged-stained neck and he kissed that neck. He began to rejoice, his son began to give excuses, **'Oh I don't deserve to be called your son, Oh just let me earn my way back in your favor, make me your hired hand'**, and the father said, **'Forget it, hush.'** He called to his servants, he said **'Servants, put sandals on his feet'** because in those days only slaves went barefoot. **'Put a ring on his finger.'** That means, reopen the checking account, give him the Visa Gold Card. And then finally he said, **'And put the best robe on him.'** He covered up his son's deficiency, his son's dirtiness, his son's lack with his own garments. Now that, gang, is what God is predicting in the Old Testament. **'Oh are you sure, Mark?'** You better believe I'm sure. Look at Jeremiah 23. This will just blow you out of the water. Jeremiah chapter 23, don't tell me that salvation by God placing his righteousness over me isn't in the Old Testament. If you say that, you don't know your Bible. **Jeremiah chapter 23**, Jeremiah the prophet predicts under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit a day when God will raise up the Messiah who would be a Righteous Branch. God judged the House of Judah, and he says, **"I'm going to cut the tree down, but a day will come when a righteous shoot will sprout up from the stump."** And what will this Righteous Shoot do? We know him as Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah]. What will he do? Look at **verse 5**, **"Behold the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I shall raise up for David a Righteous Branch, and he will reign as King and act wisely, and do justice and righteousness in the land. In his days, Judah will be saved, Israel will dwell securely, and this is the name he will be called, THE**

**LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**” Yeah! The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, in Hebrew it's YHVH CSIKENU, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS--CSIKENU. It's easier to say the Lord Our Righteousness, isn't it. **YHVH CSIKENU, or JEHOVAH CSIKENU, “and this is the name he will be called the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”** Do you know JEHOVAH CSIKENU? Is he your righteousness? **“This righteousness”**, going back to **Romans, chapter 3, “was witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.”** It's there in the Old Testament, God declares that he would cover us with his righteousness, that a substitution would take place whereby all of our sin would be placed on God's Lamb, and all of God's Lamb's righteousness, rightness and goodness, would be placed on us. And that we would come to know the Lord, not as the God of justice, not as the God of thunder, not as the God of Law, but we would know him as JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*This Righteousness Can Only Be Obtained Through  
Faith In Jesus Christ*

As I look at verse 22 now, we see that this righteousness or right standing with God can only be obtained through **faith in Jesus Christ. Verse 22 [of Romans 3] says, “Even a righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” KJV, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.”** This is not a righteousness by law-keeping, but a righteousness by faith. It can't be **attained** by good works. But it can only be **obtained** by believing, by faith. Note, it doesn't say, 'A righteousness of God through faith in God.' The Scripture is very specific, it's not faith in God that's going to save anybody--did you know that? I mean, in our currency today it says "In God we trust." And

that could be many things to many people. "In God we trust", well that could be Allah for some. It could be a Hindu deity, one of thirty million. It could be 'a higher consciousness' for others. It could be the car in the parking lot for some. It could be the job and the check every month. And that's why the Bible doesn't say, 'This righteousness comes to those who have faith in God.' But it is for those who have faith in who, gang? What does it say? Jesus Christ, Yeshua haMeschiach for you Messianic believers. What would happen if we would write Congress and say, 'We want to change our coinage to say "In Jesus Christ we trust"? Whoa!!! You'd have an explosion, the capital would blow up [metaphorically speaking]! The dome would just fly off. *'Oh you can't impose that!--why that's too narrow!'* See, that's what I mean. Oh there are many people who would say, *'Oh yes, let's have faith in God.'* I remember this radio program, it's still on the air, it's been on the air for forty years. And it always ends, *"Have faith in God."* [spoken in a super-sanctimonious manner.] Well that's dumb. You should say, **'Have faith in Christ, have faith in Jesus'**, because faith in God isn't going to save you, it's faith in Jesus Christ that's going to save you. Well you say, *'Isn't he God?'* Yes, he's God, but you have to receive him, God's Son, to be saved. The Father says, **'If you receive my Son, you've received me. But if you reject me Son, you have rejected me.'** You can't have God and not have Jesus Christ. If you want the true God in a relationship with the Living God, you must have a relationship with his Son. Because his Son said, **"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."** You can't know God apart from Jesus Christ. It says, **'Righteousness, saving righteousness comes to those who have faith in Jesus Christ, and this right standing with God is available to everyone, everywhere.'** It says at the end of **verse 22, "For all those who believe."** Not for those who haven't crossed this line, *'Oh, I did the unpardonable sin.'* I don't believe you did. I believe if you are being drawn by God

right now, if you are even worried about your sin you haven't committed the unpardonable sin. *'The unpardonable sin,' you say, 'is blaspheming the Holy Spirit.'* Yeah, do you know what that means? It means that when the Holy Spirit comes to you and presents Christ to you like He presented Christ to the rulers of Israel, and they say *'He's of the devil, we reject him.'* That's blaspheming the Spirit. You keep that up, he won't present Christ to you anymore. And then you're in trouble. Because as long as the Holy Spirit's moving on you, you can be saved. But the moment the Holy Spirit stops drawing you to Christ, it's curtains for you. You're dead. It's over, you might still be breathing, but you're dead. That's why it's so important, people, that if the Holy Spirit is moving you to Christ, that you not sit there and struggle and fight and put up your excuses. Don't you know, it's just the mercy of God that you're still alive. Don't you know that God wants to draw you to himself to save you and if you resist that, you might reject him because you will not, but the day will come soon when you cannot receive Christ. So if you're the least little bit drawn to Christ, at the end of this message, I'm going to give you an opportunity to accept Christ. And I think you ought to respond while you have the chance. Because I don't know if you ever will again, and that's not scare tactics, that's reality. Like the doctor who tells you, 'If you don't have this surgery in the next three weeks, it's going to be too late.' Where will you be? You'll go to the hospital. You'll listen to what he says. The Bible then goes on to say, in verse 23 that 'everybody needs this righteousness.' We're familiar with **Romans 3:23** because it says **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** We've heard that many times, those of us who have much of a Christian background, haven't we? The context, though is right here. The context is, ***'Hey, everybody, good person, moral person, pagan person, religious person, everybody needs the righteousness that the Old Testament predicted. Everybody needs YHVH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. They need a***

**relationship with him, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

### *God's Free Gift Of Righteousness & Justification*

The neat thing here, is the passage actually says, **“for”** continue, **“all have sinned and continue to fall short of the glory of God.”** Remember I told you the word "sin" is an old English word that was part of a bow and arrow game? Did I tell you that? And it was missing the target, you would draw your bow, and let the arrow go, and if you missed the bull's eye, you "sinned." It was called a sin, and that just sort of came on over to the talk of the people, and it meant "to miss the mark, miss the target." Well, the Bible says that all have missed the target of God's perfection. And we continue to fall short. It's almost like you had your target up at the edge of the Grand Canyon, you missed, and then your arrow continues to fall and fall and fall. You didn't just sin, you continue to fall. It falls into a bottomless pit. **Proverbs 20 verse 9** says, **“Who can say 'I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin'?”** There's nobody here who can say you're pure from sin. **Ecclesiastes 7:20** says, **“Indeed there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”** I once met a man, his name was Cline. It was at a church that I was the associate pastor at. This was when I was in college. And this man was absolutely convinced that he had stopped sinning. He believed that he had to become perfect before he could be saved. And so, I guess one day he got perfect and he stopped sinning, he said. And he was an older guy and a real sweet guy too. He wasn't the obnoxious type. Which probably made it a little easier for him to think he was perfect. I would never think that I was perfect. But, anyway, Cline said, *“I don't sin anymore.”* I remember Leslie and I looking at each other like [snicker]. *“Well*

Cline, you mean you don't ever have to pray the Lord's prayer again?" "Well, what do you mean?" "Well, it says forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." "No, I guess I don't." 'Oh wow, this is interesting (I thought).' 'Let me talk to your wife, she'll tell me the truth.' But **1 John 1:10** says, "**If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.**" So we got a problem, we've all sinned. We've all continued to fall short of God's glory. Seneca the Roman philosopher said, "Not one of us has strength to rise. Oh that someone would stretch out his hand to us." Someone has stretched out his hand to us, a nail-pierced hand to us. Jesus Christ has, he is JEHOVAH CSIKENU. He is JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And he offers us freely his covering of righteousness. Verse 24 describes this, how it happens. How you can be saved, first two words. "Being justified", that's how it begins. This is how you're saved, you must be **justified**. What does it mean? Well, it's very interesting that in the Christian community there are two opinions on what it means. The Roman Catholic community says it means becoming more and more perfect, it's God working in you, making you better and better and better, until finally you'll be good enough to save. That's what they call justification. But that's not what the Bible teaches. You see, that's confusing, that's salvation by works. Even if it's God's work in you, it's still salvation by works in you. The Bible says that's not what justification means. **The Bible says to be justified means God reckons you to be what you are not.** God accounts you to be something you're not. God credits you for something that you don't have. **Easy way to remember what justified means is, when you are justified it means God looks at you 'justified, never sinned'-just as I'd never sinned. That's to be justified. He looks at me just as I'd never sinned. God declares us righteous, he puts on a robe of righteousness over us. How does he do it? The Bible says, as a gift, verse 24, as a gift. The word can also be translated "freely".** Well, that's the idea of a gift,

right? Ever get a gift that cost you something? Yes, by the way, I have. Watch out for these sales people over the telephone that offer you the fantastic vacations in San Diego, if you'll just come and look at our condo's. Just drive an hour and a half to Sedona and sit through our brief presentation of four hours, and we will give you a free trip to San Diego. Oh man, we bit the bait. What a bunch of dummies Leslie and I were. We go to Sedona, the brief presentation was almost five hours, and I tell you, they were trying to figure out all sorts of ways for us to get into that condo. They wanted me to have a church bazaar to raise money to get in, I kid you not. I said, 'I don't think the elders would go for that.' They said, 'Why didn't you say no.' 'I did!' the seat belt on the chair, they wouldn't let it up, you know! I was stuck. And then the trip to San Diego, what a dumb deal! The trip to San Diego, \$50 registration fee for a free trip, that's interesting, \$50 is not considered still free. Actually I won't go into it all, but we would have to leave at midnight, spend all day on their tour, sleep one night and leave at six the next morning and fly back. I mean, it was absolute stupidity. Don't get burned by a cheap--your shepherd was, don't you be. I didn't go to San Diego, we wised up before then. But, we got our \$50 back, and I got a sermon illustration, so it was ok. But the thing is, a gift is free, right? It's got to be free. It's like my anniversary present from my wife. She called my brother, and he's a jeweler. She says, "*Randy, I want you to get Mark a watch.*" I'm wearing a Mickey Mouse right now, this is very embarrassing to me, actually. This is what the girls got me to wear on my day off. And I lost my Casio watch and then somebody else gave me a Timex, and I lost it, and now I'm down to Mickey, and I'm wearing Mickey to pastor's meetings. The other day I was going to a very formal wedding and Mickey was showing through my suit, you know, and I thought, this is ridiculous, and I tried to just very, you know casually turn my watch around so you couldn't see the face, you could just see the leather. So Leslie was going to be nice to me and get me a watch. My brother's a jeweler, he can get me

a great deal, he works at Weisvilles in Medford, Oregon. He shipped down a watch the only thing about these kinds of gifts, I end up, I have to pay for it. Leslie said, 'Well, you got the money'. He sent me the best watch in the place, it was beautiful, absolutely stunning, gold, gold gold, I mean, that thing would sparkle. I opened it up and said, "*I can't wear this, I could never wear this.*" Leslie said, "*Yes, you'd never be able to talk about the television evangelist's ever again, would you.*" [laughter] I had to call up my brother and say, "*Randy, I can't take this.*" He said "*Why, it's the best one we have.*" I said, "*Ran, you can thank Jim and Tammy, but I can't wear this watch.*" And so I picked out something else, you know, that's not so- and I wished it'd get here. Anyway, the whole point, it's a gift. Right? It's free. Some people think free gifts, religions are that way, gang. Watch out for them. There are religions that come knocking on your door, 'Oh, would you like to have our Bible studies?--oh, would you like to study another testament of Jesus Christ?-- oh, would you like to come to our Hall?' And they're just like the San Diego people. It's **not** free. There's **nothing** free about it. In the end it will cost you everything, it will cost you your eternal life, because if you trust in anything but the eternal gospel, you're lost. There's no other gospel. There's no other name by which we must be saved. So be careful. There's a lot of phony deals going around. **But this really is free**, gang, it doesn't cost you anything. But it's not cheap, '*Oh that's cheap grace.*' I'd just like to slap people who say that (in all my spirituality). [to those who say "Cheap grace" he says] '*Cheap, that's easy for you to say, you didn't hang on a cross and die. You didn't shed your blood. You didn't have the sin of the world placed on you!*' '*You let that happen to you, and then you talk to me about "cheap grace."*' It'd better be cheap, because the people who talk about cheap grace couldn't buy it. It's not cheap, it's free. Cheap still makes you think you can put your dollar down and buy it, you can't. It's not for sale, it's a gift. Love that's bought is prostitution, and God doesn't prostitute

his love. It's free. It's a gift. Without cause, he saved us, he saved us for nothing, he does it all by his grace. It's awesome.

### *How Does Grace Work?*

Grace, how does it work? I want to show you how it works. Some of you have seen this before, but that's OK. I tell you, it's worth seeing again. You need to understand what happens when the Lord saves us. What happens when Jesus comes into our life, and covers us with his righteousness. You need to understand what it means to put on the garment of salvation. (I'm looking for a volunteer. Kevin, you're wearing a nice sinful colored shirt. Come on up, brother.) Let's just pretend that Kevin's shirt is sin. I mean, he wore a rag, let's pretend. It's not, it's a very nice T-shirt. But, ah, he's just an average usher here. But, you know, when Jesus wants to come [into our lives], he says, 'All your righteousness, Kevin, is as filthy rags. This won't make it into [the kingdom of] heaven. It's the wrong color. It's not righteous.' And so, what do you do? I mean, he's got to admit it (admit it Kevin) 'Uhuh.' I mean he can wash that 500 times and it's not going to turn white, is it? He could bleach it, and it's still not going to be white. And so this is the way the gospel works. (This is not going to work. Why can't Baptist's make baptismal robes that are regular old-fashioned robes?) What Jesus does (pretend, gang [guess they can't get this Baptist baptismal robe to go on Kevin!]), Christ covers you with his righteousness. But you get the idea that Christ wants to cover you with his robe of righteousness, so that you don't appear as you are, but as he is. The Bible says that all of us have sinned. And we'll just let the color red [on Kevin's shirt] represent the sin (some of you are real sinners here,

and you're red), but just for the sake of illustration, we'll say that this color represents our sin. Though your sins be as scarlet, the Bible says, God wants to make them as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall become as wool. See, that was the Old Testament prophet [Ezekiel] prophesying what Jesus, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, would do. Now if I could pass this around [must be a notebook or something] and we could write down our big sins here, hundreds of us writing down our sins, we could fill this up and have quite a list of pretty gross sinfulness, couldn't we? And that's what God sees, only he sees your entire life and all the sin that you've ever done. The soul that sins it shall die, the Bible says, the wages of sin is death [Romans 6:23]. But God loves you. ***Though your sins have separated you from God, God has made a way whereby you can be saved.*** Look at 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21. Open your Bibles to **2 Corinthians 5:21**. The Bible says that **“God made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us.”** Life is not hopeless, we're not doomed to hell. God has provided a way. Jesus came into the world, and he was absolutely perfect, wasn't he? No sin in his life, I mean, even his enemies couldn't say ‘*Well, he's got a big mouth.*’ Or ‘*He's coarse*’, or ‘*He told a bad joke*’, or ‘*He swore once*’, or ‘*He's got a bad habit of getting mad and chewing on them.*’ Nobody ever criticized Christ for any sin. In fact, the judge, the Roman judge, Pilate, finally said **“I find no fault in him.”** Legally, he was pronounced **“not guilty.”** Well, you say, *“Why did he die?”* Well, this is what the cross is all about. Maybe you wonder, *“Why is the cross the symbol of Christianity?”* It's because it was there on the cross that a tremendous transaction took place. It says, **“God made him who knew no sin”** -- Jesus, Yeshua, on the cross, God – **“made him to be sin for us”** -- and all of our sins were placed on Jesus on the cross. Every one of our sins, placed on him, at the cross. So that when God saw his son, he didn't see a perfect sacrifice, he didn't see a perfect lamb anymore, instead he saw this sin that had been laid on him. And that's why Jesus cried out **“My God, my God, why have**

you forsaken me?" ***'Because, all the sin of the world is on you.'*** ***And God rejected him, God rejected his son because his son took your sins on himself. This is your whole-life's sin, not just one, but all of your sin, from the moment of conception all the way to the end of your life, he took the penalty for your sin.*** And he didn't even last as long as the others on the cross, because all of the sin of the world, past, present and future, all of it in totality was placed upon him, and it crushed him and he died very quickly. The Scripture tells us that he was buried, and three days later--what happened?--he rose again. But our sins weren't on him anymore. He was raised, the Bible says, for our justification. He was raised so that now we could say *'I am justified, never sinned, I'm justified.'* How does it take place? Well, read the rest of the verse. **"God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, in order that" -- what? -- "we might become the righteousness of God" -- where? -- "in him."** We now can come to Christ, and here's Jesus, Yeshua, and Jesus is saying, ***'Look, I died in your place, I paid the penalty for your sin.'*** God doesn't have anymore wrath to pour out on you, by the way, it was all poured out. And he didn't just die for the goodie-goodies, he died for everybody. He died for all men, especially for believers, the Scripture says. He died for all. And now, if we come to Christ, Jesus offers, he says, ***'If you'll come to me, I'll accept you, I'll never reject you. Come to me. I'll never cast you away. Come to me, I'll forgive you all your sins. Come to me.'*** And what happens, when you accept Christ, is that Jesus covers you with his spotless perfection. And now when God looks at you, he doesn't see your sin anymore, he sees Christ's perfection and righteousness and goodness. He sees Jesus, Yeshua now when he looks at you. Now the rest of us, we don't see that, do we? I mean, we still see -- *'you got some work to do, kiddo.'* I mean, you got to grow in the Lord. But when God looks at me, he sees his son, in whom he's well pleased. Amen? That's the gospel! It's not God working in you to make you better and better, *'God only sees this*

*much of me, but I'm getting better, and better, and better.'* No, because what if you die like this. You'd be half saved and have lost? No, afraid not. You'd be totally lost. You see, you must be hiding in Christ, you must be covered in his righteousness in order to be saved. *'But I was baptized!'* So what. Baptize this. Doesn't change it. Still looks the same. *'I was confirmed.'* Confirm it, still looks the same [must be referring to the colored T-shirt]. *'Well, I was RAISED in the church.'* Didn't change it. *'I've been in the Way 20 years.'* Why don't you get out of the way [laughter]. The only thing that's going to save you is accepting Jesus Christ and asking him to cover you with his righteousness. And then, sure, be baptized, yea, live a godly life. Of course, you're saved. But this, Jesus' righteousness, only, will save you. You know, there's a hymn, the words say, ***"My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame"*** -- oh there's all sorts of man-made ways, keeping the commandments, eating (or not eating) certain foods, going to have temple ordinances done for you, all sorts of 'sweet frames', but the Bible says they're all quicksand. The Bible says we are not saved by deeds of righteousness we have done, but we are saved by his washing up and cleansing us of sin, we are Jesus' blood and righteousness -- ***"on Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."*** This has a very practical application, by the way, because those who understand this truth--there are a lot of Christians who don't understand this, they think this is the way, *'Well, I accepted Christ, you know, he's a part of my life, but you know, I really made a bad mistake, and so I'm not going to go to church anymore, until I really get my act together, because I know God is really upset with me, and well, you know, I guess I'm gonna go back to my old ways.'* Dummy, don't you understand that when you accepted Christ, you were covered with his righteousness, and God's not mad at you, God doesn't even see your sin, the Scripture says, ***'all our sins he casts behind his back'***, he says, ***'I'll remember them no more, I've cast them into the***

***depths of the sea. I've blotted them out like a thick cloud, like the sun evaporates a cloud. I'll remember them no more.*** When you sin, you're covered. But this is the way a lot of Christians think – ‘*Oops, I sinned, Now I've gotta ask for forgiveness. Lord please forgive me of my sin. OK, oh, pew, Well, everything's going along fine, Oh, I sinned, and on and on it goes.*’ No, no that's not the way it works, gang. When you accept Christ, he covers you forever with his righteousness. [the aspect of growing in the Lord and overcoming sin is not being covered in this particular sermon, but will be within this sermon series covering Romans 1-8. But the point Paul is making here is that salvation cannot be bought by overcoming sin or keeping the law, man has never been able to pay the price for salvation, which is perfect obedience, from birth to death. ] You become secure in his love. I mean, I'm talking about really saved people, I'm not talking about people who fake it, or pretend it, or but I'm talking about when you by faith have claimed the righteousness of Christ and ask him to cover you with it [by asking Jesus to come into your life], you've been born-again, I'll tell you, you are saved, and you are secure in Christ [cf. Romans 8:35-39, read it gang]. An awesome thing this is, and you know it's true, you don't want to live the way you used to be. And we're going to get into that next week, talk about that." [This is a transcript of a sermon given by J. Mark Martin of Calvary Community Church, P.O. Box 39607, Phoenix, Arizona, 85069.]

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