

It is God Who Justifies  
Romans 8:31-34  
Parker 872 A  
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Welcome to our program. Today I'm going to be preaching from the book of Romans, Paul's epistle to the Church of Rome, chapter 8 and I'll begin with verse 31.

In verse 31, Paul writes "What shall we then say to these things?" Now "these things" refers to everything that Paul had written in the book of Romans, chapters 1 through 8, concerning the salvation and the preservation of sinners by the grace of God in and through and by the Lord Jesus Christ. God saves sinners by Christ. God preserves sinners by his grace through Christ. He'll bring them to glory by Christ no matter what. That's what he is teaching. This is the grace of God. So these things, all these things and then even those things concerning God's sovereignty in the salvation of the sinner. He's going to deal with that more in chapters 9, 10, and 11 but he says, "What shall we then say to these things?" and listen to what he says, "If God be for us, who can be against?"

Now the point he is making here is if God is engaged on my behalf in salvation by Christ, if he is engaged on my behalf eternally and spiritually than who can be against me? No one can stop this. No enemy can defeat God and no enemy, no hindrance can stop what God has purposed in the salvation of his people. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We don't have to fear anyone in this matter of salvation because God is for us if we are in Christ. Now God is not for everybody without exception. You know people today, that's the way many of them believe, that God is for everybody. He's trying to save everybody if you'll just let him. That's not what this book teaches. I know that may sound weird to you, it may sound negative but it's not. The Bible teaches whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved and those who do, God is for them but we know that man by nature will not call upon the name of the Lord. He loves himself too much. He's too self-righteous. That's all of us by nature. That's why when we talk about sin we talk about fallen human nature. So "If God be for us who can be against us?"

And then he says in verse 32 he says "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all..." Now who's the all there? We are going to talk about that. That's all whom God is for, all who are in Christ. "...how shall he not with him," with Christ, "also freely," unconditionally, without a cause in our selves "give us all things?" In other words, here's what he is saying, those who are saved by the grace of God in Christ, that is saved by the blood of Christ, that is delivered up by God the father on the cross. Christ put away the sins of his people. if he gave his son, how shall he not freely unconditionally give us all things, all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Now here's the identification.

Look at Romans 8:33, he says "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" That's who he is talking about, God's elect people chosen before the foundation of the world and given to Christ. All of their salvation conditioned upon Christ, the responsibility of their eternal well-being placed squarely upon the shoulders of Christ. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's? It is God that justifieth." Then he says in verse 34, he says "Who is he that condemneth?" No one can condemn God's elect. Why? Because it's God who justifies and who is he that condemneth? Upon what foundation are the elect justified? He says, "It is Christ that died." There's the ground of justification - the death of Christ. You see, the ground of justification is not anything that the sinner does and it's not anything that God does within the sinner. God does a marvelous work within the sinner in the new birth but the new birth is not the ground of our justification. The new birth is the fruit, the result of justification. So what is the ground of justification? Here it is - "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again." He was risen again. Romans chapter four says because of our justification. "Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." That is the elect: all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, first of all let's make clear what is it to be justified? Now, he says it is God who justifies not man. Well, what is it to be justified? Well he says here, "who is he that condemneth?"

Over in Romans 8:1, it says this, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation. To be justified is to be not condemned because of sin. You know the

12 teaches very plainly that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God - Romans chapter 3:23. That's all men and women by nature. We're all sinners. We all fall short of the standard, the requirement of righteousness according to God's holy law and justice. And then it says in Romans 6:23 that "the wages of sin is death." That's the sentence of condemnation and death. In other words because of our sin, because of our fall in Adam, ruined in Adam and when Adam fell all whom he represented fell. That's you and me by nature because of our fall in Adam and because of our own personal sins, we deserve condemnation and death, the wages of sin. We cannot earn salvation and we don't deserve salvation. That's why salvation is a matter of grace and mercy in Christ. Justification is a legal term. It's God acting as a judge and when the judge brings down the sentence upon the guilty what is that sentence? It's death. But to be justified is to be not guilty. The Bible says over here in Romans 3:19, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." That's what we are by nature, guilty. and it says in verse 20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." What is it to be justified? It's to be not guilty. Well if I'm a sinner how can God in righteousness and truth judge me to be not guilty and not deserving of condemnation? How is that possible? You see this reaches all the way back to the old question that's posed several times in the book of Job (which many scholars believe to be the oldest book of the Bible) and the question is posed this way: How can a man, a sinful wretched man, be just with God? How is that possible? Now it says it is God who justifies. What is it to be justified? It is to be not guilty. What is it to be justified? It means to be cleared of all guilt, cleared of all condemnation. It means to be righteous in God's sight.

Now over in Romans 3:10 it says, "...There is none righteous no not one." That is to be found among men by nature, none righteous, no not one. Well how can God rightly and truly and justly without denying himself, how can he look at a sinner like me and declare me righteous and do it truthfully? Let me tell you something about God when he justifies, you see God is holy and he must punish sin. Listen, God is a merciful God, is a loving God, he is a gracious God

but he can not show mercy, he can not love any person, he cannot be gracious to anybody apart from his justice being satisfied. He's God. if God were to save a sinner without justice being satisfied, he would cease to be God. That kind of a God is an idol. You see, God must be just when he justifies. He must be right. God always judges according to truth. When God justifies a sinner there is no pretense here. I hear men today talking about a pretended justification or pretended righteousness. No, it is God who justifies and when God does it there's no pretense, there is no fake, there is no seeing things as they're not. You see, this is reality. It is God who justifies. So how can God be both a just God and a Savior? How can he deal rightly according to himself in his own nature as God and be both a righteous judge as well as a loving father, a Savior. A just God and a Savior. Well that's the issue, that's the question. You see this goes to the heart of the gospel, but it says it is God who justifies and when God justifies...Listen if God justifies me, I am justified. There is no pretense there. I've heard men in the past define justification this way - they would say it means just as if I've never sinned and I never did like that because it's not. You see, I have sinned yet God has justified me. God doesn't pretend that I've never sinned. I've sinned, but I'm still justified in God's sight and rightly so. You see, there's no as if here. So how does he do it? Well, he tells us plainly in verse 32. He says, "He that spared not his own Son..." That's the Lord Jesus Christ, the God man. That's God in human flesh. He "delivered him up." How did he deliver him up? On the cross of Calvary for us all. Who are they all there? All for whom Christ died and was buried and raised again the third day. "...how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" and then in verse 33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge..." You know what happens when you get charged with a crime. The police come and they arrest you if there is evidence against you and then you have to go to court and stand before the judge. You see, man is a sinner and to be charged with the sin is only justice. So when he says, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" - what's he talking about? He's talking about a people, an elect people, chosen by God, given to Christ for whom he was delivered up on the cross. He died for them and they cannot be charged. Now why is that? He says well "It is God that justifieth." God justified them. They can't be charged. now that word charge - We are going to talk about that but let me give you

this: he says, "It is Christ that died." What is that death? Well, that's the payment for sin. That's justice being satisfied. Now how does all that work out? Well, let me give you these four things. What I call four gospel principles and they go to the heart of the gospel. Just like this whole passage here. I preached on this before but I want you to listen to me. First of all, in order for God to justify a sinner that sinner must have a proper representative. In other words, that sinner cannot stand on his own before God. Now you know whenever a sinner seeks salvation and blessedness from a holy God based on their works that's exactly what they're doing. They're trying to go before God based upon their own merit and that's death. The Lord taught that early on in the in the example of Cain and Abel. Abel brought the blood of the land. That's a picture of Christ. Cain, he brought his own works. He said I'll go before God and plead my works. I don't need a representative. That's death. That's the wages of sin. By deeds of law, by works, shall no flesh be justified, declared not guilty and righteous. You see, "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." So in order for God to justify me I need a representative but there's three qualifications for the representative.

## **The four gospel principles**

I. Number one: that **representative** who will stand before God as my representative; he must be appointed by God. God is the one who appoints the representative. Man doesn't. God didn't say to mankind, "Now you all take a vote and see who you want out of your sinful mess here who you want to represent you." Oh no. You see the best man on earth could not represent sinners because he himself is a sinner. We need a representative appointed by God.

Secondly, that representative must be qualified to represent his people. He must be qualified and there's no man on earth who's qualified.

Thirdly, that representative must be willing to do so. Now who is the only representative? Well, of course you know who that is. He says it right here: it's the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the son of God, the second person of the Trinity. He is the one whom God appointed before the foundation of the world to be the representative, the

substitute, the surety of his people. His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, the scripture says. That's the covenant of grace made before the world began. The Bible speaks of salvation in 2 Timothy 1:9-10, "...which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." This representation of Christ is so intimate that we are considered one with him. He is the head, the church which was bought with his blood is his body. We are in Christ. Over in the book of Romans chapter 5 it speaks of representation. It speaks of our first representation of Adam. Adam was the representative of the whole human race. It says in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" Literally that would read all sinned. That is, when Adam fell all whom he represented fell in him. He's the representative of the whole human race but then it speaks of Christ. Look over in Romans 5:18. It says, "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" That's all whom Adam represented in the fall. We fell in Adam and came under condemnation in Adam according to the covenant of works. But it goes on to say, "...even so by the righteousness of one..." Now who is that one? That's the Lord Jesus Christ because he's the only one who can claim righteousness. What is that righteousness? It's the perfection of his obedience unto death. Christ kept the law perfectly and he went under the sentence of death for his people and satisfied the justice of God. That's his righteousness and he says, "...by the righteousness of one the free gift..." you see it's not something that we earn, "...came upon all men unto justification of life." Now who are the all men there? All whom Christ represented on the cross and it's evidenced by the fact that they come to justification of life. What does that mean? That means all whom God justified through this representative, the Lord Jesus Christ, will live eternally and spiritually. They'll be born again by the spirit. You see there's no such thing as Christ dying for a sinner on the cross and that sinner going to hell. No sir, not in the Bible. All for whom he died will come to justification of life but it goes on. It says in Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience..." that's Adam, "...many were made sinners..." Now how many? However many Adam represented. Now what does the Bible teach? Well, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That's all there, the whole human race because all are sinners. He says, "...so by the obedience of one...", the representative, "...

shall many be made righteous." How many? However many Christ died for. However many come to justification of life. Christ is the representative of the elect. Back in the old covenant, the high priest wore his garments and on part of his garments, there was a breastplate and on that breastplate there were twelve names and those twelve names were the tribes of Israel. That was a type of the elect of God and that priest represented Israel when he went into the holiest of all. When Christ went into the holy of holies, the holiest of all, the very presence of God, he did it as the representative of spiritual Israel. All who believe in him and rest in him. Now here's the second thing, now there's representation. Christ is the only one appointed of God. Christ is the only one qualified to be our representative. Now what qualifies him? Well he's both God and man in one person. He's God in human flesh. He's qualified, he's able, he has the power to save his people from their sins and thirdly he's willing. The Bible said he's willing. He loved his own unto the end, John 13:1. He did it for his people.

II. Here's the second thing. The second thing is we need a **substitute**. It is God who justifies. How can God do that? Through a representative but not only a representative, a substitute. Christ is not only the representative of his people but he's the substitute. He actually took the place of his people before a holy God and satisfied the justice of God for them. That's what it's talking about over here in Romans chapter 8: God delivered him up, How? As a sin bearer. He bore our sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says he was made sin. What does that mean? That means that Christ himself as the substitute of his people took their place under the condemnation of sins that were charged to him, imputed to him and he bore our griefs, he bore our sorrows, the punishment that brought peace. He endured suffering unto death even unto separation from God when he cried, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" He actually died on that cross and that's why he did it, as a substitute. That was pictured all through the Old Testament in the sacrifices, the lamb.

III. You see in order for God to justify me, my sins had to be charged to Christ and he had to actually suffer and bleed and die to satisfy the justice of God for those sins. And that's why he says here in verse 33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

God cannot charge me with my sin because he charged them to Christ and Christ put them away by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. By his one offering he purged my sin, he put away, like that scapegoat, that fit man, Christ, he led them out into the wilderness, the place where they are cut off from God and I bear them no more. David said blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth or chargeth not iniquity. As a result, I received his righteousness charged to me. It's given to my account. That's real now that's not fake. That's not pretense. That's not God looking at me as if I'm righteous, though I'm not. Now I'm a sinner in myself still, but I am justified before God. God justified me. I'm righteous in his sight. You see what I am saying? For God made him to be sin Christ who knew no sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That's the third thing: **imputation, charging**. God charged our sins, the sins of his elect, to Christ and charges his righteousness to us.

**IV.** The fourth thing is **satisfaction**. That's what Christ did. Who can condemn us? It is Christ that died. Christ satisfied the law. Christ satisfied the justice of God. The justice of God can demand no more payment from me because full payment was made in my substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ for my sins laid upon him. He bore the iniquity of his people. He satisfied every jot and tittle of the law. He perfected it. For Christ is the end, the finishing, the completion, the fulfillment of the law for righteousness to everyone that believe. It is God who justifies. Now man tries to justify himself but it never works. How does he try to justify himself? By his works, by his efforts, by his religion but that will not take away sin. That will not make a sinner righteous. You see it must be God who justifies and how does he do it and still remain true to himself? How does he justify the ungodly? By his grace based on the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ alone: the representative, the substitute to whom sin was imputed, who satisfied all the law's demand for his people.