

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION

ROMANS 3:23-24 • TV230A

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Romans 3:23-24

“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.”

I would like for you to turn in your Bible with me to the **Book of Romans**. I'm going to be speaking from the **3rd chapter of Romans**. I will be reading a text and will be going back and referring to several verses before this text and a couple of verses after this text.

In **Romans 3:23-24**, the Scripture says; *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

Here is my subject: **“GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION.”**

Men have many ways of salvation and many ways to heaven. They have many ways to be redeemed and reconciled. God has only one way.

The apostle Paul was so certain of this that he made this statement in **Galatians**; *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto*

you, let him be accursed. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Now, that is dogmatism and that is confidence. God has one Gospel.

Before I begin the message I want to make clear and plain what I am not saying on this television program. These are some things that I am not saying:

First of all: I am not saying that men are not religious, quite the contrary. Most everyone today is very religious.

Religion today is big business. There is big money and entertainment in religion. Religion is a major part of our political scene, our social life, and our emotional life. Almost everyone has religion.

So, I am not saying, (and please understand); I am not saying that people are not religious; they are religious. They are like the Jews of old of whom Paul said, *"They have a zeal for God."* They have an interest in God, an enthusiasm for God. I don't doubt that at all.

Secondly: I am not saying that people are not sincere in their religion; most of them are very sincere, quite sincere.

Saul of Tarsus was so sincere that he would kill people who did not agree with his tradition and his doctrine. He was so wrapped up in his form and ceremony of religion that he destroyed anyone who would get in his way.

The followers of Jim Jones were sincere. Where in the world could you get that many people to commit suicide in a mass if they were not sincere?

I remember a young lady in Chattanooga, Tennessee, who had religion. She was very sincere in her religion. In fact, she was reading a Scripture and said that the Lord told her, *"If your right hand offends you cut it off."*

She said that the Lord told her to take an ax and cut her arm off. So, she took an ax and chopped her arm off. That is sincerity.

So, I am not saying (and I want you to understand this) that people are not religious. Religion is big business. There is religion everywhere and in every town, city, hamlet, and countryside, in this nation.

People are religious and they are sincere in their religion. Some of them are very sincere. Some of them are willing to go to jail for their religion.

Thirdly: I am not saying that religious people have no morality, they do have morality.

I'm not saying that they do not have good deeds; they have good deeds. These people are moral, generous and they are kind to others.

Listen to the Pharisee as he stood in the temple: *“God; I thank you that I am not like other men. I fast; I tithe; I give alms of all that I possess. I’m not an extortioner; I’m not an adulterer; I’m not unjust. I do all these things.”*

This man was moral, sincere, and this man was a man with good deeds; he told God that. Religious people today have orphanages, schools, and rest homes for old people, rescue missions, and all of these things.

I want you to understand this; I am not saying that people are not religious. We have more religion today per square foot than we have ever had in the history of the world. People are religious.

Many of them are sincere. They are like the old Crusaders who went to their death holding a cross up in front of them trying to take new countries for Jesus; they are sincere. Some are moral people, generous people, and kind people.

What I am saying is this (I want you to listen to me and listen well); there is a difference in having religion and having a saving relationship with a living God. There is a lot of difference between having religion and having a saving relationship with the living God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said in **John 17**, (talking about the priestly prayer of the Master), *“This is life eternal, (not that you might have religion or even have sincerity in your religion, morality, and good works), this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”*

The apostle Paul, who was Saul of Tarsus before he met Christ, was an expert on this condition. He was an expert on having religion and not knowing God. He was an expert on having the traditions, customs, ceremonies, rituals, and not knowing God.

He was *“ever learning but never coming to knowledge of truth.”* He was an expert on that by personal experience. Paul wrote in **Romans 2:28**; *“He is not a Jew who is one outwardly.”*

When we use the word *“Jew”* in the epistle to the **Romans**, Paul is talking about a son of Abraham, a true, spiritual son of Abraham. He is talking about a true Christian, a person who has knowledge of God and a right relationship with God.

This is what he is saying; He’s not a Christian who is one outwardly. He is not a true son of Christ who is one outwardly. He is a Christian and he is a believer, a son of God, who is one inwardly. Do you see what Paul is saying?

This circumcision is not of the flesh, but rather it is a spiritual circumcision of the heart. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, *“You call me Lord with your lips.”* You go through all the routines, all the rituals, and all of the ceremonies of religion. You tithe, you fast, you quit this and you quit that

and the other. You make a great profession and pretense of piety but “*your hearts are far from me.*” That is what I am saying.

There is a lot of difference in having religion, the mechanics of religion, the so-called piety of religion and the zeal of religion. There is a lot of difference in having religion by tradition, custom, name, and profession.

There is a lot of difference in that and in knowing God Almighty in your heart, in saving faith. There is much difference. That is what I am saying.

Paul said in **2nd Timothy 3:5**; “*They have a form of godliness but they deny the power thereof.*” We have substituted, (you know it and I know it), in our religious campaigns and revivals, a decision for the new birth, instead of a heart work, a work of grace in the soul.

We have substituted a mechanical walk in the aisle and making a profession of religion. This has been substituted for regeneration, for the new birth.

We have substituted church membership for repentance. Most religious people have never repented toward God. They have never truly embraced Christ Jesus. They have a form; they are church members and are identified with some denomination.

Then, we have substituted the activities for worship. You know that this is so. Our churches are so busy making announcements and counting people. They are having contests, all sorts of raffles, entertainment and ballgames. We have substituted much activity for worship.

One of the old writers wrote something about “Much ado about nothing.” That is what it is; we have all these activities with very little worship, very little reverence and very little godliness. There is very little coming before God in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. We have substituted activities.

Someone asked a member of our church one time, “What do you do for your young people?” This man replied; “We preach the Gospel to them. They love the Word of God; they love the Gospel. They love to worship God.” Young people as well as old people need to worship God and call on God.

I’m not saying that people aren’t religious. I’m not saying that people are not sincere. I’m not saying that they do not have good works and morality. What I am saying is there is a lot of difference in the mechanics of religion in the outward form and show of religion than having an inward, spiritual, intimate, relationship with the living God.

That is what Paul said in **Romans 2**; “*He is not a Jew who is one outwardly. He is a Jew who is one inwardly.*”

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION

ROMANS 3:23-24 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Watch this, what I am saying is this, (and listen closely); today's religion; (you get this and get it well); I'm saying that today's religion is man-centered and not God-centered at all. That's exactly right! Man is the source of it and man is the goal and intent of it.

Most of today's preaching; (now listen to me and think this through); most of today's preaching and religious talk is about what you and I should do for God. They will say, "Won't you give God your heart; won't you give God your tithes; won't you give God your talent; won't you give God your time?" They will even say; "Won't you give God something?"

My friends, God doesn't need me to do anything for Him. I seriously and solemnly need God to do something for me; that is what I need.

Today's religion is man-centered. The religion of the Bible is God-centered. Preachers today are talking about what you and I need to do for God. The old writers talked about what God needs to do for us. There is a difference. Do you know the difference?

The Scripture says, "*Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*" God did something for Noah. The Scripture tells us about God calling Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. God called him out; He said to Abraham; "*Go unto a land that I will show thee; I will make of thee a great nation.*"

What God is saying is this; "I will do it; I will make of you a great nation. You are not going to make of Me a great God; I was a great God before I called you; you are a nobody. You are nothing. You are Mr. Nobody from nowhere. You need Me; I don't need you." That is what God is saying to Abraham.

Jonah, from the belly of the fish, cried; "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" Salvation is not something that I do for myself or for what I do for you. It is something that God does for me. It is a work of His grace, of His power, of His Spirit, and of His Word.

David didn't talk about what he had done for God; he talked about what God had done for him. Read **Psalm 23**, he said; "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul.*" That is all; He did this for me. I have done nothing for God.

Actually, did you ever notice when our Lord Jesus Christ was talking about the sheep and the goats? He separated them, one on the right and one on the left. When He told the sheep that they had ministered to Him in prison and they visited Him. "*For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*"

They said, "*Lord; when did we ever see you like that? We don't remember doing anything for you.*" He said, "*In as much as you have done it to the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me.*"

So, these people had to be reminded of what they had done. They didn't remember it. They didn't know that they had done anything for God. They knew that God had done a whole lot for them.

Listen to what our Lord said to them: *"A new heart I will give you, (a new nature I will give you). I will put my Spirit within you. I will write my Law in your heart."* That is what we need; we don't need men doing anything for God. If God needs anything, He is not God.

God is independent. Before God made the worlds, before God made men, before God made anything, God was perfect. He was without any need. We need Him; He doesn't need us. *"For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. It's not of works lest any man should boast. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works."*

One day the disciples asked the Master; *"Who can be saved?"* The Master replied, *"With men it is impossible."* That is what I am saying. I am saying that this thing of the new birth, this thing of salvation, this thing of eternal life is as impossible with you as an Ethiopian changing his skin or a leopard changing his spots.

Christ added this; *"With God all things are possible."* Listen to the people in **Matthew 7:22**; listen to these folks, *"Lord; we cast out devils in your name. We have done many wonderful works in your name. We have preached in your name."*

Listen to them; they keep telling Christ what they did for Him. He just disowned them; He literally disowned them.

What did the people around the throne of God in **Revelation chapter 1** say? They didn't speak of what they had done for God. They spoke of what Christ had done for them; they said, *"Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sin in His own precious blood, to Him be the glory both now and forever."* Then in **Revelation chapter 5**, *"For thou wast slain and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation under heaven. Thou hast made us kings and priests unto our God."* What they are saying is, "You did it; we didn't do anything for You."

If you will measure these things and think about them, the Pharisee in the temple talked about what he had done for God; he said, *"I fast; I tithe. I do all these things."*

Most preachers today are driving a bargain with their congregation trying to get them to do something for God in exchange for God's blessings. That kind of God is not worthy of worship; that kind of God will not have the worship of a true believer.

The Pharisee talked about what he had done and what he hadn't done. The Publican stood over there and asked God to do something for him. He said, *"Lord; be merciful to me the sinner."* "Let Thy blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat. He went home justified."

So, what I am saying and I am trying to say it loud and clear; I'm saying, an outward form of religion is not an inward relationship with God.

I'm also saying that the big problem with religion today is that we are exhorting men to do something for God when in reality we all need to shut our mouths and fall on our knees. We need to open our ears and have our palms risen as empty beggars and cry for God if He is pleased in His mercy to do something for us. That is what we need, a God-centered religion.

I will tell you this, the Bible clearly says that *"salvation is of the Lord."* That is what it says. David wrote, *"The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord."* It is of the Lord in its planning. It is of the Lord in its execution. It's of the Lord in its application. It's of the Lord in its sustaining power. It's of the Lord in its ultimate perfection.

"He is Alpha and Omega; He's the beginning and the end" and all in between. *"It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. It is not of Him that willeth; (that is what the Scripture says); it is not of him that runneth; it is of God that showeth mercy."*

If you will go through the New Testament and study the qualities of salvation, how the Bible describes salvation, you will notice that it is described as a *"new birth."* Salvation is a new birth.

It describes salvation as a *"new creation,"* something out of nothing; that is creation. Discovery is when you find something is already there. Salvation is a *"new creation."*

Salvation is described as the *"true revelation of God,"* a knowledge of God. Then, it is described as *"a resurrection,"* a quickening from the dead.

I will take all four of these things, *"the new birth, the new creation, a true revelation and a resurrection from the dead,"* only God can do any of these things.

Man cannot perform any of these things. The evangelist can't and the preacher can't. He stands in the pulpit and sings a song at the end of the service and invites people to come to him and shake his hand and bow before him.

He cannot help them; he can't help himself. God is the Saviour. Mercy comes from God. He is the source and fountain of every saving grace and blessing:

***"Come Thy fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace."***

My friends, I am saying this, a man is free to build his hopes for eternity on whatever foundation he chooses. You can build on the sand of the flesh. You can build on the sand of religion. You can build on the sand of tradition or you can build on the rock Christ Jesus. That's right!

You can build on your religious works. You can stand someday before God and boast and brag of what you did for God, what you gave to God. You can stand someday and tell how you served God and later hear Him say; *"Depart from me; I never knew you."*

You can build your hope for salvation on the person, work, and free grace of Jesus Christ who wrought for us a perfect righteousness and a perfect holiness and standing before God's Law and justice.

If we build on the person of Christ, then we are going to have to turn to the Scriptures and find out who He is, what He did, why He did it, and where He is now. We are going to have to forsake our ways and our thoughts.

We are going to have to forsake our customs and traditions. We have been in this mess a long time. There are no shortcuts out of it.

We have built these false foundations and these false walls of religion. We have incased ourselves in "*a refuge of lies.*" "*Under falsehood we have hid ourselves.*" It is not easy to get out. We are going to have to go to the Scriptures.

I want you to turn back to **Romans 3**. I'm going to give you five, six, or seven things that I understand from the Scripture.

Here is the first thing that I understand: I understand that I am by birth, by nature, and by practice, a sinner.

I may be a preacher. I know that I am a preacher; I have been a preacher for 37 years. I'm still "a sinner saved by the grace of God."

There are things that I think, say, and do, that I ought not to think, say, and do. I was born a sinner and by nature and by practice I am a sinner. I need the cleansing, redeeming blood, of the Son of God, and so do you; the sooner that you discover that you are not a good person, the better.

You may be good, comparatively speaking, in reference to other human beings, but that is just one worm bragging on another worm. I'm talking about in the sight of God we are sinners. God is perfect. God is Holy and God is perfect love, perfect righteousness, and perfect truth. We are not!

"To offend in one point is to be guilty of the whole Law of God." The Scripture says in **Romans 3:10**; *"There is none righteous, no not one."* I'm talking about being perfectly righteous. *"There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. There is none good, no not one."*

It is the law of God that is the holy standard; not the law of man, but the law of God, not the law of your religion, but it is the law of God. I'm not talking about your church with a standard but God's standard. Your standard won't do. It is God's standard that will judge you.

"What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world, (all the preachers in the pulpit, the deacon in the pew, the Sunday school teachers in the classroom, and all you folks out yonder) become guilty before God." That is where it is done, before God, guilty before God. I understand that.

Secondly: I understand this; I understand that by the deeds and the works of religion, law or morality; I cannot be justified before God. I do understand that.

Look at **Romans 3:20**, now the law tells me I am guilty, so therefore, *“by the deeds of the law, (by the works of the law), there shall no flesh be justified (saved, or redeemed,) in God’s sight.”*

That is where the work has to be done, in His sight. You see; *“We justify ourselves before men.”* Our Lord Jesus Christ said; *“You are they that justify yourselves before men but that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God.”*

So, I am saying that by the deeds of the law, no flesh, religious or otherwise, believer or unbeliever, no flesh, by the deeds of the law, by the works of the flesh, will be justified in the sight of God.

Thirdly: I understand that God has provided us holiness.

I understand that God has provided a righteousness before His law which He will accept, of which He is satisfied and which He will give to us and which does not require me producing, providing, or performing anything.

That is what it says; *“By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, but now, (the holiness of God), the righteousness of God without the law, (that is, without my obedience), is manifested. It is spoken of by the law and the prophets.”*

What is it? It is the righteousness of God, and the holiness of God, *“which is by the obedience and faithfulness of Jesus Christ and it is free to everyone who believes in Christ.”* That is what it says in **Romans 3: 19 through 22.**

In other words, it is saying; *“Christ who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness (and holiness) of God in Him.”*

God hasn’t changed His law; it is still perfect. We still have to meet His law. I cannot meet it; I know that and you can’t either. Christ did; *“He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.”*

There was no sin in Him; *“He knew no sin.”* He was a perfect man. He walked on this earth from cradle to grave in perfection. The Father said, *“I am well pleased with Him.”* He was a representative man. *“By one man’s disobedience I was made a sinner by another man’s obedience (Christ), I was made righteous.”*

So, there is righteousness; I understand that this holiness, this righteousness, is free. It is not in exchange for 10%; it is free. It is not in exchange for my works; it is free. It is free in Christ to all who believe.

Listen to this; *“Being freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus for God hath set forth Christ to be our and propitiation (righteousness) through His blood by faith.”*

There are four things you need to remember:

First of all: Everything God has for sinners He has put in Christ.

Second: It is not in the church, not in the ordinances or not in the law, it is in Christ. It is ours through a relationship with Christ. That relationship with Christ comes by faith.

Third: That faith is born from the Word of God; *“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

Fourth: It is the Holy Spirit that makes the Word effectual.

Fifth: I understand that this righteousness and justification through Christ is the only way that a holy and just God can redeem sinners and be a holy and a just God.

God cannot change. In order to redeem us, He has to be God. Would you have God change His nature? If you did, you would have no God. Your salvation would not be worth anything.

God almighty *“set forth Christ to declare His righteousness that He might be just and justifier of them that believe on Christ.”*

Sixth: I understand that there is no room for boasting.

Paul said in **verses 26 and 27**; *“Where is boasting then?”* What do you have to brag about? It is excluded. How? Is it excluded by the law of works? No, it is excluded by the law of faith.

My friends; this is good news! This is not man's way of redemption; this is God's way. This is good news to the guilty and it is a Gospel that glorifies God. It is a Gospel that is true to the Scriptures. It is the Gospel that meets a sinner's need and it is the Gospel that keeps the sinner saved.

God's way of salvation is by grace, through faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole basis of it and foundation of it is the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Surety, our Representative and our Substitute. He died that we might live. He paid our debt and we no longer owe it.

Can you believe? Can you receive Him?