

How God Saves Sinners

Radio Broadcast

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Bible Text: Romans 8:32, 33

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Welcome to the Grace Abounding broadcast brought to you by the congregation of the Shreveport Grace Church that meets at 2970 Baird Road in Shreveport, LA. My name is Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you today a message that seeks to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious person and finished work of salvation accomplished for sinners at the cross. Please stay tuned.

I want to speak with you today on this very vital and important subject and that is how God saves sinners. We don't want to be left to our own thinking in this regard nor do we want to base our opinions on what men tell us because the matter is too important. We're dealing with a holy God; we're dealing with eternal life and salvation. So, it's important that we consider what God himself has to say and so my text to answer this question is found in Romans 8. I'm going to focus primarily on verses 32 and 33 for my text but to have a context, I want to begin reading with verse 28. Here's God's word. He says,

“28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Now, here is a great question,

“31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Here's my text now,

“32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

Here's another question in verse 33 of Romans 8,

“33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.”

Now, if the Lord gives us ears to hear and eyes to see, we're going to find in this portion of Scripture the answer to that question of how God saves sinners. So, let's look first of all at what God has said. Remember, we don't want to base this upon man's testimony but we want the testimony of God himself and I've just read for you his inspired word. So, what has God said as to how he will save sinners? The second point I want us to consider is what has he purposed in the saving of sinners? If he's God and he has purposed the salvation of sinners, what has he purposed? Has he purposed to save everybody? Or has he purposed out of all of fallen humanity to save sinners that he has chosen for himself? That's an important matter so what has he purposed. But, thirdly, we're going to consider what he has done. So it's not just a matter of God promising or purposing but what has God done to save sinners. Then, finally, what is he doing. God is at work even today in the salvation of sinners. What is he doing?

Let's go back to the very first point and that is: what has he said? That's why I wanted to begin reading back in verse 28 of my text in Romans 8 because there we see very plainly that God has said that he will save sinners whom he has called according to his purpose. So, you can see why the second point is: what has he purposed? But here, we read, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” So, this isn't just a matter of God throwing salvation up in the air and catch as catch can or grab as grab can. No, there is a working together that we see there in verse 28. There is God loving sinners because it says “all things work together for good to them that love God.” And then there is a very specific explanation of those who love God, it is those “who are the called according to his purpose,” summoned, set apart, selected, chosen according to his purpose.

So, we can see that God here has declared in his word that he will show mercy because it says there in verse 29, “whom he did foreknow.” That's a very tender and intimate word. It means “to love beforehand” or “to ordain beforehand those he has loved.” Whom he has so ordained, it says, “he has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son.” This is why it's a work of God to save sinners and that's why the title of this message is “How God Saves Sinners.” You notice I didn't say what you have to do in order for God to save you but how God saves sinners. Well, he foreknows from eternity those that he will save and he has predestinated, determined ahead of time. To predestinate, it's like somebody setting out on a trip and determining already the direction and the points of that trip. But he has predestinated sinners to be conformed to the image of his Son. Nothing less than being conformed to the image of God's Son will satisfy a holy God because all of God's pleasure is in his Son.

And it says that he, the Son and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, “might be the firstborn of many brethren.” Now, firstborn not in the sense of first created. The Lord Jesus Christ was never created but firstborn in pre-eminence. In that particular culture, the firstborn was the heir of all things so what you can see here is that God has declared in his word that not only has he chosen a people but he's given them to his Son and those sinners that

he's chosen are his inheritance. That is why he came to this earth and laid down his life, to redeem and to justify, sanctify forever those that the Father has given him. So, you can see all of this is declared in God's word.

It goes on in Romans 8:30, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Now, this is a different word than the called up in verse 28. Here it has to do with those he predestinated, he chose. Up in verse 28, he summoned; they were summoned according to his purpose. That's how we know that God has set his love upon us sinners. He draws them in love to himself. But here in verse 30, it's going back into eternity whom he did predestinate, them he also called. He named, having chosen them out. I'm called Ken. I'm named Ken. That's the sense there. "And whom he called, them he also justified," he declared righteous, he acquitted. When did he do that? When Christ died. "And whom he justified, them he also glorified." You see, the Lord Jesus Christ came as the high priest of a people that he represented and those people were in him. When he died, they died. When he rose again, they rose again. When he ascended on high, they ascended on high. That's how Christ was glorified. The Father glorified him and raised him up and he ascended on high and has sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high according to Scripture. All of this is what God has declared in his word as to how he will save sinners.

So, that's the very first point we're looking at and he has so purposed to show mercy. What he has said? Here, again, in verse 31, "What shall we then say to these things?" This is what God has said, now what shall we then say to these things? Here the "we" has to do with those that the God of Scripture has chosen and that he has named and for whom the Lord Jesus Christ has come into this world. "What shall we then say to these things?" Here it is: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" So, again, we're looking at what God has said. If God be for us in this way, who can be against us? Can anything be added to what he has said? What he has promised? What he has decreed? Nothing can be added nor can anything be taken away. If God be for us, dear friend, in that eternal love, in that eternal grace and in that divine calling and in substitution. In other words, Christ taking the place of the sinner and in justification, God justifying the sinner. Not arbitrarily but because of the completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ there remains nothing but his justice, his righteousness to impute.

So, if God has already accepted and glorified you or me in Christ, then what can be said against us? What can be brought against us? There is not a law of God, Christ has honored it. There is not divine justice, it's been satisfied. Not even Satan because the Scriptures say that he's already judged and cast out. So, these are precious promises that we find in God's word as to what he has said as to how he saves sinners.

Let's move to the second matter and that is what God has purposed. I read for you in Romans 8:28 that word "purpose," "to them who are the called according to his purpose." You see, "purpose" means "design" and so what this is saying, you say, "Well, what has God purposed?" Well, he's purposed to save sinners. It's in his nature to save. Yes, he's a just God and yes, he's a holy God but, dear friend, he is also a merciful and gracious God. Now, he doesn't set aside one to satisfy the other. Mercy cannot be shown at the

expense of God's justice but in his attributes as God, he reveals himself both as a merciful and just God. He's a just God and a Savior but what he has purposed to do in mercy and by his justice is to save a people.

So, that's the second point we're looking at here as to how God saves sinners: in what he has purposed. This goes all the way back to the Old Testament. I'm reading here in Exodus 33 and here's when the Lord had revealed his glory to Moses and they are now in the desert. In verse 17 of Exodus 33 it says, "And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name." You say, "Well, what did he ask?" Well, if you go back up in the context, he had said in verse 15, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight?" That's an important question that Moses was caused to ask on our behalf if we're the Lord's. How do we know that God will be gracious? Have you ever had that question? It still comes to my mind: why should God ever be merciful or gracious to a sinner such as I am? So, Moses pled with God in verse 18 of Exodus 33, he said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." He's not asking for wealth here. He's not asking for health. But he's asking for God to manifest his glory.

And here is what God answers, verse 19 of Exodus 33, he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." Yes, he's a just God but here what his purpose is to show mercy and the Apostle Paul repeats this again in the epistle that we're studying, in Romans 9, beginning with verse 15, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Verse 16, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." So, it's his purpose to show mercy but he says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." It's God's prerogative to show mercy to whom he will. He doesn't owe it to anybody but yet it is in his nature to show it and, therefore, it is what he has purposed.

So, that answers the second point as to how God saves sinners. Not only what he has said but what he has purposed but thirdly, here is where I want us to consider what has God done. Now, herein we see the wonderful working of God as the Savior of sinners. Not only that he has promised to save but what has he done to save sinners? Isn't that something that is important? People can make promises all day long but in something so important as this matter of salvation and God being just to justify, what has he done? Well, here in verse 32 of my text, we read very simply, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Here we can't take verses out of context. When he says "he that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all," this is like reading someone else's mail. You've got to figure out who the "us all" is and that's why I started, again, back reading in verse 28. It's those that God has loved and has called according to his purpose and has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son. He spared not his Son for them but

delivered him up for them. That's the "us all" and if Christ has paid that great debt, here again is the great question: how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

So, when it says "he spared not his own Son," that means that the Lord Jesus Christ as the substitute bore under the wrath of God, all that was required of God's justice on behalf of his people. He did not spare his own Son; he did not withhold his hand because it was his Son but he smote him as if he were that sinner for whom he was paying the debt. Now, Christ was without sin. He bore the sin but he was sinless as the Lamb of God and yet, God the Father did not withhold from Christ all that was necessary in order for him to be a just God. Nor did he withhold Christ. You see, he spared not his own Son but delivered him up. This is a fulfillment of what the prophet Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 53:1-6. Isaiah in his day, asked the question: who hath believed our report?

And the same thing could be asked today: who is there that truly believes today that salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end, that it's entirely the work of God? Because that's what we're looking at here: what has God done to save sinners? He's a just God. He's purposed to show mercy but what has he done? Well, he spared not his Son but who hath believed this report? Most people out there that you talk to and maybe even you yourself listening to me, in your conscience, in your mind you're thinking, "Okay, God has done his part now the rest is up to me." That's what preacher's tell you and that may be what your conscience is saying but, dear friend, the report of God is that salvation is of him from beginning to end.

But Isaiah even asked the question: "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Where are those today in whom this great salvation has been revealed? The arm of the Lord is the strength of the Lord for the saving of sinners. It takes God saving the sinner. Our sin is too great. We couldn't even begin to chip away at it which is why it is so foolish for people to think that somehow by giving certain things up or penance or whatever in their minds they think can diminish somehow their debt, is blindness. It's rebellion.

But now, what has God done? Well, in verse 2 it says, "he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." This was a picturesque way of describing how the Lord Jesus Christ would come into this world as an infant, born into this world, here described as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground. Think about what kind of world that he was born into. It was a world of wickedness and darkness but even he himself, it says, "hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." When the Lord Jesus Christ walked on this earth, he didn't have a halo around his head or a glow about his body. He looked every bit as much as a man as you would find over there in the Middle East right now.

And it says, "He is despised and rejected of men." We know that. When he declared himself to be the Son of God, they took up stones to stone him. He was "a man of sorrows," so identifying with that people that he came to save that he endured their grief. He was "acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him." Hid not in the sense of just not being able to look at him but hid in the sense of shame. In other words,

those people that turned thumbs down upon him in that first century represented us. Had we been there, we would have done the same thing. "He was despised and we esteemed him not." But here's what it says, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Men that looked upon him as he hung there on the cross, just saw him as a common criminal but yes, he was smitten of God but not as a common criminal but as the substitute for that people that God purposed to save. If you want to have an idea of just how just God is, look at how he spared not his Son but delivered him up. But here's the grand conclusion in verse 5, "But he was wounded for our transgressions." That word "for" is the word for substitution. "He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

You say, "Well, what is our part in salvation?" Well, we're the sin. In fact, Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." That's all we've contributed to this is our waywardness and our rebellion. "We have turned every one to his own way." It's not even a matter of going out there and killing somebody or getting drunk and all these things you hear people talking about. That's just a matter of going your own way and that's something that in this heart, we do every day and it's condemnable before God by eternal death. But it says here, "And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." There again, the iniquity of us all, of all those that he has purposed to save.

So, that's how God saves sinners. He spared not his own Son. That's what he has done and so if he has given Christ to be our surety or representative or sacrifice or sin offering, if God has so loved sinners that he has purposed to save, that he gave Christ and that Christ so loved the Father that he came into this world and bore all the sin and shame of those that the Father has given him, shall not the Father freely give us all things that Christ has purchased for us? If I sent you to the store and said, "Go in and pick up these items that I've purchased for you," you'd expect to receive what has been purchased, that's been paid for. So it is with salvation. Christ did not die in vain. He did not suffer in vain. Perish the thought. No, he gives eternal life unto as many as he has given to his Son and for whom Christ has paid the debt.

So, that brings us to the conclusion of what is God doing now for the salvation of sinners? Well, here in Romans 8:33, it says, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" It has been over 2,000 years since the Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life and yet the same question can be answered the same way today: who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? If Christ paid your sin debt then there is nothing that is chargeable to your account and no one can charge anything to your account. When you think about whether or not we're chargeable, yes, we're charged with Adam's sin. When he fell, we fell. We're charged with our own sins and lack of righteousness and that is a multitude of sins both before and even after conversion. Yet, you stop and think: our conscience might charge us, Satan, he's the accuser of the brethren, he might charge but these charges avail nothing because they're all answered in Christ if the Lord Jesus Christ has paid our sin debt. In him our sins are pardoned and we have that perfect righteousness and justice that has been totally satisfied and that by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, that is what God is doing. He justified in one place, in one time, in one sacrifice, all

those that he's purposed to save and here in Romans 8:33, it says he continues to justify, "It is God that justifieth."

Dear friend, there is nothing that is going to change God's mind. He's faithful and just to forgive our sins if Christ Jesus has paid that sin debt. Oh, what good news this is, how God saves sinners and if you're one of those that he's purposed to save and for whom Christ has paid the death, then he's going to give you or has perhaps already given you his Spirit to draw you unto Christ that you might enter into the blessing and joy of what he has purposed, what Christ has purchased on behalf of sinners such as we are.

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