

I. Introduction

A. The Gospel

1. Begins with a God who loves
2. That God creates a nursery and then mankind, with His image and breath, is placed there as His child and friend.
3. And then man chooses not to trust Papa Creator - sinning against God. That sin becomes a part of the very nature of humankind, breaking the relationship that they shared and requiring punishment.

\*\*What should God do?

- Ignore the sin, or ...
- Punish them with eternal damnation because that's what they deserve, or ...
- Express the depth of His love in a way that can never be outdone.

B. Sin requires a response from a God Who is righteous.

1. God is love; God is light.
  - a. A God of love wants to forgive sinners, but a God of holiness (light) must punish sin and uphold the integrity of his righteousness.
  - b. Q: How can God be both just and justifier?
2. A: Jesus Christ
  - a. Jesus suffered the wrath of God (light) against sin at the cross.
  - b. Jesus fully met the demands of God's law and fully expressed the love of God for humanity.

II. Cross and Tomb (Romans 3:25-26)

A. God the Just

1. When it comes to forgiveness, God's righteousness is at stake.

"He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities." (Psalm 103:10)

  - a. We deserve immediate death and separation (We have no right to be relationally reconnected to God) but God had other plans.
  - b. God has been "passing over" our sins but in the end there must be a valid sacrifice/payment or else God is no longer just - no longer God!

\*\*Our forgiveness is actually a threat to a righteous God.

2. Our culture's view
  - a. Not a problem because they don't begin with God, but with man
  - b. Culture conforms God to our desires and wishes, rather than being transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

\*\*This is why sin and evil is so rampant.

3. A just God could have settled all accounts by allowing everyone to spend eternity in Hell as deserved by their sin.
  - a. But, John 3:17... "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."
  - b. The world was already condemned, but because of Jesus, the cross, and tomb, God's righteousness is intact and we didn't suffer the wrath we deserved.

Isaiah 53:5-6

"But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

\*\*Christ bore the wrath of God's light on our behalf. He deserved none of it because He was blameless. There is no greater act of love than this.

B. God the Justifier

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

1. God was not only just in dealing with sin, but, in love, He gave us His own righteousness through Christ!
2. Greek "*hilasterion*"
  - a. Propitiation: means of appeasing wrath and gaining the good will of the offended person
  - b. The Mercy Seat
    - 1) Septuagint (Greek version of the OT) uses this word in reference to the Mercy Seat.
    - 2) The Mercy seat was the golden lid placed on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. It was where "God would meet His people." Once a year, the High Priest would enter and sprinkle the blood from sacrifices on behalf of the people to symbolically appease God's wrath.
    - 3) How Paul is using it, both legal and as an vivid image ...

\*\*Jesus Christ Himself is the living, breathing mercy seat, the "place" where God now deals, finally and forever, with His people's sins. Only in Christ our sins are forgiven and God's wrath is satisfied.

III. The result of cross and tomb

A. God is the just (light) and justifier (love)

1. God did the only thing that could keep His character intact.

2. Sin is defeated and we are redeemed
- B. It is through Jesus Christ that God remains holy and our relationship can be restored. He is the only place that our sins can be dealt with.
1. Only way: the Lamb that was slain and became the mercy seat.
  2. No other way is sufficient.