

God's Righteousness Vindicated against Unrighteous Complaints

Romans 3:5–8

⁵But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) ⁶Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? ⁷For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? ⁸And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

Main idea: God's perfect righteousness will always bring Him glory. But the only hope that a sinner has is if that righteousness becomes his own through faith in Jesus Christ.

Introduction: What's at stake in the righteousness of God? Everything. Everything for us, and we're not even the ones that really matter here—except that it pleased Him to love us, and to show both the greatness of His justice and the greatness of His love in His Son.

1. God is righteous to inflict wrath upon the unrighteous (v5–6)

- a. Our unrighteousness does demonstrate the righteousness of God
 - i. By comparison to us. He is perfectly consistent and true and accurate. We are unstable like water. He is perfectly righteous. Apart from His grace in Christ, we are utterly sinful (as vv9–18 are about to declare).
 - ii. By His demand of atonement and demand of sanctification, as displayed in His covenant signs. (so, if we do not believe, and are therefore neither justified nor sanctified, the sign itself holds true, though we unrighteously refused to believe, cf. 1:5, 16:26).
- b. The complaint in v5b is so wicked that the apostle has to hedge with "I speak as a man."
 - i. The complaint assumes that God "owes us" or should be otherwise grateful for our making Him look righteous. To this, the apostle rightly retorts, "Certainly not!"
 - ii. The complaint forgets that God *will always* be displayed as righteous
 1. He is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably righteous. Of course(!) whatever He does with us will show Him to be righteous.
 2. This will be true in every single other instance as *He judges the entire cosmos*.
 - iii. When we realize that this impulse, to think that it's "not fair" to be judged this way, actually is present in us in our remaining sin, let us confess God righteous to condemn such sinful thoughts as we have.

2. God is righteous to judge liars as sinners (v7)

- a. But what about the idea that God's truth is actually shown more glorious by me?
- b. Again, this assumes that the truth of God can "increase" or that the glory of God can "increase." Such thoughts are unworthy of God, regardless of how they come about.
- c. The question in v7 answers itself: "because I am(!) a sinner!" Indeed, it would be *untrue* and *inglorious* of God not to judge my sin.
- d. God makes great display of His glory by judging believers' sin upon Jesus Christ, and exhibiting Christ as the great display of His own glory (cf. v25). Those who say that God could just "decide" to forgive sin, without fully judging it, are the ones who invent a wicked, unrighteous, untrue, inglorious god.

3. God is righteous to condemn those who excuse sin (v8)

- a. The proposal at the beginning of v8 presupposes the validity of the complaints in v5–7.
- b. But this is exactly how the wicked respond to a gospel of free grace—and they accuse faithful preachers of promoting such ideas.
- c. Here, the apostle views their judgment from afar and declares God's condemnation of them to be just.
- d. We must never excuse sin *for any reason*—let alone as a response to the gospel.

Conclusion: The greatness of God's righteousness—the very righteousness that He makes to be ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 3 verses 5 through 8. These are God's words. But if I were unrighteousness demonstrates, the righteousness of God, what shall we say? As God unjust, who inflicts wrath? I speak as a man. Certainly not for then. How will God judge the world For if the truth of God has increased through my life to His glory?

Why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say let us do evil that good may come as we are slanderously reported. And as some affirm that we say, their condemnation is just

So far the reading of God's inspired and a narrated text

What is at stake in the righteousness of God? That what we need to be thinking about, as we look at these four verses. And we see that in verse 5 is God unjust. And then in verse 7, why am I also still judged as a sinner? Why not say verse 8?

Let us do evil that good may come. Their condemnation is just So is God unjust to inflict wrath or in verse 7? Why does he judge? Sinners or verse 8? This declaration, their condemnation is just, why is it so important to the Apostle that he prove and demonstrate and declare that God is righteous?

That God is just that God is fair. Well, it's very important to the apostle for the argument that he's making what's at stake in the righteousness of God. Well, for us. Everything's at stake. Because the section that we're in, in the book of Romans right now, is one in which he began in verse 18 of chapter 1 to say.

The wrath of God is revealed against all of the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men And so if God's wrath is revealed against our unrighteousness, what hope do we have? Well, he had declared the hope just before that and verses 16 and 17, he wasn't ashamed to go. To Rome and proclaim the gospel to preach the gospel.

Why? Because in the gospel was displayed, declared the righteousness of God from faith and for faith for all who believe. And so if we being unrighteous or under the wrath of God, we will dwell in the immediate presence of the brightness of the glory of God. One way or another either as those who have been made to enjoy the brightness and of the of that glory and for whom that brightness and glory shine as a blessing or as those who receive destruction from the presence of God and from His glory in all of his intensity forever and ever.

What's at stake in the righteousness of God? Everything is for us because his righteousness is the only righteousness. We can hope to have If God is not righteous, then we have no hope.

Now, Although everything is at stake for us, we're not even the ones that really matter so much. Are we God is the one who matters in the beginning. God, He created all things are from him and he is the one who upholds, all things by the word of his power.

All things are through Him and all things, of course are to him. They are for His glory for from him and through him, and to him are all things to him, be the glory forever. The Apostle will conclude Later in this book towards the end of the very long opening argument.

And so God is the one whose glory matters. And the reason that we matter is because we are made in His image and the reason the elect who believe who come to believe, the reason, the believers matter is that it is pleased God to love us with redeeming, love to show both the greatness of his justice and the greatness of his love as he redeems us in his son.

So what does it take? Here is the very glory of God. And so we come to see in verses 5 through 6, God is righteous to inflict wrath upon the unrighteous. And in verse 7, God is righteous to judge liars. A sinners. And then verse 8, God is righteous to condemn all those who excuse sin.

First then God is righteous to inflict wrath upon the unrighteous He begins by posing a question that he has heard others say. In fact the question is So horrible to write out loud as it were to think out loud or say out loud that he concludes verse 5 by saying I speak as a man, I'm speaking like

men speak like the way I've heard them speak and perhaps, even as his own fleshly heart has spoken the heart that he received from our first father.

Adam. He says, if our unrighteousness demonstrates, the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust to inflict's wrath? Now the reason he's asking this question is because he's just come out of discussing, how there were people who were in God's church and received God's sign circumcision and the vast majority of them.

Although he in verse 1 just said,

Sorry not verse 1. Verse 3 just said some the vast majority who had been in God's church from Sinai and up until Christ and who had received God's sign of circumcision upon them. They had perished in their sins. They had never had the foreskin of their heart cut away.

They had never been atoned for by the blood that was spilled at circumcision. Or in all of those sacrifices, They had never come to faith. They had never been made alive. They were spiritually dead. As they came into this world and they continued as members in God's. God's church.

The Commonwealth of Israel. They continued in their spiritual death. The vast majority of them perished. Remember, we were thinking about well, what about the church after the coming of Christ? And remembering that in Matthew 7. He says that on the last day, many will say to him. Lord Lord in your name, did we not And three different things.

Three. Different times people who are in his church. People who presumably had his sign and many of us have known, ourselves have known People who are in the church and gave no evidence of real spiritual life or who perhaps seems to for a while. And then the truth came out of their hearts and out of their lives.

And so he had said, let God be true. But every man a liar as it is written that you may be justified in your words and may overcome. When you are judged David himself speaking and singing and praying in Psalm 51. As the Apostle, quote him in verse 4, David himself acknowledging that if he at last was lost God would be righteous to judge him.

Pour out his wrath upon him, But of course David was not lost. He was clinging to the mercy of God, even as he as he wrote that even as he sang, that even as he prayed that He was clinging to the promised Messiah. Even the one who had come from himself.

Great, David's greater Son, Jesus and none who cling to Jesus can ever be lost. Praise God.

But he asks, now well what about those others? If they're unrighteousness demonstrated, the righteousness of God is God unjust to who inflicts wrath. Well, the first thing that we need to admit here, is that our righteousness does demonstrate the righteousness of God. Take the case. In question, someone in his church and whether it's in the church between Sinai and Pentecost that is marked by circumcision or the church between Pentecost and the return of the Lord Jesus, which has marked by baptism.

It doesn't really make a difference. Take take either one if someone who has received the covenant sign doesn't believe as God somehow being inconsistent or untrue. Was the promise that he displayed in the sign and the membership in his covenant people with the advantages that that membership has that that was sealed by that sign?

Was that false? No. They were in the visible church. They had advantages. And if they had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, if they had believed in the promised Messiah, they would be saved and their eternal and invisible. Condition would be infinitely, more blessed than any advantages they had and being in the church.

So God was perfectly consistent and true and accurate in such a case. It's man who is unstable like water? It's man who can have all those advantages and see the reality. You remember from Hebrews 6, the powers of the age to come and the gifts of the spirit. It's we who are so unstable and false as to be capable of hearing, all that and participating in all that and doing.

So with a dead heart and just putting on a performance for men. And thinking to ourselves, that if men are convinced perhaps God is convinced to do that, we must be safe. Just as the place of the safe people. Isn't it? The church, but such a person is a liar.

We must not be such liars. We must not be. We must not be those who affirm things with our lips and pretend things to in front of other people. When we know them to not be true of ourselves. We say Abba. Father, We pray our Father who art in heaven, but our heart doesn't know him as our Abba, because the Spirit is not dwelling in our hearts and convincing us from our union with Christ.

God is my Father. He's adopted me as his son. He's put away the enmity. He's atoned for my sin.

And so in the first place are unrighteousness does demonstrate the righteousness of God, Whereas, he is perfectly consistent and true and accurate. Apart from his grace in Christ. We are utterly sinful as the next portion is about to declare, which we look to hear in two weeks. Time. A second way that God is, that are on our unrighteousness demonstrates.

The righteousness of God, is because he demands atonement for our sin in order that we would be right before him. And he demands cleansing from sin in order that we might find His presence of blessing forever. But we might find heaven. Heavenly. We have to be holy, We need that holiness.

As Hebrews 12 tells us without which none can see God. We need that purity. That is necessary in order to see him when, when he appears, we know, we will be like Him. John says in first John because we will see him as he is.

And so when God puts His sign upon us and his sign says you must be cleansed by the blood of Jesus or you cannot be forgiven and you must be conformed to the character of Jesus. Or you will not be able to enter heaven and enjoy heaven. Then yes, our unrighteousness demonstrates, the righteousness of God because what His sign declares that we need to be atoned for that.

We need to be cleansed. What has signed declares is true, I'll run righteousness. Does demonstrate the righteousness of God. And so the complaint in verse in this second half of verse 5. Applied in. The question is God unjust to inflict's wrath? How could you even ask a question that begins?

That way. Is God unjust to The answer? Of course is no Doesn't matter what comes after the two because God is perfectly righteous. He is infinitely righteous. There is no bound. There's no measure to the greatness of his righteousness. He is eternally righteous. He always has been and always will be because he is unchangeably righteous.

God can never change all of his perfections holds together as as one and are always infinite in their intensity.

And yet this complaint assumes that God owes us or should be otherwise grateful for our making Him look righteous. If I were unrighteousness demonstrates displays exhibits. The righteousness of God is God unjust. Do you think God should be grateful to you? That, what he does with your life shows forth.

His righteousness, it's literally impossible for him to do anything, unrighteous with your life.

And so God does not owe us. He should not be grateful to us. That his righteousness is displayed and his dealing with us to ask such a question itself as offensive. And so not only does he say I speak as a man at the end of verse 5. He says, certainly not for six.

You see the complaint forgets that God will always be displayed as righteous not just in everything that he does with us. Because righteousness is inherent to his being but because every action of his will be righteous and he is going to judge the entire cosmos and fallen angels, and reprobate men will be cast into the lake of fire and they will suffer that destruction, that comes from the brightness of the Lord.

The presence of the Lord and his glory forever and God will be righteous then Will he not be displayed as righteous when he judges the world?

Suddenly, many of us and I suspect all of us, because when the apostle says, I speak as a man, he is a man. What's he saying? He's saying I speak from my flesh. I have known that impulse. I have known that idea that if my unrighteousness shows forth. God's righteousness.

Then it's unfair that he would pour wrath out on me.

Certainly not and God forbid that we would think like that. But when we realize that these are the kinds of thoughts that occur to us from a remaining sinfulness and our remaining fleshliness, We come to a passage like this and we confess. No God. You are righteous and my unrighteousness is shown even by these ideas that occur to my heart.

And so let us when we have such thoughts. Kill them. Answer them with the arguments of the apostle God himself is righteous and he will be shown righteous by everyone whom he just lead judges and let us confess God to be righteous and condemning those sinful thoughts that keep coming out of us and let us agree with him.

Let us confess that such thoughts are unworthy of God to be killed. Well God is righteous. Then to inflict wrath upon the unrighteous In the second place. God is righteous to judge liars. As sinners for seven For if the truth of God has increased through my life to His glory.

So he's saying yes God is always true and always righteous but He does get shown more glorious. The more that that truth is displayed over against my lie, over against my falsehood in church membership over against my not believing in what His sign announces to me for. If the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory.

Why am I also still judged as a sinner Again? Doesn't the first part of the verse imply that God's truth can increase or that the glory of God can increase. It doesn't become more glorious. He doesn't get displayed more glorious. We want to be another occasion of him. Displaying his glory but regenerate person.

The one who loves him and hate sin, for his sake, That sort of person wants God to be displayed as glorious by our obeying Him by Jesus. Christ's character being copied and reproduced and someone who is a sinner like I am. And like, I was

But the idea that his truth can increase or his glory can increase. Such thought is unworthy of God. The question in verse 7 itself, seems to imply its own answer. Why am I also still judged as a sinner? Well, you just said you are a liar at the beginning.

The first part of the verse, If the truth of God is increased through my lie to his glory. Why am I also still judged it? Because lying is a sin, Your judges a sinner because you're a sinner, That's why we're touched a sinners.

We are the child who has not yet learned how to put on a good surface. Like older people have and when something has crossed their desires, just balls up their fists and says it's not fair. And what's the parent thinking? While you're response, demonstrates, that you need exactly what I just decided that you're responding to that way.

My dear little sinful child and now the Lord is showing that you're a sinner by bringing out the it's not fair now for a Christian child. Covenant child, the parents have the instruction of the gospel instruction of Scripture and the discipline that the Lord has commanded and the sign that the Lord has put upon them.

And we take all of these things to God as we use them in the life of our child say. Oh Lord, Thank you for bringing this sin out of my child's heart. Now, convince him, convince him of its wickedness, convince him of Christ's righteousness. Convince him of the salvation.

That is in the Lord, Jesus Use the instruction that I'm about to give him, use the discipline that we give them, bring true, internally inwardly spiritually, those things that have been pronounced on them. Externally and covenantally. Don't let him be. Just a member of your church here. One of those many who will hear on the last day depart from me.

I never knew you bring him to faith because he's a liar. He's a sinner. That's why we're judged as sinners. Because we're sinners, You see, God makes great display of his glory by judging believers

sin in. Hell, sorry, not believers. Sin by judging unbelievers sin in hell, but he made greater display of his glory, by judging believers sin.

At the cross for hell to be complete. It will go on forever and ever, at the cross, did not need to go on forever and ever. Because the one who died on the cross, the one who knew no sin, but was made to be sin at the cross is the God-man.

Yes. In his human nature, human body, human soul, but one divine person, and in his person, he suffered by means of his nature. The full wrath of God, for all of the sins for all who had ever believe in him and he finished an innumerable number. Quantity of eternities in three hours time and he said, it was finished when he was done.

So that if you want God's righteousness and God's truth to be Sean glorious, it will be shown infinitely. Glorious on you one way or the other. But if that's really your concern verse 7 person, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that great display of his glory. When we get to verse 25 because he's going to use the language of the courtroom and say that Jesus Christ or Christ, Jesus was exhibited set forth exhibit.

A is a propitiation. What's that word mean? It means someone who's payment was equal to that wrath that he's been talking about. That means, God is no longer wrathful against our sin. Why? Because the entirety of his wrath for the sin of believers was poured out on Jesus. Now, if you think about what that says about the Lord Jesus Christ, if the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all of the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men which is primarily that the unrighteousness and ungodliness was primarily in refusing to acknowledge God, Neither giving him.

Thanks nor giving him glory but pushing down upon the truth about God and our unrighteousness. And the argument that he's that the Apostle has been building and is in still in the midst of building is God's, wrath is as great as His glory. And then, he's going to come in a few verses and he's going to say, and it's all gone because the one who bore it is as great as His glory.

If we can say it, reverently verse 25 is going to say that at the cross. God showed that his son is at least as glorious as He is. Now that That is a display of the glory of God and that makes utter nonsense out of those who say that God could just decide to forgive sin and not judge it or condemn it.

If that were the case, then God would not be righteous, would he? Because he would just be pretending sin away. And if God were not righteous, how could we ever be righteous? Because His righteousness is the only hope that we have For our own selves to be righteous so that he who knew no sin was made sin made to be sin, Second Corinthians 5:21 so that we might become the glory, the righteousness of God.

Sorry, not the glory of God, the righteousness of God in him, It is the righteousness of God that we are made into when we believe in Jesus. We're joined to him by faith. So over seven, for if the truth of God is increased through my life to his glory.

Why am I also still judged as a sinner because you are. And if what you really want, is the display of the glory of God than believe in Jesus Christ. As God who became, man to die for sinners. In the last place. Then God is righteous to condemn those who excuse sin, He continues in verse 8, and why not say, Let us do evil that good may come as we are slanderously reported.

And to some affirm that we say their condemnation is just Now saying let us do evil that good may come that presumes the same things as we've already heard and verses 5 through 7, doesn't it? That somehow God's righteousness or God's truth, or God's glory may, be increased by our giving him the occasion to judge us.

Let us to evil. So that good makeup. But as we've already heard, We don't add anything to God, when we are just when we are judged. This is exactly how the wicked respond to a gospel of free grace.

They either say let us do evil that good may come, so that God may be glorified by judging us. Usually don't say that. But what they usually say, is, if you preach a gospel of free grace, that the

moment you believe in Jesus Christ, you are as righteous as Jesus Christ, that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Then what you're doing is saying that anyone who believes in, Jesus can sin as much as they want, they can, they can sin with license because they've already been forgiven, right? And God's just going to get more glory for forgiving them. More. This is actually how the Roman Catholic Church responded to the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, which was recovered in the revival, in 16th century.

Europe that we like to call the Reformation. He said all While your idea of God making sinners righteous, that's just a lie that God tells They're not righteous, but he says they're righteous. And if you tell people that lie, they're gonna think they can do it ever. They want.

But someone who says that about the grace of God doesn't understand. The first thing about the grace of God, do they that the grace of God starts with us by giving our dead heart's life? Because God has decided that he is going to save us and everyone whom he gives that life to They come to hate their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus.

And yes, they still have that remaining sinfulness sinfulness and that those remaining desires to sin. But God who started such a work because he decided to is not gonna stop. Such a work in the middle.

It is impossible for someone who believes in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for them to be lost as it is for Jesus to And Jesus's crossed to be undone or his resurrection to be undone For him to die again or be cursed again.

But I'm afraid there's a little papist in every one of us.

Because if you've walked with the Lord for a time, one of the things that you're remaining sinfulness and remaining fleshliness does with grace received and forgiveness received is try to convince you that since not so bad. After all I can keep doing it, I'll just come and say, sorry again.

And yet, aren't you? If you get into that habit and you're hardened in that habit, Now you're living for sin and using the gospel as an excuse. Oh God will be much glorified when I when I come and ask forgiveness this time. I'll just go ahead and do it and then I'll bring him glory that way in a little bit.

Isn't that the way the liar thinks the one whose membership isn't matched by the, in word work of the Holy Spirit? Should we not tremble? When such ideas come out of our hearts,

There are some who say, well, the way the preacher preaches, free grace, that's what made me think that way. And so I'm often in my life saying, let us do evil that good may come because that's a necessary inference from from this gospel of being made right with God, only by what Jesus has done.

And what I do doesn't make me right with God at all. So there's no need to do it.

Then the apostle says Why not say let us do evil that good may come as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say Now that puts preachers of free grace and good company. When people say oh the way they preach about forgiveness, the way they preach about righteousness, it just makes it so that everyone feels fine sinning.

Well, if they say that about your gospel, They said that about Paul's perhaps it's the same, But there is a kind of preacher who tells you not to feel so badly. When you sin and that obedience isn't necessary and that we're not perfect in the church, just forgiven which is a truth but the way it said is meant to imply, isn't it?

That's okay. To keep sending You shouldn't really get so worked up against it or over it. But that is the satanic law, isn't it? Why not say let us do. Evil that good may come. As we are slanderously reportant is not what he was saying. It was a slander.

And as some affirm that we say, their condemnation is just we must never excuse our sin for any reason of all. Let alone come to God like Adam and say this gospel that you gave me, it has caused me to sin.

No, no. Dear congregation do not do something. So wicked. Praise God. That he is perfectly righteous. And that this is the very righteousness that you have counted for you when you come to faith in Jesus Christ. And that, when he who started the work, has finished. It it will be the righteousness that is in you, in your mind, in your heart, from your lips and all of your actions forever and ever, in a new heavens and a new earth, body and soul perfectly.

Holy perfectly happy and the presence of the glory of God whom you delighted to bring glory. Not by saying, look what I can do now. That Jesus has forgiven me. But Look what I do Now that the Jesus who has forgiven me has sanctified me and glorified me with himself.

Amen.