

Life Group Notes

Sunday 8 March 2020

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Series: At The Cross

Title: The Cross: Revealed

Passage: Romans 3:21

Read Romans 3:21

At The Cross Series:

Throughout Lent we will be studying the Cross from various perspectives. By the Cross, we mean the suffering, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-25 is one long, dense sentence describing the Cross in various ways.

“The gospel is a many-sided diamond, and God wants people in all cultures to experience his complete salvation. But despite the multifaceted nature of Christian salvation, Western Christianity emphasizes one aspect of salvation (i.e., forgiveness of sins), thus neglecting other facets of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Jayson Georges

Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—

1. But now...

The cross creates a historic moment and a personal moment. History’s story is divided into before and after, and so are our individual stories.

2. The righteousness of God

Three words in this passage come from the same root in Greek: righteousness, just(ice), justified.

The personal aspect is called Justification. Justification is a legal term, belonging to the law courts. Its opposite is condemnation.

Both are the pronouncements of a judge. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, “Salvation does not merely consist in our receiving forgiveness of sins. The thing the apostle stresses is that we are given a positive new righteousness.”

The cosmic aspect is called Justice. The prophets kept promising that God would come and set things right, fix the broken world (e.g. Isaiah 42:1-3). Charlie Dates makes this point: “At the cross God got justice and we got righteousness. So now in the church, we who are righteous ought to be found fighting for justice.” Some Christians are passionate about personal righteousness. Others really care about social justice issues. These are inseparable – Christians care about both!

3. Has been manifested/ revealed

An imperfect system of atonement perfected in Jesus. An imprecise expectation of Messiah fulfilled in Jesus. An incomplete display of God’s righteousness completed in Jesus. Old Testament hints, symbols, prophecies, signposts, types all become plain at the Cross.

4. Apart from Law

Paul here means the Old Testament, Jewish, “Mosaic” Law. The Law was limited in power, limited in scope, and limited in time. But now Christ has suffered, and died, and been buried, and risen from the dead, and ascended to the Father to take up his throne, now this good news is unlimited in power, unlimited in scope and unlimited in time.

Questions:

1. Which of these seven words that we will be exploring over the next 7 Sundays means the most to you, and why? Revealed. Acquitted. Included. Freed. Paid for. Forgiven. Gifted.
2. What do you think about Lent? Are you doing anything differently during lent, and if so, what and why?
3. How is the cross a decisive moment in world history? What is the difference between history before the cross and history after the cross?
4. How do you feel about the Charlie Dates quote above about justice and righteousness? What does it mean that God cares about justice and is angry about injustice?
5. What does Romans 3:21 mean? What is revealed at the cross, according to this verse?
6. What issues of justice do you feel strongly about? What can you do to make a difference?