



## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

BY FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE

NOVEMBER 5-11, 2017

### SERMON OUTLINE

#### **By Faith Alone in Christ Alone November 5, 2017**

Romans 4:1-5  
Galatians 4:4  
Ephesians 1:10

#### **Why 'By Faith Alone in Christ Alone' is Important?**

##### 1. Our Struggle with Sin ... The Religious 'Fix'

Romans 3:10-12

##### 2. Our Need of Faith ... God's 'Fix'

Romans 4:1-5

Acts 4:12

5:8

Matthew 20:28, Romans

1John 4:9-10, 1Peter 1:18-19

**Our Rescue Comes Only by Faith Alone in Christ Alone**

Acts 2:37-39

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

*What do I need to do with what I have heard today?*

### MAIN POINT

The gospel is a summary of God's work through Jesus and our response to that work, which leads to salvation.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

**1. What hobby or activity do you typically do to help you get away from everything and "recharge"?**

**2. What do you think it is about that particular activity that helps restore you?**

**3. Do you think that activity would have the same restorative effect on you if you were able to do it more frequently? Why or why not?**

**Leader:** At various times in our lives, we all feel the need to be restored. The demands and concerns associated with our jobs, family, and so on eventually become more than we can handle with joy and excellence. In order to do them well, we need a time of restoration so that we can once again turn to those responsibilities. This need for physical restoration is symbolic of our need for spiritual restoration. All of us are broken in our relationship with God. In order to be with Him, we need restoration. Yet no amount of down time or effort on our part can bring this restoration about. Thankfully, God, in His great grace and mercy, has made restoration possible. The restoration God makes available is summed up in the gospel, the story of God's saving purpose in sending Jesus Christ to us in order to bring us back to Him.

### DIGGING DEEPER

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**Leader:** Paul got the bad news over with first in his letter to the Romans. From 1:18 through 3:20 he painted a drastic, but accurate, picture of the spiritual and moral condition of the human race broken by sin. *But now* (v. 21) he begins to paint a picture that is altogether different and superior.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 3:21-26.

**4. Verse 21 tells us that God's righteousness is provided for all people. Take a few minutes to look back at Romans 3:9-20 and discuss what makes this provision so important.**

**5. What do you think it means to fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23)?**

**Leader:** God is the Creator and Sustainer of everything, as Genesis 1–2 describes, but read just a little further and you learn that something went horribly wrong. God created us for a relationship with Him—a relationship that centers around praising Him and making His name known to the world. But the Bible doesn't mince words when it tells us that our relationship with God is broken. Genesis 3 describes the fall, or unraveling, of creation, when sin entered the world. Sin is understood as missing the mark when it comes to God and His expectation for His creation. The apostle Paul said that because of sin, we fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and we're considered dead as sinners (Rom. 6:23)—completely separated from God and under His judgment. Isaiah 29:13 and Matthew 15:8 help us understand that falling short of God's glory means we have hearts separated from Him because of our sin. The fellowship between God and humanity that existed in the garden is severed. Without God's grace, we're all spiritually hopeless. Thank God that our spiritual story does not stop with this dark picture of sin.

**6. Read Romans 10:9-10 and 10:13. According to these verses, how is a person saved? How does our salvation bring glory to God?**

**Leader:** God desires for all people to respond to Him through faith in Jesus and receive the salvation He offers. When we do, it brings Him glory and restores the fellowship that was broken in the garden.

**7. *Justify* (v. 24) is a legal term meaning God declares the sinner not guilty because of Jesus. If you are a Christian, then how has being declared not guilty changed your identity? Because of your relationship with Jesus, how does that challenge you to live differently?**

**Leader:** No one is without sin; we all have sinned. Instead of leaving us to die in our sin, God sent Jesus to die for us. He's the perfect solution to our sin problem, rescuing us from the punishment we deserve. Out of love for us, God sent Jesus to accomplish our salvation on the cross (Isa. 1:18). We receive salvation and eternal life through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which means we are forgiven and transformed. That's it! Once you believe in God's gift of salvation, the next step is responding to His great gift in repentance and faith. Turn away from your own direction and back to God. Repent from self and sin, then turn to Jesus.

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**8. If you are a Christian, what were some of the things that previously kept you from believing in Jesus? What changed your mind? What things today consistently remind you of the validity of your relationship with Jesus?**

### **DOING LIFE TOGETHER**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**9. Based on our discussion of the gospel and the sermon you heard on Sunday, can you confidently say that you are a Christian? If you have any doubts, questions, or want to talk further, don't hesitate to call or email me, or talk to someone else in our group.**

**Leader:** Deciding to follow Christ is the most important decision a person will ever make. Encourage your group members to talk to you afterward if they have questions about becoming a Christian or are ready to take that step. The following questions will help the Christians in your group process the gospel's implications in their lives.

**10. How does eternal life affect the way that you look at the world?**

**11. Based on what God has done for you, who do you know who needs to hear the gospel, and how does the Spirit equip you to share that with them?**

**12. Can you succinctly share your story of what God has done for you [4-5 minutes maximum]? Write it down this week, and practice sharing it with your spouse or a close friend. The more comfortable you are with sharing the gospel, the better prepared you will be when the opportunity to share arises.**

**Leader:** Encourage your group members to share their stories with one another, or plan to spend time doing this in your next group meeting.

### **PRAYER**

As you close in prayer, ask that the reality of God's gift of salvation by grace through faith in Christ will reach the depths of praise and gratitude in our hearts. Thank Jesus for descending to the depths of our need and taking upon Himself the penalty and punishment for our sins. Pray that God will give us such understanding and humble

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

appreciation for His gospel that we will be compelled to share it with others. Close by spending time praying by name for the people who came to mind who don't have our hope in Jesus.

### MEMORIZE

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." –Romans 3:23-24

### SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

#### ROMANS 3:21-26

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**3:21.** Few passages in Scripture are as rich in theology and as important for understanding salvation as this portion of Romans 3. Paul had established that all people have sinned and that the law is inadequate for salvation. What then? What is the hope? Paul's answer would have surprised many people. Apart from the law God has revealed His righteousness. Last week's lesson explained the law's function: it reveals sin (see Rom. 3:20). The law diagnoses the spiritual disease of sin. This lesson shows God provides the healing apart from the law. Though the law is inadequate to save a person, it does testify to God's means of salvation. The Old Testament serves a valuable role in our faith. The arrival of the New Testament by no means rendered the Old Testament obsolete. The Law and the Prophets testify to the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. This prophetic role is indispensable to our faith.

**3:22.** The phrase in verse 21 "attested by the Law and the Prophets" is parenthetical, and Paul returned to his point in this verse with the words that is. He clarified that God's righteousness is through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness is first and foremost an attribute of God, but it is also an activity of God. He is in the business of making us righteous. God desires fellowship with us, and in order to enjoy that fellowship He makes believers right. How is this righteousness imparted? Not through works! Paul has already denied that works is the means to righteousness. Faith is the answer to the question and is the key to salvation. Faith is also an important part of the theme of the letter (Rom. 1:17), but this is the first time Paul explicitly referred to Jesus Christ as the object of faith.

The offer of salvation is available by faith, as to all who believe indicates. The word for believe and the word for "faith" in the Greek language are from the same root. To "believe in" is to "have faith in" something or someone. The English word believe is inadequate to convey the force of the Greek word. Faith involves intellectual assent as well as a thorough commitment of a believer's life. The early church wrestled with the question of how Gentiles were saved. Paul had seen clearly that God offered salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. There is no distinction in the matters of sin and judgment (Rom. 2:11), and there is no distinction in the manner of salvation. God makes it available on the basis of faith.

**3:23.** Paul repeated the need for salvation. People of every race and gender need to be saved because all have sinned. God's righteousness is pure. Our sin renders us completely incapable of reaching Him. The task of righteousness, of accessing the glory of God, is completely beyond our ability. Glory is a difficult word to pin down but essentially means "the full weight" of God's attributes. Glory is God's splendor. It defines, in part, who God is. In Jewish thought Adam and Eve possessed God's glory before they sinned. Now, through Jesus Christ, God is restoring His glory in His people.

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**3:24.** This verse clarifies the result that “all who believe” (v. 22) enjoy. Justified means “to be declared right with God.” The context is judicial; the scene is a courtroom. The divine judge declares all who believe to be innocent. Freely translates a Greek word meaning “gift” and underscores the difference between the attempt at salvation by works and the free offer of God. This offer of salvation is the pinnacle of His grace. Nothing surpasses it, and nothing is more important than for us to experience it. Being declared right with God comes only through His grace. Knowing we have this gift relieves our fear and grants us peace. The means by which God grants justification is through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Redemption has a twin focus of deliverance or emancipation on the one hand and payment of a ransom to secure that freedom on the other. The image portrayed by this word is that of a condemned prisoner whose freedom is secured and who is then declared innocent. The word clearly emphasizes the freedom from sin that believers enjoy.

**3:25-26.** Propitiation is a term borrowed from the sacrificial system and the temple. The Greek word hilasterion was used for the cover of the ark of the covenant. Luther translated it as the “mercy seat” (Heb 9:5). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would sprinkle blood over the ark to atone for the nation. By this rite sins were deemed expiated; people became reconciled to God and God’s wrath was averted. But human sins could not literally be atoned for by the death of animals. “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). Thus Jesus came to accomplish what no priest slaying an animal could ever hope to accomplish: full satisfaction of God’s requirements for atonement. God the Father “made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). This involves a double imputation. Our sin was imputed to Jesus on the cross, and His righteousness was imputed to us. Justification is not a legal fiction; Christians are made righteous by the imputation of God’s own righteousness in His Son.