

## GOD'S POWER TO FORGIVE

Jesus' apostle Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" ([Romans 1:16-17 KJV](#)) If God is so powerful to have created the world, why then did he need another power, the power of the gospel?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

God is all powerful. God made the worlds, the universe. God hung the earth's hot sun in its place, and all other suns in the universe. God caused the earth's moon to orbit the earth in a regular, dependable pattern. The earth itself God made with all of its intricacies. God created life on this planet, every living creature! God created mankind, and put the seed of life within a man and a woman. But yet, God needed power to save mankind from hell! Even with all of His great creative power, God still needed power to be a righteous judge when issuing forgiveness to the world of sinful people. "Therein (in the gospel of Christ) is the righteousness of God revealed." (Romans 1:17)

The Holy God wanted the world to know of His righteousness in saving people. You see, actually, mankind did not earn, nor could it earn, God's salvation. The old prophet Isaiah put it this way, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. They hatch adders' eggs; they weave the spider's web; he who eats their eggs dies, and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched. Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who

treads on them knows peace. Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom." (Isaiah 59:1-9 ESV) In that passage Isaiah captured the true nature of sinful mankind! And Jesus' apostle Paul announced the reward for our sins, "The wages of sin is death," Paul wrote in Romans 6:23.

So how can God be a righteous judge and allow mankind to go free? God's arm is not shortened that it cannot save us, neither is God deaf so that He cannot hear us, **but** the problem is of our own making; the problem is our own sins! So how can God be a righteous judge and let us go free without punishment? The Gospel of Christ gives God the power of salvation, and allows God still to be righteous! That's right!

You see, the good news is that someone has taken our punishment! And God has righteously accepted the substitution. But who has been so bold, so full of love, to take our punishment? God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, accepted this grave responsibility! To us then, it is the Good News of Jesus Christ that gives God the power of salvation. The apostle Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation." Why would the apostle say that he was NOT ashamed of the gospel? Because the news was that someone had shamefully been crucified in a shameful Roman execution.

There was absolutely no dignity associated with a death on a Roman cross. If a soldier dies in an effort to save someone, then we call him a hero. But to die naked as a criminal of the state, suspended between heaven and earth as a warning to the watching world, no, to die that way would not be counted as heroic! Crucifixion was a shameful death!

But Jesus said this about that death, "**Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.**" (John 12:31-32 ESV) Friends, this is an amazing statement! Jesus says there were three things that would happen when He was lifted up. In the next verse, the apostle John tells us that Jesus "said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die." (John 12:33 ESV) And the people who heard Jesus knew that Jesus was talking about his death. "So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?"

(John 12:34 ESV) This Jewish crowd knew exactly what Jesus meant and they thought that Jesus being put to death by being lifted up would disqualify Him from being the Son of Man, the Christ, because they thought their Christ would never die! Jesus responded to their interpretation this way, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." (John 12:35-36 ESV)

Yes, Jesus knew exactly what kind of shameful death He would die. But He also knew what it would mean to the world, and to God. Jesus said there would be three things that would happen when He was shamefully lifted up. **Number 1**, Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world." It is as if at the death of Christ the whole of creation was being brought before the Judge of all the earth **and condemned**. When Jesus was lifted up the world was judged! **Second**, Jesus said the ruler of this world would be cast out! Three times in John's book Jesus refers to Satan as the "ruler of this world." When Jesus was lifted up Satan also was judged and cast out. Friends, Satan is your enemy and Christ has dealt with Him. Christ has robbed Satan of his power in the world. Satan can only have His way with those people who allow it! Satan's power was death! But Christ has taken the power of death away from Satan. The Holy Spirit explained it this way, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself [Jesus Christ] likewise partook of the same things, that through death he [Jesus] might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Hebrews 2:14-15 ESV) When Jesus was lifted up on the cross Satan was being condemned and robbed of his slaves. Satan's slaves could now repent and justly be forgiven.

But a third thing would happen when Jesus was lifted up. Jesus said, "I will draw all people to myself." What does this mean? Does it mean that everyone would believe in Jesus and His crucifixion and would be saved? Well, we see that all people have not believed the gospel. What then does it mean? It means that Jesus drew to himself all the sins of mankind from Adam down to the last person born into this world.

Jesus' apostle John put it this way, "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world." (1John 4:14 ESV) Furthermore, John

wrote, "He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." (1John 2:2 NIV)

Yes, friends, when Jesus was crucified three wonderful, earth shattering events happened. The world of sinners was judged and condemned in the uplifted Son of God; the instigator of sin and enemy of mankind was judged and cast out, never again may Satan control you without your permission! And thirdly, Jesus gathered up all the sins of mankind upon Himself, dying for them all. It is no wonder that Paul could say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Instead of shame, Paul felt compelled to preach the good news of the uplifted Christ to every creature, everywhere!

And so, even today, we preachers are not ashamed of the horrible death of Christ for the sins of mankind. For on the third day following His crucifixion, Jesus Christ arose from the dead, proving that He is God's Son. Forty days later Jesus Christ ascended to His throne at the right hand of God. (Acts 1) Jesus is now the Lord and Savior of the world. God is justified in forgiving you because Jesus paid your penalty.

God's forgiveness is now available to you. If you believe this good news about the uplifted Savior, God gives you a way to accept His great and sweet forgiveness. We call it His Plan of Salvation. God commands you to repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:18-20) Your baptism is a reenactment of what saves you, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Romans 6) God commands you to then live a new life, transformed by your gratitude and love. An apostle wrote, "We love him, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

(Romans 5:6-8 ESV)

Find a church of Christ near you so that you can find assistance in obeying the commands of God, obeying the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will receive wonderful forgiveness and find newness of life in the fellowship of Jesus' church.