



The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector:

Romans 3: God Justifies the Sinner who Believes

In the first and second chapters of his *Epistle to the Romans*, St. Paul has shown that all people, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, fall under God's judgment on account of their sin. At the beginning of the third chapter he returns to this point, first asking what advantage the Jew has and what benefit the Jew gains by virtue of his circumcision (verse 1). In answer to this, his first point is that there is a great advantage, that which lies in the Jewish nation's being entrusted with the oracles of God (verse 2). The oracles of God are the Old Testament, as the Jews had it in the first century AD, in particular, the Law (or Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament) and the Prophets. It was a great advantage for the Jewish nation to have received this divine revelation of God's moral Law and the

prophecies calling the people to observe His commandments and predicting the birth, life, passion, death, and resurrection of the Christ and His coming to judge the world. The Lord Himself told the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar that salvation is from the Jews (*St. John 4:22c*), so



St. Luke 23:39-43

indicating that God's revelation given to the Jews and recorded by them shows the way to salvation. It does so by presenting God's moral standards and, through people's awareness of these, the conviction of sin by which the Holy Spirit brings them to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

for the forgiveness of their sins.

St. Paul maintains this advantage the Jewish nation has in being entrusted with God's word, asserting that the faithfulness of God in so entrusting His word to them was not rendered ineffective by the unbelief of some (verse 3). St. Paul is

viewing his own nation from the perspective that, though many of them continue in unbelief and disobedience (a fact he again confronts in *Romans 9-11*), some Jews have come to faith in Christ and obedience to him. The unbelief of some, even if it were all and not just some Jews, cannot cancel or nullify the faithfulness of God since God's testimony remains true even if every man is a liar (verse 4). As evidence of God's truthfulness, St. Paul quotes from *Psalms 51:4*, which is King David's testimony to God's just judgment and the

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Romans 3: God Justifies the Sinner who Believes

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truth of His charge against David: That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged.

St. Paul decisively counters a possible argument that might now arise. Some might say that if man's sin and wickedness only demonstrate by contrast the righteousness of God, could it not be the case that God is unjust to inflict judgment because of human wrongdoing? St. Paul replies with a strong negative, "By no means!" The reason is that if God were unjust, how would He judge the world (verse 6)? Sin remains sin and the sinner a sinner even though God's truth abounds the more for His glory through man's sin (verse 7). However, this does not mean that we can take the lawless attitude expressed in the words, "Let us do evil things, so that good things may come" (verse 8), or as some believe today, "Let us sin more, so that we may receive more grace and forgiveness from God."

St. Paul again asks the question whether the Jews are in a better position than the Gentiles. Some interpret this question as, "Are we worse off?" The Greek verb can be thought of as middle voice with an active meaning ("Are we better

off?"), middle voice ("Do we hold up any excuse as a shield in front of ourselves?"), or passive voice ("Are we excelled?" or "Are we worse off?") My preference is to interpret this verb as middle voice, meaning, "Do we have an excuse?" This fits well with the theme of the whole discourse in the remainder of the chapter. St. Paul answers this question with great certainty, "No, in no wise" (*Romans 3:9a*), since he has proved in the preceding chapters that Jews and Greeks (representing all nations) are under the power of sin and therefore guilty of it.

St. Paul now builds proof of man's sinfulness from Holy Scripture. We must note here that these quotations do not distinguish between Jew and Greek, or Gentile, in the matter of sin. All human beings are guilty of sin. The first verse from which St. Paul quotes is *Ecclesiastes 7:20*, which tells us that there is no righteous man on earth. The full verse adds there is no one who does what is good and does not sin (*Ecclesiastes 7:20b*, NKJV). St. Paul adds to this the testimony of *Psalms 14:1-3* that there is no one righteous, no one who seeks God, but "they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (*Psalms 14:3*). After that, he cites *Psalms 5:10*, which describes people whose

throat is an open grave, who practice deceit with their lips. The descriptions of sinful behavior are associated with death and deceit, and the quotation from *Psalms 139:4* that speaks of the poison of asps under their lips, implies mankind is controlled by the Serpent, the Devil, while *Psalms 10:7* describes a mouth full of cursing and bitterness. As if this were not enough, verses are added to show man's violence in shedding blood (*Isaiah 59:7*; *Proverbs 1:16*) and how destruction and misery characterize his ways (*Isaiah 59:7c*) while people have no fear of God (*Psalms 35:2*).

Now all this Scriptural testimony to man's evil ways St. Paul attributes to God's law, for he writes:

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Romans 3:19,
KJV

The witness of Holy Scripture (here various parts of the Old Testament, but mainly portions of the *Psalms*), through which the Spirit of God speaks, brings a charge against all people: We are all guilty of sin. Here St. (Continues on page 3)

Romans 3: *God Justifies the Sinner who Believes*

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Paul does not argue that those who were not subject to the laws of the Old Testament are not guilty of sin. His understanding is rather that the whole world is under God's judgment, since all are subject to God's universal law, and all must hear the verdict that they are guilty. No one, he continues, can be justified in God's presence on the basis of good deeds done to fulfil God's law, since through God's law comes the knowledge of sin (**Romans 3:20**).

Why is the above such an important part of the Gospel and its preaching? No one will be convicted of sin if we do not preach the truth of God's judgment against sin and man's guilt as God's verdict. No matter how much good anyone does or tries to do, he cannot extract himself from the predicament of guilt before God and its accompanying sentence of eternal death in everlasting hell. But God, in His love, mercy, and grace did not leave mankind in this despair!

One of the most powerful phrases in this chapter comes at the beginning of verse 21: "But now..." If it were on the basis of God's law alone and by good deeds done that a man is established in a right relationship with God, none of us would have any hope of

eternal life. "But now" brings in a new dimension, a new reality, a reality that was brought about apart from law but which was predicted by the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament—the revelation of God's righteousness. This righteousness of God is revealed and received through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ expressed by all who believe, whatever their nationality (verse 22). On the one hand, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**). On the other hand, all are justified freely through the redemption that is in the Lord Jesus Christ (**Romans 3:24**). The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is proof of God's designation of Christ as the means of expiation of sins (**Romans 3:25**), demonstrating His righteousness on account of the remission of all past sins through God's forbearance (**Romans 3:26**). All this proves God's righteousness, so that He may be just and the One who justifies whoever believes in Jesus. All human boasting or grounds for pride are excluded on the principle not of good deeds but of faith, since a person is justified, or set in a

right relationship with God, by faith apart from works of law. God, being God of Jews and of all other nations, justifies everyone through their faith. This does not mean that we replace law with faith; rather, we put law on a firmer footing.

***Father,
You are kind and good.
It is impossible for anyone
to deserve what Jesus has done.
Your grace is free,
undeserved, and unconditional.
There is nothing
I can ever do to repay You
for all You've done
and all You continue to do
in my life.
I am saved by Your grace alone,
and in grateful response
I humbly thank You
and offer myself to You.
With Your Spirit's help,
may I live this day
for Your glory.
Amen.***

Christians must still aim to obey God's commandments and be resolved to do so, but they are justified by God solely on the basis of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

— *The Reverend
Chris Parrish*

What is So Wrong with God?

I have been pondering a question in my head for the last few weeks now. I notice that more and more, there is an active attempt by some to remove God from every part of our daily lives.

About a month or so ago, news agencies reported that the City Council of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, had voted to discontinue reciting the Pledge of Allegiance before their meetings. The intent was to allow for more inclusiveness with the diverse population of their constituents based on the fear that some people might be offended by it. (The constituents protested, and the Council voted to reinstate the Pledge.)

Around the country, protests have arisen over the presence of the Ten Commandments cut into stone on the front steps of courthouses. The thought is that having the Ten Commandments at the front doors conflicts with the separation of church and state. (This so-called separation just means that the government cannot dictate that its citizens practice a specific religion or a single way to worship. It means that the government does not endorse one religion over another. Americans even have the choice to not worship at all.)

These are only two examples of the efforts under way to eliminate God from our lives. The purpose, I believe, in making this effort is the notion that if God is removed from our lives and has no part in the nation's fabric, then we can all be equal in society and this will foster a sense of inclusiveness. The thought is that then our lives will be better and, in turn, happier.

So this brings me to the question: What is so wrong with God? If God is not present in our lives, will life as we know it really be better?

Our country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. The Ten Commandments are the foundation of our country's laws. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution have God written all through them. The motto *In God We Trust* is even on our currency. All this shows that the Founding Fathers recognized that God is essential to every aspect of our national life. It is also our reminder of Who has actually given us the blessings we enjoy as one nation under God.

In my observation, it seems to me that America is pulling farther and farther away from God. The more we separate ourselves from God, the more isolated we become from one another. This in turn causes us to look for other things to fill in what is

missing. It is human nature for us to be in community, and God is the center of that community. The stronger the attempts to have God removed, the more distant from God we become and each other. Taking God out of our national life is not bringing us together. No sort of equality grows out of separation.

God is very inclusive. He invites every one of us to come to Him and welcomes all who choose to seek Him. The freedoms that God has blessed us with also allows us to come together to pray in a community. God's community gives us strength.

I remember something my sister told me once. At the time, she was wearing a cross necklace. She said to me that she was not wearing the cross to tell people that she was a Christian but to remind herself that she was a Christian. That has always stuck with me.

It is very important to me to keep God first because He is the bulwark of this great country. Keeping God on our minds will also keep Him in our hearts and bring us closer to one another. We need to stop trying to look for what is wrong with God and hold tightly to what is right with God.

— Julia McNeely



The LORD is my rock
and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength,
in Whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold.

Psalm 18:2

Our Chapel Family Prayer List

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness:

Archbishop
Foley Beach;

Bishop
Bill Ilgenfritz;

Canon
Michael Penfield;

Father Chris Parrish;

Deacon Peter Vogel; and

Deacon Linda Bracken;

also all those who serve as Thy ministers in governing our nation and state, particularly:

President
Donald Trump; and

Governor
Gavin Newsom;

as well as all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; especially those for whom our prayers are desired:

the soldiers, sailors,
marines, airmen,

police officers,
firefighters, and pilots
who protect us every day;

our persecuted Christian
brothers and sisters
throughout the world;

all refugees;

Jim and Edna Davis;

Estelle Wilson;

Joya de Rossett;

Sharon De Souza;

Debbie;

Scott;

Brittany;

James and Tanya Theiler;

Dale Quinn;

Brian Quinn;

Lisa;

Ben;

Marion;

Flo;

Max;

Dan and Kendra Pack;

Ernst Hernandez;

the Stanko family;

Yoshihiko and Hideko
Ikegami;

Elizabeth Ann
and her husband;

Stephen;

Lori Anderson;

Ali Hemphill;

Lori Hemphill;

Pennel Magaw;

Tracy Magaw;

Lourdes Fernandez;

Mary Frances Reeves;

Maryanne Sanchez;

Kaitlyn Lindstedt;

Pamela;

Claudia;

Brenda Terry;

Elise;

Thomas and MaryAlice
Dunbar;

Mrs. Kitt;

Jon Carter;

Marilyn;

Frank Capone;

the family of John Jerre-
hian;

Maria Fernandez;

Dave Joines;

Rose Handwerker;

Ann and Frank MacVoy;

Bishop Ilgenfritz;

safety on the highways
for all who commute,
especially
during rush hour;

the life
and continuing longevity
of St. Luke's
Chapel in the Hills; and

for all those
who are in our hearts,

that it may please Thee to
comfort and relieve them,
according to their several
necessities; giving them
patience under their suf-
ferings, and a happy issue
out of all their afflictions.
And this we beg for Jesus
Christ's sake. Amen.

Please note: This prayer
list was current as of
September 1st, and
the people of St.
Luke's will pray for
each need until we
are notified that it has
been met. Please con-
tact Father Parrish to
make corrections.
Thank you!



Parish Postings

St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills will host its annual International Day on Sunday, September 1st. This celebration of our oneness in Christ will begin with Holy Communion and Holy Unction at 10:00 AM and continue with a potluck international luncheon in McNeely Hall. Invite your friends and neighbors!



Bible Study will resume on Sunday, September 8th, at 9:15 AM in McNeely Hall. We will be studying the *Book of the Prophet Isaiah*. All are welcome!



The Vestry will meet on Sunday, September 15th, immediately following the worship service. All interested parishioners are invited to observe.



The Vestry invites all parishioners to read the By-Laws and submit any possible changes and updates to any member of the Vestry before the next Vestry meeting on Sunday, September 15th. Copies of the By-Laws are available in McNeely Hall.



Our Summer Community Missions Project is to collect funds with which to make a donation to North Valley Community Foundation. North Valley Community Foundation makes grants to 501c3 organizations working to bring relief to those affected by the devastating Camp Fire. For more information, please visit

www.NVCF.org

Please note your donation to this cause by writing *NVCF* on your check memo line or offertory envelope so that our Treasurer will know how to allocate the funds. Thank you!

Upcoming Events

Sunday, September 1st

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity
International Day

Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM

International Day Potluck
immediately following the worship service

Sunday, September 8th

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Isaiah
9:15 AM

Office of Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Holy Communion
12:00 PM

Sunday, September 15th

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Isaiah
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
10:00 AM

Vestry Meeting
immediately following the worship service

Sunday, September 22nd

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Isaiah
9:15 AM

Office of Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Holy Communion
12:00 PM

Sunday, September 29th

The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Isaiah
9:15 AM

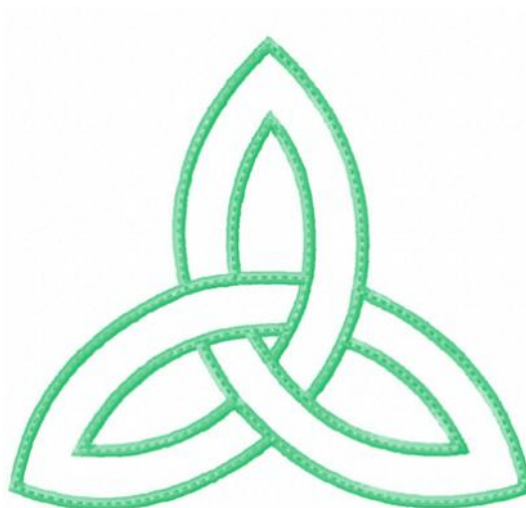
Holy Communion
10:00 AM

Sunday, October 6th

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Isaiah
9:15 AM

Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM





The Hillside Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF
ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL IN THE HILLS
ANGLICAN CHURCH

A PARISH OF
THE CONVOCATION OF THE WEST,
PART OF THE
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ALL SAINTS IN
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

26140 Duval Way
Los Altos Hills, California
94022-4413

Office phone:
650-941-6524

Rector's cellular:
669-245-9701

E-mail:

ChristopherParrish7@gmail.com

Website:

www.StLukesChapel.church

«AddressBlock»

Worship Schedule

St.

Luke's Chapel in the Hills is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the 1928 edition *Book of Common Prayer*. We invite you to join us for worship soon!

***"A place
where the Bible is taught."***



*Biblical in teaching.
Liturgical in worship.
Loving in practice.*

First, third, and fifth Sundays of each month

Holy Communion
(with Healing Service on First Sunday)
10:00 AM

Second and fourth Sundays each month

Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Said Holy Communion
noon

Please note that both services on Feast Days occurring on these Sundays will be Holy Communion.