

## Supreme Paradox!

### I. Announce:

- A. **Slide#1** Tem/Murr Rescue Mission - has their Mobil Medical Unit for you to tour.
  1. Medical profession volunteers are invited to sign up & use their gifts.
  2. To encourage those in need of medical care to come & use it. [See Eric Wells]
- B. **Slide#2** Join me this Thursday to hear our Mayor, Doug McAllister, giving the *State of the City*.
- C. **Slide#3** Interview Carlos & Valeria Ramos (GRN) to Brazil.

### II. Slide#4 Intro:

- A. **Slide#5,6** Now we find light at the end of the sin-tunnel! (Rom.3:10-18)
- B. The main Questions to answer this morning:
  1. How can a **holy** God *forgive* **guilty** people?
    - a) If our judges in our courts did that, Wouldn't they be removed from their office?  
Wouldn't our society fall apart?
- C. So we learn about what Bengel called, "*the supreme paradox of the gospel*".
  1. Webster defines a **paradox**, "a statement that is **seemingly contradictory** or **opposed to common sense** & yet is perhaps **true**."
  2. G.K.Chesterton gave the definition for a **paradox** as "truth standing on its head shouting for attention."
  3. A paradox is a **powerful vehicle for truth**, *because* it makes people **think**.
    - a) **The Scriptures often use Paradox** - We **see**, unseen things (2 Cor. 4:18); we **conquer** by yielding (Rom. 6:16-18); we find **rest** under a yoke (Mt. 11:28-30); we **reign** by serving (Mark 10:42-44); we are made **great** by becoming little (Luke 9:48); we are **exalted** by being humble (Mt. 23:12); we become **wise** by being fools for Christ's sake (1 Cor. 1:20, 21); we are made **free** by becoming His bond servants (Rom. 6:10); we **wax strong** by being weak (2 Cor. 12:10); we **triumph** by defeat (2 Cor. 12:7-9); we find **victory** by glorying in our infirmities (2 Cor. 12:5); and we **live** by dying (2 Cor. 4:10,11).
- D. **Title:** Supreme Paradox [*How can a holy God forgive guilty people?*]
- E. **Outline:** Three Metaphors & Three No's.
- F. As a teaser...I will prove at the end, we can be saved *by works*!

### III. Slide#7 THREE METAPHORS! (21-26)

- A. **3 Metaphors** are given to describe what God has done for man's sinful condition:  
**A Courtroom; Slavery; Sacrifice.**
- B. **Slide#8 [1] A COURTROOM!** (21-24a,26)

- C. We have the picture of a **Condemned Man** in a courtroom, as he hears the verdict of **acquittal** (not guilty).
- D. **#8a Justification** – a legal declaration, an announcement of one’s status before God.
1. It’s opposite is *condemnation*.
  2. It *doesn’t mean* we are **instantly perfect & holy**;
  3. It *does mean* we are **instantly forgiven & loved** by God.
  4. It *does mean* Christ’s righteousness is **instantly credited** to our account.
  5. It *does mean* God looks at us & sees the **perfect obedience** of **His Son**.
    - a) The Old religion(Judaism) thought “a man can attain to a right relationship w/God by keeping meticulously all that the law lays down. If he fulfills all the works of the law, he will be right w/God.”<sup>1</sup>
      - (1) Yet we know that no man ever **kept, or will ever keep, every** commandment of the law. **Simply because**, man is **an imperfect creature** who can **never** render a **perfect obedience**.
    - b) The Law...
      - (1) The Law helped man to **become aware** of his sin.
      - (2) The Law helped man to **know what he ought to do**, so he could realize that he is not doing it.
      - (3) The Law helped man to **see** that as he tries to **satisfy the law**, he will realize he will **never satisfy it**.
      - (4) The Law helps man to **see** the way to God is **NOT by the law**, but **by Grace!**
  6. **Justification** then is not to **make** someone *something*, but to **account** someone as *something*.
    - a) Rom.4:5 **God justifies the ungodly**.
    - b) **But wait!** - Prov.17:15 says, **He who justifies the wicked**, and he who **condemns the just**, **Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD**.; **And**, Ex.23:7 says, **For I will not justify the wicked**. **Then** he turns around & **does** it...**How can He?**
- E. **#8b Righteousness** – He not only **cancel**s our failures, **Justifies** us, but he also **declares** us Rt.
1. **Isn’t that the same?** Nope!
    - a) If a **Teacher** **cancel**s out an **F** you got on an exam, **it isn’t the same** as **declaring** it an **A!**
    - b) If a **Bank** were to **forgive you the debts** of your account, **that** wouldn’t be the same as **declaring** you **rich!**

---

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, pg.53.

(1) So also, **canceling** our sins, is not the same as **declaring** us **righteous**.<sup>2</sup>

- F. **#8c** All have sinned (entire human race has *plunged into* sin w/Adam) and **Fallen short** (means to lack, or to be without. *Present tense we “keep on falling short”*)
1. **Fall short of what? His glory** (i.e. His splendor or radiance)
    - a) **We fail** to show the outward manifestation of what God is;  
**We fail** to be like Him, to be Christ like!
- G. **#8d** **Freely** – (lit.) *Without any cost!*
1. A **wage** is something you earn or work for.
  2. **God’s grace however is a Gift to us**. Exactly opposite of what we deserve. It comes only **one way**...through the blood of Jesus Christ.
- H. **Slide#9a [2] SLAVERY!** (24b)
- I. We have here the picture of an *Enslaved Man*, standing on his **slave block**, who hears he is **redeemed** from his bondage, & is **set free**.
- J. **#9b** **Redemption** – means a ransoming, a liberating, a redeeming.
1. It means man was in the power, the grip, the dominion of sin, & the ownership of Satan; **And now**, Jesus Christ’s blood purchased him & set him free.
    - a) Yet, “Freedom is not the right to *do as you please*, but the liberty to *do as you ought*.”
- K. **Slide#10 [1] SACRIFICE!** (25)
- L. We now have the picture of a *once Guilty Man* at the **Cross of Christ**, as he hears that the **wrath of God** has been **removed**.
  - M. **Propitiation** – fancy word that means *satisfaction*.
    1. **Jesus’ death** was necessary to **satisfy** God the Father’s need to judge sin.
      - a) This is so important because it preserves God as a **just judge** of sin, **even though** we have been forgiven.
    2. **Propitiation** is a sacrifice that bears the **wrath** of God & **thereby** turns Gods **wrath** into **favor**.<sup>3</sup>
      - a) **Because He passed over sins & not punished** them in the past(OT), people could rightly accuse God of unrighteousness.
      - b) **The assumption**...A God who does not punish sins...is not a righteous God.
      - c) **The cross** showed He could still be righteous by **storing up** the punishment of all the OT saints, **then gave that penalty** to Jesus on the cross.
    3. By pouring out His wrath on His own Son, God rightly judged our sin

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, The Passion of Jesus Christ, pg.39.

<sup>3</sup> Grudem, Systematic Theology, pg.510.

a) Even those *previously committed* i.e. pre-cross.

N. So, Q: How can a **holy** God forgive **guilty** people?

1. A: God the **Lawgiver & Judge** obeyed His own law, **died** for us, & **paid the penalty** for our sins...The Judge is now our **Savior**.

#### IV. Slide#11 **THREE NO'S! (27-31)**

A. **3 NO's** are given to describe what God has done for man's sinful condition:  
**No Pride; No Prejudice; No Presumption.**

B. Slide#12a [1] **NO PRIDE!** (27,28)

C. What's our response to this? – "*Look at the Gift I've Earned!*" (Nope!)

D. If the way to God is the way of **faith & acceptance**, then **ALL** boasting in human achievement is gone!

1. **Quit trying** to keep a **profit & loss** statement w/God!
2. **Quit making** an entry on the **credit** side of the page **whenever** you carry out one of the law's requirements.
3. You see, the Gift always glorifies the **Giver not the Recipient!** [So, no boasting!]
  - a) Thus the Hymn writer says, "When I survey the wondrous cross, On which the prince of glory died, **My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride!**"

E. The way of **obedience to the Law** is concerned with what a **man** can do **for himself**;  
The way of **Grace** is concerned with what **God** can do & has done **for a man**.

1. Thus, the way to a right relationship with God **lies not** in a frenzied, desperate, doomed attempt to **win acquittal** by our **performance**; **it lies in** the humble, penitent acceptance of the love & the grace which God offers us in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

F. #12b [2] **NO PREJUDICE!** (29,30)

G. One of the Jews might have questioned, hey that's great for the **Gentiles** who didn't know the law, **but what about us who did?**

1. Paul takes them to the basis of the Jewish creed, the very thing that every Synagogue service always begins with, even today...The Shema, "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!**"
  - a) **One** – Not, **one kind** of God for the **Gentiles** & **one kind** for the **Jews**...The Lord is **One!**
  - b) The way to Him is the same way for all!

H. #12c,13 [3] **NO PRESUMPTION!** (31)

<sup>4</sup> William Barclay. Pg.56.

- I. **The end of the law? No!** - It strengthens it!
1. The Law is **not evil** & the law should **not be ignored**.
  2. **Up to this time**, man **tried** to **be a good man**, **tried** to **keep the commandments**, **tried** to **serve God**, **because** he was **afraid** of God & **terrified** of the punishment that would come.
    - a) But now we strive for goodness **because** we **love** God, **not because** we are **afraid** of Him!
    - b) It is **not the law of fear** **but the law of Love** that keeps a man right!
      - (1) Many people do not care to be **fined** or even **imprisoned**, **but often** what keeps a man from **shipwrecking his life** is **the eye of one who loves him**.
        - (a) **Remember the old films**: The cops on the **bullhorn** trying to get the man holding hostages inside to give up, *“no way coppers, never take me alive!”* Then, “Johnny...this is your mother!” – “Ma?”
        - (b) It is **not the law of fear** **but the law of Love** that keeps a man right!
- J. Read what Paul says later in **Rom.8:3,4**...regarding what happens to **the law** now!
- K. **Wrap up!** – Christ’s righteousness is given to us as **a gift**.
1. It is ours **by faith**, **apart from the law**, **apart from works**. *All because of Christ!* – **That is the flip-side of sin!**
  2. **Did you know** we **can** actually agree to the statement, *“we are saved by works!”* - As long as we qualify it with...***His works not ours!***
- L. **Slide#14,15** **Have you found Jesus?**(see Him behind the curtains?)
1. Actually, He was never lost...**but we all have been lost?**
  2. We are lost sheep in need of a Shepherd & He would love to be yours this morning.
- M. **End: Water Bottle Illustration.** [start with a water base - sodium Hydroxide]
1. **At Conception** sin enters from the parents to the child [add red drops] [Turns red-Phenanthrene]
  2. **At Justification** we are **set right** w/God. He deposits His rt into our account. We are delivered from **sin**. [add acid/drops, clears up] [Acidic Acid, strong vinegar]
  3. **At Sanctification** we **grow in** holiness, [If I put more **sin/drops in**, **nothing happens!**] We are delivered from the **power** of sin. [no matter how many “red/sin” drops, wont turn red again]
  4. **At Glorification**, we are **delivered from the presence** of sin altogether. [set bottle aside]