

Question: Have you ever had to trade or sell something of great personal worth in order to pay a debt? Based on that experience, describe how it must have felt to God to exchange His Son for us.

4. Propitiation - Your debt has been paid by Christ. Read Romans 3:25 together as a group. The word propitiation means - the appeasement of God's judgment by a sacrificial offering. Last week, we discussed the fact that we are all guilty of sin and incapable of satisfying the righteous requirements of the Law. The Good News is that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He made a provision to meet those requirements.

Propitiation describes the specific method of payment. Jesus Himself was the payment or substitution for our sin debt. Our sin isn't just an inconvenience to God that must be somehow addressed. Sin is a violation, or infraction of the law that carries with it a penalty of spiritual death. **Read more about that in Romans 6:23.** In the redemptive exchange of the cross, Jesus became the *propitiation* or *payment* for the debt that we owed because of our sin.

So, what does that mean to each of us? Some of us might see ourselves as failures, unworthy of love and deserving of punishment, just waiting for God to get the belt out after us or send a lightning bolt zipping through the sky. Or maybe some of us may have found ourselves caught in the Blame Game, blaming others for our sin. Propitiation means that by His death on the cross, Jesus satisfied God's judgment. He met the righteous requirement for each of us. We don't have to pay for the sins of our past or blame others. The substitution has been made – and we can be free.

Question: What “forms of payment” have you been offering for your failures?

Personal Application

You have the opportunity to trade in your sin, your shame and eternal separation from God for the purity, the goodness and peace with God – will you do it?”

Prayer

Give group members an opportunity to receive God's free gift of Life through Jesus.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Week 3 – The Great Exchange

Announcements

Servolution - March 26 – April 4

A Life Made Beautiful - May 7-8, 2010

REACH Honduras Team - June 19 – 27

LEAD Internship Interest Meeting - March 14

Newcomers Dinner - Sunday, March 21

Water Baptism - March 28

Daylight Savings Time - Sunday, March 14

Doctor & Dentist Dinner – March 14 | email damos@churchoftheking.com

Warm-Up

What do you think is the best “fix” for a bad habit or an undesirable behavior?

Word

In this series, **What is the Gospel?**, we are spending six weeks studying the first eight chapters of the book of Romans. Last week, we discussed some of the excuses we might offer when we are faced with our sin and the truth of the gospel. We learned that these common excuses really aren't valid excuses at all. We ended last week with the realization that we are all sinners and there is nothing we can do to work our way into a right relationship with God and that's the *Not So Good News*.

This week we continue our study with a lesson entitled **The Great Exchange**. Our text for this lesson is Romans 3:21 through 5:10. In this text we will once again take a look as the author, Paul, continues to unpack – *What is the Gospel?* In Romans 3:20, we are left with the question, “Well,

what can be done about our sin issue?” In our passage today, Paul begins to show us the *good news* of the gospel - what God did in order to give us life and a relationship with Him. We find an *exchange* that took place as Jesus willingly exchanged His life for ours, His perfection for our imperfection, and because of that, we can be saved. In this lesson, we are going to look at **Four Building Blocks of the Great Exchange**.
Read Romans 3:21-25 together as a group.

1. Justification - You are justified by faith. Go back and read **Romans 3:23-24 together as a group.** Now, let's take a moment to dig deeper into the term - **Justification**. Commonly we hear this word used to describe whether a person was excused in their action: “He was justified in his reaction...” But actually, this word has much deeper significance than how we typically use it in conversation – it is a legal term. It means to be granted a righteous standing. It's more than “not guilty,” it means “acquitted” – as if you had never done anything wrong.

When Jesus gave His life on the cross for our sins, His blood not only granted us forgiveness, it actually washed us clean, removing any hint or stain that would indicate that there had ever been anything wrong! God sees us through the lens of His Son's sacrifice, continually justified and righteous, worthy to stand before Him, pure and blameless! **Read what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:21 as a group.** The righteous requirements of the law are satisfied, God's justice is appeased, and we are acquitted. Just-As-If-I'd-Never-Sinned!

In response to this we might ask, “Ok, that's great, but what does justification really mean to me?” If we are not careful in life, we can begin to believe the lie that we must meet certain standards just to feel good about ourselves. How many of us have ever fallen into the fear of failure or the trap of perfectionism? Maybe some of us have allowed our drive to succeed to lead us to unhealthy patterns of living. Well, there is good news for us today - we don't have to perform anymore. We are forgiven. And not only are we forgiven; but beyond that, we are granted Christ's righteousness. **Romans 5:1 says: Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** We can rest, knowing that God accepts us. We can get off the hamster wheel, step out of the performance trap, and live with peace, knowing that we are pleasing to God.”

Question: Do you tend to live under constant pressure, feeling as though you don't measure up? How will this understanding of justification change that?

2. Grace - You are highly favored by God. Read Romans 3:24 together as a group. In the little, three word phrase “*by His grace*” we

find a critical component of the Gospel. It really means that our salvation is completely by God's initiative. Think about it – Grace was God's first move: He grants us His absolutely free, utterly undeserved favor. Grace is God loving, God coming to our rescue, God giving Himself generously in and through Jesus Christ. It is through God's grace that we are regenerated or made new. God, in His grace, meets us wherever we are. He takes us out of our darkness, pain, shame, and guilt, and makes us new from the inside out.

Read Romans 5:17 together as a group. This salvation by grace is not a self-improvement program, nor is it a cleanup campaign for our sinful natures. Grace and God's regeneration is nothing less than the impartation of new life. This gracious salvation comes through the work of the Holy Spirit in each believer at the moment trust is placed in Christ as Savior. This great exchange comes as we experience a new birth, an awakening of our spirit, as the Holy Spirit comes alive within us. Grace in the Greek is a simple term *charis*. It really means God's undeserved kindness and unmerited favor for us. Unmerited means we didn't do anything to deserve it. Grace says, “God did the work and yet He paid us richly.”

Again, we might think, “Great, regeneration, grace, but what does that really mean to me?” We may see our lives and circumstances as hopeless, but there's the good news for us today – God has already done for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. In Christ each of us is a new creation. There's no more shame. God has given us everything that we need for life, more than enough and we are completely new. Consequently, we are loved, highly favored and accepted by God.

Question: Describe grace in your own words. Give an example of how you see it at work in your life.

3. Redemption - You are redeemed by Christ. Let's focus on the next phrase from **Romans 3:24. Read that verse together again as a group.** To redeem means to “exchange for a price” or to “buy back.” Jesus' sinless life had so much value to God that He was able to exchange His life to redeem every person who would ever live – to those who would receive him. In fact, the Greek word used for redemption here is very specific in its usage, meaning much more than simply a purchase or exchange. It literally speaks to the act of purchasing a slave for the sole purpose of setting him or her free. Jesus' redemptive work on the cross was specifically intended to purchase our lives from slavery to sin and set us free!

Read what Paul also wrote in Colossians 1:21-22 together as a group. Redemption means that we were once “slaves to sin”, separated from God, and incapable of becoming free on our own. But God, because of His great love for us, purchased us out of slavery to sin and destruction. The currency He used was His most valued possession – the life of His only son, Jesus.