

Relativity and Thanksgiving

Romans 2:28-3:9

Romans (no. 7 in the series)

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/relativity-and-thanksgiving/>

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This document was prepared by Brett Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Brett know. Thank you!

Prayer

So Lord, you're all around me, you surround me, and yet, I don't perceive you. So, Lord God, I pray that right now, with your might right arm, your right hand of power, you would reach down from heaven and massage my brain, massage everyone's brain in this room. And through the power of your Spirit I pray that you would help us to understand your word. Help us to see your living Word and understand your written word. In Jesus name, Amen.

Message

Video Clip: Hour of Power, Program #1426
Trinity Broadcasting Network (1997)

Dr. Billy Graham: What God is doing today is calling people out of the world for His name. Whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the body of Christ because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light they have and I think they're saved and they're going to be with us in heaven.

Dr. Robert Schuller: What I hear you saying is that it's possible for Jesus Christ to come into a human heart and soul and life even if they've been born in darkness and have never had exposure to the Bible. Is that a correct interpretation of what you're saying?

Dr. Graham: Yes it is...

Several years ago, I heard Tony Campolo share a story that Billy Graham had shared with him but had not often shared publicly. It happened on an Evangelism trip somewhere in Southeast Asia. (Evangelism, *euangelia*, in Greek, means "To announce Good News.") So Billy Graham was walking up the side of a mountain to share the gospel at a monastery, when he noticed a monk praying intently on the side of the road. It was then, that he felt lead to approach the man and tell him about Jesus.

So, with his interpreter, he approached the man, opened his Bible, and began to tell him how God became man, lived and loved, suffered and died for each of us, that each of us might live with him and love like him. As Billy spoke tears began to stream down the monk's cheeks. Billy didn't know what to think; then he handed the man a Bible.

Through tears and through his interpreter, the monk responded by saying: "You're giving me this book? How can I thank you? I have never had a gift like this. You see sir, this Jesus that you've described to me, I've always known Him. And even as you were reading from this book, within me He was saying, 'He is speaking of Me...he is speaking of Me.' And when you said the name Jesus, He said to me, 'That's My name. That's My name.' I've always known Him, and now I know what He did for me. Now I know exactly who He is."

Isn't that a beautiful story? It's almost straight out of the book of Acts, chapter 17, when Paul found the altar to the unknown god in Athens, complimented the pagans and quoted their philosophers saying, "We are indeed his offspring" and "In him we live and move and have our being... He is actually not far from each one of us."ⁱ Well, the monk said to Billy Graham, "You're giving me this book? How can I thank you? I've never had a gift like this." You know that's basically the same response that I get whenever I open my Bible and say to people, I'd like to read to you some Scripture. NOT!

Sometimes Christians will say, "We love stories about your kids passing the ball, movie clips and insights, and even when you talk about Jesus." But Scripture is confusing and kind of offensive. And yet, I'm talking about the Jesus that I find in the Scripture. Same Scripture. Why is it so confusing and offensive to some? Billy Graham told the story and then told Tony that he didn't often share it in public, for it angered too many American Evangelical Christians. It's news of Salvation. Why would it offend and confuse Evangelicals?

If you google, "Billy Graham denies Jesus," you'll find all sorts of posts taking you back to that interview with Robert Schuller where Graham suggests that people can know Jesus, even if they don't yet know his name—Yeshua; it means "God is Salvation."

Scripture says that we must all stand before his throne—The "judgment seat of Christ." If a fellow didn't know his name, perhaps Jesus will just tell him his name. "My name is Jesus. It means Salvation. Is that good news to you?"

- Why do Christians find Scripture confusing and offensive?
- Why do we seem to think the Good News isn't good?
- Why does news of salvation, confuse and offend us?
- Why do Christians so often, look so little like Christ and some non-Christians seem to be so Christian? Isn't that confusing and offensive?

In Romans 2 Paul argued that Jews and Gentiles—Christians and non-Christians—indeed all humanity will be judged by the same judgment, then he writes:

Romans 2:28b-29:

... **no one is a Jew** [and last time we noted that when we read the word “Jew” we should hear the word “Christian.”] **No one is a Jew [Christian] who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision [baptism] outward and physical.** ²⁹ **But a Jew [Christian] is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.**

Then Paul anticipates a response:

Romans 3:1a:

Then what advantage has the Jew?

Let me rephrase: Then what’s the point of being a Christian?

- If a Christian isn’t better than a Buddhist Monk on the side of the road in China, what’s the point of reading Scripture and preaching the Gospel?
- If Jesus doesn’t belong to us, what’s the point of Jesus?
- If Jesus won’t stay in church, but can just do whatever he wants, why follow?
- If Jesus can just show up in the heart of a Buddhist, why talk about Jesus at all?
- If we don’t win the game by beating our neighbor, what’s the point of loving God or loving our neighbor?
- If we don’t win the game, what’s the point of playing the game?
- What advantage has the Christian?

Romans 3:1:

Then what advantage has the Jew [“Christian”]? Or what is the value of circumcision [or “baptism”]? ² Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles [logion] of God.

The *logion* of God is the “words” of God. Jesus is the Logos, the Word of God; and Scripture is the *logion*, the words of God written in a book. The Buddhist Monk knew the living Word of God and so was profoundly grateful for the written words of God. We American Christians possess the written words of God—that is the Bible—but usually don’t read the words of God and are even offended by the Living Word of God if he does something of which we don’t approve.

Romans 3:1-3a:

Then what advantage has the Jew [or “Christian”]? Or what is the value of circumcision [or “baptism,” or “communion,” or “going to church,” or “doing good deeds,” or “passing the ball”]? ² Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews [The Christians] were entrusted with the oracles [*logion*] of God. ³ What if some were unfaithful?

You see Paul will be addressing this mystery: “Why do gentiles get so excited about Jesus. And Jews get so confused and offended by Jesus?” That’s like asking “Why do some non-Christians

seem to like Jesus. And so many Christians get so confused and offended by Jesus (therefore appearing so non-Christian)?”

Romans 3:3:

What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?

Or it can also be translated: What if some lack faith, does their lack of faith nullify God’s faith? We’re saved by Grace through faith, but whose faith? What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faith or faithfulness of God? “Well, yes?” Isn’t that what we say? “If you don’t have faith in God, God cannot have faith in you, or be faithful to himself and his Word to make you in his own image,” we say.

Romans 3:3-4a:

What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴ By no means! Let it not be true, but Let God be true though everyone were a liar...

My Greek professor claimed that this should always be translated “Hell no!” for Paul is using the strongest negation that he can get his hands on. *Me genoito*: literally, “may it not exist or become” “may it not be.” Romans 3:4, Hell no. By no means! Let it not be true, but Let God be true though everyone were a liar.

Literally, “Let God be true, and let every man (singular), (every Adam), be a liar.” Literally, “Let God be true, and let every man be a liar.” I don’t think I’ve ever met a man that actually let that happen, entirely, in the sanctuary of his own soul. Every man assumes that he is true, and God is divided, everchanging, and probably an illusion—like nowhere and nowhen.

Since the Enlightenment we say: “I think therefore I am... and maybe God exists”ⁱⁱ
But God says: “I am that I am and therefore you think and will one day exist.”

Paul says: “Let God be true.” It’s a passive imperative verb. It means you can’t make him true, but you must allow him to be who he is.

- “Let God be true” *alethes*, literally “not hidden,ⁱⁱⁱ”
- “Let God be undivided, unchanging, and truly real.”
- “Let God be entirely constant.”
- “Let God be true; but let all people and every person be a liar.”

My experience is that

- Liberals will let most people be true and just conservatives be liars.
- Conservatives will let themselves be true and liberals be liars.
- But Paul won’t let conservatives or liberals, Pharisees or Sadducees, Jews or gentiles, Christians or Buddhists be true; he claims that all are liars.^{iv}

“Let God be true, but let *all* and *every* Adam be a liar, (*pseustes*)” “Let all and every person (which would include yourself) be false.” And check it out, that’s an oracle of God: Psalm 116:11 “I said in my alarm, ‘all mankind (all Adam) are liars’ ... ‘all.’ That’s offensive and rather confusing—confusing, for if we are untrue, how could we ever know what is true. If you like big words, that’s the problem of “Epistemology” How can I know the truth if I am untrue? How could I ever judge another judgment, let alone the judgment of God—God, who is the truth—if I, the judge, am untrue?

Paul continues with more oracles of God, in the words of David in Psalm 51: “That you (Yahweh) may be justified (proved right) in your words [*logois*] and prevail when you are judged.” We’ll look at this more next week, but Paul is claiming that David is claiming that he sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, so that God could judge David’s sin, and we all could judge God’s judgment of David’s sin and justify God’s judgment, saying “Dang, that judgment is good.”

Now, that’s confusing and offensive (at first) for it’s the exact opposite of our judgment of God’s Judgment; it’s upside down and backwards.

- We think: “We sinned, and so God must Judge.”
- Paul is saying: “No. God judged, and so we sinned, that we might experience God’s judgment, and justify God’s judgment, saying ‘Dang that’s a good judgment. In fact, it’s the Good!’”

Romans 4b-6:

“That you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged.”

⁵ But if our unrighteousness [bad judgment] serves to show the righteousness [the good judgment] of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) ⁶ By no means! For then how could God judge the world?

Me Genoito! Hell No! You’re looking at this upside down and backwards. Verse 5: Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? Verse 6: Hell no! For then [otherwise] how could God judge the world?

- We think: “We sinned, and so God judges, and inflicts wrath revealing his judgment.”
- Paul is saying: “God judged, so we sinned, so God could inflict wrath, revealing his judgment so we could justify his judgment saying, ‘Dang that’s a good judgment—I could fall down and worship that judgment; that’s good and that’s life!’”

Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? Hell no! For then [otherwise] how could God judge the world? Paul talks as if the entire cosmos was created, subjected to futility, and consigned to disobedience, just to reveal the Judgment of God. He talks as if we were untrue, just to reveal that God is true, such that we would know that God is true, and good, and Life eternal. He talks as if God and His Judgment is The Universal Constant, and everything else, including us, is relative to Him: The judgment.

Romans 3:7-9a:

But if through my lie [my “falsehood”] God’s truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned [*krinomai*: judged] as a sinner? ⁸ And why not do evil that good may come? —as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation [*the “judgment” on them*] is just. ⁹ What then? Are we [Jews] any better off?

Some translate that “are we any worse off?”^v Some others translate that, “Are we excused?”^{vi} (If we were “consigned to disobedience,” are we excused for disobedience?) In answer to all of those questions, Paul writes:

Romans 3:9b:

No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin...

All are faithless liars. Then Paul quotes more oracles, as if to say, “Look the Bible has said this all along; this should not come as a surprise to you. Ever since Chapter 2 verse 17, ‘the day you eat of it dying you will die.’ Not just some of you Adam, all of you Adam—that’s mankind.” That’s original sin, which we all commit, for all of us are untrue. But original sin both follows and precedes, an original blessing—a blessing that is the beginning and the end of all space and time, for it is eternal; because God is true, and God is faithful.

Genesis 1:26 “Let us make man in our image after our likeness... 31 and God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good... 2:2 on the seventh day God finished his work [I bet he said “it is finished”]. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy [that is, different from all the other days] because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”
God’s Rest is Eternal

You see original sin is encased in original and eternal blessing, like a womb is encased in the body of a mother. The Lie is temporal; the Truth is undivided, unchanging, ubiquitous, and eternal.

And so, there is a reason that we find all of this so deeply confusing and offensive.

- a reason the oracles of God sound like insanity in this world of space and time.
- a reason the Good News doesn’t sound good, even to Christians.
- a reason that Evangelicals are offended by the Gospels.
- a reason we try to save people from God, who is the Savior.
- a reason we teach people to hide from the Judgment of God, who is Love.
- a reason why Christians are offended by Christ and look so little like him.
- a reason we prefer dead words on paper to the Living Word in a human heart somewhere in China

And that reason is that we won’t let God be true and every man be a liar.

If we let God be true: undivided, unchanging, ubiquitous, and eternal, then we must let ourselves be divided, changeable, limited, and temporal (as in dead). And you see: that's deeply offensive. But if we allowed ourselves ("let" ourselves) to be deeply offended by the judgment of God, perhaps we'd be saved by the judgment of God. I mean die with Him and rise with Him. Then all of this—Scripture and our world—would no longer be so confusing.

Jesus said, "Blessed, happy, fun, is he that is not offended at me."^{vii} And "This is the Judgment: the Light has come into the world"^{viii}... I am the light"

If you've been in the dark for a time, the light can be terribly offensive. But if you allow yourself to be offended, the light will cease to be offensive, and everything will begin to make sense, for the light will make sense of you." "God is Light"^{ix} writes John. And Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World."^x

At the turn of the last century, reality had grown to be rather confusing. For the previous 200 years, since the Enlightenment and Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, many thought that we had reality all figured out. But at the dawn of the twentieth century, not so much. Gravity had never really made sense, even to Newton. Light was giving everyone a headache. In the 1860's Maxwell argued that light was an electro-magnetic wave and calculated it's speed—the speed of light. In 1887 Michelson and Morley conducted a famous experiment that seemed to indicate that light travelled at a constant speed relative to an observer regardless of that observer's motion or frame of reference.

In 1905 24-year-old Albert Einstein, had been unable to find a teaching job, and so had taken a job as a clerk in the Swiss Patent Office. His father had recently died thinking that young Albert was a failure. But the job at the patent office gave Albert time to daydream and his daydreams revolutionized our World; or I should say our understanding of our world—in biblical terminology—they caused every physicist to "repent." (to think about everything differently).

For Einstein, it all began with a boyhood daydream about light. Since he was a boy, he had tried to imagine how he would experience reality if he were travelling on a beam of light. One day riding the bus home from the patent office, he imagined that the bus was approaching the speed of light as he looked back at the town clocktower. It dawned on him that if the bus were approaching the speed of light, the hands on the clock would appear to slow down and then stand still.^{xi} But not just appear to stand still, actually stand still, for him, if he were light.^{xii} And yet, we are not light, are we? We are matter and energy moving through space and time, aren't we^{xiii}?

Until Einstein, and at least since the Enlightenment, scientist had assumed that matter and energy, and most definitely space and time, were constants and then they built their house on that foundation. But Einstein jacked up the whole house and suggested a new foundation. He suggested that we're looking at reality upside down and backwards. He took the speed of light as a constant and suddenly everything else changed.

$$E_{\text{nergy}} = M_{\text{ass}} C^2$$

$$S_{\text{peed}}(C) = D_{\text{istance}} / T_{\text{ime}}$$

$E=MC^2$ is his most famous equation.

- E is a variable standing for energy.
- M is a variable standing for mass.
- But C is a constant. It is the Speed of Light in a vacuum.

It means that Matter can become Energy and Energy become Matter.

Speed equals distance divided by time; we all know that. $S=D/T$. But, if the speed of Light is constant, then distance and time must be variable, as if “A day is a thousand years and a thousand years really is a day.”^{xiv} But Light remains the same. As Brian Greene writes in *The Elegant Universe*, “Light does not get old.”

Einstein’s Special theory of relativity, led to Einstein’s General theory of relativity, which postulates that gravity is a curvature in the flexible fabric of space and time, that is spacetime. It all sounds absurd because we’re so used to our own limited frame of reference and yet this has all been verified over and over and over, again. Your GPS wouldn’t work if this were not true.

General Relativity was first proven to be true on May 29th, 1919, during a solar eclipse, but it’s just now making its way into our collective consciousness. Or maybe I should say, making its way back into our collective consciousness. People haven’t always believed that man is the measure of all things. At one time some thought that The Light of the World is the measure of all things—that is “The Judgment.”^{xv} Well in the last 100 years we’ve learned some fascinating things about light. Here are a just a few:

Light

#1 Light is one and undivided.

#2 Light does not change.

#3 Light is everywhere and everywhen.

Number one, it’s a particle and a wave, at least to us. To us, it looks like two contradictory things, and weirder still our judgment seems to determine which thing it appears to be. But we know that light is one unified thing, so maybe we are two contradictory things. So, when we judge light, perhaps the light is actually judging us. We think it’s two, but we are two and Light is one and undivided.

Number one, light is one and undivided.

Number two, light doesn't change. To us it appears to change, but according to Einstein a photon of light doesn't experience the passage of time. And yet we can "see" and "hear" light that was emitted at the Big Bang. For a photon of that light, all space and time, all matter and energy must be somehow present in something like an eternal now. We think the light changes, but maybe we change—after all, we are balls of matter and energy moving through spacetime.

Number three, light is ubiquitous. It is everywhere and everywhen. That is "In [Light] we live and move and have our being." Even in the dark there is light—it turns out that our eyes can only see a small sliver of the spectrum of electro-magnetic vibrations that we call light. Even weirder, physicists now say that light is more than a spectrum of vibrations; it is a ubiquitous, ever-present, quantum field. So, in light we truly live move and have our being. And when we see the light, we are witnessing a vibration in a quantum field, much like a word, which is a vibration in the atmosphere all around us. Scripture says, "God is Light." Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." And in Ephesians 5:8 Paul writes, "You (Ephesians and Sanctuarians) were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of Light."

DANG! If you take those statements seriously it will jack up your house and replace the foundation; you'll repent for you'll realize that you were looking at everything upside down and backwards; and you'll begin to walk as children of light—because you are.

I'm calling it Saint Paul's Theological Theory of Relativity. And now you should ask, "Well how much of that is a metaphor? How much is Scripture talking about seeing with the eyes in our head and how much is seeing with the eyes in our hearts? How much is physical and how much is spiritual? And is light spiritual or physical? Is God spiritual or physical and is there a difference?" Answer: I don't know, but if this discussion of Light is not helpful to you, St. Paul's Theological Theory of Relativity can be stated in a different way.

Romans 3:3 "Does our faithlessness, nullify the faithfulness of God? Hell no. Let God be true [That's the Constant], and let every man be a liar [that's the variable]."



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

Take a look at this picture of a man on a tree in a garden.



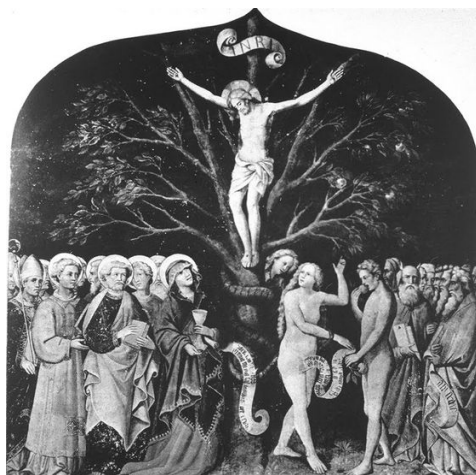
Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

Or, look at this picture of a man on a tree in another garden on Mt. Calvary



The Tree of Life [Print]. The British Museum. London, England. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Or this picture of a man on a tree in the garden city of the New Jerusalem.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

What is that hanging on the tree? Well, you know:

- That's the Truth. (The Constant)
- That's the Light of the World.
- That's the Revelation of God who is Love.
- That's the Good in human flesh, hanging on a tree like fruit.
- That's the Life, eternal.
- That's God and the Judgment of God, the Word of God.

So, is he divided? Does he change? And when and where is he? Your answer might depend on your frame of reference. That is, do you let God be true—undivided, unchanging, and ubiquitous? Or do you let yourself be true—undivided, unchanging, and ubiquitous? Maybe God is not divided, not good and evil, not life and death, not light and dark, not Love and the opposite of Love. Maybe God is One and each of us is two. “Here oh Israel the Lord our God is One.” And maybe God doesn't change, or change his mind about us but maybe we do change, and he changes our mind about him. And maybe this didn't just happen ten thousand years ago in the garden of Eden and didn't just happen two thousand years ago in the garden on Mt. Calvary, or only happen in the future in the garden city: New Jerusalem.

- Maybe it's ubiquitous, for it's the edge of spacetime and eternity.
- Maybe It's the edge of creation and the thought of God; it's the Word of God.
- Maybe the man (the last Adam) on the tree is true and everyone of us is false.
- Maybe this is the undivided unchanging ubiquitous judgment of God? Maybe?

If so, how would you know? How could you judge the judgment of God? How could you know that he is true and every man (including you) is a liar?

You see that's the problem of Epistemology. How could you know whether or not God, or the Word of God, is true if you the knower are untrue? You can't know by simply choosing to know, by running experiments on God like you would on a mouse in a maze or chemicals in a beaker. How could you judge whether or not the Truth is true? How could Adam or Eve know that Word of God is Good and the lie of the snake is not good but evil, not life but death? Perhaps they could not know, unless they took what the Existentialists would call “a leap,” unless they made a choice, a bad choice. [How could they have made a good choice if they didn't know the good? Yet maybe they could have made a not good choice, which is bad?] And, of course, they did make a bad choice—they chose to take the Life of the Good in flesh hanging on the tree and everything died. That's our choice, our judgment; it's called sin.

They made a choice, and we all make that choice, when we have no knowledge of Good and evil. Every man makes that choice and becomes a sinner, becomes false—a false self. Every man makes that choice, but the God man also makes a choice. As we take his life he gives his life, saying “Father let [*aphiemi*] them, Father forgive them^{xvi}” He makes a choice in time, but he is the choice of eternity—undivided, unchanging, and ubiquitous—the judgment of God

You were darkness in space and time, but you are now the image and likeness of God in all eternity. He cries “Father into your hands I commit my spirit” and it's that spirit that rises in our empty souls as we cry “Abba Daddy.” We can only know because we have been known by God.

We can only know because we judge God's judgment and everything dies (that's called sin) and because God then judges our judgment and everything lives (that's called grace). And then we judge God's judgment of our bad Judgment and say "Dang, that's really a good judgment. Thank you." And suddenly we're sitting in the Kingdom of God because that's Heaven (The Great Banquet). Our judgment is a temporal illusion, and God's judgment is reality.

When you let God be true and let everyman be a liar:

- God offends the hell out of you and creates reality within you.
- He makes sense of you, and you become who it is that you truly are.
- He destroys the false you and creates the true you in its place.

In other words, "You are saved by Grace through faith, and this not of yourselves. It is the gift of God that none should boast," that none should boast and all would be thankful.

Now, People say, "Nice, but what does it mean to me?" It literally means absolutely everything. But to give an example, it means that you can, at least, enjoy Thanksgiving. I titled this sermon Relativity and Thanksgiving.

So, if you would, just close your eyes and think of all your relatives at Thanksgiving. If you ate alone this year, that's fine, think of all your relatives from every year—blood relatives, any relatives, anyone related to you. Imagine everyone together at Thanksgiving Dinner or a Great Banquet.

Imagine your husband, your wife, ex-wife, your mom and dad, stepmom and stepdad, grandma who has dementia, your cousin who just got out of jail, your niece who left home and became a Buddhist somewhere in Thailand. And imagine a couple freeloading neighbors that just get on your nerve—imagine some republicans and some democrats, some anti-vaxxers and some hyper-zealous vaxxers—imagine all your relatives at Thanksgiving. Now let all of them be true—that is, expect them, and expect yourself to be faithful and true. (We optimists do that don't we? We say, "This year is going to be different!")

Well, if you expect everyone to be true, you'll soon discover they don't all agree, so someone must be lying. You'll have a terribly disappointing dinner, not be thankful, and maybe even curse God for ever creating people in the first place. So maybe now you could just let some of them be true, or at least partly true and that would have to include you, just to know who it is that is true. (And this is what most of us do).

If you expect some to be true, or partly true, you'll begin asking, "Who's true and who's not true? Who's right and who's wrong? Who paid for the turkey and who didn't pay for the turkey? Can a Buddhist even be thankful for a Turkey; they're obviously not aware that Jesus created Turkey? And what right does my ex-wife have to be so happy? And then you think, "Crap, I'm not happy and not thankful, I'm only pretending to be thankful on Thanksgiving. I'm divided; I'm miserable; I suck."

But now, try something else. Look around at all of them and let God be true, and so let every man, woman, and child be a liar. That sounds incredibly confusing and offensive but I think something miraculous begins to happen. As you do that, you begin to realize that no one could pay for the Turkey or deserve one ounce of stuffing; if God is true and every man is a liar, everything that's anything is Grace, including your knowledge of Grace. You realize that you're a sinner, and everyone at the table is a sinner, and so all are enslaved to sin, and even dead in their sin, and incapable of choosing the good, for none is right, and everyone is wrong. And so, you realize that if anyone is righteous it's not their righteousness. And if anyone speaks a truth, it's actually not them that's speaking, it's Jesus in them speaking—even in your niece, the Buddhist in Thailand.

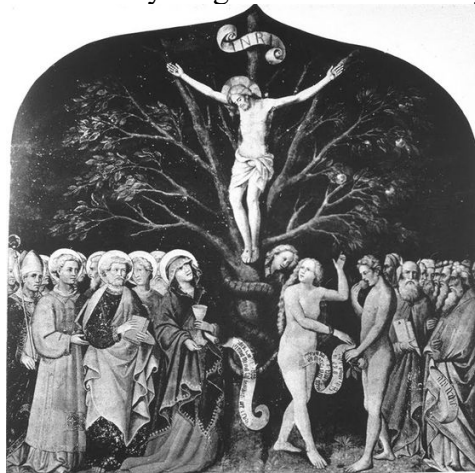
And if you believe that this is true, it's not even you that's believing it's true; it's Christ in you, believing in you, rising from the dead in you. For although you have been faithless, he remains faithful to you, in you, and through you. For you actually are the Judgment of God. You are his creation. And you have just stepped foot in his Kingdom—that is, Reality. And so, your ex-wife asks you to pass the Turkey—the Butterball Turkey—and so you pass the ball, and it's fun—it is the judgment of God. It's this:

Communion

He took bread and broke it, saying this is my body given to you, take and eat.
And then he said, this is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it, all of you.
Now it's time for dinner. Amen.

Benediction

So Jesus, thank you that you are our everything and we will adore you. Amen.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

Take a look at that picture. I keep showing you that picture because I want you to realize that it is like this picture—us in this room—and we're all those people at the base of the tree. Einstein later wrote that when he was riding on the bus and he looked back at the clock and had that thought that maybe light is a constant, there was a storm of ideas that flooded his mind that gave birth to all these new theories.

I think that's helpful because I think we're in that picture and we come here to remember what is constant. Is man the measure of all things or is God the measure of us? If you take the frame of reference of the people at the base of the tree, life gets pretty confusing, and you'll find that you're offended by the presence of the man on the tree. It's because you've believed a lie, from that snake—that you can make yourself in the image of God—that you are the creator, that you are the judge. But in reality, your judgment is nothing; it's an empty void (there are a lot of words for that in scripture). But that's ok because God's judgment is true.

When you begin to take the perspective of the *eschatos* Adam—the Man on the tree—at first, it is offensive because it offends your psyche (your imagination of reality is a psyche and you're being offended by His psyche). But if you loose your psyche and find your psyche in the Man on the tree, something incredible begins to happen. All sorts of things begin to make sense and the judgment of God begins to manifest in you. The judgment of God is absolutely good. The judgment of God is absolutely light. That's why we come here each Sunday, to imagine what's true. A theologian once said imagining what is true is called 'faith.' Another way to say that is: believe the Gospel. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Endnotes

ⁱ Acts 27:27-28

ⁱⁱ Des Carte said this at the start of what we have called “the Enlightenment.”

ⁱⁱⁱ As if we hide him and “imprison him in the chains of our own unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18 Barth)

^{iv} Jesus did too. “All who came before me are thieves and robbers...” -John 10:8

^v See ESV footnote

^{vi} Barth, *Romans*

^{vii} Matthew 11:6, Luke 7:23

^{viii} John 3:19

^{ix} 1 John 1:5

^x John 8:12, 9:5

^{xi} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qzm947lBqnE> At 6:30 this documentary from the history channel recounts Einstein's thought experiment on the bus. We know that we, in our current state (mass and energy in space time), cannot travel at the speed of light.

^{xii} “...something travelling at light speed through space will have no speed left for motion through time. Thus light does not get old; a photon that emerged from the big bang is the same age today as it was then. There is no passage of time at light speed.” - Brian Greene, *The Elegant Universe (paperback edition)*, p. 51

^{xiii} “...For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” – Ephesians 5:8

^{xiv} Psalm 90:4, 2nd Peter 3:8

^{xv} Before the Enlightenment, when western civilization began to assume that man was the measure of all things—few people thought space and time were constants; they believed that the Word of God was constant. Isn't it interesting that the Word of God in Human Flesh said “I am the light of the cosmos.”

^{xvi} Luke 23:34 *aphiemi*, the verb translated “forgive” is also translated “let” our “allow.” “Father let them all crucify me, let them all be faithless and untrue.”