

7 – The Gospel: Gospel Truth

Relational Leadership Training

Developing Disciple Making Leaders

Session Seven

Pre-Session Assignment:

Introduction

The gospel message announces who Jesus is and what he has done. As a result of the gospel, there are many things that are true for those who respond to the gospel message in repentance and faith.

Step 2 – Read the article “**Gospel – Driven Sanctification**” by Jerry Bridges.

- A. Bridges talks about how many Christians have a “deeply ingrained performance mindset” thinking they “earn God’s blessing or forfeit it by how well [they] live the Christian life.”
 - 1. Do you see any evidence of a “performance mindset” in your life?
 - 2. If so, in what ways?
 - 3. How has this influenced your relationship with God and others?
- B. Bridges talks about “learning that Christians need to hear the gospel all of their lives because it is the gospel that continues to remind us that our day-to-day acceptance with the Father is not based on what we do for God but upon what Christ did for us in his sinless life and sin-bearing death.”
 - 1. How can learning something like this impact your relationship with God?
 - 2. How can learning something like this impact your relationships with other people?

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With Others – During Group Instruction

Step 1 (In Triads) – Pray together, asking God to graciously provide His direction, protection, and presence during the group instruction time.

Step 2 (In Triads) – Share experiences, outcomes, and “Aha Moments” from the personal application activities from the last session.

Step 3 (With the Whole Group) – Have someone from each triad summarize to the whole group a few outcomes and experiences from the personal application activities from the last session.

- A. any questions or concerns that came out of the triad sharing time.

Step 4 (In Triads) – Read the article “Gospel Truths –What the Cross of Christ Accomplished” out loud together and answer the following questions:

- A. How would you respond to someone who says, “I believe Jesus is an example for us to follow, but he did not die for our sins as a substitute because God would not punish an innocent person for someone else’s sins.”
- B. Make a list of ways that a proper understanding of The Sufficiency of the Cross impacts your personal growth as a Christian.

<u>Response A</u>	<u>Response B</u>

Step 5 (With the Whole Group) – Pray for direction and protection as we as a team share the Gospel of Jesus Christ this week.

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Post Session Follow Up:

Step 1 – Share the gospel message with someone who does not participate in this training. When sharing the gospel message, use one of the following options previously presented in **Session 6**:

Use one of the gospel frameworks

- Creation > Fall > Redemption > Restoration
- Birth > Life > Death > Resurrection > Ascension > Return
- God > Sin > Christ > Faith

Use Ephesians 2:1-10

Step 2 (With Your Spouse) discuss the following:

- the main ideas of this session.
- Summarize the main points of your discussion in your Learning Journal.

Step 3 – Prayerfully think about what you have learned with regard to the truths of this session, your experience during the assignment, and your conversation with your spouse. Use the questions below to guide your reflection. You do not necessarily have to write out answers to all of the questions but take the time to prayerfully think about each one and then write down some thoughts pertaining to one or two of them. Be ready to share your thoughts and insights during the next group instruction time.

- A. Do you need to repent of any disobedience? If so, what?
- B. Do you need to acknowledge any unbelief? If so, what?
- C. What biblical truth do you need to trust to be true for you?
- D. What promises of God can you trust in and expect Him to keep?
- E. What signs of growth do you perceive in your life?
- F. What can you give thanks to God for?

Gospel-Centered Sanctification

By Jerry Bridges

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Early in my Christian life I heard someone say, "The Bible was not given to increase your knowledge but to guide your conduct." Later I came to realize that this statement was simplistic at best and erroneous at worst. The Bible is far more than a rulebook to follow. It is primarily the message of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ, with everything in Scripture before the cross pointing to God's redemptive work and everything after the cross--including our sanctification--flowing from that work.

There is an element of truth in this statement, however, and the Holy Spirit used it to help me to see that the Bible is not to be read just to gain knowledge. It is, indeed, to be obeyed and practically applied in our daily lives. As James says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

With my new insight, I prayed that God would use the Bible to guide my conduct. Then I began diligently to seek to obey it. I had never heard the phrase "the pursuit of holiness," but that became my primary goal in life. Unfortunately, I made two mistakes. First, I assumed the Bible was something of a rulebook and that all I needed to do was to learn what it says and go do it. I knew nothing of the necessity of depending on the Holy Spirit for his guidance and enablement.

Still worse, I assumed that God's acceptance of me and his blessing in my life depended on how well I did. I knew I was saved by grace through faith in Christ apart from any works. I had assurance of my salvation and expected to go to heaven when I died. But in my daily life, I thought God's blessing depended on the practice of certain spiritual disciplines, such as having a daily quiet time and not knowingly committing any sin. I did not think this out but just unconsciously assumed it, given the Christian culture in which I lived. Yet it determined my attitude toward the Christian life.

Performance-Based Discipleship

My story is not unusual. Evangelicals commonly think today that the gospel is only for unbelievers. Once we're inside the kingdom's door, we need the gospel only in order to share it with those who are still outside. Now, as believers, we need to hear the message of discipleship. We need to learn how to live the Christian life and be challenged to go do it. That's what I believed and practiced in my life and ministry for some time. It is what most Christians seem to believe.

As I see it, the Christian community is largely a performance-based culture today. And the more deeply committed we are to following Jesus, the more deeply ingrained the performance mindset is. We think we earn God's blessing or forfeit it by how well we live the Christian life.

Most Christians have a baseline of acceptable performance by which they gauge their acceptance by God. For many, this baseline is no more than regular church attendance

and the avoidance of major sins. Such Christians are often characterized by some degree of self-righteousness. After all, they don't indulge in the major sins we see happening around us. Such Christians would not think they need the gospel anymore. They would say the gospel is only for sinners.

For committed Christians, the baseline is much higher. It includes regular practice of spiritual disciplines, obedience to God's Word, and involvement in some form of ministry. Here again, if we focus on outward behavior, many score fairly well. But these Christians are even more vulnerable to self-righteousness, for they can look down their spiritual noses not only at the sinful society around them but even at other believers who are not as committed as they are. These Christians don't need the gospel either. For them, Christian growth means more discipline and more commitment.

Then there is a third group. The baseline of this group includes more than the outward performance of disciplines, obedience, and ministry. These Christians also recognize the need to deal with sins of the heart like a critical spirit, pride, selfishness, envy, resentment, and anxiety. They see their inconsistency in having their quiet times, their failure to witness at every opportunity, and their frequent failures in dealing with sins of the heart. This group of Christians is far more likely to be plagued by a sense of guilt because group members have not met their own expectations. And because they think God's acceptance of them is based on their performance, they have little joy in their Christian lives. For them, life is like a treadmill on which they keep slipping farther and farther behind. This group needs the gospel, but they don't realize it is for them. I know, because I was in this group.

The Gospel Is for Believers

Gradually over time, and from a deep sense of need, I came to realize that the gospel is for believers, too. When I finally realized this, every morning I would pray over a Scripture such as Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all," and then say, "Lord, I have gone astray. I have turned to my own way, but you have laid all my sin on Christ and because of that I approach you and feel accepted by you."

I came to see that Paul's statement in Galatians 2:20, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me," was made in the context of justification (see vv. 15-21). Yet Paul was speaking in the present tense: "The life I now live" Because of the context, I realized Paul was not speaking about his sanctification but about his justification. For Paul, then, justification (being declared righteous by God on the basis of the righteousness of Christ) was not only a past-tense experience but also a present-day reality.

Paul lived every day by faith in the shed blood and righteousness of Christ. Every day he looked to Christ alone for his acceptance with the Father. He believed, like Peter (see 1 Pet. 2:4-5), that even our best deeds -- our spiritual sacrifices -- are acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ. Perhaps no one apart from Jesus himself has ever been as committed a disciple both in life and ministry as the Apostle Paul. Yet he did not look to his own performance but to Christ's "performance" as the sole basis of his acceptance with God.

So I learned that Christians need to hear the gospel all of their lives because it is the gospel that continues to remind us that our day-to-day acceptance with the Father is not based on what we do for God but upon what Christ did for us in his sinless life and sin-bearing death. I began to see that we stand before God today as righteous as we ever will be, even in heaven, because he has clothed us with the righteousness of his Son. Therefore, I don't have to perform to be accepted by God. Now I am free to obey him and serve him because I am already accepted in Christ (see Rom. 8:1). My driving motivation now is not guilt but gratitude.

Yet even when we understand that our acceptance with God is based on Christ's work, we still naturally tend to drift back into a performance mindset. Consequently, we must continually return to the gospel. To use an expression of the late Jack Miller, we must "preach the gospel to ourselves every day." For me that means I keep going back to Scriptures such as Isaiah 53:6, Galatians 2:20, and Romans 8:1. It means I frequently repeat the words from an old hymn, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

No "Easy Believism"

But doesn't this idea that our acceptance with God is based solely on Christ's work apart from our performance lead to a type of "easy believism"? In its most basic form, this is the notion that "Since I asked Christ to be my Savior, I am on my way to heaven regardless of how I live. It doesn't matter if I continue in my sinful lifestyle. God loves and will accept me anyway."

By a similar way of thinking, the claim that God's acceptance and blessing are based solely on Christ's work could be taken to mean that it really doesn't matter how I live right now. If Jesus has already "performed" in my place, then why go through all the effort and pain of dealing with sin in my life? Why bother with the spiritual disciplines and why expend any physical and emotional energy to serve God during this earthly life if everything depends on Christ?

The Apostle Paul anticipated such "easy believism" in Romans 6:1 when he wrote, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" His response in Romans 6:2, "By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" answers the question, "Why bother?" Paul was not responding with "How could you be so ungrateful as to think such a thing?" No, instead he is saying, in effect, "You don't understand the gospel. Don't you realize that you died to sin and if you died to sin, it's impossible for you to continue to live in it" (see Rom. 6:3-14).

We Died to Sin

Now, however, we come to a big question. What does Paul mean when he says we died to sin? It's fairly obvious he doesn't mean we died to the daily committal of sin. If that were true, no honest person could claim to be justified because we all sin daily. None of us truly loves God with our whole being and none of us actually loves our neighbor as ourselves (see Matt. 22:35-40). Nor does it mean we have died in the sense of being no longer responsive to sin's temptations, as some have taught. If that were true, Peter's admonition to abstain from the passions of the flesh would be pointless (see 1 Pet. 2:11). So what does Paul mean?

Some Bible commentators believe that Paul means only that we have died to the penalty of sin. That is, because of our union with Christ, when Christ died to sin's penalty we also died to sin's penalty. Well, it certainly means that, but it also means much more. It also means we died to sin's dominion.

What is the dominion of sin? In Romans 5:21, Paul speaks of sin's reign. And in Colossians 1:13, he speaks of the domain of darkness. When Adam sinned in the Garden, we all sinned through our legal union with him (see Rom. 5:12-21). That is, because of our identity with Adam we all suffered the consequence of his sin. And a part of that consequence is to be born into this world under the reign or dominion of sin. Paul describes what it means to be under this dominion in Ephesians 2:1-3. He says we were spiritually dead; we followed the ways of the world and the devil; we lived in the passions of our sinful natures and were, by nature, objects of God's wrath.

This slavery to the dominion of sin then is part of the penalty due to our guilt of sin. Through our union with Christ in his death, however, our guilt both from Adam's and from our own personal sins was forever dealt with. Having died with Christ to the guilt of sin, we also as a consequence died to the dominion of sin. We cannot continue in sin as a dominant way of life because the reign of sin over us has forever been broken.

This death to the dominion of sin over us is known theologically as definitive sanctification. It refers to the decisive break with, or separation from, sin as a ruling power in a believer's life. It is a point-in-time event, occurring simultaneously with justification. It is the fundamental change wrought in us by the monergistic action of the Holy Spirit (that is, by the Spirit acting alone without human permission or assistance) when he delivers us from the kingdom of darkness and transfers us into the kingdom of Christ. This definitive break with the dominion of sin occurs in the life of everyone who trusts in Christ as Savior. There is no such thing as justification without definitive sanctification. They both come to us as a result of Christ's work for us.

Consider Yourselves Dead to Sin

So we are free from both the guilt and the dominion of sin. But what use is this information to us? How can it help us live out a gospel-based pursuit of sanctification? Here Paul's instructions in Romans 6:11 are helpful: "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

It is important we understand what Paul is saying here because he is not telling us to do something but to believe something. We are to believe that we are dead through Christ to both sin's penalty and its dominion. But this is not something we make come true by believing it. We simply are dead to sin, whether we believe it or not. But the practical effects of our death to sin can be realized only as we believe it to be true.

The fact is that we are guilty in ourselves, but God no longer charges that guilt against us because it has already been borne by Christ as our substitute. The sentence has been served. The penalty has been paid. We have died to sin, both to its guilt and to its dominion. That is why Paul can write, "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin" (Rom. 4:8).

But the question arises, "If I've died to sin's dominion, why do I still struggle with sin patterns in my life?" The answer to that question lies in the word struggle. Unbelievers

do not struggle with sin. They may seek to overcome some bad habit, but they do not see that habit as sin. They do not have a sense of sin against a holy God. Believers, on the other hand, struggle with sin as sin. We see our sinful words, thoughts, and deeds as sin against God; and we feel guilty because of it. This is where we must continue to go back to the gospel. To consider ourselves dead to sin is to believe the gospel.

This doesn't mean that we just believe the gospel and live complacently in our sin. Absolutely not! Go back again to Paul's words in Romans 6:1-2. We died both to sin's guilt and its dominion. Though sin can wage war against us (hence our struggle), it cannot reign over us. That is also part of the gospel. But the success of our struggle with sin begins with our believing deep down in our hearts that regardless of our failures and our struggle, we have died to sin's guilt. We must believe that however often we fail, there is no condemnation for us (Rom. 8:1).

William Romaine, who was one of the leaders of the eighteenth-century revival in England, wrote, "No sin can be crucified either in heart or life unless it first be pardoned in conscience.... If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power." What Romaine was saying is that if you do not believe you have died to sin's guilt, you cannot trust Christ for the strength to subdue its power in your life. So the place to begin in dealing with sin is to believe the gospel when it says you have died to sin's guilt.

Progressive Sanctification

Warring against our sinful habits and seeking to put on Christlike character is usually called sanctification. But because the term definitive sanctification is used to describe the point-in-time deliverance from the dominion of sin, it is helpful to speak of Christian growth in holiness as progressive sanctification. Additionally, the word progressive indicates continual growth in holiness over time. The New Testament writers both assume growth (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 2:19-21; Col. 2:19; 2 Thess. 1:3); and continually urge us to pursue it (see 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; 2 Pet. 3:18). There is no place in authentic Christianity for stagnant, self-satisfied, and self-righteous Christians. Rather we should be seeking to grow in Christlikeness until we die.

This progressive sanctification always involves our practice of spiritual disciplines, such as reading Scripture, praying, and regularly fellowshiping with other believers. It also involves putting to death the sinful deeds of the body (see Rom. 8:13) and putting on Christlike character (see Col. 3:12-14). And very importantly it involves a desperate dependence on Christ for the power to do these things, for we cannot grow by our own strength.

So sanctification involves hard work and dependence on Christ; what I call dependent effort. And it will always mean we are dissatisfied with our performance. For a growing Christian, desire will always outstrip performance or, at least, perceived performance. What is it then that will keep us going in the face of this tension between desire and performance? The answer is the gospel. It is the assurance in the gospel that we have indeed died to the guilt of sin and that there is no condemnation for us in Christ Jesus that will motivate us and keep us going even in the face of this tension.

We must always keep focused on the gospel because it is in the nature of sanctification that as we grow, we see more and more of our sinfulness. Instead of driving us to discouragement, though, this should drive us to the gospel. It is the gospel believed

every day that is the only enduring motivation to pursue progressive sanctification even in those times when we don't seem to see progress. That is why I use the expression "gospel-driven sanctification" and that is why we need to "preach the gospel to ourselves every day."

Jerry Bridges is a staff member with the Navigator collegiate ministry group. A prolific and best-selling author, his most recent book is *The Gospel for Real Life* (Navpress, 2002).

The quotation from William Romaine comes from his *The Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith* (Cambridge, England: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1793), p. 280.

"Gospel Truths" – What the Cross of Christ Accomplished

The "gospel" is the announcement of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ. The heart of the gospel is Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead.

"Gospel truths" refer to what is true because of the gospel. These truths are a description of what Jesus accomplished and how those accomplishments benefit those who respond to the gospel message in repentance and faith. The gospel truths are result of the gospel. Therefore, never separate the benefits from the Benefactor (Jesus Christ).

This article briefly describes some of these gospel truths.

(NOTE: where indicated the definitions are taken from *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem, © 1994, Zondervan)

Union with Christ

"The summation of several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation." {Grudem, p. 840}

- *...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him (Ephesians 1:4).*
- *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).*
- *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:5-11).*

Regeneration

"The act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us" (aka "born again"). {Grudem, p. 699}

- *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13).*

- *According to his [God the Father] great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).*
- *...since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter 1:23).*
- *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:4-5).*

Justification

“An instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.” {Grudem, p. 723}

- *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:23-24, 26).*
- *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Romans 5:1, 9).*
- *...and be found in him [Christ], not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith (Philippians 3:9).*

Reconciliation

The act of God by which our separation from God is overcome and we are brought back to fellowship with God. {Grudem, p. 580}

- *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (Romans 5:10-11).*
- *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).*
- *For he himself [Christ Jesus] is our peace, who has made us both [Jews and Gentiles] one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (Ephesians 2:14-16).*

Adoption

“An act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.” {Grudem, p. 736}

- *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).*
- *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ... (Romans 8:15-17).*
- *So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith (Galatians 3:24-26).*

Propitiation

The act of God by which Jesus bore and satisfied the wrath of God against our sin.

- *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Romans 3:23-25).*
- *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10).*
- *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17).*

Redemption (Ransom)

The act of God in which sinful man is redeemed (bought) out of bondage to sin and Satan. {Grudem, p. 580}

- *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).*
- *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24).*
- *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace... (Ephesians 1:7).*
- *...he [Christ] entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12).*

Sanctification

“Is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.” {Grudem, p. 746}

- *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-5).*
- *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God (1 John 3:9).*
- *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:5-11).*

Glorification

“The completion of redemption by God by which our bodies are entirely set free from the effects of the fall (sin) and brought to that state of perfection for which God created them.” {Grudem, p. 828}

- *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved (Romans 8:23-24).*
- *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified (Romans 8:30).*
- *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).*

The Cross of Christ as a Substitutionary Atonement

In his death and resurrection, Christ has provided the atoning sacrifice (payment) as our substitute for the satisfaction of the judgment of God (wrath taken, forgiveness given) and for the imputation (transfer) of Christ’s righteousness to us. Jesus Christ lived the righteous life we should live and died the death we deserved.

- *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).*

- *For our sake he [God the Father] made him [the Son, Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).*
- *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4-6).*
- *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).*
- *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (1 Peter 2:24).*
- *...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them (2 Corinthians 5:19).*
- *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe (Romans 3:21-22).*
- *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).*
- *...and be found in him [Christ], not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith (Philippians 3:9).*

The Exclusiveness of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. There are no alternative means for a person to be reconciled to God.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

- *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him (John 3:36).*
- *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).*
- *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).*
- *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:11-12).*

The Sufficiency of the Cross

The work of Christ was complete and sufficient to take care of all areas of our sinfulness necessary to reconcile us to God. We do not need to, or get to, add anything to the gospel.

- *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*
- *For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:3-6).*

The work of Christ is secure. What Christ has accomplished cannot be undone or negated in any way or at any time.

- *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39)*
- *“I [Jesus] give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one” (John 10:28-30).*

We never get beyond the gospel. We never move on to something else in order to grow spiritually or to get closer to God.

- *But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14).*
- *For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [Jesus Christ] (2 Corinthians 1:20).*
- *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).*