

So That We Might Become the Righteousness of God

by Paul Washer

Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Duration: 1:16:12

Scripture: Genesis 22:2, Deuteronomy 29:20, Psalm 24:7-10, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Topics: "Righteousness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the anticipation of the second part of the story of God's plan for salvation. He describes the scene of Jesus, the Son of God, being crucified on a tree, emphasizing the sacrifice and the love of God for humanity. The speaker also references Psalm 24, where Jesus, as the victorious and chosen one, calls for the gates of heaven to be opened. The sermon concludes with the story of Abraham and Isaac, highlighting Abraham's obedience and God's provision of a ram as a substitute for Isaac. The speaker emphasizes that this story is not the ending but a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice and provision of Jesus for humanity's redemption.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 21. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father please, for the sake of your Son, for the sake of your people, help us that we might have a greater understanding of who your Son is and what he has done for us. And that that truth would lead us to greater devotion, greater obedience, most of all greater love toward him. In Jesus name, Amen.

We are once again this morning going to seek to do what any sane man would call the impossible, and that is to speak much of Jesus Christ. As I like to say so often, so much talk today about the second coming and things like that, people delight in hearing of those types of things. Yet on the day of the second coming, you'll understand everything there is to know about the second coming.

And yet you'll be in eternity in heaven and you will still not even have begun to comprehend the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, for the saints, that is their delight in heaven, and that is what keeps eternity from becoming bored. It is the beauty of God revealed in the face of Christ.

It is a deeper and deeper knowledge of knowing what was done in order to achieve our redemption. And so we're going to look at that today and I can assure you that we will fail. I will fail in speaking.

And you will fail in hearing because this subject is too big for any of us. It's one of the reasons I delight so much in hearing Charles Spurgeon, whenever he was going to concentrate specifically on the person of Christ, he would always at the very beginning of his sermon say, I am going to fail. And even if a cherub were to stand in this pulpit and preach like he had never preached before.

He would fail because the glory of Jesus Christ goes beyond all comprehension of mind, only the mind of God. Can truly understand, comprehend and appreciate the person of Jesus Christ. And that's why, even though in this world and oftentimes in our own heart, though Christ may not be the center, I can assure you in the heart of God, he remains always from the beginning to the end in the very center, the very center.

Well, let's look at this passage. He made him who knew no sin, possibly the most outstanding thing about Jesus Christ that is often overlooked is this. He knew no sin, he had no affiliation with sin, so unlike us.

You and I were born in sin. In the book of Job, we understand that depraved men, they drink down iniquity like it was water. We are friends with sin.

We walk hand in hand with sin. And yet he had no affiliation with sin, no friendship. Never did he once walk together with sin.

He was perfect in all his ways. Now, oftentimes when we think about sin, as it is defined in many of the confessions, that sin is lack of conformity to the law of God, which is the standard of God's righteousness for us. So when we think that Jesus had no sin, we oftentimes think to ourselves, he perfectly obeyed the law of God.

And that's true. That's very true. But I want to take it a little bit farther to show you how magnificent his obedience truly, truly was.

One time I had the I guess you could say the privilege of speaking to a man who was given to perfectionism. He was a part of that denomination or those group of churches that believe that a saint on this earth can become absolutely perfect and sinless. And after talking to him, I found out that the reason why he believed that is because he had redefined sin.

So I looked at him and I asked him this question, I said, what do you suppose would be the greatest sin a man could commit? And he said, well, I don't know. I never thought about it that way. And I said, could it be breaking the greatest commandment that God ever gave? And he said, well, I suppose.

And I said, well, what is that command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? And then I asked him, have you done that? And there I had him trapped, because if he says no, he has sinned and if he says yes, he has blasphemed to say that he gave God all the love that God merits is blasphemy. Now, I want you to think about something. There has never been one second and I mean that literally.

Not one millisecond in all of human history, not once in all of human history, not even for a fraction of a second. Has anyone ever loved the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength? Now, we're we have seven billion people plus on this planet right now. And if you add it all up back to Adam,

how many billions of people have walked on this planet and not for even one fraction of a second? Has any one of them.

Loved the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. And yet, Jesus Christ. Every second of his life.

He loved the Lord, his God, with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, he did throughout his entire life what no one else in humanity had ever done for even a second. Now, do you begin to appreciate a little bit more of what it means when it says he knew no sin, that he was perfectly obedient? Now, I want you to look at something else about Jesus Christ. It says that the writer of Hebrews tells us that he was tempted in all things.

Just like us, and because of that, he can be a sympathetic, compassionate high priest, that he was tempted in all things. Now, that's true. But when people read that, they they're not really comprehending what's going on here, what it's actually saying.

And let me try to give it to you in something of an illustration. Let's say that I'm standing up here and this is an Olympic platform and I'm standing up here with the world champion, heavyweight power lifter, OK, the strongest man on earth. And we're going to have a competition.

We're going to have a squatting competition. That means we put a bar on our back with a lot of weight and we go down to a certain degree, a 90 degree, at least with our with our thigh, and then we come back up. We lift this magnificent amount of weight.

Now, you put an Olympic bar on my back. It weighs forty five pounds. You put an Olympic bar on his back.

It weighs forty five pounds. I'm OK. I'm OK.

I've got this. He's he's got this. He's OK.

Now put on two plates. OK, each one of those plates weigh forty five pounds, put on two plates. I got one hundred and thirty five pounds on my back.

I'm OK. He's OK. Let's go for two plates more.

Now we got two twenty five on my back. All right. I feel it, but I'm OK.

Put two twenty five on his back. He's like, no problem. Now let's put some more plates on.

Now, remember, I'm I'm almost fifty four for another set of plates. Now we're three fifteen. Sweat is breaking out on my brow.

OK, and I'm thinking, I know I can take this down, but I don't know if I'm coming back up. You put the three fifteen on his and he's just standing there. It's not even breaking the sweat.

Let's put some more plates on there. So now we're at four oh five. I go down and I collapse, put four or five on his back.

He goes down, comes up. I've collapsed. He came up and that's why a lot of people look at that's what Jesus did, you know, the temptation that was put on us, we collapsed and that same amount of temptation was put on him and he stood.

No. It goes deeper than that. He has that four or five on his back, he goes down, comes up, put two more plates on, he goes down and comes up, put two more plates on, he goes down, comes up, put more plates on and more plates on, he goes down and comes up.

And this is the point. It was like a tiny fraction of temptation can be laid upon us and we fall, we collapse, multiply that. Infinitely.

That is what was thrown against Christ, not equal with what was required to collapse us, no, infinitely beyond what was required to collapse, us was thrown upon Christ and he still stood. He fought what no man has ever fought. He felt temptation, no man, no woman has even ever begun to feel he suffered it and he overcame.

That's how great he is. It wasn't that he stood when we collapsed, it's he stood when we collapsed and then he kept standing with more and more adversity piled upon him in every sort of way. And yet he stood there like this.

That's the magnificence of our Lord, that's the greatness of our Lord. Let's go on. It says here that he made him who knew no sin.

To be sin on our behalf. Now, all the great commentary writers from from the reformers on down through the Puritans, they give us warnings here and rightfully so, we need to be very, very careful when we look at this text, because look at what I mean. Actually, look at what it's saying.

He made him who knew no sin to be sin. It doesn't just say to bear sin. It made him to be sin.

Now, what does that mean? Because we need to go far enough so that we understand the power of this text. And yet we can go too far and enter into heresy itself. What does it mean that he was made to be sin? Well, before we get to that, I want you to realize something.

You and I, as I have said, were born in sin. And yet even even the unconverted man at times, if his conscience has not been totally defiled, when he sins, he can feel the pain of his conscience for the sin that he has committed. But when you think that we were born in sin and that we drink down iniquity like water for us to be associated with sin is not that big a deal because we were born in it.

We've always felt it as a matter of fact, we don't even know the absence of it. But you take Jesus Christ, the trice holy son of God, when sin came upon him, when he was made to be sin, just imagine the terror of it, the sickness of it, the horrific nature. It's horrific to think that a sinful man becomes very, very vile in his sin.

But now imagine a trice holy son of God who becomes him. And the weight of that upon him, the terror of that, how disgusting it would be, how terrifying, how defiling it would be. Let me give you an example.

Let's say that some of the fine women of this church. Who were raised, let's say, homeschooled, protected, always lived pure lives, being in the church, being in godly families, and they decide that they're going to do an evangelistic outreach to prostitutes here in Cincinnati. And one dear woman goes down there and starts handing out tracts to the prostitutes.

And all of a sudden the police show up, the paddy wagons show up and they take the prostitutes and throw them in a paddy wagon and they grab that dear sister who'd never even read anything defiled in the

newspaper and they throw her in that paddy wagon. The other prostitutes are sitting there laughing, filing their nails, telling jokes, maybe trying to call their lawyer, no big deal. And she's over in the corner of that paddy wagon, she can't even breathe.

For the shame and the defilement she feels, they pull them all out of the paddy wagon and they process them through fingerprinting them and everything. You hear the other prostitutes just laughing and having a big time, making smart remarks to the police, being emboldened in their sin. And here's this dear sister, she can't even stand.

It doesn't even begin to describe what it meant for our Lord to bear our sin, but here it doesn't just say he bore our sin, it says he was made to be sin. Now, what does that mean? A lot of people have looked at this and not paid attention to it and others have paid attention to it and gone too far and said things about the Lord they should have never said. But what does it mean? Well, the answer is found in the second part of the text.

It says that he was made to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Now, what does it mean for a believer to be the righteousness of God? Does it mean that the moment someone is saved, they become a righteous being? No. No, because the moment you were saved, you did not become a perfectly righteous being incapable of sin.

What does it mean for us to be made to become the righteousness of God? What does it mean for a believer to be righteous? It means this, that the moment we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and it is true saving faith, we are legally declared before God to be right with him. You understand that we are legally declared to be right with him, although our bodies have yet to be redeemed, although there is still this element called the flesh, this aspect of us that's unredeemed, that this aspect of us that still draws us into sin that fights against the spirit, but in our position before God, the moment we believe in Jesus Christ, we are legally declared to be right with God. And then here's the word that's often left out and should not be left out.

We are not only declared to be right with God, we are treated as those who are right with God. Do you see that? We were adopted as sons and daughters. His wrath has been removed.

We are now treated as those who are right with him. So what does it what did it mean for the son to be made sin? Did it mean that when he was on the cross that he himself became defiled and corrupt and wicked? Absolutely not. Even on the cross, he was a lamb without spot.

Then what does it mean? It means at that moment he was legally declared to be guilty in our place and he was treated by God as the guilty of the guilty. Do you see that this is the holy transaction that went on with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Now, again, when I preach this in the United States or almost anywhere. It is very, very hard to preach this.

Why? Because so little is taught with regard to the attributes of God. That's why. You see, the gospel cannot be truly appreciated, even the word sin cannot be understood unless people are mature in their understanding of who God is.

You see, we see sin is almost a common thing, something that, well, it's just it just happens, it just is it is what it is, as people say. And we can't understand the horrific nature of it because we do not understand what it means for God to be holy and righteous. That's why it is so necessary for you to grow in your

understanding of the attributes of God so that you might truly appreciate the gospel of Jesus Christ, the horrific nature of sin and how unspeakable it was for the son of God to hang before his father as the one who was guilty in our place, bearing our sin and finally crushed under the holy hatred of God in our place.

The holy hatred of God against sin. Now, let's go on this passage in Second Corinthians 5:21, where it talks about him who knew no sin being made sin. There is another text in the scriptures that is just as piercing.

That in the same way opens up a door and allows us to understand what it truly meant for Christ to die on the tree, to bear our sins, and it's found in the book of Galatians. And I want us to go there for just a second. Chapter three, look at verse 10, for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written curse, it is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them.

The curse that comes upon the sinner. We see evidence of this in the very beginning when Adam fell, that there was a curse, that there were thorns, that there were briars. We get into the law, Deuteronomy 27, Deuteronomy 28, and we understand the fullness of what it means to disobey the revelation of God's righteousness.

To disobey the law of God is to bring a curse upon a man. And not just to disobey the worst, the most the most exquisite or the most important commands of the law, but to disobey any aspect of the law was to bring the curse is a matter of fact, if you could possibly obey ninety nine percent of the law, but disobey in one percent, you are under a curse. It is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them.

So all of us prior to Christ were under a curse. The sinner, apart from Christ, is under a curse. Does that terrify you? It should, it should.

Let me put it this way, if I were to try to sum up without any exaggeration what it means for the sinner to be under a curse, it would be this, that if you die unreconciled to Christ, the last thing you will hear. When you take your first step into hell. Will be all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God with joy because he has rid the earth of you.

That's what it means to be under a curse. See, we do not understand how vile sin is and we do not understand how vile we are apart from Christ. That's on that day, even your closest kin, if they are redeemed and standing before the throne of God, when they watch you take your first step into hell, they will bow down and worship God for having judged you with righteousness.

I hear these silly evangelists stand up and say, you know, on the day of judgments, your mother and your grandmother and all of them will be weeping and weeping. They don't want you to go to hell. They do not get that out of the scriptures.

But even your mother. Will stand up and say that God of all the earth has done right with you, and if you don't believe that you don't believe the Bible and you do not believe 2000 years of Orthodox Christian theology, but you've just fallen into the trap of a soupy Western American evangelicalism. And that's all wives tales, humanism.

You say, would God do that? Is he that bad? No, you don't understand. God would do that because he is that good. It's that you and your sin is that bad, but you cannot see it.

You cannot truly understand how vile and wicked sin truly is. And if someone says, well, I can, I can, and I still think that's wrong. No, you can't.

Let me give you an example. What Christians. Defining that loosely, where to the beach.

Today in America, what they wear to the beach in public. If they had done that only 50 or 60 years ago or the same thing, the secular unbelieving authorities would have either fined them, locked them in jail or sent them to an institution to have their mental capacity examined. So what Christians believe is OK today and see as nothing wrong with it, even secular unbelieving people 50 years ago thought it was either criminal or insane.

We cannot judge how vile sin is. Do you see that? You know, the old story about the frog, right? You take a live frog and throw him in boiling water, he'll jump right out because he knows it's boiling. But you take that frog and put him in body temperature water and just slowly turn up the heat and he will roast, he will boil there in that water because he becomes accustomed to it.

And that's what's happened to us. Yes, my dear friend, to be under a curse and you are under a curse if you are outside of Christ. To be under a curse is more terrifying than any tongue of man or angel could ever describe to you, but you will know what it means one day if you do not repent and believe you will understand what it means.

But now here's the good news. Verse 13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. He who knew no sin.

Was made sin on our behalf. He who was the blessed of Yahweh, the blessed of God on our behalf on the cross, he becomes a curse. It's that great interchange.

It's that great transaction. In which the holy one or, as Peter says, the just one takes the place of the unholy ones, those who are unrighteous and he bears the punishment for their crimes. Now, let's go on to give you an idea of what this is like and just just listen, we won't we won't turn there, but I want you to think about the Beatitudes for a moment that talk about the man who is blessed before God.

And what we're going to do is we're going to look at that beatitude and then I'm going to change it around and show you the opposite, which is the man cursed before God. Let me read the blessed are granted the kingdom of heaven. The cursed are refused entrance.

You would be refused entrance, but Christ was refused entrance on that tree. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The blessed are recipients of divine comfort. The cursed are objects of divine wrath.

It was the wrath of God that Christ drank on Calvary. The blessed inherit the land. The cursed are cut off from it.

The blessed are satisfied. The cursed are miserable and wretched. The blessed receive mercy and the cursed are condemned without pity.

Perfect justice. The blessed shall see God. The cursed are cut off from his presence.

The blessed are sons and daughters of God and the cursed are disowned in disgrace. The only way you can be anything other than accursed of God. Is through the one who was blessed of God, who took your sin upon himself and became cursed in your place, you understand that now in order for us to get an even

greater grasp of what it means for Christ to be made sin and to be come a curse on behalf of his people, I'm going to use Deuteronomy 27 and 28, and I'm going to take from there the specific declarations where God says the cursed shall suffer this or the cursed are like this before me.

And I'm going to show you how in order for you to be saved from all these curses, it was necessary that the Messiah suffer these curses in your place. Now, to give you a context on this, I want you to think about this. When Israel came out of Egypt.

As they were there, there was two mountains, Mount Gerasim and Mount Ebal. In Mount Ebal, they divided up the people of God and part of the people of God stood upon Mount Ebal and the other part of the people of God stood upon Mount Gerasim and from Mount Gerasim, all the blessings were declared that would come upon the person who obeyed God's law. And on Mount Ebal, all the curses were shouted forth that would fall upon the man who was a covenant breaker, who disobeyed God's law.

Well, you know which mountain belongs to you. It's not Gerasim, the mountain that belongs to you is Ebal and every curse of God for disobedience that was proclaimed upon that mountain should fall upon you and me. But in Christ, our Savior, we are redeemed because when he was on Calvary, every one of those curses fell upon him.

And I just want to I want to read a few things. This is something that I wrote several years ago, but I want to be very, very clear. So I want to read it speaking about when Christ was on the cross, when he raised his eyes to heaven to find God's countenance, his father turned away when he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? His father replied, the Lord, the Lord, your God damns you.

Now, if you think that's harsh, understand that not only do we see that Christ on Calvary bore the wrath of God, but down through the ages, countless theologians, those who you would most respect, including the Spurgeons and so on and so forth, said the very same thing. This did not originate with me when he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? His father replied, the Lord, the Lord, your God damns you. The Lord sends upon you curses and confusion and rebuke until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, the Lord smites you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart.

And you will grope at noon as a blind man gropes in darkness with none to save you. The Lord, as the Lord delights over you to make you prosper, the Lord now delights over you to make you perish and to destroy you and you will be torn from the land. Curse shall you be in the city and curse shall you be in the field.

Curse shall you be when you come in and curse shall you be when you go out. The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze in the earth, which is under you iron. You shall be a horror and a proverb and a taunt among all the people.

Let all these curses come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed because you would not obey the Lord, your God, by keeping his commandments and his statutes, which he commanded you. All of these things should have fallen upon you and me on Calvary in Gethsemane, they fell upon Christ. So many people, they think that somehow because the Romans beat up Jesus, our sins were paid for.

That is not the case, that is only part of the curse and the punishment, but the great part of the curse, the great part of the punishment is not what the Romans would do to Jesus, but what God the Father would

do to his only begotten son, the very thing that he should do to you throughout all eternity, he does to his son on Calvary. You see why we believe in him. You see why we obey him and follow him and even sacrifice for him.

It's not because we want to be good people, it's not because we want to have nice families, it's not because we have some standard of ethic and we want to look conformed to it. All that is good in its own way, but in another sense, it's nothing but rot. We believe in him, we serve him because of who he is and what he did for us on that tree, and if we spent the rest of our lives rotting in a prison for his name, we would still have to worship him.

It's not about some silly little thing he prospers us in. Or how he makes our lives clean or how he blesses our children, we believe in him and we love him because of what he did and suffered on Calvary, that's the thing that imprisons our hearts. That's the thing that tames a wild man, that's the thing that kills the pride of the proud in the vein.

And says it makes them say nothing in my hands, I bring simply to the cross, I claim it's Jesus. It's Jesus, I remember going to this this this homeschool ministry one time in their magazines and everything else, and I went to him and I said, I got a real problem with everything you're doing. I said, what is it? I said, I don't see Jesus anywhere.

I do not see Jesus anywhere, so I don't care how many families supposedly get healed, I don't care how many lives get fixed, I don't care how many people get moral or conservative or anything else. If Jesus is not the center of it, it's idolatry and it's right. We are Christian.

We do everything we do because of him. And because of what he did for us, that's it. That's it.

Anything else is idolatry. Let me go on. As Christ bore our sin upon Calvary, he was cursed as a man.

Now, all this is coming from Deuteronomy 27 and 28. He was cursed as a man who makes an idol and sets it up in secret. He was cursed as one who dishonors his father or mother, who moves his neighbor's boundary mark or misleads a blind man on the road.

He was cursed as one who distorts the justice to an alien orphan and widow. He was cursed as one who is guilty of every manner of immorality and perversion, who wounds his neighbor in secret or accepts a bribe to strike down the innocent. He was cursed as one who does not conform to the words of the law by doing them.

Now, there's a passage in Proverbs that I want to address, it says this like a sparrow and it's flitting like a swallow and it's flying, so a curse without cause does not does not alight. How could the curse alight upon Christ? He had no sin, it could alight upon Christ. Because he bore your sin, he took up your evil.

He bore all your filthy transgressions against God, and for that reason, then. All the curse of God, all the curse of the law could alight upon him. I want you to think about this.

David cried out after his great transgression, how blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, how blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit. Yet on the cross, the sin imputed to Christ was exposed before God and the host of heaven, he was placarded before God and the host of heaven, he was placarded before men and made a spectacle to angels and devils alike. The transgressions he bore were not forgiven him and the sins he

carried were not covered.

If a man is counted blessed because iniquity is not imputed to him, then Christ was cursed beyond measure because the iniquity of all of us fell upon him. This is why we love him. Have you ever wondered why some people? Missionaries and such, as you see them, famous ones, martyrs, they seem to have this extraordinary passion that would cause them to lose everything.

For the sake of Christ. And yet you find it hard to even open your Bible in the morning, what's the difference? Well, in some cases they were converted and others are not. But in other cases, it is this they simply have seen more of Christ.

Than you. And it is the beauty of Christ. It is the greatness of what Christ did for them that propels them to such devotion and piety.

There is a statement in Deuteronomy. When the covenant is renewed. There is this description of this covenant breaking man, and although that is found in the law, it seems to be looking forward even to Christ.

And this is what it says. About the covenant breaker, the anger of the Lord and his jealousy will burn against that man and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. Then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the crimes of the covenant which are written, all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law.

Christ should well, let me put it this way. God. Should single me out for adversity.

He should single you out for adversity. You know, there's I've seen guys wax very boldly when they're surrounded by their friends, but you get them alone and they cower. They're not so bold.

I have heard sinners boasting that day I stand before God. I'll tell him I disagree with him. No, you will not.

You will melt before him like a tiny, tiny wax figurine before a blast furnace. But imagine this, no comfort of friends, no comfort of mother or father, no one. If you have rejected Christ and you die in that rejection.

Are you've just got enough religion in order to calm your conscience, and yet you do not know Christ, you stand before him that day, you will not be judged in a crowd, you will be singled out and every one of your transgressions against the law of God will be made known. And then you will hear even from the lamb. Depart from me, you are cursed in light of this.

It doesn't even really matter who wins the next presidential election, does it? That's a small thing. Compared to the eternal salvation of your soul, let's go on, I want to go to the garden for a moment, I mentioned it in brief yesterday, but I want to go to the garden for a moment or was it Friday? Christ is in the garden and I believe as. Most conservative theologians today and those down through church history.

In that garden, which is often overlooked. The most incredible things happened. You see, the curse.

It involves so many things that people don't understand. In one sense, there's a turning over to the devil. The fierce turning over.

To the vile rage of the devil. Well, there is being turned over to wicked men. We see that in the curse being persecuted and chased, betrayed.

There is the sense of abandonment of God. There is the sense of the wrath of God rolling over the soul with such terror that it cannot even be defined by human tongue. It's not even set forth in biblical language.

It is so severe and the physical suffering, all of it has to do with being under a curse. And if you look at Gethsemane. That's where you see it all beginning.

It is something like this, some of the Puritans have said it this way, that. That Christ. When he became a man, he did not lay aside his deity, but he did lay aside the privileges and the glory and the use of his deity.

He was a real man, though God, he functioned as a real man and he was born and he grew in wisdom. Now, the only way to grow in wisdom is to lay aside your omniscience. He grew in wisdom and he came to understand early he was the Messiah, that he was the redeemer.

But the Puritans would say it this way, that that as he grew, he would see and begin to understand a little more of what it would cost him to redeem his people. And it would like hit him in the chest, like being hit by a truck and it would back him up. And he'd say, not my will, but yours, and then he would grow in wisdom and see a little more of what it meant for him, the cost it would take to redeem his people and it would hit him in the chest like a truck and he would stand and say, not my will.

And then it comes to Gethsemane and there in Gethsemane, the full measure of what it would cost him to redeem his people came upon him to realize that he would be bearing sin in its fullness, that his father would forsake him, that it would be turned over to devils and men and be forsaken of God upon a tree and be crushed under the wrath of God. And it hit him in the chest like a truck. He falls to the ground, there's such anguish that he's bleeding through his skin.

And then, as always, he pulls himself up and he says, not my will, not my will. But yours be done, he took the cup. Now you say, what was in the cup? So many preachers, I tell you, you remember several years ago when Mel Gibson made the film on The Passion.

Well, when he made that film, I got all kinds of emails from preachers all over the country saying, you know, this film is bad and this and this and everything else. And I didn't see the film until like a year or so ago. But they just talked about how bad the film was and everything, and I wrote them back and I'd say, I don't have near as much problem with Mel Gibson's film as I do with your preaching.

And the reason why is this, I remember that film came out and I'm sitting there and I'm working on my mom's farm and I'm in my old blue Ford Ranger. I was digging post holes or something and I pulled up to where I needed to unload some posts and my truck was on and the radio was on. It was a Christian radio station and the preacher goes, there's been a lot of talk about Mel Gibson's film, but for the next half hour, I want to set out for you what really happened on the cross.

And I said, praise the Lord. So I sat in my truck. He talked about the Romans.

He talked about a whip. He talked about thorns. He talked about nails.

He talked about a spear and the side of Christ. And he concluded with an impassioned plea for people to pray a prayer. And I and I just screamed out, you have not preached the gospel, you don't even understand the gospel yourself.

Do you think, honestly think that that Christ purchased us on that tree, that he won our salvation just because a bunch of Romans did all that to him? Do you think that he was in the garden? Bleeding through his skin with anguish. Because of a Roman cross, well, then explain to me how for the next three centuries, countless followers of Jesus Christ went to the same Roman cross, singing hymns and counting it joy to die and die as their master had died. So as the captain of our salvation, weaker than us, what was in the cup? What was in the cup? What was in the cup? That's a very good question.

I want us to look at, well, before I do that, let me give you an illustration. I was teaching at a reformed school. It was a Christian school that was solidly founded upon reformed principles.

So the scriptura, the trivium and other things like that, beautiful work. And I walked in, I looked at the headmaster and he said, she said, she goes, what will you be teaching on? And I said, well, who will I be teaching? She said, well, kindergarten through the 12th grade in chapel. And I said, well, that makes it kind of difficult.

She said, why? I said, I'll be teaching on propitiation. And she said, it won't be a problem. I said, what? It won't be a problem.

So I got up there and I preached a sermon on propitiation that I could have preached in the seminary. And when I got to the point of what was in the cup, I asked the students what was in the cup. And I remember this little girl, she couldn't have been more than eight or nine.

She raised her hand. And I called on her in true reformed fashion, she stood up, stood to the side of her desk, put her hand on her desk like this, and she said, sir, the wrath of almighty God was in the cup. Behold, out of the mouth of babes being able to proclaim what most preachers just simply bypass or don't understand, how can he pay for our sins only this way, that he drank the wrath of almighty God when he was on that tree, the holy, righteous hatred of God against evil that should fall upon you for all the evil you have committed and for the fact that you are evil.

It fell upon Christ, listen to what the prophets say, first of all, in Psalm 75, for a cup is in the hand of the Lord and the wine foams, it is well mixed and he pours out of this. Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. Then listen from Jeremiah, for thus the Lord, the God of Israel, says to me, take this cup of the wine of wrath from my hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it.

They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them what was in the cup, the wrath of almighty God. Oftentimes here, people say, well, you know, heaven's heaven because God is there and that is true, and then they'll say, but hell is hell because God's not there. Untrue.

Hell is hell because God is there in the fullness of his wrath, burning continuous or continual burnings, as we hear in Isaiah against the wicked. And you say this, well, how can hell be eternal? Two reasons, one. It is of infinite duration because they have committed crimes against an infinitely good God.

But secondly, realize this. Those in hell. They do not repent.

They hate God even there, as some theologians have said, hell is locked from the inside. And if the king were to come down into hell and push open the door and say, come out, be free, all you have to do is bow your knee to me. Every person in hell would run to the door and slam it shut and say, I'd rather rot in hell because never forget this in hell.

We have Romans one carried out. To its perfect degree. Men are turned over to themselves, they did not come to God while they were alive because God is good and they are evil.

And in hell, they are given over completely to that evil so that they are who they really are and they would not want to bow the knee to God, even if it would cause them to cease from suffering. Now, I want you to imagine for a moment that we're in a small village here in this. This church, just a hundred meters out the door here is a dam a thousand miles high and a thousand miles wide, and it's filled to the brim with water.

And in one second. We hear this magnificent, horrifying crash. The dam has broke completely split in two from top to bottom and a wall of water is about to fall upon us, doesn't matter how fleet of foot you are, doesn't matter how strong the swimmer you are, you will not escape.

There is no hope. And right before the water reaches us, the ground opens up and drinks it down so that not one drop of water even splashes upon your pant leg. This is what Christ did for you on Calvary.

He opened himself up, he swallowed down and extinguished the wrath of God against his people. Imagine a millstone. When I was a missionary in Peru, they said I could still see millstones in some of the old granaries.

Imagine a millstone that weighed ten thousand pounds and upon it another that weighed ten thousand pounds. And you take just a grain of wheat and you put it in between the two in a fraction of a second, it feels the immense pressure and then explodes under the weight and is ground to nothing unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and die and abideth alone. But if it die, but die crushed under the wrath of God for the scriptures say in Isaiah fifty three ten and it pleased the Lord to crush him.

You see, as I said Friday, God cannot simply lay aside his justice. He cannot love at the expense of justice. So in order to demonstrate his love to his people, he had to do something with their sin.

Their sin had to be punished. But he is such a loving God. He became a man and he suffered the punishment in our place.

He extinguished the wrath of God because he satisfied his own justice. And now he can freely love us because he has paid for all our crimes now. I want you to realize something when we talk about pardon and listen carefully, there have been cases where presidents and governors and the like have pardoned criminals at the end of their office.

They have the right to pardon certain men and they pardon them. There have been men who have gotten away with crimes and there have been men who have been pardoned, who later commit suicide because they cannot live with the fact, even though they are pardoned, they cannot live with the fact that their crime is outstanding. They never paid for it.

They live lives of misery. That's I hear sometimes preachers using the same illustration, you know, like the governor pardoned this criminal, so God has pardoned you. No, it's nothing like that.

You see, when a governor pardons a criminal, that criminal's crime is still outstanding because it was never paid for, it's still in the books, it's there to defile his conscience every day. But that's not the case with the Christian. Your conscience is clean.

Why? The crime is not in the books. Why is it not in the books? Because it was paid for. It is no longer outstanding.

It's gone. It's completely gone as though it never happened. And thus you are free.

That's what it means to be pardoned in Christianity. Now, I want to give you something. One of my favorite authors of all time and favorite books of all time is John Flavel, the Puritan, his first volume, *The Meditorial Glories of Christ*.

And in that he talks about a certain transaction before even the creation of the world in eternity between the father and the son. And I just want to read it to you because it's so beautiful. I want you to listen to it.

The father speaks, my son, here is a company of poor, miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves and now lie open to my justice. That's you. Justice demands satisfaction for them or justice will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them.

What shall be done for these souls? And then Christ speaks, oh, my father, such is my love to and pity for them. That rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their surety, their guarantee. Now, listen to what it says.

Listen to what Flavel is trying to get across here. Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee, Lord. And what he's saying is Christ didn't enter into this transaction to save his people unaware of what it would cost him.

For example, a young man, you know, gets married and he's all full of love and romance and everything. And then he comes to me six weeks later and he looks at the ring on his hand and he says, what have I done? I had no idea what I was getting into, and if only I knew I wouldn't have done it. That's not the way Christ came to die.

He said, bring in all thy bills, everything they owe me. Let me see them. And then he goes on, bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee, Lord, bring them all in.

Now, listen to this label is trying to get a justification here. Listen to what he says. Bring them all in that there may be no after reckonings with them.

Now, do you understand that young person, you understand that old person? Bring in all the bills. Because when I pay for all these. I want to be sure there will be no bill left outstanding and nothing else they have to pay or add to it, I want to pay it all.

So that they are perfectly and completely and forever free of them. And then he goes on, bring them in, bring them all in that there may be no after reckonings with them at my hand, thou shalt require it. I will rather choose to suffer their wrath than they should suffer it upon me, my father, upon me be all their debts.

And then the father says, but my son, if thou undertake for them, if you take their place. Thou must reckon to pay even the last might, expect no abatements when you take that cross. Don't you think I will diminish

the punishment because it's you, my beloved son, my justice demands full payment, and if you take their place, I will not slacken my hand.

If I was to crush them, I will crush the. Me. He says this.

Expect no abatements, if I spare them. I will not spare you, the only way you could be spared the judgment of God is that Christ was not spared the judgment of God and the son. Replies content father.

Let it be so, charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it, who can say that I hear these silly, silly songs that are written today, you know, God looked all over heaven to see if there was an angel willing to die and God looked all over to see if there was a man willing to die. It wouldn't have mattered if he found an angel willing to die or a man willing to die. And no one could do this, only God could pay the justice of God and fully satisfy for our crimes.

And such was the love of God. That he would do this, that he would do this now, I want to come to an end by reading a text to you, you remember Abraham. And his son, Isaac, and Mount Moriah, and this is what it says now, I want you to listen to the language, I am one, I'm old school.

In the sense that I will see the scriptures as a unity, even though they are many, many books written by many, many different people, and even though we have to interpret the context and understand the reader and everything about it, I believe that it even transcends all that and that on every page it's talking about Jesus. Everything is hinting at him. Now, listen to the language of God when he speaks to Abraham.

Take now your son, your only son. Whom you love, do you hear that language any other place? Like in the New Testament. About another person.

For God so loved the world, he gave his only. His only begotten, his only son, he says, take now your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there is a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you. And see, old man makes the journey.

I think it is also very interesting that when Isaac finds out he is to be the sacrifice. There seems to be no struggle. No holding the boy down to tie him, he lays down.

And Abraham possibly draws forth the very flint knife that he used to circumcise the boy, he draws back the knife and as his will gave in to the will of God and the hand descended down upon the son. Abraham heard this, Abraham, Abraham, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him. For now, I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son for me.

And then all of a sudden, Abraham turns around and he finds a ram in the thicket caught by its horns and he cries out, Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide. The Lord has provided. The Lord has provided.

We hear that story and we all go, what a that was tense, but what a beautiful ending to the story. My dear friend, it wasn't the ending. It was only the intermission century after century rolls by and we sit in the audience wondering, when will the curtain open again to tell the second part of the story? And then it opens.

And there's the son of God. His son, his only son, whom he loves hanging on a tree, and then God takes the knife out of Abraham's hand. And drives it into the heart of his only begotten son, one poet said, offer up the sacrifice, creation sends forth the call, offer up the sacrifice, one life to pay for them all.

Offer up the sacrifice, the innocent one must be slain, offer up the sacrifice. And bring man back to God again, I hope that actually there's a hymn on your mind right now. And it's this.

All the vain things that charmed me most. I sacrifice them to that blood that in light of this. You see that everything else is vain, that your desires to be anything else other than his servant.

That your desires to know anything else but his salvation are just vain and stupid and unwise. Flavel when he's writing one of his kin, and I can't quote him directly, it's too long, but he says something like this. He says, I write, but I write as one who sees and writes by moonlight.

What he's saying is I don't see clearly. I can't describe to you his glory. Then he says, oh, fair sun and fair stars and fair moon, but oh, fairer Lord Jesus, oh, fair flowers, fair trees and fair blooms, but oh, fair, fairer, fairer Lord Jesus.

And then he stops with his pen and he says, no, no, I've wronged him in speaking this way. And then he rewrites it and he says this. Oh, dark and pitiful son.

Oh, blemished moon, but oh, fair Lord Jesus, oh, dark and black and twisted flowers. But oh, fair, fair, fair Lord Jesus died. And he rose again on the third day, his death was, in a sense, a vindication of God's righteousness.

And when God raised him, he vindicated his only son. This is my beloved son. Hear ye him.

This is the one I have chosen. There is no way to be reconciled to God except through his beloved son who now sits at his right hand. He died.

He rose again and he ascended into glory and he is what is esteemed. There is no other name. We're so foolish and stupid, blind.

We see beauty in so many things that are trivial. We look at ourselves in the mirror and we're impressed. All of it is pitiful, dark and twisted, every ambition that doesn't have Christ at its very center.

It's high treason. Christ, Christ alone, I love just just listen to this, I love this passage and it was used by the ancient church, not so much now. It's the psalm of ascension.

Listen to what it says. What it's saying is that after Christ rose again from the dead, then for 40 days he showed himself and then he ascends up into heaven. The man, Christ Jesus, ascends up in heaven.

And Spurgeon uses this and I love I love the way he does it. It goes like this. He takes from Psalms 24 and Christ, the man, the victor.

Here, God's chosen one stands at the very gates of heaven and he cries out in a loud voice, lift up your heads, O gates and be lifted up old ancient doors that the king of glory might come in. And when all of heaven hears that voice, they rush to the wall, they climb upon the parapet, they look over and they ask this question, who is this king of glory? Who dare call out to these doors? What man is bold enough to demand that these doors be opened to him since the beginning of time? No one has called out to these doors. No one has dared lay his hand to the latch of these gates.

Who is this king of glory? And Jesus responds, the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates and lift them up old ancient doors that the king of glory may come in. And when

those doors were opened to him, all of heaven found their gaze set eternally upon the one they were made for.

All hail the power of Jesus name. Let angels prostrate fall, bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. Crown him with many crowns.

And he goes up to the throne and a greater than Xerxes sits there, and yet he doesn't wait for a scepter to be extended to him to see if it's proper for him to climb the stairs. He climbs the stairs by his own virtue and his own merit, the son of God has returned home the victor and he sits down beside his father. It is finished.

It is finished indeed. This is why we're Christian. Young people, listen to me.

In this drab, horrid, twisted, vile, pathetic world, why would you set your heart on any hero when you have such a victor in heaven? And know this, this is the one, the thing that is most beautiful, the one who sits there on that throne is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. The one who sits upon that throne is your elder brother. And in the great congregation before God, he is not ashamed to call the brother brethren.

This is amazing. Hey. This is amazing.

So waste your life if you choose, waste your life if you choose, waste your life if you choose. Oh, don't waste your life. And if you're sitting there today and you're saying, oh, is it for me? Is it for me? I'm unconverted.

But is it for me? Do you long for it to be for thee? So, yes, then it's for thee. Then come all who are weary and heavy laden. But there's nothing.

I am so tired of hearing people tell me, but I heard the message. There's nothing in my heart. I must wait until God does something to me that is not biblical language.

The biblical language is if you hear his voice today, do not harden your heart. Come, come, come. My heart is dead.

Then seek him all the great Calvinistic preachers down through the ages. They were great because they truly believed in the sovereignty of God and election. But they would not allow a sinner to use the sovereignty of God as an excuse for their own rebellion against God.

You are required, no matter who you are, if you hear my voice to repent of your sins and to draw near. To cry out to him, to seek him, and you say, well, I seek him and I seek him, but I feel nothing, I see nothing, then keep seeking him. He has commanded thee to seek him, but it is his prerogative of when he makes himself known, but he has promised that to all who seek him, he will make himself known.

Don't you use the sovereignty of God as an excuse for your you being passive? Seek the Lord, seek the Lord, seek the Lord, seek the Lord. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Repent of your sins, turn from your iniquity, acknowledge your foolish ways, fall down before him, cry out to him because he is a merciful God, abounding and loving kindness.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for the gospel.

Thank you for the joy that it brings to the saint's heart, though he hear it a thousand times a day, it is more beautiful every time. Lord, save, save and add to your church, Jesus name, Amen.

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