

Chapter Five

THE PROBLEM OF PERSPECTIVE (5:1-21)

IDEAS TO INVESTIGATE:

1. Why does Paul suggest the possibility of “nakedness” at death?
2. How are we “away from the Lord” while we are “in the body”?
3. Would christians ever “pride themselves on a man’s position”?
4. How is it possible for humans to “see no one from a human point of view”?
5. How was “he (Christ) made to be sin who knew no sin”?

SECTION 1

Frailty of the Human Body (5:1-5)

5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

5:1-3 Provokes: The problem of perspective (outlook, view, vista) is as old as man! It began in the Garden of Eden. When God created man, he gave (or revealed) to man his divine perspective. This divine perspective (outlook) was to be applied to every human experience. But Satan (the rebel from heaven) came to earth and seduced man into *rejecting* the divine perspective. Man prostituted his viewpoint and perverted God’s creation. At that point, for the sake of wooing man back to himself. God “subjected the creation to futility” (see Rom. 8:18-25). This was a part of God’s plan to redirect man’s perspective. God intended to reclaim man’s viewpoint so that it would become

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divinely oriented.

Part and parcel with the "futility" of creation is the *frailty of the human body*. As a result of man's sin, his physical body was condemned to dissolution and death. That very mortality of the body has presented a constant problem for man in the matter of perspective or viewpoint. The ultimate problem of human philosophy remains: there is no satisfactory metaphysical system (perspective, or viewpoint). The mortality of the human body frustrates all human metaphysical systems! And that is precisely where God wants all human metaphysical systems! The frailty of man *provokes* him to cry out for a perspective that is superhuman.

The Bible bears witness that perspective is a problem that may plague preachers and saints. The cry for a divine viewpoint for mortal man is the essential focus of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon). The O.T. prophets were sent by God to call Israel to think and act according to the divine perspective revealed in the Law of Moses and in the messianic prophecies. Jesus, God incarnate, came to *live* the divine perspective as a human being thus proving it is possible for man to do so. Jesus saw, heard, thought, lived everything from God's viewpoint, and he did it all as a human being within the human experience. All the epistles, and especially the book of Revelation, are revelations of the Holy Spirit directing and guiding man toward the divine perspective.

Loss of divine perspective was the crucial problem with the christians at Corinth and Paul dealt with it pointedly in I Corinthians, chapter 15. Here, in II Corinthians 5, Paul admits that his own mortality gives him occasion to "groan" and "sigh with anxiety" and struggle with the need for a constant divine perspective. Christians, preachers, missionaries are not immune from this problem. They, too, are mortal.

Unlike unbelieving philosophers, Paul knew where to find and how to appropriate a divine perspective. Paul could look *beyond* human mortality to a perfect and eternal existence by faith based on the historical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:14-15).

The word "For" in 5:1 connects what follows to Paul's statement of the christian perspective in 4:16-18. Christians are to see their total experience in this life from the perspective of the "eternal weight of

glory" which is "beyond all comparison." And that includes the mortality of the human body. The Greek word *oidamen* is present tense meaning, "We are continuing to know. . . ." In other words, the divine perspective needs to be a continuing experience. The christian needs to remind himself every day to look at everything and every person from God's viewpoint. The only place to find God's viewpoint is in the Bible. The mind of Christ is revealed no place else (see comments, I Cor. 2:1-6). Christians are to look to the Bible for God's viewpoint on every aspect of life. Paul's knowledge went beyond human philosophy or logic for he knew everything from a divine perspective, that is, from divine revelation.

The Greek phrase, *he epigeios hemon oikia tou skenous*, would be literally translated, ". . . our dirt-house, this tent. . . ." The word *epigeios* is translated, "earthly" and is a compound of *epi* ("down") and *ge* ("soil, land, ground"). The human body is emphatically of the soil! It is marvelously fashioned, but essentially dirt. It is bound to and inseparable from the soil. The word *skenous* ("tent" or "tabernacle") is poignant. Our human bodies are like tents — temporary and uncomfortable. Nomads and pilgrims live in tents. They are always looking for permanent dwelling places (see Heb. 11:8-16).

The Greek word *kataluthe* is the very word which was used by the ancients for "striking down a tent" in preparation for moving on. When Paul said "For we know that *if* this earthly tent we live in is *destroyed* . . .", he meant *when* this earthly tent is destroyed (or, "struck down"). He had no doubt that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 15:50), and this human body of dust must perish and/or be changed (I Cor. 15:51-54).

Taking his stand on the revelation of God, Paul's viewpoint (perspective) transcended earth and time. He saw eternity! Thus he was able to say, "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The Greek word *echomen* is a present tense participle. We *now* have an eternal building. The word *oikodomen* means "a strong edifice" in contrast to a temporary tent. God has already prepared our heavenly body ("building") and it is there waiting for us when we "strike our tent" in this pilgrim-land. We do not know what we shall be (I John 3:2); just what our eternal body will be is yet a "mystery" (unrevealed), but it will be somewhat like the body put back into the earth at death (like the plant resembles

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the seed), and it will be glorious, imperishable, powerful, spiritual, immortal, and eternal (I Cor. 15:35-54). The phrase, "not made with hands" is simply an idiomatic way of saying our eternal body is spiritual, not physical. It is the best human language can do in trying to describe something outside the human experience. What words would one use to depict a human body that is not flesh and blood? It is a "forever" body, and it is located in the other world ("in the heavens").

In verse 2, Paul is very careful to explain the need for a divine perspective in light of the frailty of the present body of dust. He does not want to be misunderstood. When he writes about the "heavenly dwelling" he is not writing about a disembodied, ghostly existence. We are in this body of the earth now. And we know it will soon be going back to the dust from whence it came. So we "groan" (Gr. *stenazomen*, complain, grieve) and greatly desire (Gr. *epipothountes*, long) to "put on" our heavenly building or dwelling.

Paul keeps switching metaphors of our eternal existence between "building" and "clothing." Man envisions himself as "naked" (Gr. *gumnos*, bare, exposed, Matt. 25:36; Acts 19:16; I Cor. 15:37; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 3:17), dispossessed, insecure, without a body. Man fears the death of this body because of the anticipation of disembodiment. So Paul repeatedly affirms in this text (and in I Cor. 15) that the christian should not view death as a time of exposure, dispossession or disembodiment. When the christian's earthly body dies, he *immediately* (see notes on II Cor. 5:6-13) becomes "further clothed."

5:4-5 Pressures: The word "anxiety" is a translation of the Greek word *baroumenoi*, which more literally means, *burdened*, or *pressed down*. Paul used it to describe the anxiety and pressure the christian feels as he anticipates the dissolution (death) of this physical body. No christian, not even the apostle Paul, is in such perfect command of his emotions that he is completely unafraid of death. All christians feel some anxiety as they anticipate death and the next life — especially anxiety about the next body, about consciousness, about where they will be and who they will recognize. The prospect of death is not pleasant for any one, and to insist that the Scriptures require believers to face death without anxiety or fear is a false interpretation of the Bible. Paul's faith was sure; his confidence was firm. Yet, he shrank from

the idea of being without a body and "naked." This is what "burdened" Paul. But again, Paul was able to bear this anxiety (burden, pressure) because he had the divine perspective. Those without the divine perspective are devastated by this pressure.

Paul reveals here an *immediate embodiment* for christians who die. He knew nothing of some disembodied spiritual existence, or soul-sleep, or intermediate temporary-body existence after death. For Paul, the state of existence for the christian immediately after the death of this earthly body was one of being "further clothed" (Gr. *ependusasthai*). For Paul, the instant the christian puts off this earthly "tent," his life is "swallowed up" (Gr. *katapothe*, absorbed, overwhelmed, consumed, devoured) by eternal life and by victory (I Cor. 15:54). Later, Paul will describe the next existence for the christian as "at home with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8).

There is even the hint here that Paul was *anxious* to die and put off this earthly body because he *knew* he would *not* be naked at death, but rather abundantly "clothed" at home with the Lord. He expresses just such anticipation in Philippians 1:22-23, ". . . Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

Ray C. Stedman says of this passage, in his book, *Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians, Power Out of Weakness*:

"What Paul means, of course, is that when we leave this body we also leave time. It is not easy to re-train our thinking along these lines, because we project time into eternity, assuming eternity is simply time going on forever, but it is not. . . . In *time* we are all locked into the same rigid sequence of events. . . . But in eternity there is no past or future; there is simply one great present moment. Therefore, the events we experience in eternity are never anything we have to *wait* for, they are always what we are *ready* for, what we are spiritually prepared for. . . . The Scriptures clearly teach that when a believer dies, he experiences immediately the coming of the Lord for his own."

So in verse 5 Paul says that God has been *preparing* (Gr. *katargasamenos*, moulding, fitting, working, shaping) us for this very thing. That "thing" for which we are being "moulded" in this existence is the "building from God," the "house not made with hands," our "heavenly dwelling," with which we shall be "further clothed" and "swallowed up." And this shall be the state of the

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believer immediately after being “unclothed” from this earthly body, for he will never be “naked.”

I Thessalonians 4:16-18 says that when Jesus comes again, he will be accompanied by all those who have been dead in Christ. But it will only *appear* to those left alive on earth that the dead have been raised first, when in actuality we are all raised together, to be always with the Lord. That is the way it will *appear* to men because of their finite conception of eternity! The believer goes immediately to be with the Lord in a conscious, embodied state when he sheds this earthly body at death (see I Sam. 28:14ff; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 23:43; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-12). His existence after death is *very far better* (Phil. 1:23), and therefore could *not* be a disembodied state.

God prepares us for this very far better existence by these “slight,” momentary afflictions” (see Rom. 8:18, 28; II Cor. 4:16-18), and by “forming Christ in us” (Gal. 4:19). In fact, God’s Spirit in us is his *guarantee* (Gr. *arrabona*, down-payment, earnest) that we shall have a very far better “clothing” in the next existence (see Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13-14; I Pet. 1:3-5). The Spirit, living in our minds through his Word (John 6:63; I Pet. 1:22-24) gives us a foretaste of the very far better life and creates in our spirits a longing for the full redemption (Rom. 8:18ff). And if God guarantees it, who can prove it otherwise (see Rom. 8:31-39).

While the frailty of the human body provokes and pressures, and makes us fear the possibility of dispossession after it dies (and it is certain to die), Christians may *know* with abiding assurance that God is preparing them for an elegant (glorious) “body” beyond all imagination. They need not fear dispossession or nakedness, because when they are absent from this body, they are immediately at home with the Lord. That is the divine perspective. Without the divine perspective there “remains only a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries” (Heb. 10:27).

SECTION 2

Frustration of the Human Soul (5:6-15)

6 So we are always of good courage; we know that while we

are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men; but what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to be proud of us, so that you may be able to answer those who pride themselves on a man's position and not on his heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

5:6-10 Unfulfilled Vindication: A very present problem with human perspective is man's need for vindication. It is an urgency within the soul of every human being that cries out for satisfaction. The fundamental desire for righting all wrong was created in the human soul. But in this fallen world, rebelling against God, wrong is not always righted. Most of this world chooses to be "away from the Lord." It does not acknowledge that righteousness and justice are present only when the Lord is present (see Isa. 26:9-10). It has been seduced by the devil. The world's perspective is flawed, and thus men are frustrated. Even christians may become frustrated if they are not careful to maintain the divine perspective.

But Paul made every effort to constantly view the wrong in this world (especially wrong done to him personally) in the light of divine, justice. The apostle kept the divine perspective and it made him "always of good courage." The Greek word *tharrountes*, translated "of good courage," is related to the Greek words *thero* and *therme* from which we get the English word *thermal*, thus, "warm, tempered, bold, confident, courageous, etc." *Thero* was a favorite word of the Stoics. But Paul's courage (*thero*) was not at all like the detached im-

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passiveness of the Stoics.

“At home in the body” is from the Greek words *endemountes en to somati*. *Endemountes* is a compound of *en* and *demos*, and literally means “among one’s own.” In this text *endemountes* is contrasted with *ekdemountes* which means, “away from one’s own.” Paul is saying that when we are “among our own” in the body, we are “away from our own” in the Lord. Paul did not mean that the Lord was absent from him in his earthly existence. The Lord is the Holy Spirit, and the reality of his presence, his actual presence, is mediated to the believer through the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Yet in spite of Christ’s constant presence through the Spirit of God in us (Matt. 28:20; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27; Rom. 8:9-10, etc.), there is a sense in which the christian is away from, separated from, the Lord as long as he lives in this world. While we are “in the body” the Lord’s presence is not direct and unmediated with us, but is indirect. It is not until we are “away from the body” that we shall have his direct presence (see Rev. 21:3; 22:3-4).

In the meantime, we must “walk by faith and not by sight.” We must view everything in this “away-from-the-Lord” existence through the divine perspective. And it is important that we understand our “away-from-the-Lord” existence as something inferior to what our “at-home-with-the-Lord” experience will be. Our eagerness to proclaim the christian life in this world as the ultimate experience occasionally leaves people with the impression that there is nothing better to come! We must never do that! The christian life even at its best in this world is far inferior to that which it shall be in the next world. Christians must never de-emphasize the strength and courage derived from walking with Christ by faith in this life. On the other hand, it would be difficult for the christian to over-emphasize the glory and blessedness of the promised life to come for all believers.

Having such a divine perspective, says Paul, makes the believer *ambitious* (Gr. *philotimoumetha*, lit. “to search for honor, to love honor”) to please the Lord whether in the earthly body or in the heavenly existence. Of course, Paul would *rather* be away from the body and at home with the Lord. With this statement Paul dispenses with any theories that life after death is in any way inferior to this existence. We are, therefore, to assume that in the next life the believer will be conscious, embodied, immortal, spiritual, holy, good, just,

beautiful, joyful, and in the direct presence of Christ. Whatever it was like for those believers to have enjoyed the incarnate presence of Christ in the Gospels, will be magnified millions of times in heaven. And the one thing which pleased Christ most about men when he was here on earth was their readiness to believe him and obey him.

A significant part of having the divine perspective is to believe the coming *judgment* of Christ, and to act in accordance with that belief. The person who refuses to see the world, history, or himself as inevitably coming under the scrutiny and sovereignty of the Absolute Redeemer, has a flawed perspective. Such a person will surely suffer the frustration of having no hope for ultimate vindication of right over wrong. Such a person will have no hope that final justice will ever be accomplished. Such a person's perspective can only lead to irrational stoicism, at best, and existential despair, at worst.

The word "For" in verse 10 connects Paul's appeal for a judgment-perspective to his "ambition" to be always pleasing the Lord. In other words, the christian's magnificent obsession should be to always please the Lord *because* he must inevitably appear before the judgment seat of Christ. The word *appear* is from the Greek word *phanerothenai* and means, "made manifest, revealed, unveiled, exposed." What Christ is going to do at the judgment for the christian is to reveal the christian to himself! Christ certainly does not need a special time to put people on trial in order to discover their deeds or motives. Christ already knows the "secrets of men's hearts." This is not a judgment to settle final destiny. This is a personal evaluation given to each individual by the Lord himself of what the individual's life has really been like. Paul looked forward to this judgment because he believed the Lord would be showing many things Paul thought were failures that were really successes. The Lord will reveal many things that pleased him which no one else heard of or applauded (see Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 12:41-44). Everyone who has made it his aim (ambition) to please the Lord is going to be surprised by joy at this "manifestation." It will be a time of disclosure and evaluation when all mankind learns for the first time, and perfectly, who was right and what attitudes men should have had or should not have had. It will also be a time of encouragement where believers will see and learn the real value of many things that they thought no one knew and which they themselves often did not understand. The evil that men have done

will also be exposed, evaluated and repaid.

Thinking and living in the light of perfect evaluation should drive men to seek the divine perspective. Christ is primarily concerned with our motives. That is why Paul said he always made it his "ambition" to please the Lord. It is "ambition," aim, motive, that counts most with Christ. Our "ambition" here (not the quantity of our accomplishments) determines the degree to which we will be rewarded in the next life! The person who has understood this will not be frustrated with life in this world where one's "ambitions" for the Lord often exceed his opportunities and capabilities. He has the divine perspective.

5:11-15 Unmitigated Vanity: Another frustration of the human soul is the unmitigated vanity with which the christian is surrounded in this world. While the christian is in this earthy existence he must live among proud, arrogant, malicious people who are always attacking his motives and his veracity. Jesus even experienced this as incarnate God! It was a constant source of frustration to the apostle Paul that men should slander his motives. Paul's answer here is that his motives are vindicated as pure because of his divine perspective.

Someone in Corinth had persuaded the christians there that Paul was seeking to win the favor of men for his own selfish ends. Paul answered that he was busy trying to persuade men to follow Christ, not for his own selfish ends, but because he was always trying to please the Lord. And his ambition to always please the Lord was because he "knew the terror of the Lord."

The *fear* (Greek, *phobon*, phobia, terror) of the Lord is not as uncommon to the New Testament as some people think! Jesus taught his disciples to *fear* God (see Matt. 10:26-33; Lk. 12:4-7). See also Hebrews 12:28; I Pet. 1:17; 3:2; I Tim. 5:20; Heb. 4:1; Rev. 14:7; 19:5; Phil. 2:12; Jude 23, etc. The Old Testament makes the *fear* of the Lord (reverence, awe) one of the fundamental bases of holiness (Eccl. 12:13; Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7; Psa. 15:4; 22:23; 33:8; 34:9; 115:11, 13; 118:4; 135:20).

The fear Paul points to here is *his* fear (reverence) for the Lord. This is what motivated Paul to persuade men. His motives were not selfish in the least. Paul preached to men to bring glory and honor to God, not to himself. Paul's view of life, his perspective, included the fear of God and the judgment. Therefore, he was able to keep his

motives pure, as well as his actions. It would not be out of order for all christians to have this perspective. It well behooves the Church today to "restore" a proper fear and awe of God. More reverence would be a good thing! It would solve the problem of perspective!

Paul uses the Greek word *peithomen* to speak of his efforts to convince the Corinthians of his sincerity. Knowing fully the fear of the Lord and that his every ambition is clearly open to the Lord and will be "manifested" by the Lord Paul wants to *persuade* (Gr. *peithomen*, conciliate, win favor of, satisfy; see Matt. 28:14; Acts 12:20) those in Corinth who doubt that his motives are pure. Paul wants the Corinthian christians to grasp the divine perspective and judge him in light of that.

Verse 12 is Paul's answer to any possible misinterpretation of his words as self-glorifying. He says that his real reason in defending his sincerity was that the Corinthian christians might have an answer to give those who were criticizing him. Evidently there were some who had come to the Corinthian church (probably Judaizers) who took pride in their position (being probably from the Jerusalem church and claiming the sanction of the "pillar" apostles, Peter, James, etc.) and were slandering the apostle Paul's motives. Paul has already mentioned these Judaizers in II Corinthians, chapter 3. An interesting Greek phrase, *en prosopo kauchomenous*, "in face-boasting," is translated, "pride in position." The Judaizers were manipulating these Corinthians with their "appearances" or their religious facades, rather than bringing any honest or factual evidence against Paul. They were throwing their weight around rather than allowing anyone to search their hearts and motives. They were presenting exactly the opposite perspective that Paul was presenting to the Corinthians. They were presenting the *human* perspective — Paul was presenting the *divine* perspective!

Look at Paul's fervor and total commitment from the human perspective and he appears crazy (mad)! (see Acts 26:24ff). It may be that some of the Judaizers pointed to him as an example of an egomaniac (or perhaps a paranoiac) because he appealed so often to his own sincerity, his fervency for the gospel, and his wide ministry. His enemies may well have accused him of a mania for recognition, that he was "mad" for position or power over his converts. But Paul argues that the Corinthians must look at his writings and his works

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through the divine perspective. Paul declares if he is an egomaniac, greedy for personal exaltation, God will judge. Only God can know that perfectly, and God will reveal it at the judgment; but Paul charges the Corinthians that they can judge whether he is outwardly following sensible behavior toward them or not. They can make this judgment if they will evaluate Paul's actions in light of the divine perspective. If they will only measure Paul's actions according to the revealed Word of God, they will conclude that he is acting sensibly and not as an egomaniac.

Paul continues to prove that his perspective is antithetical to that of the "lovers of position." He says that his motives are controlled by the love of Christ. He has died to self by accepting the death of Christ as his own death. The fact of the substitutionary death of Christ has flooded Paul's soul with love and "constrained" him to live no longer for himself, but for Christ. The Greek word *sunechei* is a compound of *sun* and *echo* and means literally, "to press together." It is the same word used in Luke 12:49 to describe the "pressure" or "constraint" propelling Jesus to the cross! The love of Christ should pressure, control, impel and motivate the christian. The love of Christ drives and guides by setting the limits to what we should and should not do.

And why did the love of Christ control Paul? Because Paul was *convinced* that Christ had died *for* him (and for all men). The word *convinced* comes from the Greek word *krinantas* and is a word meaning "legal conviction." It shows that Paul's conviction was based on *evidence* and not just emotion. It was the evidence that produced the emotion and not vice versa! The evidence that Christ's death was a vicarious, substitutionary atonement is the bodily resurrection of Christ. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the supernatural stamp of authentication on the doctrine of Christ's atonement. Without the resurrection, the death of Christ as a vicarious atonement for anyone's sins is unvalidated. It is the atoning death of Christ for sinful man that sheds God's love abroad in man's heart (see Rom. 5:1-11).

Now the critical issue in this text is: What does the atonement mean to an individual, personally, existentially, subjectively? It means that when Christ died, the believer died! If I accept Christ's death in my place, I have actually accepted my death! In other words, I agree

with God that my sins put *me* there on the cross "in" Christ. "All" died, therefore "I" died when Christ died. "I" no longer live; "I" have no right to myself, to control myself, to live for myself any longer. "I" have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer "live" (see Gal. 2:20). Having accepted, by faith, the grace of God in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, we are also privileged to accept by faith, the gracious *life* of Christ as a *substitute* for the old sinful life of self. "He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." We live that life of Christ vicariously in our lives by *faith* (Gal. 2:20).

II Corinthians chapter 5 is one of the greatest treatises on the experiential impact of the atonement in all the Bible! It is paralleled by such great passages as Romans, chapter 6; Colossians 2:20 — 3:17; Ephesians, chapter 2; and Hebrews, chapters 2 and 10. (The reader is directed to *Learning From Jesus*, by Seth Wilson pages 495-503, pub. College Press, for significant studies on this passage).

In the midst of unmitigated vanity by those who take pride in human position and other vagaries of life apart from faith in Christ, a personal, existential absorption of the fact of Jesus' vicarious death is absolutely crucial to a divine perspective. Paul had accepted Christ's death on his behalf. He had accepted Christ's life as his own life. Now he wants the Corinthians to judge his actions toward them from this perspective. Paul insists that as christians the Corinthians have no right to any other perspective.

SECTION 3

Fallibility of the Human Spirit (5:16-21)

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and

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entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

5:16-17 Egocentric: The main problem with the human perspective is its egocentricity. It is selfish! It centers and focuses and devotes itself to self. In the Bible this is called "the things of the flesh" (see Matt. 6:25-34; Rom. 8:5-11; 13:14; I Cor. 1:29; 5:5; Gal. 5:16-17; 6:13; Eph. 2:3; Phil. 3:3-11; Col. 2:23; 3:5ff; I Pet. 4:1-5). Paul wrote to the Romans, ". . . the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7). Now Paul did not mean there that simply living in a fleshly body makes a person inexorably hostile to God. Jesus lived in a fleshly body. Paul is talking about a worldly-mindedness, an attitude that makes the flesh and the world its priority. The "human point of view" in the Greek text is, *oidamen kata sarka*, literally, "know according to flesh." Jesus called the "fleshly viewpoint" idolatry — serving Mammon — in Matthew 6:24-34.

There are essentially only two viewpoints for man — human or divine. Man either sees everything from the limited, fallible, perspective of human wisdom, or from the infallible, revealed perspective of God in the Bible. The perspective of the unbeliever is limited to this world, by the limitations of this existence. He sees nothing beyond this existence. Everything is relative to this earthly experience. That is why human perspective alone leads to degradation, depravity and despair. Every human experience is evaluated and acted upon from an animal-fleshly-materialistic perspective (see Rom. 1:18-32). But as for the believer, Paul says, from the very moment he accepts by faith the atoning death of Christ, he gives up his right to think or evaluate or act by himself or for himself. He no longer views anything from the limitations of flesh or matter. He sets his mind on the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5ff). He surrenders his thinking and evaluating and acting to the mind and behavior of Christ revealed in the Bible. The Bible takes over his mind and his life. Every aspect of life — home, job, education, entertainment, finances, hobbies, sexuality, emotions —

everything, is brought into conformity to the precepts and principles of the Holy Spirit revealed in the Scriptures. The christian surrenders all right to say, "It's my life, and I'll think the way I please and live the way I want."

Non-christians view Christ from a human point of view. They think of him as being no more than merely another human being, having no authority to exercise over anyone else. Non-believers reject the idea that Christ was God in the flesh. They refuse to accept his death as an atonement for their sin. They may grant that he was a wonderful, wise, compassionate religious teacher, but they will not accede Christ any right to do their thinking for them. They reserve the right to disagree with any viewpoint Christ might dictate in his teachings or those of his apostles. But, Paul says, once a person becomes a christian he views Christ no longer from a human point of view. The christian *never* claims the right to disagree with any New Testament viewpoint.

Thus, if any man is *in* Christ, he *is* a new creature (or creation). Paul is not dealing with the possibility of the new creature here as much as he is dealing with the *fact*. He is saying, "It is a matter of fact that those who are in Christ are new creatures with a totally new perspective!" This is the way it *must* be for a christian! The old, human perspective, has passed away; behold, the new, divine perspective, has come and is continuing to come (Greek *gegonen*, perfect tense verb, "has come with a continuing action"). The new creation with the new, divine perspective, is a continual, growing, ever-expanding experience. It is the experience of being changed into the likeness of Christ from one degree of glory to another (II Cor. 3:18) by "beholding the glory of the Lord."

This transformation of the mind of man so that he might have the divine perspective was the purpose of the Law of God revealed through Moses. It was the very core of the writings of the O.T prophets. All the great theophanies (throne visions) in Isaiah 6:1-13; Ezekiel 1:1-28; Daniel 7:1-28 and Zechariah's visions were *specifically* given to insist that their Jewish listeners see all their circumstances from the perspective of the *throne of God* (the divine view of history). And the highly symbolic book of Revelation in the N.T. urges from the very first (the vision of the victorious, reigning Christ ch. 1, coupled with the vision of the Throne of God and the Lamb ch. 4-5) that the

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churches of Asia Minor must view their "great tribulation" from the divine perspective. History, even the terrifying, destructive, depraved aspects of history, is all under the sovereign control of God and the Lamb. It is imperative that the saints of God have this perspective. Without it they cannot possibly remain faithful!

5:18-21 Estranged: The reason the human perspective is egocentric is that the human being is estranged from God. Man, the rebel-sinner, has chosen to exclude God from his life. He is at "enmity" (war) against God (see James 4:1-4). The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit — these are opposed to each other (Gal. 5:16-17). The mind of the flesh is "hostile" toward God (Rom. 8:7). Man, not reconciled to God, is against God! There is no neutral-zone. There are not three categories: for God, against God, and neutral. We are either for Christ or against him — gathering with him or scattering (Matt. 12:30).

So, Paul says, the only possible way any human being can acquire the divine perspective is through the redemptive work of God in Christ which reconciles man and God to one another. Reconciliation is purely and simply by the grace of God. God took the initiative; God accomplished the redemption by giving his perfect Son as the ransom. *It is all from God!*

To attempt to discuss the concept of *reconciliation* in these notes would require such a lengthy digression contact with the exegetical flow of the text would be lost. The reader is therefore referred to the *Special Studies* at the end of this chapter for thorough treatment of the subjects of Propitiation, Justification, Redemption, Reconciliation, Faith, and Obedience. Treatment of all these subjects is necessary to understanding the concept of Reconciliation. Suffice it to say here that when man declared war on God, the Divine Father, in keeping with his very nature, had to declare war on man. God could not love man for his good without acting hostile toward that which would destroy man! So God "withdraws" himself from man. This is taught consistently throughout the Bible (Hosea 5:15; Isa. 64:7-9; Psa. 51:11; Rom. 5:10-11). The very word "propitiation" assumes there is Someone who has to be "appeased." The *wrath* of God is revealed in the very forces of nature (Rom. 1:18ff). The absoluteness of God's justice must be satisfied. Until all this is accomplished, there could be no "reconciliation" between God and man. God's absolute justice

must be satisfied and his wrath appeased, and man must be wooed back to humble surrender and faith toward God.

This is precisely what God did through Jesus Christ. God sent his Son to earth incarnated as a man (John 1:1-18; Heb. 2:5-18; 10:1-25; Phil. 2:1-11). Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. He pleased God in everything he thought, said and did. He kept the commandments of God, the Law of God completely. And then, the Son willingly laid down his life (John 10:14-18) as a ransom for sinful mankind. He became the curse of God in our place (Gal. 3:10-14; I Pet. 2:21-25). God punished Christ for all the sins of all the ages and thus God's wrath was appeased and man was justified all in the same redemptive work (see Rom. 3:21-26). The Absolute God was reconciled to man through the absolute atonement of Christ, and man is wooed back to God through the divine demonstration of love at the cross and the empty tomb. God does "not count" men's trespasses against them if they accept God's work of redemption and reconcile themselves to him by faith and obedience to his Son.

Quickly Paul shifts from the subject of personal salvation and reconciliation to the *ministry* of reconciliation. Every christian is obligated by the grace of God's reconciliation given to him, to proclaim the good news of God's offer of reconciliation to the whole world. Paul used the Greek word *themenos*, an aorist participle of *tithemi*, and it is translated, "committed." The Greek word means, "assigned." God has *assigned* to all christians the work of ministering the *rationale* (Gr. *logon*, word, logic) of reconciliation. No christian is exempt from this assignment! It is written in the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:18-20). Paul considered himself a "debtor" and thus obligated (by his own redemption) to preach the gospel to as much of the world as he could humanly reach (Rom. 1:14-17).

All christians are "ambassadors" (Gr. *presbeuomen*, presbyters, elders, legates, ambassadors) allowing God to make his "appeal" (Gr. *parakalountos*, paraclete, to call alongside) through them. The ministry of reconciliation is calling sinners to come to the side of God! Paul said the "ambassador" of reconciliation was to "beseech" (Gr. *deometha*, beg, plead, pray) people to come to the side of God for the sake of Christ. And the motivation in the message of that ministry is the vicarious atonement of Christ. Could it be that "ambassadors" of reconciliation are to have the same qualifications as elders (I Tim.

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3:1-7)?

How did God "make" Christ to become sin for our sake? Most certainly God did not *force* Christ to *sin*! Christ was personally without sin. But since Christ was free from sin he was under no obligation to suffer the consequences of sin. That left Christ free to *choose* to become, vicariously, sin for all who were obligated by their own sin to suffer its consequences. He was not only free to choose to do so, he had the right and authority, by his perfect life, to do so if he chose. No human being may dare to gainsay Christ's right to assume sin vicariously if he chooses unless that human being himself is perfectly sinless!

Through the centuries there have been unbelievers, posting in righteous indignation, rejecting the revelation of God that Christ suffered vicariously for man's sins.

Ethan Allen, Revolutionary War hero of Fort Ticonderoga, a Deist and Unitarian, wrote in his book, *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, "The doctrine of the Trinity is destitute of foundation, and tends manifestly to superstition and idolatry. There could be no justice or goodness in one being's suffering for another, nor is it at all compatible with reason to suppose that God was the contriver of such a propitiation."

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, former head of the World Council of Churches, wrote in his book, *A Testament of the Faith*, pg. 144:

We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory to me is immoral. If Jesus paid it all, or if He is the substitute for me, or if He is the sacrifice for all sin of the world, then why discuss forgiveness? The books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty. I owe nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicated upon the act of some one else. It is my sin. I must atone.

Canon Vernon F. Storrs is quoted in a book by T.H. Hughes, entitled, *The Atonement: Modern theories of the Doctrine*, pg. 61:

We are in no way bound to accept Paul's interpretation of Christ's death. I dismiss from my mind all ideas of substitution, or of the innocent paying the penalty of the guilty because these ideas offend my moral consciousness.

However, Jesus himself said that he came to die as a ransom for man's

sins (see Matt. 20:28; 26:28). The New Testament is filled with statements about the vicarious, substitutionary death of Christ (I Tim. 2:5-6; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:28; I Pet. 1:18-19; 2:24; Rev. 1:5; Gal. 3:13). The substitutionary death of the Messiah was predicted graphically and unmistakably in Isaiah 53:1-12 and in Zechariah 12:10-13:1. To reject the revelation of God is to fly in the face of a document that has been historically authenticated and validated by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. To reject the vicarious death of Christ as atonement for sin is infidelity and rebellion. It is the spirit of the antichrist. It cannot be made respectable by couching it in moral revulsion. To disavow what God has plainly stated should offend moral consciousness!

We suspect the rationale behind disavowing the vicarious death of Christ is the rebellion against surrendering one's mind and life to the divine perspective. That is exactly why Paul emphasized the substitutionary death of Christ here; because it is absolutely crucial to the divine perspective. It is the one critical pre-requisite to the "new creation." The world-perspective arrogantly insists on atoning for its own sins. Those who glory in the flesh intend to earn their standing before God with self-righteousness. Throwing oneself upon the mercy and grace of God will not do for the "autonomous man." He must rule himself. And God must be satisfied with that! There is no repentance in that frame of mind. That is apostasy. Reconciliation to God with that attitude is *impossible* (see Heb. 6:1-8). No man's moral consciousness has a right to be offended at any divine fiat or directive. God told Abraham to slay Isaac as a sacrifice — Abraham had no right to do anything but obey. God told Hosea to marry a woman of harlotry — Hosea had no right to resist on the grounds of moral consciousness. We must believe and obey God whether it seems right to us or to other men or not!

So Paul closes this text by contradicting all presumptions of earned righteousness. God "made" (Gr. *epoiesen*, aorist tense, at a point in time past), or imputed, all sin punished vicariously in Christ who willingly accepted it at the crucifixion in the days of Pontius Pilate. Then the apostle adds God did that in order that "we" might "become" (Gr. *genometha*, aorist subjunctive) the righteousness of God in him (Christ). When any person believes the gospel and obeys the truth (I Pet. 1:22) he is purified and *becomes*

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righteous. The aorist tense means our righteousness happens at a particular point in time, and the subjunctive mood means it is something done upon us, to us, or for us — *not by us*. God imputed our sins to Jesus, and imputed Jesus' righteousness to us! The cross was a *trans-action*, initiated by God, worked out by God, declared by God and accepted by God. So man has no righteousness or goodness by which he may boast before God (see Rom. 3:27; I Cor. 1:29-30; Eph. 2:8-9). God *made* Christ our righteousness (I Cor. 1:30). By Christ's perfect obedience many (believers) are *made* righteous (Rom. 5:19). The Christian's righteousness is not his own but that which depends on faith in Christ (Phil. 3:8-11). Righteousness is not attained by pursuing it, but by believing in Christ (Rom. 9:30). God only imputes righteousness, however, to those who are *in* Christ by believing and obeying Christ's commandments (I John 1:8-2:6; Rom. 6:1-23). We retain that imputed righteousness *provided* we continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which we have heard (Col. 1:21-23).

Because we have that righteousness already, we do not have to earn it. It is our delight to begin with it, to start acting righteous because we *are* righteous. I hope you understand this, because this is the "good news." It is no good news to come to a person and say, "Christ forgave all your sins up to now, but from now on you'd better watch it. You are going to have to pay for all those." No, no, that is not the gospel. The good news is all your sins are forgiven, all your life long, including those you have not even committed yet.

God knows your struggle. He has dealt with that. He is never going to retract his solution; he is never going to act any different way toward you. Because the sin problem is settled he can come in alongside of you and help you learn how to act righteously on that basis. And he will — lifting you up, forgiving you, restoring you, strengthening you and staying right with you until this life is finally done.

So this is the glory of it. We learn how a God of justice can come to a loveless, hard-hearted, self-righteous, selfish, hurting and hurtful sinner like you and me and not count his trespasses against him. That is the way he does it because "he who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—Ray. C. Steadman, *op. cit.*, pg. 116-117.

Non-christians, in rebellion, unreconciled to God because their sins are unforgiven and they have no righteousness that will meet the

THE PROBLEM OF PERSPECTIVE

absolute demand of God, have no perspective beyond this world and this life. They cannot see things as God sees them, because they are determined not to. But remember, Paul is writing to the *christians* at Corinth in this epistle. He is begging them that they not let their perspective slip from the divine to the human. Their faithfulness in a world of temptation and trial, and their hope for the eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison depends on retaining the divine perspective. The same holds true for christians in the twentieth century — and especially for preachers!

APPREHENSION:

1. What relationship does God's subjecting the creation to futility have with the problem of perspective?
2. Where does the Bible document the human cry for divine perspective?
3. What chapter in I Corinthians deals with the problems of divine perspective among the Corinthian christians?
4. Why does Paul call our human body an "earthly tent"?
5. What is the significance of saying we "have" a building from God?
6. What does Paul mean by the word "naked"?
7. What do christians "sigh with anxiety" about while in their earthly body?
8. What do the scriptures say about "being at home with the Lord"?
9. What has the judgment of Christ to do with the christian having divine perspective?
10. Why did Paul have to explain that some had thought him "beside himself"?
11. Why did the love of Christ control Paul?
12. What convinced Paul that Christ's death was for all men's sins?
13. Why must the christian never "regard anyone from a human point of view"?
14. Define: Propitiation, Justification, Redemption, Reconciliation, Faith and Obedience (you will need to study the Special Studies to answer this question).
15. What is an "ambassador" of reconciliation?

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16. How did God "make" Christ to be sin on our behalf? What if we have some moral reservations against another person being punished on our behalf?
17. How did Christ's righteousness become ours?

APPLICATIONS:

1. Do you have a problem keeping the daily news reports in divine perspective?
2. How do you deal with the every-day trials and tribulations of your own life and those intimately associated with you?
3. Do you read your Bible daily for answers to your daily problems?
4. Are there really answers in the Bible for *every one* of man's problems?
5. Do you give much thought to your *own* death and what comes afterward?
6. Are you ever anxious about where *you* will be after your body is put in a grave?
7. What do you anticipate about the next existence?
8. Do you look forward eagerly to the judgment of Christ as a place where wrong will be righted?
9. What is your "ambition" in life?
10. Can you truthfully say that in every undertaking you've made in life (every ambition) you have sought first to please the Lord in it?
11. Is reverence (fear) of God a motive in your life? Do you think the Church today could use more reverence? In what way?
12. What does the atonement of Christ mean existentially (subjectively, personally) to your viewpoint, perspective, way of living?
13. Do you see "self" in you as having actually died on the cross with Christ?
14. Have you determined, with God's gracious help, to let Christ live his life out to the world through you?
15. Do you struggle with the command of Paul in this chapter that Christians are no longer to see anyone from a human point of view?
16. Where do you think the Christian must turn for solution to this struggle?

THE PROBLEM OF PERSPECTIVE

17. Does it seem fair to you that Christ must be punished for your sins? Do you believe he did? All of them? Forever?
18. Do you feel like God considers you a righteous person? Why? Do you think some of the good you have done in your life ought to be taken into account by God when he takes you home to be with him?
19. What do you feel like saying to God in light of his punishment of your sins in Christ and his giving you Christ's perfect righteousness as your own?

Special Study

PROPTIATION

Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; I Pet. 1:18-19;
I John 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:21-26

I. MEANING

- A. (Heb. *kipper*), means "to cover or wipe-out or wipe clean, to annul" by offering a gift
- B. ἱλαστήριον *hilasterion*, means, "to avert wrath."

II. USAGE

- A. *Kipper* is translated "appease" in Gen. 32:20 (literally, "I will cover his face with a present.")
- B. *Kipper* is translated "atone," "expiate" in Isa. 47:11 (literally, "thou shalt not be able to charm it away, or bribe it away.")
- C. *Kopher* is used to describe the "protection money" paid by the Jews to avert a plague (Exod. 30:12).
- D. *Hilasterion* in the LXX is translated "mercy seat" and the word is employed in exactly this sense in Hebrews 9:5.
- E. *Hilasterion* might even be thus translated in Rom. 3:25 and would say that God appointed Jesus to be the "mercy-seat" for sinners, in order that some place and means might be provided for securing a friendly meeting with the Deity, offended by man's sin.

Discussion

I. THEOLOGY

- A. Understanding the nature of God is necessary to understand the idea of propitiation
 - 1. A God of holiness is of necessity a God of wrath
 - a. The wrath of God is mentioned 585 times in the O.T. alone and although not as often in the N.T., it is surely there (Rom. 1:18, etc.). Ordinarily we think of the cross as being necessary for our sakes, but this is true only in a secondary sense. Certainly our salvation depends on the cross; YET IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE CROSS IS NECESSARY NOT

PROPITIATION

JUST BECAUSE WE ARE SINNERS, BUT
BECAUSE GOD IS GOD!

- c. Justice or righteousness is that characteristic of God which requires Him to punish sin. **GOD MUST BE TRUE TO HIMSELF OR HE IS NOT GOD. WHEN MAN SINS IT CONTRADICTS THE VERY NATURE OF GOD. GOD MUST PUNISH SIN . . . HIS JUSTICE DEMANDS IT.**
 2. The sinner is a standing assertion that there is no God. He is against God, and God therefore must be against him.
 - a. For God to ignore the sinner as a sinner would be an unacceptable compromise of His nature even though in His love He has no personal desire for vengeful malice in His motive
 - b. God's love for the victim of the sinner has been called in question by what He, the Sovereign, has allowed to happen in His realm.
 - c. Even though God may want to relate Himself to the sinner in ways of love, that relation must be predicated on an objective reckoning of some act of Justice where the record is put straight.
 - B. God's love is a personal attitude which is passionately concerned about genuine relationship.
 1. When God's love to man does not elicit love in return there is a necessary estrangement.
 2. Eliminate the possibility of wrath and God's love is meaningless.
 - C. Some act had to be completed that would permit God to maintain His holiness and justice and also to forgive the sinner, and let God be true to the other side of His nature — love!
- ## II. TRANSACTION
- A. What God did at Calvary He did actually and objectively and not merely in the minds of men.
 1. God acted to appease His own wrath in an event on the basis of which He can actually and objectively cover man's sin
 2. God paid Himself off, as it were!

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3. After Calvary God could be toward man as He could not be toward man before
- B. A propitiation is that which satisfies the wrath — the righteous and judicial demand for justice — of God.
 1. That which satisfies the wrath and justice of God is the punishment of sins.
 2. The Bible describes the death of Christ as a propitiation (Rom. 3:25), which means that in His death Jesus satisfied the wrath and justice of God by bearing the penalty for sin.
 3. The divine necessity is not just to forgive, but to forgive in a way which shows that God is irreconcilable to evil, and can never treat it as other or less than it is.
 4. Sin makes a real difference to God, and even in forgiving God treats that difference *as real*, and cannot do otherwise. He cannot ignore it, or regard it as other or less than it is. If he did so, He would not be more gracious than He is in the atonement; He would cease to be God.
 5. Men have been able to appreciate and accept the thought of a benevolent God, **BUT NOT THE THOUGHT OF A COMPLETELY HONEST GOD!**
- C. But God must remain honest to His own nature or we have a God no better than all the pagan gods and religions of all the ages
 1. God does what the supreme Judge must do. He refuses to waive the demands of the law. Rather than that, in love He Himself meets the law's demand through the propitiating death of Jesus Christ.
 2. Thus instead of making void His law (His word) (His nature), He *establishes* it (fulfills it) (Rom. 3:31).
 3. Jesus' death has a penal aspect to it. He became the object of retributive justice and hence bore our punishment.
- D. There are those who refuse to accept this idea:
 1. Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, in his book, *A Testament of the Faith*, (p. 144) "We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory to me is immoral. If Jesus paid it all, or if He is the substitute for me, or if He is the sacrifice for all sin of the world, then why discuss

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forgiveness? The books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty. I owe nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicated upon the act of some one else. It is my sin. I must atone."

III. TRANSFER

- A. But if the N.T. is true, and it is, and if words have any literal meaning, and they do, then God transferred my sin to Jesus Christ and He is the propitiation for my sin and the sin of all the world.
 - 1. According to the N.T. Jesus Christ in love identified himself with us and we in faith identify ourselves with him
 - 2. God treated the sinless Christ as if He were guilty, and inflicted upon Him the punishment which our sins deserved; **AND THIS INFLICTION MADE IT POSSIBLE TO TREAT THE SINFUL AS IF THEY WERE ACTUALLY RIGHTEOUS** (II Cor. 5:21, etc.)
- B. When Christ satisfied the wrath of God, He satisfied it in our place, as our substitute
 - 1. He was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13)
 - 2. He bore the full force of the wrath of God against sin. In thus allowing the penalty of sin to be inflicted on himself, Christ satisfied God's justice and became the appeasement for our sins.
- C. Because the cross is what it is, God can forgive our sins and justify us and be just at the same time.
 - 1. If Christ suffered the penalty for our sins, then our sins have already been punished in Him.
 - 2. The fiery wrath of God due to us has already burned itself out on Him
 - 3. When God says to us, "Your sins are taken away," He is not simply **BRUSHING THEM ASIDE**.
 - 4. Quite the contrary, every sin which is forgiven in us has already been punished in Christ.

Conclusion

I. JUSTIFICATION IS FREE TO US

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- A. It is not something that we have earned or deserved
 - 1. God's love, not our works, solved the problem which justice raised
 - 2. The righteousness which justifies us is no more our own than the sins which Christ took were His own.
 - 3. This righteousness is something God in the flesh earned and gave to us as a gift
- B. We can serve God with peace and joy, knowing that our salvation does not depend on our ability to perform a certain number or quality of good works.
 - 1. Our Christian service is not an effort to earn something we do not have, but rather an expression of thanks for something we have been given.

II. JUSTIFICATION COST GOD

- A. His only unique Son. Forgiveness of sins is no casual thing!
- B. Forgiveness of sin is not merely a matter of a few spoken words on our part, and the snap of a finger on God's part
 - 1. Our sins are washed away, not by the tears of a soft-hearted, sentimental God, but by the blood of the Son of a Just and Righteous God.
 - 2. All sins for which we ask forgiveness have been fully punished in Christ. Only because they have already been punished in Christ can they be forgiven in us. Christ has borne in His body and soul all of the agony and all the anger of God that are due to those sins for which we so casually ask pardon.

Special Study

JUSTIFICATION

Rom. 3:21-26; I John 1:5-10; Rom. 5:1-21; Heb. 10:4-14

Introduction

I. MEANING

- A. Heb. *tsadaq*; Gr. *δικαιοῦν dikaioon*; "to pronounce, accept and treat as just; to treat as not legally liable; to treat as if innocent; therefore entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law."
- B. To justify means to set right, or to put on a right footing by declaring a verdict of acquittal.
- C. Literally it means "to get the verdict." It is a legal term.
- D. Defined as "that judicial act of God, by which, on the basis of the meritorious work of Christ, imputed to the sinner and received by him through faith, God declares the sinner absolved from his sin, released from its penalty, and restored as righteous."

II. JUSTIFICATION IS THE CENTRAL FACT OF BIBLICAL RELIGION

- A. Justification determines the whole character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith.
- B. It defines the saving significance of Christ's life and death, by relating both to God's law.
- C. It displays God's justice in condemning and punishing sin; His mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners, and His wisdom in exercising both attributes harmoniously, in Christ.
- D. It makes clear what faith is — trust in Christ's atoning death and justifying resurrection for the sinner's righteousness
- E. It makes clear what Christian morality is — law-keeping out of gratitude to the Saviour whose gift of righteousness made lawkeeping needless for acceptance
- F. It explains all types, prophecies and instances of salvation in the O.T.

Discussion

I. ARRAIGNED

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- A. The entire O.T. and N.T. teach emphatically that man is a guilty criminal who must be hailed into the court of the Judge of all the Earth.
 - 1. The O.T. teaches that a day of judgment was to come in which God would condemn and punish all who had broken his laws
 - 2. That day would terminate the present world-order and usher in a golden age for those whom God judged worthy.
 - 3. The N.T. confirms that God will judge the world in righteousness in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16)
 - 4. Man is guilty; the whole creation testifies against him; his own conscience — the revelation of God — his fellow man — nature itself — and last but not least, the great adversary, the devil accuses man.
 - B. Man has been arraigned; judgment is certain
 - 1. The principle of judgment will be EXACT RETRIBUTION — he will get what he deserves — what he has earned
 - 2. The standard of judgment will be GOD'S LAW
 - 3. The evidence will be THE SECRETS OF MEN
 - 4. The Judge is the omniscient, omnipotent, searcher of hearts
 - 5. Only those who can hope to escape are those who have kept His law in all its parts
 - 6. But there are none — all are guilty!
- ### II. ACQUITTED
- A. The good news from heaven's judgment hall is that the guilty have been justified, pronounced "not guilty."
 - 1. There has been a reversal of God's attitude toward the guilty
 - 2. What is involved?
 - B. Remission of punishment
 - 1. The believer is declared to be free of the demands of the law because those demands have been satisfied in Christ's death (Rom. 4:5)
 - 2. Christ paid the penalty Himself and the believing sinner is

JUSTIFICATION

no longer held accountable (Rom. 6:7)

3. BUT IT IS MORE THAN MERE PARDON. IT IS A DECLARATION THAT THE GUILTY IN FACT, ARE NO LONGER GUILTY . . . THE VERY FACT OF HIS GUILT IS REMOVED . . . HE IS INNOCENT OF WHAT HE WAS ONCE GUILTY
IT IS AS IF HE HAD *NEVER* SINNED!
HE IS WASHED CLEAN . . . HE IS A NEW CREATION!

C. Restoration to favor

1. God treats the sinner as if he had never sinned since the sinner is now regarded as being personally righteous in Christ (Gal. 3:6)
2. There is not only acquittal, but approval; not only pardon but promotion

D. Imputed righteousness of God

1. Granted to the believer through Christ's presence in him
2. The believers covenant relationship to Christ imparts the quality and character of Christ's righteousness to him
3. Christ is the Justifier through whom a new life is inaugurated in the believer (I Cor. 1:30).
4. Man can never be saved apart from participating in the person of Christ because only as we accept His will and His nature and His death in our place can He serve as our justification and as our righteousness.

III. ACCLAIMED

A. Justified and declared Righteous, we are Adopted as Sons

1. "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,"
2. and . . . "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."
3. ". . . those whom he justified he also glorified . . . what then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? . . . Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? . . ." etc.

B. But remember this, we are justified by God and we are permitted to accept it by believing it

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1. We are not justified on any merit of our own
2. The N.T. is very emphatic on this point (Rom. 3:28; 4:1-5; Gal. 3:6ff)
3. The book of James states that men are justified by works but what James is saying is that when a man's actions show that he has a living, working faith, it shows the man has been justified.
4. James is talking about a man proving or demonstrating his faith by his life . . . but all the demonstrating in the world will not obtain our justification.

THE DEMONSTRATION OF FAITH (WORKS) IS MERELY THE EXPRESSION OF OUR THANKFULNESS FOR WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE . . . WE NEED ONLY BELIEVE IT AND OBEY IT TO HAVE IT APPLY TO US!
A PARDON IS NOT A PARDON UNLESS IT IS ACCEPTED.

Special Study

REDEMPTION

Rom. 3:21-26; Titus 2:11-14; Gal. 3:13;

I Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:8-15; Heb. 2:1-18

Introduction

I. MEANING

A. Heb. *padah*; Heb. *ga'al*; meaning literally "to break or tear away."

Gr. ἀγοράζω *agorazo*; meaning "purchase or buy" and λυτροῦμαι; meaning "ransom or deliver."

B. Redemption is a word closely allied to the word salvation but redemption is more specific, denoting the *means* by which salvation is achieved — namely by the payment of a ransom.

C. Heb. *goel*'; "one who asserts a claim or one who vindicates for another." A favorite term of Isaiah who speaks of Jehovah as the *Goel* of Israel.

II. USAGE

A. Connected to re-purchase of property (Lev. 25:26; Ruth 4:4ff; Psa. 74:2; Deut. 9:26; II Sam. 7:23; I Chron. 17:21, etc.)

B. Connected to release of slaves (Exod. 21:7-8; Lev. 25:47-55; etc.)

C. Connected to "redeeming" firstborn sons (Exod. 34:20)

D. Connected with God's great acts of delivering national Israel from Egypt (exodus) and from Babylon (restoration).

Discussion

I. PRODUCT/PROPERTY — Man

A. Polluted by sin

1. Sin is more than weakness/mistake; it is **REBELLION, INSURRECTION**

Man is an enemy of his Creator; man mocks his Benefactor; man is a spiritual whoremonger (willfully committing spiritual adultery). Man is a rotten renegade.

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Rom. 1:18-32

2. Inhuman — sin drives man to be worse than an animal, sensual, selfish, sadistic
 3. Insane — sin robs man of a right mind (I Cor. 15:34)
- B. Prisoner of Satan
1. Deceived — the Evil one has captured the minds and wills of men by lies.
 2. Defeated — the Evil one has imprisoned and enslaved man. Whomever we yield to becomes our master (Rom. 6:12-19). So long as we are willing to believe a lie we will yield to it and we cannot break the chains of enslavement ourselves for we are incapable of arriving at truth/reality without God revealing it to us.
 3. Dead — the Evil one has alienated us from God, we are strangers, separated from His kingdom, DEAD, as far as God is concerned.
 4. Ideas and thoughts master/control us. Ideas come from persons. The devil and God both think and we are controlled by one or the other.
- C. Precious in the Sight of God
1. No matter how polluted, still Man is God's precious property. God made man, He made him in His own *likeness* (Double emphasis in Hebrew — Hebrew word in Genesis is *tzelem* and is the same word used for idol and images exactly like him, Dan. 2:31,35.) and breathed into man a part of Himself. Man is God's child, God's son.
 2. Man is precious to God (Isa. 43:4; Lam. 4:2)
 3. Man is God's great concern (Isa. 49:14-16)
 4. This universe was created *for* man — Man is the apex of all God's creative genius

II. PRICE

- A. What price is sufficient to "buy" or "redeem" the property?
1. It must be commensurate with the *worth* of the property
 2. It must be able to satisfy the *demands* of its indebtedness
 3. It must be sufficient to *restore* the property to the demanded usefulness of the owner
 4. Is there anything in all the world that will meet the above price-tag? (Micah 6:6-8; Mark 8:34-38)

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5. There is NO thing or group of things in all the world that will be an acceptable redeeming payment for lost mankind (cf. Psa. 49:5-15). Not even another human being can redeem another for all are lost!
 6. The guilt of one individual's sin against another cannot be morally transferred to a third party. All forgiveness, human and divine, is in the very nature of the case substitutional or vicarious. No one ever really forgives another, except he bears the penalty of the other's sin against him. When we pray "Father, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," we are not asking God to forgive us by a vicarious sacrifice while we forgive each other by merely overlooking faults which cost us nothing. And when we say Christ died as our Substitute, we do not mean that He was a third party . . . because
 7. The guilt of one individual's sin against another can morally be borne *either by the sinner*, or by the *one sinned against*.
 8. Christ was not a third party at Calvary . . . HE WAS THE GOD SINNED AGAINST.
 9. All those illustrations of a third party taking another's place and bearing another's punishment are logically and Biblically erroneous.
- B. Perfection — God had need to come from heaven to conquer the devil and to free man. Man would have been forever enslaved to self had God done it otherwise.
1. Man must conquer the devil. Man must conquer sin. Man must fulfill the holiness of the law of God. Man must live in perfect obedience and harmony with the will of God.
 2. Man, imprisoned by the devil and rebelling against his Creator was hopelessly unable to meet the price of perfection to God's Law.
 3. In His unsearchable wisdom He decided to step into the stream of human history and work out a plan which would bridge the gap between Him and His fallen children. HE DECIDED TO KEEP HIS OWN LAW . . . IN THE PLACE OF HELPLESS MEN! (Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:6-8)

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4. God took upon Himself the nature of His children in order to meet the devil on the battlefield of the flesh and conquered sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:1-8).
5. God obedient to the Law which He Himself had given! He who was above the Law willingly put Himself beneath it as the divine Substitute for those who, because of their spiritual bondage, were unable to do it for themselves.
6. Just as Adam was my representative and I sinned in Adam, so the Son of Man is my representative and I may be counted righteous if I am in Him by faith. (Rom. 5:12-21; II Cor. 5:14-21)
7. Jesus Christ, God-Man, was willing and able to pay the price of perfection for me — perfect faith, perfect obedience, perfect motives, perfect service, perfect surrender to God, perfect love, perfect justice.

I NO LONGER NEED TO FEEL GUILT, FRUSTRATION AND ANXIETY OR FEAR . . . I HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . I AM FREE TO REACH THE HIGHEST GOAL OF GODLINESS I AM CAPABLE OF BY FAITH AND TRUST IN HIM WHO TAKES CARE OF ALL SHORTCOMINGS I MAY HAVE.

- C. Punishment — Demanded by the very moral nature of God and man
1. Without a penalty there is no law, without law there is no morality
 2. When law or justice is violated the penalty must be paid
 3. This principle is true even in human institutions. The demands of justice must be met and the majesty of the law sustained or otherwise the bonds of the association will be destroyed and anarchy will prevail.
 4. God, in order to establish and vindicate His sovereignty and His trustworthiness must execute the penalty of His law when it is violated.
 5. In His unsearchable mercy He decided to step into the stream of human history and PAY THE PENALTY OF HIS OWN LAW HIMSELF! No third party could forgive man. Man's sin — all of it — ultimately is against

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God. Only God could forgive man. God had to pay the price Himself if it was to be paid at all.

6. This is how God was both JUST and the JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHO BELIEVES (Rom. 3:21-26). God became man and willingly gave Himself to suffer the penalty for sin — death (WHAT THEN HAVE WE TO BOAST OF IN ANY THING WE MAY DO OR BE???)
7. Some scriptures:
God made Him (Christ) to be sin on our behalf (II Cor. 5:21)
Christ died for our sins (I Cor. 15:3)
By Him we received the atonement (Rom. 5:10-11)
He bore our sins in His own body (I Pet. 2:24)
He redeemed us from the law becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13)
He tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9ff)

III. PAYMENT

A. Anticipated

1. Throughout the centuries of the O.T. the believers looked forward to an act of deliverance which would forever free them from the guilt, the power and the punishment of sin.
 - a. They looked forward to a heaven-sent Deliverer
 - b. They looked forward to a great act of atonement
2. Where did they get this anticipation?
 - a. Revealed through God's spokesmen, Patriarchs, Prophets
 - b. Revealed through God's Law
3. O.T. believers made payment for their sin by symbolically transferring their guilt to an animal, and then sacrificing that animal as a symbolic atonement for their transgressions . . . in symbol the sinner transferred his guilt to the innocent, and the innocent died in the place of the guilty.
4. How could the death of an animal make good for the sins of a human being? IT COULDN'T! High on the great divide which still lay centuries in the future stood that

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Great Sacrifice which alone could give meaning and value to all the rivers of blood which were shed in Jewish temples.

5. The death of Christ was the *real* thing . . . the death of the animal had atoning value for the O.T. believer only because he had put his faith in the promised One and the promised Act of God who was to make final payment for all his sins.
6. A 10 dollar bill has value, not because of the worth of the paper it is printed on, but because of secure collateral which may lie 1000's of miles away . . . so the death of the animal in the O.T. had value only because of the collateral which was 1000's of years away.

B. Arranged

1. The Son of God left the glory of Paradise to give Himself in payment and to cancel our debt
2. He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men . . . and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, Phil. 2:5-11.
3. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a *ransom* for many, Matt. 20:28.
4. No one took His life, He laid it down (John 10:17-18).
5. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).
6. The Great Arrangement is documented in Hebrews 10:5-18. Animal sacrifices did not pay the debt — a body was prepared for the Son of God (according to the O.T. scriptures, i.e., "the roll of the book") — then The Son said, Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God.

AND BY THAT WILL WE HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL!

FOR BY A SINGLE OFFERING HE HAS PERFECTED FOR ALL TIME THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED

WHERE THERE IS FORGIVENESS OF THESE, THERE IS NO LONGER ANY OFFERING FOR SIN. PAID IN FULL!

REDEMPTION

C. Accepted

1. All of this theology about a substitutionary, redeeming death is vain without validation
2. It may sound great for a man 2000 years ago to walk up and down Palestine and say I will die for you and pay your debt to God **BUT DOES GOD AGREE?**
3. This was answered for all men and for all time on the first Easter morning. Christ not only died for the sin of men; **HE ROSE AGAIN!** If Christ had remained in the grave, all talk of His having paid the debt of human sin would be idle and vain . . . we would still be in our sins (I Cor. 15:17-18).
4. The resurrection of Christ not only demonstrates He is the Son of God, **IT ALSO DEMONSTRATES THAT GOD IN HEAVEN HAS ACCEPTED THE SACRIFICE OF HIS SON FOR THE SINS OF ALL THE WORLD.**
5. The Easter miracle is Heaven's **RECEIPT**, presented to all men of all ages, saying: *Payment Received — Paid in Full!* (II Cor. 1:20).
6. God says in effect, "I have accepted the ransom which My Son has brought in payment for your sin. His resurrection is the stamp and seal of My divine approval. His resurrection is not only *His* vindication — but *yours* also. For, because of His payment which I have now accepted in your stead, you are free!"
God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing (charging) their trespasses unto them, (II Cor. 5:19).
7. Christ has, as it were, picked up all the moral I.O.U.'s of the human race, all of the accumulated moral debts of every member of the human family which were owed to God and has "blotted them out" **AND GOD HAS VALIDATED FOREVER THE PAYMENT AND HAS MADE IT PUBLIC FOR AS LONG AS TIME SHALL LAST BY DOING SO IN THE GREATEST HISTORICAL EVENT OF ALL TIME . . . THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.**

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Conclusion

- I. We may be redeemed by taking *citizenship* in His spiritual Kingdom.
- II. We then experience the redemption and renewal of every facet of our life.

Special Study

THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION

Text: Eph. 2:11-22

(See Also II Cor. 5:11-21)

Introduction

What does the word *reconciled* or *reconciliation* mean? Webster's Collegiate Dict. says the English word is from French and Latin meaning: "To cause to be friendly again; to bring back to harmony."

"Reconciliation" — in our English Bibles is a translation of the Greek words *katallasso*, *katallage*, or *diallassomai* — all of which literally mean "to exchange, or to change over."

There are two Hebrew words, *kaphar* and *racah*, translated in the KJV sometimes by the English word *reconciliation*, but usually should be translated *atonement*. (see I Sam. 29:4; II Chron. 29:24; Ezek. 45:15; Dan. 9:24, etc.).

Most of those of us who have to watch closely how we spend our money do something every month which should illustrate our word. We take the *statement* we get from our bank and *compare* it with what our check stubs say, and hope the two are *reconciled* — that is, *in harmony with one another*. That is what it is called — reconciling your bank statement. What it really means is *surrendering* your estimate of your account to the bank's statement — bank's make no mistakes! We had one little girl at college one year who never had learned that you had to reconcile your check book with the bank's statement. She thought you could go on writing checks as long as you had blank checks in your book — until one "bounced"!

When a printer *reconciles* a margin, he brings the printed type into harmony with a pre-established margin-line so everything is *even* and *squared*. That is what *reconciliation* means. So if you've been reconciled to God you've been made square with God. God makes us "come out even" when he reconciles us.

Reconciliation to God — being in harmony with our Creator, our Father, our Judge — is the *feeling* we *really* want! Everyone is talking and writing and singing about spiritual, religious feeling and what it all boils down to is the need to *feel reconciled* to God.

THE FEELING MUST BE PRECEDED BY FAITH AND

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FAITH MUST BE PRECEDED BY FACTS — *FACTS ABOUT GOD AND CHRIST AND THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION* — AND THOSE FACTS ARE FOUND NOWHERE BUT THE BIBLE!

“Peaches and Herb” sang, in the 70’s, “Reunited, and it feels so good.” That is what reconciliation is all about.

Discussion

Man’s reconciliation to God is impossible without the work of Christ. Therefore, when we speak of the work of reconciliation we are talking about the work of God (in Christ) exclusively.

I. **ESTRANGED** (Part of God’s work of reconciliation is estrangement)

A. God is a person, not an idea — he is a personal entity apart from our thinking and imagining.

1. God, as a person, is the ultimate lover — He loves, He is love. But the love, real love, true love, of a person is more than emotion.
2. Love is character — character made of likes and dislikes (even hate), of attractions and repulsions, according to the person’s attraction or sympathy for, or the aversion to, the character and conduct of those with whom it comes in contact.
3. God is a person, not a force. He loves and hates, like and dislikes. He can, and does, discriminate between the righteous and the wicked.

B. God’s love is capable of being turned to hostility

1. If that were not true, **HOW COULD GOD LOVE US FOR OUR GOOD WITHOUT SHOWING HIS HOSTILITY TO WHAT WOULD DO US HARM?**
2. When divine love is forced back, refused, scoffed at and mocked by our rebellion so that it cannot flow forth to bless as it wishes, it *chafes* against the rebellion out of sheer love.
3. Divine love, real love, is *goodness in earnestness* trying to make others good. And when it cannot have its way, it is grieved. When it is deliberately and maliciously thwarted,

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it is angry! Mark 3:5

C. We have estranged ourselves from God!

1. We are impudent, thankless, petulant children; we are a faithless bride of God.

We have said: "I will have my own way; I want my Heavenly Father's indulgence, but I do not want his way!" "I DO NOT WANT TESTS AND TRIALS AND THE CROSS (death to self)."

2. Our own selfishness has created a barrier, a wall of hostility, between us and our God.
3. We have declared ourselves *enemies* of God and His only response or the only course left for Him is to be our enemy. God loves every man with self-giving love, but he loves his own sovereignty and his own faithfulness more. **GOD MUST KEEP HIS WORD: HE MUST VINDICATE HIS FAITHFULNESS: WITHOUT THAT HE CANNOT TRULY LOVE ANYONE!**

D. Man has rebelled and there is hostility:

1. Man's selfish hostility — God's hostility of love.
2. Does that sound like an impossibility? **HOSTILITY OF LOVE!?**

Read again the record of David and Absalom. Absalom's was the hostility of selfishness, rebellion and hatred for his father; David's was the hostility of selflessness and love, longing deeply for reconciliation with his son. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" II Sam. 18:33. Absalom was never reconciled to his father because he would not surrender to David's love — David did all he could to reconcile him.

E. The closest analogy to our condition is probably to be found in the human family relationship; parents with rebellious children; spouses with rebellious mates, estranged because of selfishness — "I WANT MY WAY, I WILL HAVE MY WAY. . . ."

1. *Barriers* to peaceful, harmonious, communicative, loving, growing, intimacy are formed.
2. Though one person may deeply desire the barriers to be broken down, the offended person may still be angry

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with the offender *because* of the *hurting, destructive* actions the offender continues to do toward a relationship that would only bring blessing to both!

Classic Biblical illustrations of human estrangements and reconciliations are found in the lives of Jacob and Esau — Joseph and his brothers — Hosea and his wife — Saul and David; then there is the parable Jesus told of the Prodigal Son, his father, and his elder brother.

Listen to these words: You'll never suspect their origin:

God's love extends to everyone, no matter how good or how bad, but it is a love whose *integrity* is grounded in his *holiness*. It is holy love, and is therefore not hobbled by the sentimentality and easy tolerance that passes for love today. The cliché (my words) "God will understand" is neither love nor grace: it is flaccid indulgence. It doesn't care enough to *demand* growth or change. It just leaves people alone, and wants the same for itself.

As usual, C.S. Lewis is helpful here. He writes, "To ask that God be content with us as we are is to ask that God should cease to be God. Because he is what he is, his *love* must, in the nature of things, be *impeded* and *repelled* by certain strains in our present character, and because he already loves us he must *labor* to make us lovable. God is committed to nothing less than restoring in us his image broken in the fall of man, and making us like his Son, (Eph. 2:10) — we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. Because of this, Lewis concludes, *his love is more sensitive than hatred itself* to every blemish in the beloved . . . of all powers he forgives most, but condones least, he is pleased with little, but demands all."

God understands, that is true. But he understands in a way that is more fiery and more shattering than we can ever imagine this side of glory, if even then, I read somewhere of an artist who was commissioned to paint a mural on the great window at the entrance to Macy's department store in N.Y. City. A few weeks after he finished he walked to the store to look again at his work. It was then that he discovered that the store had hired someone else to make some alterations in what he had painted. He was so horrified and enraged at the distortion of his creation that he hurled his body through the window.

This is a vivid picture of God's holy love and the wrath that is, of necessity, a part of that love. He resists us as we are, not because he doesn't love us, but because he does. His grace is love that will not let us go, even when it would be perfectly just and easy to do so. (by Ben Patterson in "Wittenburg Door," Feb.-Mar. 1983)

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WHEN WE ARE HOSTILE TOWARD GOD, HE IS HOSTILE TOWARD US . . . BECAUSE HE MUST BE TRUE TO HIMSELF, AND TRUE TO LOVE . . . THAT IS TRUE LOVE, DIVINE LOVE.

WHEN WE ESTRANGE OURSELVES FROM GOD, HE ESTRANGES HIMSELF FROM US . . . HE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO HIS OWN INTEGRITY AND HOLINESS . . . HE MUST BE TRUE TO *REAL* LOVE. HIS HOSTILITY AND ESTRANGEMENT, IS HIS LAST RESORT ATTEMPT TO ALLURE US BACK TO HIMSELF.

Please read the 2nd chapter of Hosea

Please read Isaiah 54:4-8

Please read Christ's seven letters to his bride, the Church in Rev. 2-3

GOD LONGS FOR US, BUT HE WANTS US TO LONG FOR HIM . . . WITHOUT THAT THERE IS NO REAL *RECONCILIATION!*

"I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress they seek me, saying, Come let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up." Hosea 5:15-6:1. (Read the rest of Hosea 6).

II. EMBRACED (Part of God's work of reconciliation is to embrace)

A. The One offended initiated the work of reconciliation. God took the first step toward reconciling us to him and himself to us. **THAT IS THE WAY IT MUST BE DONE . . . IT CAN'T BE DONE ANY OTHER WAY — NOT TRUE RECONCILIATION.**

THERE CAN BE NO FORGIVENESS UNTIL THE ONE OFFENDED BEARS THE BURDEN OF THE OFFENSE!

1. God embraced man, by becoming man Himself in Christ Jesus.
2. God erased the enmity (barrier, the offense) to the relationship between Himself and man by *appeasing Himself*

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in the atoning death of His Son.

3. In Matt. 5:24 Jesus instructs us that if we know a brother has anything against us, we are to go (make the initiatory move) and do something to try to remove our brother's estrangement, and so bring about a reconciliation. What we do or say may not allure him to be reconciled, but we are to make the initial move!
4. This is exactly how God acted in Christ. He did everything in His power to remove the barrier — even to “becoming sin for us”! He bore our offense in order to allure us into being reconciled!

HE DECLARED HIMSELF, HIS JUSTICE, HIS HOLINESS, SATISFIED AND VINDICATED IN THE VICARIOUS ATONEMENT OF CHRIST. HE PROMISES THAT IF WE ACCEPT HIS HOLY WAY IN FAITH, WE NEED NOT FEEL HIS HOSTILITY AND ESTRANGEMENT ANY MORE. IF HE IS NOT ESTRANGED . . . CERTAINLY WE *NEED* NOT BE — BUT WE *MAY* BE IF WE CHOOSE!

A missionary at Dorchester, England, relates: “I frequently visited the penitentiary there. One day an officer called my attention to a prisoner and told this story — When he was a young man he was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to life imprisonment. After several years, Queen Victoria granted the man a pardon. Freedom, however, lost its attraction, and after a few days' liberty he returned to prison, requesting to be re-admitted. His request was granted, and there he was. By the grace of his sovereign, a free man, entitled upon request to walk through the gates as readily as the warden himself. Yet, so long as he preferred prison life, he must submit to prison discipline, prison food, and wear prison garb. Each night, when the bell rang, he must fall into line, walk into his cell, where the iron door clanged behind him and listen to the heavy bolt grating harshly in the lock and where night after night the receding steps of the turnkey revived the consciousness that he was still a prisoner, *unreconciled* to his sovereign and to free society.

What kind of stupidity had taken possession of this man's mind? And

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yet, how like thousands living today? Preferring the false security of enslavement by conformity to the world, rather than *responsible freedom by transformation and reconciliation* to their sovereign God!

B. God reconciled Himself to man. God embraced man.

1. Christ's atoning death supplied the means by which God could forever after have a gracious attitude toward the sinner.
2. God himself performed the actual, *objective deed* on His own Son that changed God's attitude and God's relationship toward the estranged sinner.

Frank Weaver tells this story: Two men who had been friends and companions in their youth met in the police court, one on the magistrate's bench, the other the prisoner before the court. The case was tried and the prisoner was found guilty. The judge pronounced the sentence: 14 days hard labor or a fine of \$1,000. The condemned man had nothing to pay the fine. The judge rose from the bench, threw aside his magistrate's robes, and, stepping down to the prisoner, stood beside his friend, paid his fine for him, and then said, "Now, John are you coming home with me to supper."

The Judge justified both the integrity of the law and the guilt of the law-breaker. They were reconciled.

God, in Christ's death and resurrection, was both just and the Justifier of those who believe and obey. **GOD AND SINFUL MAN ARE RECONCILED!**

C. Reconciliation is the very *essence* of the good news.

1. Reconciliation is the goal of God's redemptive plan from the garden of Eden to the throne of the Lamb in Revelation.
2. Reconciliation is the goal of our faith in Christ. To be restored to personal, mental, spiritual fellowship with God is what the soul of man longs for.
3. We are more than merely saved — we are embraced, endeared, reconciled.

IF WE ARE NOT ALLOWING OURSELVES EVERYDAY TO BE

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MORE AND MORE CONQUERED BY GOD THROUGH CHRIST, WE ARE NOT BEING RECONCILED TO OUR FATHER . . . WE ARE STILL PRODIGALS, FAR AWAY FROM HOME AND THE FATHER'S ARMS

III. ENDEARED (Part of God's work of reconciliation is to endear himself to us).

A. IT is this very deed of God performed on His only Son that not only changed God's relationship—

1. But it also provides the *possibility* and *power* for the estranged sinner, influenced by God's love and grace, God's justice and faithfulness, to desire reconciliation and to seek it.
2. God is the first mover. He makes the reconciliation. He accomplishes what is impossible for man He declares man pardoned, forgiven, embraced, reconciled.
3. And the fact of God's work of grace, moves us to accept, and change our attitudes and relationship.

B. It is therefore the privilege of men to respond to such great grace.

1. God, in his great wisdom, provided the appeasement by which He is reconciled toward the sinner.
2. And at the same time provided the *power* for *us* to be reconciled toward him.

John 12:32 — "If I be lifted up. . . ."

I John 4:10 — ". . . not that we loved God, but that he loved us. . . ."

II Corinthians 5:18-19 — "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. . . ."

Romans 5:8,10 ". . . while we were enemies, Christ died for us. . . ."

C. We have access to the Father

1. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes: "Now the important thing to realise here is that the Lord Jesus Christ does not merely prepare or open the way to this. He actually effects it, He actually produces it Himself. It is He who introduces us to the Father, brings us, takes us by the hand and ushers us into His presence. I am anxious to em-

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phasize the fact that this is really the grand end and object of salvation. And I suppose there has never been a time when this needs to be emphasized more than today. We have all become so subjective, and are so much interested in our own moods and states and feelings and conditions, that when we give our testimonies we say that what salvation has done is to make us happy, or to take away this or that; and there we stop. *But the grand object of salvation is to bring us into the presence of God — nothing less, nothing short of that.*" (*God's Way of Reconciliation*, p. 251)

2. The object of salvation is reconciliation — happiness on God's terms, not ours.

The object of God's redemption and salvation is to make us love him and long for clear, unfettered, access without any hostility toward God and his kingdom.

THE OBJECT OF VICARIOUS ATONEMENT IS TO SATISFY GOD'S HOLINESS AND JUSTICE, AND TO AFFECT MAN'S UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER TO HIS WISDOM AND LOVE! IN ORDER THAT GOD AND MAN MAY ENJOY ONE ANOTHER'S PRESENCE!

IV. EVANGELISM (Those who have been reconciled have a work to do in God's program of reconciling the world unto himself).

- A. First, we are to regard no one from a human point of view.
 1. Everything and everybody we now think about, view, regard, relate to, according to the *mind of Christ*.
 2. We do not regard people or God's kingdom from *even our own point of view, but only as Christ directs us in his word*.
 3. Enough of this indulgent, destructive sentimentality that wants to sacrifice another person's reconciliation to God for the sake of being popular, being thought well of, not creating tension. Beware when *all* men speak well of you! Christians live in constant tension against worldliness!
 4. If we, as *ambassadors* of Christ, expect to do our work in reconciling the world to God, we must present the terms

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of peace and reconciliation the sovereign has authorized. THE TERMS ARE *COMPLETE SURRENDER*! Christ views his kingdom as one whose members have counted the cost of complete surrender. It is not a mental half-way house. The Bible repeatedly says those of a divided mind and heart are not in the kingdom.

RECONCILIATION, BY ITS VERY DEFINITION, DEMANDS UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER, AGREEMENT OR PACIFICATION OF THE HOSTILE REBEL TO THE SOVEREIGN VICTOR.

THOSE AMBASSADORS WHO REPRESENT THE SOVEREIGN ARE AUTHORIZED TO PROCLAIM NOTHING LESS!

The work of reconciliation cannot be accomplished by baptizing bodies with minds left in worldly rebellion. People cannot be friends of the world and friends of God at the same time. If their minds are set on worldliness — they are enemies of God! James 4

- B. Second, we are appealers and beseechers, not manipulators.
 - 1. Paul wrote in II Corinthians that since we know the *terror* of the Lord we *persuade* men to be reconciled. He also said that the love of Christ *constrains* us to preach.
 - 2. No one was ever truly reconciled by being manipulated into the kingdom. As ambassadors of Christ we are to appeal to, beseech, and persuade as many as will be persuaded, as long as we have breath. **THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE PERSUADED ARE NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY.**
 - 3. There are two pre-requisites to becoming an *ambassador* of reconciliation.
 - a. **KNOW THE MESSAGE THOROUGHLY.** We are not reconciling people to how we feel — but to what God has declared!
 - b. **KNOW HOW TO COMMUNICATE THAT MESSAGE.**
We cannot do people's thinking for them, but we must develop the communicative skills to get them to

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think about what God says in His word.

THERE IS SO MUCH *NON-THINK* IN THE WORLD TODAY, IN THE AREAS OF FAITH, MORALS, IMMORALITY . . . AND THAT AMONGST THE SO-CALLED INTELLIGENT-SIA OF OUR WORLD!

J.B. Phillips says, in *Making Men Whole*, p. 76ff: "It is not enough for us who are preachers or writers to give an adequate *performance* before the eyes and ears of our (audiences) . . . instead we have the formidable task of *reconciling the Word of truth* with the thought-forms of a people estranged from God; interpreting without changing or diluting the essential Word. . . .

Doubtless there are times when we all bewail the particular pains and distresses of our calling, and even think enviously of someone else's vocation, but the plain fact is that if we are called of God to bear a part in His purpose, there can be no evasion of its cost.

Let us then be clear what is involved in making our vocation serve God's purpose of reconciliation. Christianity is full of joy, but it is not a *joyride*. . . . It is as if we were called to be, as Sir Winston Churchill said in one of the darkest hours of the late world war, both grim and gay. The grimness comes from our knowledge of the strength of the forces arrayed against us; the stubbornness of human self-will, the sheer dead weight of apathy which above all else would quench the fires of our spirit. But full of joy we must be too, because day by day we have the deepest satisfaction this world can afford, of knowing that we are co-operating with — and even being allowed to share the cost of — the purpose of God Himself."

Conclusion

We do not comprehend the essence of reconciliation until we love deeply and intimately, and are hurt by a loved one's estrangement. I suppose we begin to understand when we have children. They are a part of us. We love them more than ourselves. When they estrange themselves from us we discipline and chasten them — not because we are unwilling to be hurt, but because we are unwilling for *them* to be hurt. Sometimes the reconciling time is long and difficult. It takes

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great patience and much prayer. We have children here at OBC. You are our children in the faith. We have many of your brothers and sisters all over the world. We long for them — to see them — to give to them — to love them. We pray for them. We are unwilling for them to be hurt.

We have great expectations for you. We love you. We are unwilling for you to be hurt. We will not indulge you so that you will be hurt. On the other hand, we will give you everything in our power to keep you from being hurt. We want, first, to see you totally reconciled to God — totally surrendered — Unconditionally surrendered to Christ. THEN, WE LONG TO SEE YOUR BECOME AN *AMBASSADOR OF RECONCILIATION*

I think God has given us human family relationship so we may have an existential and even experiential knowledge of personal relationships which may be as humanly analogous as possible to the ultimate personal, spiritual brethren.

When I was a teen-ager, I alienated myself from my father. I didn't hate him, I just didn't want to be around him. I felt like he was too bossy — too demanding — didn't understand about my desires. I didn't fight him or openly disobey him. But I did not feel like I wanted to be close to him. It was not his fault. All this time he was forgiving and forgetting all my prodigal stubbornness.

After marriage and two children of my own, I learned a lot. I finally admitted whose fault the alienation was. The last eight years of his life he lived right across the street from me. I got to know my Dad. We worked together, we took trips together, we went everywhere together. We became like one person. I was reconciled to him. NOW THAT HE HAS PASSED FROM THIS LIFE, I LONG FOR HIS PRESENCE!

That is what God has for us — reconciliation. He desires for us to be reconciled to him, to be at peace with him, to *long* for him!

When we, like the apostle Paul, find that war raging within ourselves

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so that we cry out for deliverance from our wretched selves, we may find reconciliation when we acknowledge that God has atoned for our sins in Christ and when we set our minds on the things of the Spirit (found in the word of the Spirit) and are led by the will of the Spirit (found in the word of the Spirit).

When the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, bears witness with our spirit that we are a child of God, then we have begun our reconciliation — we have come home to our Father and we are one with him.

The WORK OF RECONCILIATION is beautiful and emotionally put to poetry by Francis Thompson in his poem, "The Hound Of Heaven."

It closes like this:

"How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which they child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me!"

Special Study

FAITH

(In order to appropriate the death of Christ)
5th lecture in a series of six on the
Meaning of the Cross; for Life of Christ

Introduction

I. SOME DEFINITIONS

A. Hebrews 11:1ff (*πίστις, pistis*)

1. Not so much a definition as it is a statement of faith's results — gives assurance of things hoped for, conviction about things not seen. In other words faith supplies *reality* to that which is behind the sensory world.
2. Faith is best defined when it is exemplified; in the lives of the saints of O.T. and N.T. — but especially as exemplified in the earthly life of Jesus.

B. Alexander Campbell, Dec. 7, 1834, in an address on Reason and Faith, New York City Concert Hall,

1. "Reason deciding that the testimony is true, is *believing*; reason deciding that the testimony is false, is *disbelieving*; reason unable to decide, is *skepticism*."
2. Faith involves the whole man — but it must **FIRST** involve the intellect.

II. THE BASIC ELEMENT OF PERSONAL FAITH

- A. Trust responding to evidence
- B. Commitment responding to need
- C. Fellowship responding to love

Discussion

I. AN INTRODUCTION

A. We must *know* whom we believe

1. In the case of eternal life or eternal death it is never trite to repeat that before we can commit our souls to anyone we must first **KNOW** them
2. We cannot believe in Jesus until we know Him

FAITH

- B. Alexander Campbell once said, no savage ever shed a tear over the death of Christ where it was not known
 - 1. He was not being facetious
 - 2. Rom. 10:17, "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."
- C. The creation of faith in all men was the primary purpose for the recording of the facts about Jesus' life (the gospels). "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." John 20:30-31
- D. So the first step in appropriating the death of Christ to sinners is that sinners be introduced to just who Jesus is, and that factually, He died, rose again, and that according to this same Jesus Christ, He died in the sinner's place.
IF THEY DON'T KNOW HIM, THEY CANNOT BELIEVE IN HIM, AND HIS DEATH WILL NOT APPLY TO THEIR SINS

II. AN IDENTIFICATION

- A. We must *identify* with Him
 - 1. We must believe Him to such an extent that we trust Him to be Who He claims and to be able to Do All He Claims
 - 2. Here is where we "accept His death as our own death."
 - 3. Here is where we accept, by faith, that when He died, we died
 - 4. Seth Wilson said, "If I accept His death as my death so that my death is past, and it is no more my life that lives, and I am united with Him so that God sees Him in me, because He now lives in me, and sees me in Him, then He died my death."
- B. Galatians 2:20 states our position as believers
 - 1. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself up for me."
 - 2. It is our belief and trust in Christ that causes us to acknowledge that our "old man" died with Him on the

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CROSS.

3. Galatians 6:14 "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
 4. Jesus uses the incident of Moses and the serpent in the wilderness to illustrate how His being lifted up will save men who "look" upon Him in faith
 5. Galatians 3:26-27 — "For in Christ Jesus are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
- C. Obedience is a definite part of our identifying with Him
1. But this is a subject to be treated separately
 2. Suffice it to say her that a faith without obedience is a false faith
 3. It is possible for men, in a christian nation, to know the facts about Jesus (some facts, though probably distorted by false teachers) AND STILL REFUSE TO IDENTIFY WITH HIM BECAUSE THEY SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO DIE TO SELF

III. AN INFUSION

- A. Our relationship to Jesus Christ must be deeper, more intimate than identification
1. If His death is to become ours, and His life is to become ours we must by unreserved faith (trust) let His personality be so infused into ours we find that unity with Him which the N.T. urges
 2. It is expressed so aptly in II Cor. 5:14-17 . . . "For the love of Christ controls us; because we are *convinced* (note that word) that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; (because we don't live to exercise our own minds and to have our own feelings and to make our own judgments . . . we simply don't have a life of our own anymore . . . we are bought with a price). . . . Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new

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has come.”

B. Seth Wilson

1. “The greatest mistake the Christian can make is to say, ‘it’s my life, and I’ll live it.’ Because that just rejects our salvation, just like that. The only salvation there is for any sinner, is to give my life up to Jesus and to receive His death for mine. And anytime anybody thinks ‘It’s my life and I’ll live it,’ he has forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. He has forgotten his Savior, he has renounced His master, and he has immediately taken all his sins upon himself afresh.”

C. This infusion must be a union of His nature with ours

1. We must dwell in Him and His will and His character (doing what He did, saying what He said, trusting in the Father as He trusted).
2. He is the source of our thinking, feeling, willing, acting
3. He is the Vine and we are the branches

D. We trust Him, believe in Him, commit ourselves to Him to the extent that we cease to live as we formerly lived. . . . We died . . . and when we enter into covenant relationship with Him, two lives are blended together and His Spirit fills me, and my guilt is upon Him, and His righteousness is upon me.

1. “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and *become partakers of the divine nature.*” II Pet. 1:3-4

Conclusion

- I. SALVATION IS NOT JUST AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE
- II. SALVATION IS BY FAITH . . . AND FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE TESTIMONY

- A. Our salvation or redemption focuses on the objective deeds of God in history

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- B. "Reason deciding that the testimony is true, is *believing* . . ."
- C. When we use our reason, investigating the evidence (testimony), and decide that the testimony is true, and we are willing to accept and commit ourselves to the consequences of the testimony . . . **WE ARE REDEEMED!**
- D. Of course, accepting the consequences of the truthfulness of the testimony is to accept our own death!!! and our new life!!! in Christ.

Special Study

OBEDIENCE

6th in series of 6 lectures for Life of Christ,
Semester VI, The Meaning of the death of Christ

Introduction

I. MEANING

- A. Heb. *shama*; to hear, hearken, obey
- B. Gr. *ὑπακούω*, *hupakouo* (most frequent in N.T.); to hearken, lit. to hear under denoting the obligation of compliance

II. USAGE

- A. Obedience in the Bible signifies active response to something one hears — not just passive listening
- B. One cannot truly hear God's word without acting upon it
- C. Obedience is the fundamental O.T. virtue
 - 1. I Sam. 15:22
 - 2. Jer. 11:7 (It is the one thing God requires and which from the first determines His attitude to His creatures)
- D. Just as important in the N.T.
 - 1. It is both the cause and condition of salvation; through one act of obedience (Rom. 5:19) Christ became to all His followers the author of an eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9). But this salvation is only to be obtained on condition that they also obey.
 - 2. In His farewell address to His disciples Christ makes obedience the supreme test of love (John 14:15,23)
 - 3. Paul declares that the obedience of the Christians should extend even to one's very thoughts (II Cor. 10:5)
 - 4. We are exhorted: (I Pet. 1:22)
to obey the truth (Gal. 5:7) (Rom. 2:8) and not to obey wickedness
to obey the gospel of God (I Pet. 4:17) (II Thess. 1:8)
to obey the Son (John 3:36)

Discussion

I. OFFERED OBEDIENCE

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- A. Too often we look at obedience as an obligation
 - 1. Actually God is doing us a favor in offering to let us obey Him
 - 2. Man's most basic need is fellowship with God . . . without God we become, in spite of all our human efforts, totally and helplessly alone
 - 3. Fellowship with God is made possible by “. . . loving the Lord your God, walk in all his ways, and cleave unto him. . . .” Only when we respond to God's love by loving obedience to His will can we experience communion with Him.
- B. Jesus made it clear that the only faith (trust) that counts as a faith that results in obedience.
 - 1. “Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). **YOU SEE, THE ONE WHO HAS NO DESIRE TO DO GOD'S WILL WOULD NOT BE HAPPY IN HEAVEN!**
 - 2. “Why do you call me, Lord, and not do what I tell you?” Luke 6:46
 - 3. The Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32). Which one did the will of his father? **THE ONE WHO OBEYED!** Not the one who said he would and didn't!
- C. Faith without obedience is disobedience.
 - 1. Satan and the demons know the truth, but do not obey it (James 2:19)
 - 2. Obedience is not legalism. . . . Legalism is an attitude Obedience is not doing something whereby we earn or merit salvation
 - 3. Obedience is merely acknowledging God's wisdom, love, and authority, and availing oneself of the privilege of sharing or participating in that love, wisdom and authority
 - 4. **OBEEDIENCE IS THE ONLY WAY TO PARTICIPATE IN WHAT GOD HAS TO OFFER!**

II. OPPORTUNITY TO OBEY

- A. God not only offers us obedience, He provides the method or agency by which we may obey

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1. The first great act of obedience which unites us in the death of Christ is baptism
 2. This is what the 6th chapter of Romans is all about
 3. We are not saved simply by Jesus' death, but by our union with Jesus' death, by our entering into Jesus' death, by the applying of His death to us.
 4. Jesus died for the whole world, yet His death does not accomplish the redemption for the whole world, only of those who are baptized into Him. **THAT IS WHY BAPTISM IS SO IMPORTANT, THAT IS WHY FAITH IN HIM IS SO IMPORTANT.**
 5. Of course, there is nothing efficacious in the mere act of being dunked in water . . . hundreds of people do that every summer in swimming pools and bath tubs.
 - a. The faith that leads a person to surrender self-will and self-direction over to God and causes that person to turn to God obeying God's word is what makes baptism efficacious.
 - b. Baptism can be turned into an idol just like the serpent of the wilderness was idolized.
 - c. Baptism without the proper relationship to the Person of Jesus Christ is no better than some pagan religious ritual
 6. On the other hand, baptism is the most appropriate way the Christian may express what he has believed about Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - a. In this act of obedience the believer both symbolizes what he believes in his heart (Rom. 6:17) and has an objective point in time and in deed where he may surely experience doing the will of God (which experience he must have), to say, "I have done God's will."
 - b. It is here the believer declares to the world and to his own heart that he accepts the sentence of death to his own self-will and accepts the new life or new nature of Christ to dwell in his mind, feeling, will and body
- B. The other great act of obedience which unites us with the death of Jesus is the Lord's Supper; we may argue about fre-

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quency, but not the *doing* of it!

1. Jesus definitely instituted the Supper to relate our faith and thinking to His death as a ransom (Matt. 26:26-29 and parallels)
 2. Paul is also definite in I Cor. 11:23-32.
 3. Again, there is no miraculous efficacy in the loaf and the cup in and of themselves . . . we do not earn or merit the blood of Christ by observing the Supper.
 4. But the Supper is the most appropriate way the believer may express what he continues to believe about Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - a. In this act of obedience the believer both symbolizes what he believes in his heart and has, at the same time, an objective point whereby he may experience doing the will of God.
 - b. It is here the believer declares to the world and to his own heart that he accepts the sentence of death to his own self-will and accepts the new life or new nature or Christ to dwell in him.
- C. All the other acts of obedience to the gospel of Christ are God's opportunities for us to participate in the death of Christ in our stead . . . opportunities to put to practice what we believe (that when He died, we died) (and that when He was raised we were raised to a new life) (Col. 3)
1. Stewardship (giving)
 2. Evangelism (spreading truth and light to the world)
 3. Benevolence (ministering, as He ministered and gave Himself)
 4. Worshipping (Christ's act of obedient death was the One Supreme Act of Worship to God) (He was heard for His godly *fear*)

III. OBJECT OF OUR OBEDIENCE

A. Christ, the Lord

1. If it were not for His obedience there would be little motivation for our obedience
2. He pioneered the way in obedience. . . . He demonstrated in the flesh that it was of the very nature of God to serve and obey.

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3. After the great foot-washing incident, Jesus said, "If you know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." John 13
 4. Jesus demonstrated that it is possible to dwell in the flesh and still to obey the Father.
- B. God does not require an obedience we are unable to render.
1. Whatever his requirements may be, we are at the same time given strength necessary to keep them.
 2. There is therefore no legitimate excuse for disobedience.
 3. The same Jesus who requires of his followers that they obey the will of the heavenly Father obeyed.
 4. Furthermore He promised to dwell in us in His Spirit to aid us in obeying the Father.

Conclusion

JESUS CAME AND TABERNACLED AMONG MEN IN THE FLESH, TRUSTED GOD, OBEYED GOD, SURRENDERED HIS LIFE AND LIVED NOT UNTO HIMSELF BUT FOR GOD AND OTHERS.

HE DID SO PERFECTLY. HIS DEATH PAID OUR PRICE, SATISFIED THE JUSTICE OF GOD, SERVED OUR SENTENCE AND CHANGED GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD REBELLIOUS SINNERS.

JESUS DID ALL THIS TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD AND DRAW US INTO THE FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION WITH OUR FATHER AND CREATOR WHO WANTS TO BLESS US ABOVE ALL WE ARE ABLE TO IMAGINE.

WE MAY ENTER INTO THAT OFFERED FELLOWSHIP BY FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

IN SO DOING WE ACCEPT HIS DEATH AS OURS AND HIS LIFE AS OURS. . . . WE NO LONGER LIVE TO SELF. . . . WE ARE NOT OUR OWN TO DO AS WE SELFISHLY PLEASE

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ANymORE. . . . WE HAVE ENTERED INTO A DEATH, AND A RESURRECTION!

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED ONCE, HAVE NO NEED TO FEAR THE SECOND DEATH.

God will not force you to enter into a fellowship (sharing) or covenant of obedience. He will not force anyone to be what he does not want, really want, to be.

No man would be happy being coerced to be good and righteous; e.g. the Parable of the Prodigal and elder Sons; Jesus did not force the Rich Young Ruler to give up his riches and follow Him.